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A
VOICE FROM THE SANCTUARY

ON THE

MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE:

BEING

A SERIES OF DISCOURSES

DELIVERED IN AMERICA,

BEFORE

THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS,
THE AMERICAN BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS, &c., &c.

BY THE MOST EMINENT DIVINES OF THAT COUNTRY,
BELONGING TO VARIOUS DENOMINATIONS.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION,

BY JAMES MONTGOMERY, ESQ.

LONDON:
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1845.

ADVERTISEMENT.

AT the urgent request of some of my respected brethren in the ministry, and from an earnest desire to promote the general interests of the Missionary cause, I have been induced to compile and publish the excellent Discourses contained in this volume; being persuaded that their perusal, through the divine blessing, will be productive of much benefit, both to Ministers of the Gospel, and the Christian public at large.

Notwithstanding the valuable works already before the public on Christian Missions, the publication of this volume will not seem, to the judicious mind, a superfluous work. A little reflection will convince any one acquainted with the rapid progress and advancing importance of Foreign Missions, and their extending influence in this country,—creating an imperious necessity for new and increased exertion throughout the length and breadth of the Christian Church,—of the utility of something like a *cyclopædia*, or magazine, of Missionary topics, embracing all the great principles, practical features, arguments, and motives of this noble enterprise; and, by presenting the subject in all its variety of aspects, relations, and influences, near and remote, wake up the private Christian to a due sense of his obligations, and suggest to the public advocate of the divine cause, new and interesting themes for the pulpit and the platform.

To supply, in part at least, this *desideratum*, and to make a desirable addition to the few works already in circulation on this important subject, no design appeared so eligible, or more likely to answer this purpose, than a comprehensive selection and systematic arrangement of the best discourses of the most eminent Divines of America, on the subject of Christian Missions; most of which are comparatively unknown in this country. How far this compilation is calculated to

answer its contemplated design, the Christian public will determine. The profits, however, arising from the sale will be given to the cause it is intended to promote.

My friends will perceive that I have departed in some instances from the plan advertised in the prospectus of this work, both in the arrangement, and in the omission of four discourses, which have been substituted by others of equal merit, and better adapted to the general design of the whole: three additional discourses have also been given to enhance the intrinsic value of the volume.

I commend unto God, for his acceptance and blessing, this humble attempt to promote his glory, and the evangelization of the world. May the divine blessing so rest upon the truth in this volume that whosoever reads may so “mark, learn, and inwardly digest” it, that he shall become daily more and more impressed with the importance of his own salvation, the value of those Gospel privileges which a gracious God has vouchsafed to him, and the claims which the Heathen world has upon his sympathies, prayers, and liberalities.

WILLIAM ILLINGWORTH.

London, April, 1845.

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION. By JAMES MONTGOMERY, Esq.	xi
--	----

DISCOURSE I.

THE MISSIONARY CHARACTER AND DUTY OF THE CHURCH.

BY THE RIGHT REV. CHARLES P. McLVAIN, D.D.,

BISHOP OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE STATE OF OHIO.

MATTHEW v. 14.—“Ye are the light of the world.”	1
---	---

DISCOURSE II.

THE MISSIONARY CHARTER OF THE CHURCH.

BY THE RIGHT REV. GEORGE WASHINGTON DOANE, D.D.,

BISHOP OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH, IN THE DIOCESE OF NEW-JERSEY.

MATTHEW xxviii. 18—20.—“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”	21
--	----

DISCOURSE III.

THE MISSIONARY ARGUMENT.

BY THE RIGHT REV. GEORGE WASHINGTON DOANE, D.D.,

BISHOP OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH, IN THE DIOCESE OF NEW-JERSEY.

MARK xvi. 15.—“Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.”	32
--	----

DISCOURSE IV.

THE MORAL DIGNITY OF THE MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE.

BY THE REV. FRANCIS WAYLAND, D.D., PRESIDENT OF BROWN UNIVERSITY.

MATTHEW xiii. 38.—“The field is the world.”	44
---	----

DISCOURSE V.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST THE MOTIVE OF MISSIONARY EFFORT.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM R. DE WITT.

2 CORINTHIANS v. 14.—“The love of Christ constraineth us.”	64
--	----

DISCOURSE VI.

MORAL FREEDOM CONFERRED ONLY BY THE GOSPEL.
BY THE REV. WILLIAM ALLEN, D.D., PRESIDENT OF BOWDOIN COLLEGE.

JOHN viii. 36.—“If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” . . . 83

DISCOURSE VII.

THE GOSPEL ADAPTED TO THE WANTS OF THE WORLD.
BY THE REV. NATHAN S. S. BEMAN, D.D., TROY.

PSALM lxxii. 17.—“His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.” . . . 108

DISCOURSE VIII.

HOPE FOR THE HEATHEN.

BY THE REV. JOHN M. MASON, D.D., OF NEW-YORK.

ISAIAH xxv. 6, 7.—“The Lord of hosts—will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering east over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.” . . . 126

DISCOURSE IX.

CONCERN FOR THE SPIRITUAL WANTS OF MEN.

BY THE REV. EDWARD PAYSON, D.D., PORTLAND, MAINE.

PHILIPPIANS ii. 20.—“I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state.” . . . 150

DISCOURSE X.

THE OBLIGATION OF CHRISTIANS TO PROMOTE THE
EXTENSION OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

BY THE REV. BERIAH GREEN,

PROFESSOR OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE IN THE WESTERN RESERVE COLLEGE, OHIO.

ROMANS xiv. 7, 8.—“For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.” 165

DISCOURSE XI.

HINDERANCES TO THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL.

BY THE REV. LEONARD WOODS, D.D.,

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, ANDOVER, MASS.

ISAIAH lxi. 1, 2.—“For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all Kings thy glory.” . . . 180

DISCOURSE XII.

THE MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE DEPENDENT ON THE RELIGION OF PRINCIPLE FOR SUCCESS.

BY THE REV. ALBERT BARNES, PHILADELPHIA.

LUKE xiv. 28—32.—“For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold him begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what King, going to make war against another King, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.” 197

DISCOURSE XIII.

OBJECTIONS OBIATED, AND GOD GLORIFIED, BY THE SUCCESS OF THE GOSPEL AMONG THE HEATHEN.

BY THE REV. ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER, D.D.,

PROFESSOR IN THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, PRINCETON, NEW-JERSEY.

ACTS xi. 18.—“When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.” 230

DISCOURSE XIV.

THE GOSPEL HARVEST AND CHRISTIAN'S DUTY.

BY THE REV. THOMAS DE WITT, D.D. NEW-YORK.

LUKE x. 2.—“Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.” 252

DISCOURSE XV.

HUMAN AGENCY IN THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE WORLD.

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR H. P. TAPPAN, NEW-YORK.

ACTS viii. 30, 31.—“Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me?” 268

DISCOURSE XVI.

THE HAPPY INFLUENCE OF FOREIGN MISSIONS ON THE CHURCH.

BY THE REV. DAVID ABEEL, MISSIONARY TO CHINA.

ISAIAH liv. 2.—“Spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes.” .. 292

DISCOURSE XVII.

MISSIONARIES PURIFIED BY AFFLICTION.

BY THE REV. FREDERICK B. THOMSON, AMERICAN MISSIONARY IN BORNEO.

- ISAIAH xlviii. 10.—“Behold I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.” 309

DISCOURSE XVIII.

RESOURCES OF THE ADVERSARY, AND MEANS OF THEIR DESTRUCTION.

BY THE REV. LYMAN BEECHER, D D., BOSTON, MASS.

- ISAIAH xlix. 25.—“Thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered.”
- ISAIAH liii. 12.—“Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death.”
- LUKE xi. 21, 22.—“When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.”
- REVELATION xi. 15.—“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.”
- REVELATION xix. 5, 6.—“And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” 326

DISCOURSE XIX.

CHRISTIANS TO EXEMPLIFY THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST IN EFFORTS TO CONVERT THE WORLD.

BY THE REV. DANIEL A. CLARK, OF NORTH HAVEN, CONNECTICUT.

- I CORINTHIANS x. 31.—“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” 319

DISCOURSE XX.

THE ASPECT OF THE TIMES, AND THE APPROPRIATE TRAINING OF YOUTH.

BY THE REV. DANIEL A. CLARK, OF NORTH HAVEN, CONNECTICUT.

- ISAIAH liv. 13.—“And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.” 362

DISCOURSE XXI.

SCRIPTURAL MEASURE OF BENEVOLENT EFFORT.

BY THE REV. AUSTIN DICKINSON, A.M., OF NEW-YORK.

- HEBREWS xiii. 16.—“To do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” 373

DISCOURSE XXII.

THE DIVINE METHOD OF RAISING CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS.

BY THE REV. ELISHA YALE, D.D.,

PASTOR OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, KINGSBRO', NEW-YORK.

- I CORINTHIANS xvi. 2.—“Upon the first day of the week let every one lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.” 380

DISCOURSE XXIII.

THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD THE BUILDER OF HIS SPIRITUAL TEMPLE.

BY THE REV. JUSTIN EDWARDS, D.D.,

PRESIDENT OF THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, ANDOVER, MASS.

- ZECCHARIAH iv. 6.—“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” 391

DISCOURSE XXIV.

THE PROMISED ADVENT OF THE SPIRIT.

BY THE REV. RUFUS ANDERSON, D.D.,

ONE OF THE SECRETARIES OF THE AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

- JOEL ii. 28—32.—“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.” 409

DISCOURSE XXV.

PROGRESS, THE LAW OF THE MISSIONARY WORK.

BY THE REV. THOMAS H. SKINNER, D.D.,

PASTOR OF THE MERCER-STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEW-YORK.

- PHILIPPIANS iii. 13.—“Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.” 424

DISCOURSE XXVI.
MESSIAH'S THRONE.

BY THE REV. JOHN M. MASON, D.D., OF NEW-YORK.

HEBREWS i. 8.—“ But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.” 453

DISCOURSE XXVII.
THE DAY APPROACHING.

BY THE REV. LEONARD BACON, D.D.,
PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH, NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT.

MARK xvi. 15.—“ And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.”

HEBREWS x. 25.—“ And so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

REVELATION xiv. 6.—“ And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” 471

DISCOURSE XXVIII.
THE EARTH FILLED WITH THE GLORY OF THE LORD.

BY THE REV. SAMUEL MILLER, D.D.,
PROFESSOR IN THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, PRINCETON, NEW-JERSEY.

NUMBERS xiv. 20, 21.—“ And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word: but as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.” 487

DISCOURSE XXIX.
MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY.

BY THE RIGHT REV. CHARLES P. McILVAINE, D.D.,
BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF OHIO.

1 TIMOTHY iv. 16.—“ Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.” 510

INTRODUCTION.

I HAVE often thought, if some good man, living about the middle of the last century,—one, like Barnabas of old, “a good man, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost,”—if such an one, on a Sabbath morning, before he went to the sanctuary, having just risen from his knees, after pouring out his soul in a flood of prayer and intercession for the greatest blessings which God has promised in the Gospel, to be bestowed upon himself, his family, his neighbours, his countrymen, and all mankind,—had then sat down and meditated by what human agency those prophecies might be fulfilled which, through a succession of inspired messengers, had announced that a time would come when “the earth should be filled with the knowledge of God, as the waters cover the sea;” that “the glory of the Lord should be revealed, and *all flesh should see it together* ;”—it might naturally, if not necessarily, have occurred to his mind, that, through the union of all those among whom God is known, and Christ is named, this might be accomplished, by sending forth ambassadors of mercy into all lands, translating the Scriptures into all languages, publishing religious tracts for the instruction of every class of human beings wherever the Gospel was carried, and the Bible introduced ; at the same time teaching the children of all the families of the earth to read for themselves, in their own tongue, the wonderful works of God. One great Society for effecting all these separate and combined purposes might have been conceived, projected, and undertaken—on the suggestion of the good man whom I have imagined—by the most zealous and faithful members of the true Church of Christ in this kingdom, however diversely named and distinguished from each other, on questions where the monotony of *unison* could not be attained, but having, what is far preferable, the *harmony* of opinions, different without being discordant, produced by the consonance of souls all equally tuned to the praise and the glory of God. Had, however, such a Society been

then organized,—magnificent in theory, and splendid in promise, beyond everything else under the sun,—it must assuredly have been found impracticable on trial. No multitude of counsellors would have had wisdom to carry out all these objects to the accomplishment of the one perfect end, through the requisite measures for raising the money as well as the men, and directing the operations of the latter so as to ensure the indispensable uniformity of doctrine and discipline. The administration of an empire's affairs would hardly have been more difficult, complicated, and defective, under the most advantageous circumstances.

The London Missionary Society, on a small scale, attempted something of the kind, by proposing to ally all Christian professors, in one bond of peace and unity of spirit, to evangelize the world. Without any falling out among themselves by the way, or any unfaithfulness on the part of the venerable Founders and the first Directors, the experience of a few years taught them, and through them taught all other Christian bodies, that the conversion of sinners among the Gentiles can be best conducted by brethren of the same denomination, just as they conduct it, and conduct it successfully, in their respective spheres among their countrymen-sinners at home.

No conceivable union of all sections of the Church here, however wisely planned, ably supported, liberally endowed, and zealously affected in the one good cause, could have done so much towards the teaching of all nations in the way of salvation, as has been actually done, during the last fifty or sixty years, by the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Baptist Independent, Wesleyan, and Moravian Missionary Societies. Of the labours and fruits of these distinct agencies, it may be said that the pure Gospel has been more extensively and effectually preached by the messengers of their respective Churches, in Pagan lands, and to the ends of the earth, than had been done by all the generations of nominal Christendom through fifteen hundred years preceding. And it is remarkable that from the time when the Missionary spirit was poured from on high upon our fathers, towards the close of the last century, first one Society and then another, without any previous concert or mutual understanding among the originators, was formed for effecting the several

distinct purposes which I have presumed some good man ("being in the Spirit on the Lord's day," and, like John the Divine, permitted to foresee, in the visions of God, the glory to be thereafter revealed) might have comprehended as the various and necessary means for evangelizing the whole world, in this late day of the universal Church, by the union of all Christians in one purpose to promote "peace upon earth, goodwill towards men, and glory to God in the highest." This, in the simplicity of his inexperience, any good man might indeed have preconceived: but God's ways are not our ways, nor God's thoughts our thoughts; and He, in infinite wisdom and goodness, caused those very means to be devised and brought forth in detail and in succession which every one who has marked the beautifully gradual development of the divine counsel in regard to this matter, must have clearly perceived to be not only practicable, but signally effective, for the progressive accomplishment of the greatest and best work now being carried on throughout the inhabited regions of the globe.

The kingdom of heaven, under the existing dispensation, has indeed come thus far without observation by the wise and the prudent of this world, though it has been continually causing joy among the angels, in the presence of God, who desire to look into such things. And there may be, at this hour, a greater number of true subjects of Messiah's kingdom below, than have ever before existed contemporaneously among all people between the rising and the going down of the sun; except, perhaps, during the brief era of primitive Christianity. Many persons may be startled at such a supposition, but when they consider the manifest effects of the revival of Gospel religion throughout the British dominions in the early part of the eighteenth century, together with the faith and patience, as well as the labours, the sufferings, and the sacrifices of the Lord's praying, believing, and obedient people, towards making his way known upon earth, and his saving health among all nations, the idea may appear not altogether unfounded or presumptuous. Be this as it may, the language of Moses, on the borders of Canaan, may be reverentially accommodated to the present actual state of the Christian Israel of God:—"The Lord your God hath multiplied you, and behold ye are, at this day, as the stars of heaven for multitude."

And yet there remains so much land to be possessed, that the accompanying benediction of the great Jewish legislator to his people may be fervently offered up by all who are already, in our day of grace, among "the called, and chosen, and faithful:"—"The Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are, and bless you as he hath promised you." (Deut. i. 11.)

The religion of the Bible is that which has been, is now, and may be to the end. There never was a day since the creation when it was altogether unknown, unacknowledged, or unenjoyed. Through progressive changes under the Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian dispensations, it lost nothing of its lustre, its purity, or its power. It gained accessions under each new aspect, till, like the shining light out of darkness that lay for ages on the face of the earth, it shone more and more unto the perfect day, when life and immortality were brought to light by its divine Author himself in person. Moreover it is capable of universal extension, and perpetual continuance; being equally beneficent at all times, in all places, and to all conditions of men. There is not a country in which it may not be planted, and prevail, to the annihilation of every system of worship invented by man; nor is there a human being in existence now, or to be born till the consummation of all things, who may not, who ought not to be made a partaker of its blessings. Now, none but a true religion can become either universal or perpetual. All false religions, being of temporary origin, and local in their influence, are of necessity incapable of more than limited adoption or continuance. The true religion may seem for awhile to be extinct, as in the days of Elijah, who imagined himself left alone amidst an apostate generation; but, as in his time, so in all succeeding times, God has reserved a remnant who have not bowed their knees to any Baal, or acknowledged any other God than himself, the living, true, and only one. The religion of the Bible may thus seem extinct for awhile, but it will as surely revive as its Author rose from the dead. On the other hand, a false religion once disappearing can never be restored. Where are Isis and Osiris, Apis and Anubis, the gods of Egypt? Can Jupiter regain his thunder and his throne, or Olympus; or Neptune his trident over the seas? Can Moloch rekindle his

burning fiery furnace, or Chemosh again perpetrate his abominations? All these, and hundreds more of the forms under which he, who is awfully styled in Scripture, "the god of this world," was worshipped of old, having blinded the eyes of his devotees,—all these *were*, they *are not*, and they *will be no more for ever*. No future combination of imaginable events can ever reinstate one of them, any more than the terrible divinities of our fathers, Woden, Thor, or Tueseoo, can emerge from oblivion, and Druidism again be the established religion of this island. No; for it may be safely foretold that under whatever devices Satan unbound may hereafter be allowed to go forth to deceive the nations, not one of his obsolete mythologies can ever, either in whole or in part, be adopted by any people under heaven; whether barbarian or civilized, Heathen or Christian. This alone proves that all the perished idolatries were false; the entail of each has been irrecoverably cut off, and there is neither heir nor inheritance to one of them left. So perish all existing superstitions! Yea, and they shall, in like manner, inevitably and everlastingly perish.

But the word of God abideth for ever; and that word once spoken is addressed to every one that hears it, individually, as well as to all nations collectively. And that is "*the word of faith, which* (Missionaries) *preach*," as St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, testifies concerning himself and his doctrine; (Romans x. 8;) adding in the context, "The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise,—*thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*" The message is *universal*, the invitation to *every one*, and the *promise personal*. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved." This, in the economy of the Gospel, has hitherto been God's way of converting sinners, and we have no authority to presume that he will ever change his counsel in this respect; for as it was in the beginning and is now, so may we conclude that it will be till the end of the dispensation of "grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ," to all that are or shall be "sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." (1 Cor. i. 2.)

So long, therefore, as it shall please God "by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe," the Gospel must be as diligently and faithfully communicated to all the dwellers under heaven, and preached as if the salvation of the whole human race depended upon the blessing of God accompanying *that* instrumentality with power and with the demonstration of the Spirit.

But if it be asked, "Is there no other way in which the world, lying in wickedness, can be, or will be regenerated, except by the preaching of the Gospel?" the answer may be direct: "*None other is clearly revealed; no other is commanded.*" There are, however, some among us, at this time, who say that the world never will, never *can* be evangelized by the preaching of Jesus Christ and him crucified; but that, by a triumphant Saviour, appearing in glory and majesty, the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in, and all Israel be saved. This hypothesis they found upon their peculiar interpretations of prophecy; and, believing the period, the crisis, to be at hand, they assert that it is the business of the Church to be looking, expecting, and praying for this second coming of Christ in his kingdom. Without venturing to condemn or even to question, in this place, the soundness of their interpretations of "some things hard to be understood," not only in the epistles of St. Paul but in other parts of the oracles of God, recorded in the two Testaments, Old and New, it cannot be altogether right for such persons, who are waiting, in their character of saints, to welcome the millennial reign of the Redeemer on earth, to be neglecting the only means through which we are warranted by Scripture testimony to hope that all the Heathen, Mohammedans, and Jews shall be converted from the evil and the error of their ways respectively, or that any portion of the living generation of these "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world," shall be brought nigh, in our own day, by the blood of Christ, who came himself a Missionary from the very throne of God, from the very bosom of the Father, and preached peace to them which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. (Eph. ii. 12—17.) Now it is matter of history, and not of speculation, that, to this hour, wherever the Gospel has been faithfully preached, among

Christians, Jews, Turks, or Infidels, it has proved, in a greater degree or a less, the power of God unto salvation to them that believed. Then let us preach the Gospel; for if we have it ourselves, woe is unto us if we preach it not. And for what purpose was the Gospel given? to edify the saints only? No; though that is a glorious and a blessed privilege: it came into the world as its divine Author came,—to call sinners to repentance. In the Revelation we read of an angel whom John saw standing in the sun, and crying with a loud voice to all the fowls that fly under heaven, “Come, and gather yourselves together to the supper of the great God; to eat the flesh of Kings, and captains, and mighty men; of horses, and of them that sit on them; and the flesh of all men, both bond and free, both small and great.” To what era of the sufferings of a guilty world this awful proclamation may refer, we know not. This, however, we do know, that the angel is not now standing in the sun, not now uttering his appalling summons; but that there is another angel, mentioned in the same book, now actually on the wing, “flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” His voice we hear, his shape we see, wherever a Christian Missionary, in any part of the earth, presents himself to those who sit in darkness, like the shepherds of Bethlehem on the night of our Saviour’s advent, saying to them, “Fear not, for I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you (also) was born in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” (Luke ii. 10, 11.) Yea; and wherever that one angel is sent with the message of mercy, to a few or to many, there are those who, like the shepherds, run to see the things which the Lord hath made known unto them. This has been verified beyond example in modern times, in Greenland, Labrador, Caffraria, the East and West Indies, and throughout the isles of the Pacific Ocean, where multitudes of the most barbarous, ignorant, despised, and oppressed inhabitants of this naughty world, having been persuaded to “seek glory, honour, and immortality,” have found for themselves “eternal life, the gift of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Looking back through the vista of past ages, we cannot discover a

time when there was so sure a hope of the literal fulfilment of ancient predictions concerning the universal diffusion of the knowledge of the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, as we may confidently cherish in this day of salvation, when “the mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof.” (Psalm l. 1.) What, indeed, hath God wrought within the last fifty years! In 1795 was there a man of faith and prayer who could have believed, if it had been told him, what would be the veritable effect of the labours of Missionaries sent forth by the Societies then commencing?

That effect we see in 1845, in changes so great and decisive, that we cannot help exclaiming, “*This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.*” Yet all this is but “*the beginning of the end;*” and another seal of the book of prophecy will have been broken ere the arrival of 1895; and such miracles of conversion from disobedience to the wisdom of the just, will then have been wrought by the same Spirit and power of the Lord, (if the Church fail not of her duty on her part,) as shall transcend those of the last half century not less than these have transcended the Gospel triumphs of any former equal space of time recorded since the days of the Apostles. Every revolution in the kingdoms of this world, so frequent and so overwhelming of late, in respect to this greatest and best work, now being carried on by human agency, has caused the removal of hinderances, and the multiplication of facilities for preaching the Gospel where hitherto it had never been known.

The Zion of the Gospel dispensation has only to continue awake, to keep on her strength, and her beautiful garments, to go forward as she has begun, and to prosper as she has prospered. Then, while God says everywhere, “Let there be light,” who shall say, “Let there be darkness?”

And now, my friend, the Editor of this volume,—with these views and convictions of the possibility, the probability, and (I would humbly add) the assurance of the evangelization of the world by what that world deems “the foolishness of preaching,” but which is, indeed, the wisdom of God and the power of God, Christ Jesus being the one

eternal text,—I may, with hearty commendations, congratulate you that the thought was in your heart, and the power put into your hand, to cast these collected contributions into the universal Missionary treasury of all Christian societies for the propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts. In no walk of literature have our trans-Atlantic kindred so worthily rivalled, and so nearly equalled, the writers of the parent country, as in works of divinity. These Discourses may well be quoted in confirmation of this judgment; and the volume containing them—thanks to your discernment and diligence—may be honourably placed beside any similar array of Missionary tracts. “*Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel unto every creature,*” (Mark xvi. 15.) the commandment of our ascending Saviour, is the *Magna Charta* of salvation to all the fallen race of man. It never has been restricted or repealed; and it never will be till “all things are fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Christ; whom it behoved to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name amongst all nations.” (Luke xxiv. 44—47.)

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

THE MOUNT, SHEFFIELD,
April 25th, 1845.

A VOICE FROM THE SANCTUARY

ON THE

MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE.

DISCOURSE I.

THE MISSIONARY CHARACTER AND DUTY OF THE CHURCH.*

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MATTHEW V. 14.

“Ye are the light of the world.”

To what particular class of persons our Lord addressed these words, whether to all his people, or only to those on whom he laid the special duties of the ministry of the word, does not admit of a question. They are part of a discourse which the Evangelist introduces by these words:—“Seeing the multitude, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: and he opened his mouth, and taught them.” Now, inasmuch as there had been as yet no selection either of the twelve or the seventy for their peculiar office, the disciples here mentioned must have been those in general who followed the ministry, believed in the claims, and embraced the doctrines, of Christ. So that, in the application of the words of the text, we have reason to regard them as now addressed to all that profess to be followers of Christ; in other words, to the Church

* Preached before the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the United States, at its Triennial Meeting, August 14th, 1835.

of Christ on earth, the associated fellowship of all that have been dedicated to him in the sacrament of baptism.

To the Church, then, belongs, in regard to the moral world, the same office for which the sun was ordained in the natural. Both were set up for the express purpose of giving light, and of giving light to all that are in the world; that their "going forth might be from the end of the heaven, and their circuit unto the ends of it, till there should be nothing hid from the light thereof."

Between the sun of the natural world, however, and the Church on earth, as the established means by which it is the good pleasure of God to shed the light of spiritual life over all the earth, there is this most essential difference,—the light of the former originates in itself; but all the light of the latter is derived. It hath nothing holy, nothing beautiful, nothing radiant, that it hath not received. It is the mere reflector, by which it is the will of Him who said, "I am the light of the world," to transmit his effulgence. Turned away from Christ, it is covered with darkness. Turned unto Christ, and occupying precisely the place, and directed to precisely the objects, for which he hath ordained it, it becomes identified with himself; so that the language which would seem to be only appropriate to the sun, he applies to the satellite; and thus the Church, like her Lord, is called, "the light of the world." Still, however, it becometh her most humbly and continually to feel, and glory in, her absolute dependence; and, like the forerunner of her Lord, to be ever acknowledging that she is not the light, but the mere "witness of the light," that all men through her ministry might believe.

So witnessed the golden candlestick in the tabernacle. Standing in the holy place, where no light could come but such as should issue from its seven lamps, it represented the position of the Church in a benighted world, where every ray of spiritual illumination must proceed from her agency. But however beautiful the workmanship, and precious the material, of which that candlestick was made; and however excellent the substance with which its lamps were daily replenished; the light was not in them, nor could it abide upon them, till Aaron, the type of our great High Priest, had touched them with the holy fire of

the altar of burnt-offerings; nor did they continue to shine but as the same typical priesthood continually renewed their flame. So stands the Church towards the Lord,—her light. Her raiment may be of wrought gold; the lamp in her hands may be no other than the primitive ministry of Apostolic institution, filled with the pure oil olive of the holy Scriptures; but to “arise and shine,” as she is commanded, the glory of the Lord must be risen upon her; the lips of her ministry, like those of the Prophet, must be touched with a live coal from the altar of the great Sacrifice for sin; the words at their mouths must be attended by the demonstration of the Spirit; and through their daily watching, and praying, and teaching, the whole membership of the Church must be so continually turned toward the will of God, and the grace provided in Jesus Christ, as that, like the face of Moses on the mount, they may shine always in the beauty of holiness.

Thus, when St. John was in the vision in the isle of Patmos, he beheld, in symbol, the position and duty, as well as the power and glory, of the Church. He saw the seven golden candlesticks, as emblems of the whole Church in the variety of her offices and circumstances, and as appointed for the express purpose of always giving light. He saw, moreover, whence came her light. He beheld, “in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man, and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.” In his right hand were “seven stars,”—“the angels of the churches,” as the seven planets which are held in their places by the power of the sun. While the responsibility and entire dependence of the Ministers of Christ, and more especially of the chief Pastors and rulers of his Church, are thus exhibited, how precious to those who feel their insufficiency for the things committed to their charge is the assurance that, while he will be with his whole Church to the end of the world, he will hold *them* in his right hand, as the special representatives of himself; sustaining them, defending them, and filling them with the light of his countenance.

And now, in the general view we have extracted from the Scriptures of the design of the Lord of Glory in setting up his Church, let us note, with special emphasis, the very solemn and

unspeakably responsible relation in which she stands towards the whole world.

Behold the condition of this world. Survey its most favoured regions, where the Gospel has long been preached, and the leaven of its holy institutions has long been operating; take the most Christian of Protestant Christian lands, and under the general name of a Christian people: what an immense proportion of the population are as unreached by the direct and spiritual influence of Gospel truth, as if it had never been revealed! Pass on from one region of Christendom to another; from Protestant to Papal, then from Papal to Pagan. Number the tens of millions of the followers of the Mohammedan imposture; then the hundreds of millions of the blind and degraded devotees of a most licentious and cruel idolatry. What an immense proportion of men are in slavish bondage to the spirit that ruleth in the children of disobedience; children of darkness, suffering incalculable evils in this life, and ripening for a miserable eternity! Twenty millions of such immortal souls, every year, finish their course, and pass to the bar of God, ignorant of any God or Saviour but that which their own hands have fashioned, of any holiness but such as ripens them to be lost for ever.

The pen of inspiration has drawn up the history of their condition, and the catalogue of their vices. What was heathenism in the days of St. Paul, is essentially the heathenism of our days. "Because," saith he, "that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.—Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator.—For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections:—being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity;—covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death,

not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."

Such is Paganism in the present day! Such is the Paganism that covers with its darkness, and binds, in fetters of iron, nearly two-thirds of the family of man!

But is there no remedy? I need not spend a moment before this Missionary assemblage in showing that, in all the devices of man's wisdom, and all the efforts which mere human power could institute, this dreadful woe can find but the mockery of relief. Nor is it necessary to show that the light which shines in the face of Jesus Christ, and is revealed in his word, and committed to his Church, is just the remedy, and the only possible remedy, for all the miseries, temporal and eternal, which the sin of departing from the living God has brought upon the world. But to this one truth, it is of great importance to awaken the slumbering attention of Christians; not as one of any novelty, but as lamentably neglected and unfelt; that while to the Church are committed the duty and the means, under the divine blessing, of enlightening the world, it is ordained of God that the saving knowledge of his truth shall go out to the dark places of the earth through no other medium than her ministry, and ordinances, and embodied holiness; so that the whole blackness of darkness, now brooding over the nations, must remain there as long as the Church remains in selfish inactivity; and that darkness will arise and pass away just in proportion as the Church, awaking to a sense of her awful responsibility, and her eminent dignity and privilege, shall arise and put on her beautiful garments, and "go forth as a lamp that burneth."

What the world needs first, is *light*. In the beginning, when the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, the first step towards order, and beauty, and life, was the command of God, "*Let there be light.*" And now that an infinitely more fatal darkness covers the earth, there can be no growth of any thing excellent among the Gentiles that know not God, till "He that commanded the light to shine out of darkness" shall shine into their hearts, "to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." This, I am well aware, he can do without his Church; as in the

beginning he enlightened the world before the sun was created. But now that the sun hath been made to rule the day, we have as much reason to expect to see the morning spread upon the mountains without his appearing, as to behold the nations enjoying the guidance of divine truth, without the going forth of the Church to preach the Gospel to every creature. Thus waits a perishing world upon the faithfulness of the Church. Thus the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain, till the Church shall vouchsafe to employ the endowment with which God has invested her for giving deliverance to the captive. Such, to hundreds of millions of immortal souls, is the tremendous cost of our every selfish and disobedient delay.

We have now seen what constitutes the great office of the Church of Christ on earth,—that it is no other than a great association, under a divine constitution, of the professed people of God, for the propagation of the Gospel to every creature; and that, inasmuch as *the preaching of the Gospel*, by an ordained ministry, is God's chief ordinance for that propagation, so the Church is a great *Missionary* association, divinely constituted, for the special work of sending into all the world the Ministers and Missionaries of the word.

But if such be the cardinal object of the whole Church, it must be alike the cardinal object and duty of every part of that Church; so that whether a section of it be situated in America, or in Europe, or the remotest latitudes of Africa, it is alike required to attempt the enlightening of all the earth; and though it be the smallest of the local divisions of the Christian household, and though just on its own narrow boundaries there may be millions of neglected Pagans swarming with the horrors of heathenism, still that little section of the Church is to embrace within the circle of its zeal, if not of its immediate labours, the destitute of all the earth.

And what is thus the duty of the whole Church, and of any section thereof, is equally the duty of every individual member. There is no more obligation upon the *ministry* to shine as light in the world, than upon all the *disciples*. If the revolving and effulgent planet hath its orbit, so hath the twinkling star its place; and both by the same law must *shine*. Thus to every Christian there is a sphere; and, however limited

that sphere may be, the united contribution of all to the light of the world, like that of the innumerable and almost invisible points of radiance in the "milky way," would make a bright path of holiness in the Church, which the ends of the earth would see and admire.

I see no ground in the Scriptures, or in the fundamental principles of the Church of Christ, for the distinction so common among us, between the various portions of the great field of Missionary labours; as if a part were *domestic*, and therefore peculiarly imperative in its claims, and the rest were *foreign*, and therefore altogether subordinate in its claims upon our aid. I cannot perceive the warrant in Scripture, or in the principles of Christian benevolence, for supposing that, because when two of my fellow-creatures are perishing for want of the Gospel, one happens to live on this side of an invisible, geographical line, and the other on the opposite; or the former under the same form of government with myself, and the latter under another; therefore, one is to be regarded as so peculiarly my neighbour, that the other must be kept in a place of secondary interest as a foreigner; and though the foreigner be by far the more accessible, and speak my own language, and have descended from the same ancestry with myself, and the other have come from people of another tongue, and be only of my own nation by having been transplanted from another continent, nevertheless I must pass by the former in my errand of love, though he be now at my way-side, until I have gone hundreds of miles to offer the Gospel to the latter.

Within the limits of the government of these States, are people of an immense variety of nations, and languages, and habits, and dispositions, as dissimilar among themselves, and from us, in every feature of character, as if they were separated by the breadth of the earth; and can it be that, merely because acknowledging the same jurisdiction with ourselves, they are so to be preferred in the efforts of our Christian zeal, that though I were living on the northern boundary of this land, and just beyond me were a nation of Pagans, I must not give these the lamp of life till I have travelled some thousands of miles toward our southern border, to a tribe of precisely similar condition, except that, because within the limits of this government, they are my

countrymen? It seems to me that a distinction so perfectly indefinite and arbitrary is altogether beneath the dignity of the Church, and inconsistent with the spirit of a disciple of Him who, in allotting the blessings of his providence, and in sending out the Preachers of his grace, has followed no lines of distinction within the limit of "*every creature.*"

The Bible recognises no nation as having any peculiar connexion, in matters of religious zeal, with any Christian but that of the true Israel, who, by profession "worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh." Towards all of this peculiar people, whether of the Church in Asia, or Africa, or Europe, or America, he is bound to feel an attachment unspeakably more tender and enduring than that arising from any local or political relations. They are "fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God." His first love is due to them. His first effort to do good to men belongs to them. All the rest are, indeed, entitled, by divine command, to the most unwearied efforts of the Church, in her every section, to make them partakers of the light of life; but they belong alike to the field of foreign enterprise, because alike aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; and they belong alike to the field of domestic effort, because the Church hath her home as little in one part of this world as another.

But still, is there no scriptural warrant to justify the Church in a particular nation, in directing her Missionary efforts more extensively to the destitute of that nation, than to those of a people on the other side of the globe? In certain circumstances there is; and a very definite warrant; the metes and bounds of which are intelligible to the feeblest mind, and subject to none of those questions concerning the dividing line between domestic and foreign, under the shadow of which the merely nominal friend of Missions finds so convenient a refuge. I find it in the Epistle to the Galatians, in these words:—"As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

Here I perceive the universal desire and object which the Church and every Christian should feel and aim at,—"*good unto all men,*" without distinction of language or country.

And then, since, however we may desire the good of all at once, we cannot attempt the sending of the blessings of the Gospel to all at once, and in the same proportion, I am furnished with a sufficient direction as to where to begin, and whither to go next, and how much to do here, and how much there. "As we have opportunity." Not, as we may be connected by local or civil relations with the destitute, but simply *as we have opportunity*: so that if the Church in these United States have evidently a more favourable opportunity of promoting the Gospel within the walls of China, than in any unevangelized regions within our own territories; then, by Him who makes the opportunity, is she called to bestow her first and chief attention upon China; and in not doing so at present, but devoting her main energy to the gathering in of them that are wandering as sheep without a shepherd, within the limits of our own country, she is justifiable only because, and only so far as, she has reason to believe that among them she has a better opportunity of promoting the good of man and the glory of God.

But among the "all men" to whom we are to do good, the rule of the Apostle selects one people as having a peculiar claim upon our first, and strongest, and latest efforts. "Especially unto them that are of the household of faith." In other words, to our brethren of the professed children of God; the members of the Church of our Redeemer under the whole heaven; making no distinction in our benevolence, whether they be countrymen at home, or "strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, or Bithynia." So far as all are of the household of faith, all are entitled to the special regard enjoined by the Apostle; and when we can do good only to some out of all, the rule to govern us in the selection is just the same as among all those that are without the household, simply "as we have opportunity."

And it is this special duty towards the household of faith, according to opportunity, that accounts for that first offer of the Gospel to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and that first and strongest anxiety of the Apostles in their ministry everywhere to bring in the dispersed of Judah, which has so often, and I believe so erroneously, been adduced in support of the idea, that to those who are in the same country, and under

the same government, and constituting the same nation, we are bound to give, because they are thus connected with us, the distinct preference in the propagation of the Gospel.

But, in truth, the relations of place or of government, of soil or of vicinity, or of any thing else of a worldly kind, had no share in the special zeal of the Apostles for the conversion of the Jews. For whether the objects of their ministry were dwellers in Mesopotamia or Judea; Parthians, Medes, or Elamites, Cretes or Arabians, by birth or citizenship, so that they were only Jews; whatever language they spoke, or Monarch they served, that zeal was equally special and equally earnest for their conversion. And it was not because they were all descended from Abraham and Sarah; (for this honour had the children of Edom as well;) but it was because they were of the household of faith,—“children of the promise,”—“to whom pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose were the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.” Hence it was that, in cities of Greece and in Rome, the Apostles first went to the children of Israel. This was all the domestic mission they knew; but it was a domestic mission in all foreign lands. And such is the only domestic obligation the Christian Church in any country has a right to own. Beyond this, it is *opportunity* alone which gives preference; within this, show me a people of the Church of God, and whether their dwelling-place be under the sun of Africa, or amid the snows of Siberia, or here on my own native soil, I am bound by the tie of Christian relationship to seek their good with a specialty of attention, which no relations of country or of government between me and such as are not of the household of faith can claim.

Here, then, arises a very important question, which deserves the serious consideration of all the friends of Missionary labour,—Whether the several decayed branches of the primitive Church, which, in the eastern hemisphere, are dragging along their decrepit existence, and, though so corrupted and mutilated, are now of the visible Church of Christ as much as in the days of their strength and beauty;—whether they are receiving, in *comparison*

with others not of the household, from their brethren of more favoured sections of the Church, *according to opportunity*, that special effort to do them good, and renew their strength, to which their peculiar relation entitles them?

There was a time when the duty of doing good, according to opportunity, and of shining as each Christian was enabled of God, was well fulfilled in the Church. It was in the day of her "first love." The love of Christ constrained all ranks and offices in the household to live not unto themselves. Ministers of all degrees were indeed as blazing stars in the right hand of the Lord. The various sections of the Church were to the surrounding night as so many golden candlesticks, lit up and kept bright by the Lord, who walked in their midst. It could be said with truth, of Christians in general, as St. Paul said to those of Philippi, that "in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation" they shone as "lights in the world, holding forth the word of life." Every point was radiant; every limb was active. Every member had not the same office, but all had the same spirit. While some only preached, all laboured; all loved; all lived by faith; all denied themselves; all continued instant in prayer that the kingdom of God might come. Then, consequently, it was that "the word of God exceedingly grew and prevailed;" that the Heathen were astonished at the rapidity of its spread; that all barriers and persecutions were as insufficient to check it as to prevent the progress of the morning light; that the Preachers of the Gospel, in some ten or fifteen years after the death of Christ, were characterized by the Heathen as "they that had turned the world upside down." This was not because Apostles preached, or miracles were wrought; for the Gospel treasure was in "earthen vessels" then as since. "The excellency of the power" was all of God. He, by his converting Spirit, in the ordinary way of his holy influences, blessed the word, and gave the increase. This he did by his Church exclusively. "Her light" had come in the coming of the Messiah. "The glory of the Lord" had risen upon her, when that "Day-Spring from on high" had visited her. And it was just because she was willing to rejoice in that light, and *arose* in her reflected beauty, and *shone* as the Lord was pleased to pour his light upon her, that her line went out through all the earth, and her

words to the end of the world, and "the forces of the Gentiles" were brought unto her. It was the collective energy of the whole Church, all alive unto God in her several members, that formed the strength of the ministry of each particular labourer, whether he wrought as an ordained Preacher or otherwise. And the force of that collective energy did not depend upon the numbers composing the whole Church; "for the Lord can save by few as by many;" but upon the proportion of faith, and prayer, and diligent obedience to the will of God, that animated the Church, whether her numbers were few or many. The five thousand were fed, not according to the provision in hand, but the readiness of the disciples to distribute what there was, and "God gave the increase" till the last had eaten. Thus was exhibited, in a figure, the feeding of the nations with the bread of life, out of the slender resources, and by the few labourers, of the earliest Church. There was no proportion between the means with which the Church began, and the wonderful results that ensued. But such as Christians had, they were willing to give; and what they could, that they were anxious to do; trusting their Lord, whose command they obeyed, for all that remained. Accordingly, with their little, they went among the millions, and God took care that they had always enough, and to spare, for any new opportunity of doing good to the souls of men. When labourers were wanted, labourers came forth out of the general Missionary spirit of the whole Church, prepared, by the devotion of the private Christian, for all the special perils and sacrifices of the ordained Preacher. When money was wanted, either to sustain the labourers in their journeyings, or private Christians when they forsook or were spoiled of houses and lands for the kingdom, then "as many as were possessors of houses or lands, sold them, and distribution was made to every man, according as he had need."

The world only waits for a corresponding spirit to return to the Church, to see the hand of the Lord as wonderfully exerted in the conversion of the nations as ever of old. Modern mountains are levelled as easily as ancient. Our weapons are the same that primitive Christians used. The God of our fathers is our God, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Want of labourers is not our difficulty; for there are men

enough in the Christian household, consecrated professedly, soul and body, to God; and the right spirit would bring them to the field. Want of money is not our difficulty; for a great abundance has already been consecrated to God in the baptism of our professing Christians; and nothing but the right spirit is needed to bring it out to the work as the Church shall have opportunity for its use. "Create in us a clean heart, O God, and renew within us a right spirit! Then will we teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee." Then, though inspiration to preach, and miracles to attest, "the truth as it is in Jesus," be never vouchsafed to the world again, the power that gave them once, will still be with the Church to make some other means equally mighty. Then, though there should seem no opening in the empire of darkness, the way will appear fast enough for the Church to proceed without delay; but not so fast, or so far in the distance, but that, as in the journeyings of Israel, and the primitive propagation of the Gospel, she may feel that at every step she walks by faith; and that all the power, and all the wisdom, and all the conquest, are of God.

"The signs of the times," at present, in regard to the prospect of a great increase of spirit and effort for the propagation of the Gospel, are decidedly encouraging. There is a renovating hand at work in various sections of the Protestant Church.* The revival of religion in the ministry, and among the members of that venerated parent Church, through which we love to remember that our Articles of Faith, and our beloved Liturgy, and our Apostolic order, and our holy Scriptures, were derived, and between which and ourselves, I hope the sense of special relationship, and the desire of entire co-operation in all common labours, may continually increase; the revival of religion in the Church of our mother-country, during the last forty years, exhibiting its blessings in a mind of special spirituality and scriptural simplicity, and in a zeal to promote the Gospel of remarkable beauty and wisdom, so that she may be regarded, notwithstanding her present secular troubles, as more prosperous spiritually, more

* Bishop M'Ilvaine penned the following paragraph nine years ago. He has since seen with alarm the progress of Tractarian departure from scriptural truth; and, in a powerful Charge, has lifted up his warning voice against the fatal and spreading mischief.—EDITOR.

lovely in holiness, more vigorous in effort, more united in counsel, and more rapidly preparing for every good work, than at any preceding era of her history;—*this, I say, is one of the signs of the times*, which all the world may see.

There is another set of parallel features, in most respects, and of great interest and encouragement, though upon a reduced scale, in our own Episcopal Church. The movements elsewhere are impressive. That in the kingdom of Satan, evinced in the new mustering of the forces of discord and infidelity, is not the least. There is a movement everywhere in the heathen world, a movement of blind dissatisfaction with what is possessed, and of undefined expectation of what is to come, which shows a hand at work in the dark. How astonishing the leading of Providence in regard to the empire of China. From the walls of that great Jericho of Paganism, the private signal, though it be but as the scarlet thread, has already been displayed; indicating that even now there are those there who look for redemption in Israel. That our Church has obeyed that call, so far as has been done, in sending the brethren who have recently gone out from us for the work of the Lord in that metropolis of the Heathen; and that, in our schools of divinity, there were young men who, at the call of the Church, were ready to say, “Here are we, send us;” and that many more wait the voice of the Church to mark out their field in the empire of Heathenism, is a very encouraging evidence of the progress of right views of the Missionary obligation, and a right spirit for its fulfilment. But still, how much increase of scriptural views, and of a scriptural, primitive spirit, in this respect, has yet to take place in our ministry, among our candidates for orders, and throughout the body of our laity! what increase of the spirit of self-denial, self-consecration, and simple obedience to the claims of Christ! what a growth of solemn, affectionate, and prayerful consideration of the immense demand for men to labour, and means to sustain them, in our new and rapidly populating States! what enlargement of zeal for the benighted Heathen, and the scattered sheep of the house of Israel! how much more of that love of Christ which constraineth men to live not unto themselves, and count all things but loss for the excellency of knowing and diffusing the knowledge of Christ, do we need, before our

Church may be considered to have fairly arisen, and trimmed her lamp, and gone forth to meet her Lord in his glorious appearing, as “a light to lighten the Gentiles!”

But how may the much greater increase of that spirit be promoted among us? A just sense of the vital connexion between a true zeal for the promotion of the Gospel in all the world, and the vigour and purity of religion in our churches at home, should alone present this question as of the greatest interest. A few brief hints, by way of answer, will conclude this discourse.

1. Let there be everywhere a much more diligent teaching and enforcement of the great principles of the obligation resting upon all Christians in regard to the propagation of the Gospel. I fear the object is too much rather to produce present impressions, by superficial representations and temporary excitements, than deliberately and carefully to uncover the root of the matter, and there to engraft great permanent principles of self-consecration and effort. I fear that to get money for a present enterprise is suffered too much to interfere with the slower, but surer, object of securing hearts and minds prepared for all enterprises of holy zeal and wisdom. There is a great lack of knowledge on this subject. Multitudes imagine that the Missionary spirit is something altogether separate from the spirit of the ordinary ministry, and especially of ordinary piety; so that one may have no zeal for the promotion of the Gospel, and yet be destitute of no important feature of a consistent Christian. They suppose, also, that Missionary associations and efforts are so entirely distinct from the Church, so incidental and *extra* to the ordinary duties and objects of her organization, that Church duty, and Missionary duty, Church membership, and obligation to take part in Missionary work, are entirely distinct and independent; so that if any choose to have nothing to do with their efforts to propagate the Gospel beyond the circle of their own interests, they may still be very consistent members of the Church. Earnest teaching is needed to show our people, and keep them in remembrance, how the spirit and field of the ordinary ministry and the most devoted Missionary are essentially one; so that to support Missions, in their most unlimited aim, is as much their duty as to support the ministry: and, again, how entirely the spirit of the most self-consecrated Missionary and of the private

Christian are essentially one, so that to be self-denied, and to bear the cross, and to count not property or life dear unto us, for Christ's sake, is as binding on one as the other: and, again, how entirely the Church is a Missionary Society, in its grand design, in the spirit and object of its divine Founder, in the primitive commission of its ministry, and in the work which the Lord has given its every member to do; so that the Missionary Institution of the world, is the Church of Christ on earth, of which all properly constituted Missionary Boards are but subordinate Committees to facilitate the action of that one great Society; consequently that every member of the Church, by the vows of that baptism in which he was consecrated to Christ, and by his every renewal of those vows at the table of the Lord, stands committed and pledged to take part with his heart, and mind, and prayers, and substance, as he hath opportunity, in promoting the Gospel to the ends of the earth; and cannot take back this pledge till he takes back his baptismal vows, nor escape this obligation till he shall escape the duty of being a member of Christ's Church, and a follower of God. Let our parochial ministry, standing before their flocks in that spirit of fervent love to God and man which belongs to their office, whether it be exercised on Christian or Heathen soil, be diligent and faithful to inculcate these simple elements of Christian duty; let them summon their people as professed servants of the Missionary cause, by their very Christian name and church-membership, to the fulfilment of their vows; let them value the least success in persuading their people, out of love to Christ, to deny themselves and take up the cross, however little their ability to give, as unspeakably more precious and availing, through prayer and faith, to the progress of the Gospel, than a hundred-fold their gifts without their love. Let them teach diligently the doings and efforts of the Missionary cause, as well as its principles; keeping the map of the whole field, as it were, always suspended in their view;—the waste places of our own land; the fearful destitutions of our great west; the alarming increase of its population over the supply of an educated ministry; the tremendous population of the empire of Heathenism;—let the minds, and hearts, and consciences of the people be called to these things, not merely as occasional subjects when a collection

of money is to be made, but as matters of daily interest and prayer. Let Ministers be careful to exercise the interest of their people in these things, however feeble it be, and however little their ability to do more than love and pray. And for this, let them seek *the poor of the kingdom*. It is gross injustice and cruelty to pass by those who have no money to give, when we would promote this cause, as if money were all it needed; as if it were not the duty and privilege of those who have neither silver nor gold, to give such as they have; as if it were not the prayer of faith and the labour of love, in which the poor are quite as rich as others, that form the strength of the whole Missionary enterprise. A very large part of the expense of the whole work of the Church Missionary Society in England is sustained by the penny subscriptions of the poor; and how much more has been done by their prayers, He only knows who offers them in his golden censer before the mercy-seat of God. If the poor have the Gospel preached to them, the poor have a right, and are bound, to join in having the Gospel preached to those more needy in this respect than themselves.

It is a most mistaken policy, when pecuniary means are to be obtained for this cause, to seek them almost exclusively from a comparatively small number of the more efficient; instead of courting the minor contributions of the poor of Christ's flock, and thus multiplying, so much the more, the minds, and hearts, and prayers, the labourers together with God, that would be led to feel a deep interest in the cause, and be continually calling down the blessing of the Lord.

2. For the promotion of a great increase of a Missionary spirit in our Churches, much depends upon the agency of those to whom the management of the Missionary department is committed. I refer especially to the faith, and enterprise, and boldness with which they should lead on the work, and the tone and attitude in which they should call on the churches to follow. It is the responsible office, and the most honourable and dignified office, of a Board of Missions, in the great work of evangelizing the world, not so to take the gauge of the zeal of the churches, as to graduate the Missionary effort by the present Missionary spirit, and thus be the followers, instead of the leaders, of the churches; but to set up the banner of the Lord

of Hosts on the highest and broadest ground of Missionary duty and privilege, and summon the churches to sustain it: it is to excite and call out the Missionary spirit; by taking up such positions of bold confidence in God, and zeal for his Gospel,—by commencing such enterprises of zeal and responsibility,—as will make the ministry and the people realize that they have all much to do, and that great efforts of love and zeal are required of all. The churches expect this of their agents, in the direction of this cause. The work of sustaining is their own: that of guiding and projecting, of calling out the strength of the Church, and of putting it to constant, vigorous exercise, they have entrusted to their representatives. What our people will be ready to sustain, depends, in a very important degree, upon what their Board of Missions shall have faith and enterprise to undertake. If the latter call but for little self-denial, and little earnestness of zeal, and little concentration of effort, either among the people or the ministry, the spirit of both will be feeble, and the little demanded will be far worse rendered than if, in the noble daring of men putting their trust in God, they had increased their claim an hundred-fold.

Let it be always remembered² that for all the purposes of Missions, as far as opportunity may ever be opened, the Missionary Society, by which I mean *the Church*, is abundantly possessed both of means and men. At the font of baptism, and the table of the Lord, there hath been a consecration of soul, and body, and substance, to the will of her great Head, on the part of every attendant at either, which can be neither strengthened nor withdrawn. “All things are ready.” The gold and the silver are in the possession of those who have professed to give themselves and all they have to the Lord. The Lord hath set the open door. The destitute are anxiously waiting. The Holy Spirit, for the needed power and blessing, is promised. All things are ready; except the hearts of those who have vowed the vows of the Christian covenant, to pay the Lord that which they have promised. Yet lack we one thing,—a great increase of a sense of the solemn obligation of every member of the Church to live for the propagation of the Gospel; so that if the Lord should say to any, as he said to one of old, “Go, sell all that thou hast, and give to the needy, and come take up thy

cross, and follow me," there would be love and obedience in his heart sufficient for the sacrifice. To promote this, I know how much the Lord expects of his parochial ministry. I know the talent with which he has entrusted them for this end. I know the inefficacy of any organization for Missionary business without their co-operation, each in his own sphere, as the agent of the Lord in this cause. But I know, also, how much depends upon the lead given by the constituted Direction. I would have them, not only confident in God the Son, as the God of Missions, (who saith, in answer to all fears, "Certainly I will be with thee;") not only quick-sighted with the eye of faith, and the soul of love, to discover the open door to any Missionary field, and then undaunted, in the spirit of aggressive enterprise, to sound the trump of onset, and send their captains to the breach; but, for the sake of enlisting the spirit of the churches the more vigorously, I would have them count so much upon that very spirit as to assume a great responsibility, which nothing but a great increase of the same can enable them to sustain; and then I would have them speak to the churches "as men having authority," affectionately indeed, and kindly, and prudently, but with the tone, and from the position, of men representing, not a voluntary institution,—not some association arbitrarily connected with the Church,—but representing, by regular delegation, the whole Church of this land with which they are connected, and God the Son, who sitteth upon the throne, as its Head. I would have them speak, not merely to the will, but also to the consciences, of the people; taking the position that what the Church needs for the work, as far as her members possess it, the Church already owns for the work, in the fact that it is in the possession of her members: and thus, instead of bowing to them in the servile begging of a gratuity, standing by the side of the baptismal font, and the sacramental table, and, with one hand upon the cross, and the other pointing to a world in ruins,—rebellious and perishing, and yet redeemed by the blood of the Lamb,—solemnly, affectionately, claiming of the members of the Church, the men and the means with which to propagate the Gospel. The people wait to "hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" on this subject. And the sooner it shall be spoken, not merely by a formal resolution, but by line upon line of

plain and full instruction, as the voice of the body of Christ,—“Prepare ye the way of the Lord,”—the sooner, and the more submissively, will the great lesson be everywhere learned, and every limb of the whole body become instinct with the spirit of the common Head.

And now is the time for that voice to be heard. The Lord hath stood forth amidst the intestine strivings and agitations with which we were once distracted, and commanded peace, that our Church may speak his will. And now there is peace. Though the storm be everywhere else, and there seems no prospect but of its raging more and more, within our bounds there is a great calm. Most remarkably, and most universally, the elements of contention have gone away. The mire and dirt of the once troubled sea have sunk to the depths. Scarcely a ripple remains; whilst a strong, and deep, and quiet current is setting directly in the course of truth and righteousness. “It is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.” It is the evidence that God is in the midst of us. But it is more. It is opportunity. It is expectation. It is tremendous responsibility. It is like the silence in heaven, when to the seven angels were given the seven trumpets. It is the accepted time,—the time prepared for the Church to speak to her people, and summon them to their work, and send out her angels with the trumpet of the everlasting Gospel. O may God, who hath given us the sweet calm, give us grace to keep it, and use it, not for slumber and self-gratulation, but for fervent thanksgiving and prayer; for united action; for unwearied love; for uncrippled and undaunted enterprise: not saving the energies which, in worse times, would be spent in household strife, to be put by in usefulness; but rejoicing that we can concentrate them so much the more profitably upon the one work of propagating the Gospel.

I have no time left to say anything upon *the necessity of a spirit of prayer* for the sending of labourers, and for the increase of a general Missionary spirit, and for all the wisdom and success of the work. And yet it is almost the very work itself. A spirit that shall take off our eyes from the difficulties, and set them immoveably upon God, to open the door and convert men for the field, and prepare hearts to sustain them, is just that,

without which our calm will be our death; and *with* which our weakness shall be strength, the sea our highway, the rock our fountain, the desert as the garden of the Lord, and the *whole world his Church*. “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”

Let the sound be heard on earth universally and without ceasing, from the lips and hearts of the people of God, “Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven:” and soon the seventh angel shall sound, and there shall be heard great voices in heaven, saying, Allelujah! “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.” Amen.

DISCOURSE II.

THE MISSIONARY CHARTER OF THE CHURCH.

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MATTHEW xxviii. 18—20.

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

THESE are familiar words. They are engraven on that old foundation-rock on which the Church is built. We point to them as the original conveyance of authority to minister in holy things. We draw from them the warrant of our office, as “ambassadors for Christ,” our claim to your acceptance, and your confidence, beloved brethren, as watchmen for your souls. Do we consider their full import? Are we attentive to the conditions of the grant? Are we as prompt to render what

devolves on us as to expect what Christ has promised? Have we reflected well, that it is as they go out, and “make disciples of all nations,” and as they teach them to observe all things which they have been commanded by Christ, that he has promised to be with his Apostles, and with their successors, “always, even unto the end of the world?” In a word, have we sufficiently considered that the *original Apostolical Commission is also the Missionary Charter of the Church*; and, therefore, that it is only as we act with faithfulness and zeal under the one, that we can reasonably expect the blessing to descend upon the other.

It is to the line of thought suggested by these questions that I ask attention now. If it be true that, to his APOSTLES, *as they were MISSIONARIES, and that they might be MISSIONARIES*, in word not only, but in power, Christ promised his protection and his presence, “always, even unto the end of the world,” it follows clearly, that to be in deed and in truth AN APOSTOLICAL, we must also be, to the utmost reach of our capacity, A MISSIONARY CHURCH. It becomes a question, therefore, of momentous import. The construction of that charter is involved by which we claim to be the Saviour’s representatives for the conversion of the world. It concerns the character of that “Church of the living God” which Jesus purchased to himself with his own blood; that it might be “the ground and pillar of the truth” on earth, make known to “principalities and powers in heavenly places,” “the manifold wisdom” of its divine Redeemer, and then be with him where he is. Nor is this all. It involves most intimately the progress of that gracious consummation which the Saviour taught us to press forward in our daily prayers, “Our Father, who art in heaven,” “thy kingdom come!” It concerns, as we accelerate or hinder the preaching of the glorious Gospel of the grace of God to “every creature,” the salvation of unnumbered souls. And it concerns, (tremendous thought!) as we are faithful or unfaithful to our trust, the immortal being of our own. Spirit of truth and consolation, endue us for the great inquiry, and its resulting duties, with candour, patience, charity; and, since in truth alone there is true consolation, guide us graciously into “all truth!” Ascended Sufferer for sinners, enthroned now in glory as the

King of saints, be with us here “as two or three” assembled in thy name; and so imbue us with thy meekness, thy purity, thy piety, thy fearless and unconquerable love, that, walking ever in thy footsteps, and going about with thee to do men good, we may reflect on earth the “daily beauty” of thy benevolent and holy life, and, through the purchase of thy precious blood, attain thy presence in immortal bliss!

The record of the text is the concluding portion of St. Matthew's Gospel, and, his ascension excepted, is the latest record of the Saviour's history on earth. It was to the eleven Apostles, after he had risen from the dead, and shortly before he was to ascend into heaven, that Jesus came, as he had appointed with them, and said, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye *therefore*,”—the connexion is most worthy of attention,—“Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” What was the purport of this commission, and to whom was it given? The reduction of a world lying in wickedness, to the obedience of Christ; to be undertaken by eleven men, peasants and fishermen of Galilee. Seas, deserts, mountains to be traversed, that every nation of the world may hear “the joyful sound.” Opposition to be encountered, persecution to be suffered, death to be endured, that the way of life may be made known, and sinners won to turn to it and live. The stupendous fabric of Heathenism, sustained by the victorious arms of Rome, and knit indeed into the very foundations of the empire, to be assailed, and shaken, and overthrown, and trodden under foot, that the cross might be set up on its majestic ruins. Ignorance to be enlightened, licentiousness to be reclaimed, perverseness to be corrected, obstinacy to be subdued; the ties of blood, the sympathies of nature, the prejudices of education, the fear of shame, the pursuit of interest, the hope of reputation, the love of the world in its ten thousand forms, to be contended with and overcome; that the pure faith of Jesus might find an entrance into the heart, and profane Gentiles, and, even more difficult, hard-hearted Jews, be won to the obedience of the Gospel;

and, stooping meekly to the washing of that regenerating laver which the Saviour opened on the cross, be sealed, in the eternal Triune name, with its mysterious sign. When, at the opening of the former dispensation, God commanded Moses, "Come now, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt;" Moses meekly replied, and said unto God, "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" And he said, "Certainly I will be with thee." How much more becoming to that simple company who stood with Jesus on the mount in Galilee, to receive his warrant to convert the world, the question of the Jewish leader! And how considerate the benevolence which anticipates their natural fears, and, re-assuring every heart by that most gracious declaration, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," makes them "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might!" In vain, without it, their commission. Desperate, without it, even the thought of such an enterprise. Assured to them by Him who had "all power in heaven and earth," it was their sure protection, their sufficient grace. There was nothing that they need fear. There was nothing that they could not overcome. "Earthen vessels," they had committed to them a treasure which should suffice, through the abounding grace of Him who gave it, for the conversion of the world. "Men of like passions" with others, they went out and preached that men should "turn from lying vanities, and serve the living God," with such prevailing power, that nations were led captive at their word. Peasants and fishermen of Galilee, they confounded the wise, they humbled the mighty; they "cast down imaginations, and every high thing" that exalted himself against God, until the prophetic promise of a thousand years was literally fulfilled, and Kings became the nursing-fathers, and Queens the nursing-mothers, of the Church. So richly, to his first Apostles, did Christ redeem his promise to be with them always; and so entirely did the value of their great commission lie in the fulfilment of that gracious promise.

And still it is so. It is not we, my reverend brethren, that preach the Gospel, and prevail with men, and bring sinners to the Saviour, and build up the Church, and hasten the coming

of the Son of man, but it is Christ in us. We are but flesh, poor, perishable, sinful flesh; and, in and of ourselves, there is and can be no good thing. Our calling was of God. The grace that led us to obey was his. His are the strength and wisdom which prepare us for the arduous work. And his alone the glory of whatever we do. With Paul, we too are with the people of our sacred charge, "in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling;" and their faith, if, through grace, they keep the faith, stands not in human wisdom, but in the power of God. Paul still may plant; Apollos still may water; still it is God that gives the increase. In vain we trace the date of our commission to the mount of Galilee. In vain we prove, by warrant clear, and open, and enduring as the stars in heaven, the authority by which we act as Ministers of Christ. Nay, vainly were it given to us, as to the men of old, to heal the sick, to raise the dead, to cast out devils, should we hope by act of ours to bring about that greatest wonder of almighty power, the new creation of the heart. The record still must stand;—humbling to us indeed as carnal men, but O how full of comfort and of hope to him that has been taught of God!—the record still must stand which Paul has written for our learning, "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but Ministers, by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" The conclusion still remains, and while the world stands will remain, that, great and gracious as the commission is which makes of sinful men "ambassadors for Christ," and great as is their danger and their guilt who take in any other than the way of his appointment that sacred and most awful trust, its power and worth consist in that assurance to the first eleven, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world!"

It becomes us, then, since these things most assuredly are so, to look to the conditions of the grant. *To whom* did Christ convey the assurance of his gracious presence? And *under what circumstances* does the tenure hold? The promise of the Saviour's constant presence was clearly made to them to whom he gave his great commission. And, since the commission and the promise were both to run together "alway, even to the end of the world," and they who first received them were but

mortal men, both must be handed down together, as all mortal trusts continue, by perpetual succession from the first receivers, the principle of its transmission being well expressed in those words of Paul the Apostle to Timothy, his son in the faith, "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." But the terms of the commission thus conveyed, and thus to be perpetuated, what are they? Under what circumstances does Jesus promise to be with his Apostles, and with their successors, "unto the end of the world?" Clearly, *while they do the things for which he sent them*. Only while they go and "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever he hath commanded them." For what other ends was his commission given? To what other use the protection of his perpetual presence? Sending them out for a great work,—even for the work which he had come from heaven to do, and which he now designs to carry on through them,—he invests them with a high commission, and endows them with a glorious promise. Shall they claim the promise while they neglect the work? Shall the protecting power be enjoyed, while the express commission is disregarded? No; he does nothing in vain. The commission, indeed, shall stand. The office of an Apostle, which the Saviour instituted, and which it was his last act here on earth to invest with due authority, shall never cease, until he cometh in his glory. The testimony which he then commanded our fathers, that they should make it known to their children, that the generations to come might know it, even the children which were yet unborn, he never will let fail. But wo to them who hold it in unrighteousness! Wo to them who hold it in indifference! The promise made to the Apostles was made to them as Missionaries to all nations; as teachers, everywhere, and through all time, of all the things which Jesus had commanded them. The office cannot be held without the commission. The promise cannot be claimed without the work. Do we lay claim to the office of Apostle? We can only hold it under Christ's commission. Do we rely on the promise made by Christ to his Apostles? We are not warranted in doing so,

but as we follow them in keeping his instructions. Observe, and ponder well, the language of the text:—"Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you: and," doing these things, (the two can surely not be separated,) "lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Observe the kindred passage of St. Mark, and the record of their compliance with its precept:—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." "So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." Follow the Apostles from the day of Pentecost, and read, in their unwearied labours to spread the Gospel through the world, how they interpreted the language of their high commission. Read, in the converts which they made; in the churches which they planted; in the exulting exclamation of St. Paul, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place;" how readily, under every trial, and against every obstacle, the promise of the Saviour was fulfilled to them. It ceased not with St. Paul. It ceased not with the apostolic age. It ceased not with the period of miraculous testimony to the truth. It has not yet ceased. It never will cease; until, from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, God's name is great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense is offered unto him, and a pure offering. It shall not cease (for God himself hath said it) "even unto the end of the world."

Run down from its first days the track of sacred story. Where are the green spots found which cheer the eye, and fill the heart with gladness? Are they not those in which the word of God had free course and was glorified; in which the office of an Apostle was discharged most fully in its first and literal acceptation, as a Missionary of Jesus; in which the ever-

lasting Gospel was preached with greatest faithfulness, and men were taught to observe all things whatsoever Christ had commanded? Turn to a bright and burning page in all the scroll which bears inscribed the history of the Church, and you shall read in it the record of the Missionary's toils, the Missionary's sufferings, the Missionary's triumphs; the glory which illumines it, the manifestation of "the truth as it is in Jesus," kindling the hearts of men with love, and making their lives radiant with purity and piety. Spread out the map before you. Scan, with inquiring eye, the pictured surface of its mimic world. Which are the spots which fix attention most, and fire the thought with fullest rapture? Not the scenes where Alexander, or "the great first Cæsar," strove to win the throne of universal empire. Not the traces of imperial grandeur, or the trophies of triumphant art. But the cradle of the Gospel; the cities where Paul preached; the stream which wafted Wickliff's ashes to the sea; the mountain fastness, where the morning-star of reformation, the Waldensian faith, was kept; the Greenland snows, where the Moravian prays and dies. Call from the past the names which wake within the breast the sympathies that most ennoble it, and most endear to what is good and gentle upon earth, and claim the closest kindred with the skies; and see how far more welcome than the Kings or conquerors, the poets, or philosophers, or patriots, of earth, the consecrated names of Polycarp, and Latimer, and Ridley, of Schwartz, and Middleton, of Henry Martyn, and of Heber, fall upon the ear; "men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;" approved themselves in love and in truth, as they were in name and sacred obligation, the Missionaries of his cross; and rejoiced to bear with him its burden, and to blend their blood with his. My Christian brethren, it is the attestation which God bears to his own truth in every heart which feels its power. It is the triumph with our nature of that gracious love by which the Saviour, lifted from the earth, draws all men unto him. It is the witness of his presence with his true Apostles; which, everywhere, and in all ages, Christ himself has borne; which, everywhere, and through all ages, he still will bear, "even unto the end of the world." Them that honour him he will honour. There shall nothing be lost which

is done or given, with a true heart, in his service, and for the glory of his Gospel; be it "an alabaster-box of very precious ointment," or a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple. "Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached, in all the world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her."

Beloved brethren, we claim, and that most justly, as the clear warrant of holy Scripture and the ancient authors plainly prove, to be AN APOSTOLIC CHURCH. Are we, by evidence as full and conclusive, to the utmost reach of our capacity, A MISSIONARY CHURCH? If we are not, can we claim fairly and justly the fulfilment of that promise of the Saviour, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world?" True, he is with us. It is because he is, that "the pure word of God is preached" among us, "and the sacraments be duly administered." But is he with us as he would be if we were more entirely and more heartily with him? Do we enjoy, can we expect to enjoy, those richest tokens of his presence; making the multitude of them that believe to be of one heart and of one soul, and, by the prevailing argument of our unity, our piety, our charity, constraining them who believe not, seeing our good works which are wrought in us by faith, to fall down, and worship God, and own that God is in us, of a truth? My brethren, these things are not so. The Gospel, which, by the grace of God, is given unto us, is not preached, as it should be, "unto every creature." The apostolic ministry with which we are entrusted, is not sent, as it was designed to be, to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Christianity does not produce in our country, in our immediate neighbourhood, in our respective parishes, in our several families, in our individual hearts, those fruits of holiness and charity which it was given to bear. We are not acting up to the conditions of our constitution as a Missionary Church; and, therefore, God is not with us in the fullest manifestations of his truth and power.

Brethren, the Church is worldly. Christian men forget that they are "bought with a price," and so are not their own. Men, who have been baptized into the death of Christ, forget that "He died for all, that they which live should not hence-

forth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again." With few and rare exceptions, "all seek their own, and not the things which are Jesus Christ's." Who are they that hold themselves, and all they have, implicitly at his disposal, and use their talents, be they two or ten, with a single eye to his approval? How many are they who strive with all fidelity, whether they eat or drink, or whatever they do, to do all to the glory of God? Who remembers always that the silver and the gold are God's; and, taking, with a careful hand, and cheerful heart, for the supply of his necessities and them that are dependent on him, appropriates the rest, in deeds of piety and charity, to do the will of the great Lord of all? How many, who bear the name of Christ, could they be carried back, with the spirits which they now have, to the Apostles' times, would be disposed to say that nothing which they have is theirs, and to have all things common? Who, with the blessed twelve, would submit themselves with cheerfulness to stripes, imprisonment, and scorn, and rejoice that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ? It matters not, my brethren, that we are called to none of these things. The question is, have we the hearts to do and bear them? If we have not now, we should not then have had them. If we have not the mind which was in Christ Jesus, we are none of his.

Beloved brethren, in so great a matter let us not deceive ourselves. "Not every one," says Jesus Christ, "that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." And again, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Nothing can be clearer than that God desires the conversion of the world. Nothing can be more obvious than that it must be effected through the preaching of the Gospel of Christ. Nothing can be more certain than that it must be brought about by human means. Nothing can be more evident than that the responsibility of its accomplishment devolves upon the Church. Participation in Christian privileges is thus the first condition of Christian obligation. And the rule of our responsibility is simply this, "according to that a man hath it is accepted of him, and not according to that he hath not." Remember, my beloved brethren, that he to whom

we all must give account, has given us all we have; and be not so unjust as to keep part from him. If the love of Christ be truly in your heart, you will not wish to do it. True love keeps nothing back from the beloved. Health, fortune, happiness, and life (yea, more than life, were there yet more) it freely gives to him. Like Jesus, it goes out to seek, that it may save, the object of its care. And if, indeed, it be like Jesus, it will not spare even its own heart's blood for their salvation.

It is the testimony of Paul, in regard to some of Corinth, who had exerted themselves even beyond their means, to aid his mission in Macedonia, that "they first gave their own selves to the Lord." It was a wise and prudent forecast, and I commend it to your imitation. Give yourselves up to the Lord, and you will have nothing to withhold. You will take your little children by the hand, and lead them to his altar, and beseech him to accept them for the Church; and you will train them up in his nurture and holy admonition, that they may be meet for his acceptance. You will dedicate to him your dear domestic hearth, and all that gather round it, and set up in their midst an altar of perpetual prayer and praise. You will pour out before him, whether you have little or much, the treasures which his goodness lends, and implore him to accept them here, that you may find them hereafter in heaven. O that God would put it into the hearts of this congregation thus to give themselves up to the Lord! O that God would put it into the hearts of the Churchmen of this land, so far to imitate their brethren of the Church in Corinth, as to be willing according to their power! The superfluities of millions, that now rust, or are abused to frivolous or sinful uses, would supply with spiritual food a famishing world. The strength of body, the gifts of mind, the weight of influence, the able hands, the generous hearts, that now content themselves with secular ends, and labour but for temporal interests, converted to the Lord, and consecrated by the live coal from off his altar, would supply an army that should leaguer every land. The noble rapture, like a flame of living fire, would spread from heart to heart. Again, "the arm of the Lord" should wake, as in the ancient time. Again, the gates of hell should totter to their fall. The Church of the living God, roused from her sleep, should shake the dust from

her fair garments; and gird on her panoply for battle. "Strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might," she should go on "from strength to strength;" until, triumphant over every foe, God, for Christ's sake, bestows on her the victory.*

DISCOURSE III.

THE MISSIONARY ARGUMENT.†

BY THE RIGHT REV. GEORGE WASHINGTON DOANE, D.D.,
BISHOP OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE DIOCESE OF NEW JERSEY.

MARK XVI. 15.

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."

THIS was the parting precept of the Saviour of mankind. He came into the world that all, even as many as should believe in him, "should not perish, but have everlasting life." During all his painful sojourning on earth, he proclaimed himself, in word and in deed, "the light of the world." And he died, that he might be "the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." In perfect and entire consistency, then, with the original purpose of his incarnation, with the teaching and practice of his life, with the motive and object of his death, was the parting precept of the Saviour,—"*Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature!*" It was addressed originally to the Apostles; and the same page which records it, records also their prompt, implicit, and persevering obedience:—"They went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." Did they fulfil the

* The conclusion of this discourse, being specially connected with the circumstances in which it was preached, is here omitted.—EDITOR.

† Preached before the Board of Directors of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the United States.

Saviour's precept? Was the Gospel preached by them "to every creature?" Alas, no! They were but mortal men. And though they gave themselves, body and spirit, to the work, they did but sow the precious seed, before they were compelled, by cruel persecution, to enrich it with their blood. The work which they began, they entrusted to faithful men, able to teach others also; that so from their time the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts might continue to extend to all valleys its gracious roots, and to spread over all hills its comfortable shadow, and to extend to nation after nation, and to kingdom after kingdom, its life-sustaining, life-restoring cup. Still, is the Saviour's purpose yet accomplished? Has it yet gone into "all the world?" Is the Gospel yet preached "to every creature?" Alas, no! There are myriads of human hearts that are fainting for the protection of its shadow; there are millions of immortal souls that are perishing for the refreshment of its cup of life.

WHY IS IT SO?

OUGHT IT TO BE SO?

SHALL IT CONTINUE TO BE SO?

I. WHY IS IT SO? Are the means which God has appointed for the extension of his kingdom inadequate to the result? Is his "ear heavy, that it cannot hear?" Or his "arm shortened, that it cannot save?" The supposition is alike injurious to his power and wisdom, his holiness and goodness. He has proclaimed the everlasting Gospel. He has founded the universal Church. The leaves of the one are given "for the healing of the nations." The gates of the other are open to kingdoms, and tongues, and kindreds, and people. In her divinely-instituted and perpetuated ministry, the glorious vision of the Seer of the Apocalypse is realized: "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying, with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come!" In her divinely-instituted and perpetuated sacraments, the gracious voice that, on the Isle of Patmos, won his favoured ear, addresses all mankind: "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come! And let him that heareth, say," to his neighbour, "Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the

water of life freely." Why, then,—the question returns,—why, since God has made provision so ample for the spiritual wants of all, his holy Church freely opened, his holy word freely offered,—why is it that all are not participants of its precious privileges, subjects of its constraining love, heirs of its immortal hopes? The noble argument of the great first Missionary to the Gentiles will supply our answer. True he says, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." "For the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him; and there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek. But how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a Preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?" Alas! brethren, that it should be so: but so it is. The lapse of nearly two thousand years has abated scarce a single jot from this unanswerable apostolic reasoning for the claims of Missions. There are yet whole nations, and I had almost said, whole continents, of them who call not upon God because they do not believe on him, who believe not on him because they never heard of him, who cannot hear of him without a Preacher, and who can have no Preacher unless he shall be sent. And there are others, countless others, of our flesh and of our bone, who,—though in the pleasant land of their fathers they may have heard of God, and, even among the Heathen who know him not, or the wicked who disregard him, do still believe in him and fear him,—are losing, as the rainbow fades, the impressions which even we, with all our means of grace, so faintly and so feebly hold; and, far from home, and all its holy and delightful sympathies, are longing, till their very heart is sick within them, for those sacred ministrations of comfort and of hope, which without a Preacher they cannot have, and to whom no Preacher can go unless he shall be sent. The subject, then, you see, my Christian brethren, is brought home to us; to you, and to me; and when we ask, why it is that souls are perishing for lack of saving knowledge, it becomes us also to ask, and that solemnly and anxiously, as in the presence of Him who has declared, "*All souls are mine,*"—Are we doing what we can for their relief? Have we given according to the ability with which God has blessed us?

Have we exerted, in the furtherance of his own cause, the ability and influence with which God has endowed us? Have we poured out upon it;—this at least all of us can do, and God forbid that any of us should not!—have we poured out upon it, warm from the heart, our fondest and most fervent prayers? If it be not so, if for Christ's own cause, the cause in which he shed his precious blood, the Christian's wealth, the Christian's efforts, the Christian's prayers are stinted, there needs, assuredly, no further question why it does not triumph, to God's glory, and the good of men.

II. But we ask, secondly, OUGHT IT TO BE SO? Is there anything that can excuse the believer for being a laggard in his Master's service? Let us speak plainly out: the occasion calls for plainness. Is it possible that *he* can be sincere in his profession of the Christian faith, who hesitates to promote, to the utmost of his ability, (remembering that to God the heart is as open as the hand,) the extension of its privileges and blessings to all who have them not at all, or who have them in inferior measure to himself? We answer boldly, No! And we rest our answer on the warrant of God's word: "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" And, again, "Whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" For consider, I beseech you, brethren, the worth, as God himself has rated it, even of a single soul: "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Consider, next, the state of all souls by nature: "We have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God." "When we have done all, we are unprofitable servants." "There is none that doeth good, no not one." Consider, then, the sure punishment of sin: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil." Take, then, into consideration, the price at which all souls were ransomed: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." "Who bare our sins in his own body on the tree;" "and, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man." Consider, lastly, the conditions of the law of

Gospel love: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." "Look not every man upon his own things, but every man also on the things of others." "For no man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." "For we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."

Consider well, my brethren, this affecting exhibition of true Christian fellowship, as a relation so intimate that the vitality of its union can only be expressed by representing Jesus as the head, the Church as his body, and individual Christians as members in particular; one in feeling and interest, one in joy and grief, one in fears and hopes; and then say, if the love of Christ should not—nay, if, where it exists in purity and power, it certainly will not—constrain all who breathe and feel it, to the same anxiety, the same exertions, the same intense, unsparing, and agonizing devotion for the salvation of other souls as of their own. Say, finally, if that man who has neglected any effort, spared of his perishable treasure, or remitted in his effectual, fervent intercession for the souls of all mankind, and much more of those who fall within the sphere of its immediate influence, can justly entertain the slightest hope of acceptance with Him who has declared that he will judge all men according as they have judged, and by that strict, yet equitable, rule, of doing unto others as they would have others do to them.

III. Having seen clearly why it is that the extension of the Saviour's kingdom upon earth has been, and is, so slow; and that, by every principle of Christian duty and of Christian charity, it ought not so to be, we are prepared for our third question,—**SHALL IT CONTINUE TO BE SO?** That the march of our religion shall go on, that the triumphs of Christianity shall continue and increase in glory, that the kingdom of the Saviour shall not be stayed, as it were, in mid-air, but shall come down to earth, and spread its peaceful sway from the one end of it to the other; filling it all "with the glory of God, as the waters cover the sea;" enabling all to "know the Lord, from the least to the greatest;" and pouring into all hearts "the blessing of peace, quietness, and assurance for ever," is among the clearest convictions to which the word of God gives warrant. God's

work, then, will go on. His cause will prosper. Christianity will triumph. And our question is thus narrowed down to this,— Shall his work be done by us? Shall his cause prosper in our hands? Shall we share in the triumphs, and partake the glories, of the cross? Or, laggards in our exertions, and niggards of our bounty, in the day of trial and of toil, shall we be rejected in that day when the spoils of victory shall be divided, and its glorious golden crowns bestowed? For, brethren, understand me well. I came not here to summon you to duties which, with unwilling hand, you may, upon compulsion, do. I came not here to call on you for sacrifices which, with reluctant heart, you may surrender by constraint. But, no! I come to lead your free and fervent spirits to the most glorious and inviting enterprise of which mortals ever were allowed to hear; to give you the offer of privileges which no price can estimate, and of rewards which will endure for ever; to ask you but to turn the light of that blessed Gospel which cheers and guides your way, towards the groping multitudes that wander on in darkness and the shadow of the grave, and to tell you that God has declared that they who thus turn sinners to righteousness, shall “shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever.” And, though I repeat it, that Jesus Christ will have nothing of you in this behalf as matter of mere necessity and duty; nothing which is not won from you by the soft persuasion of your constraining love of him; nothing that is not done by you for his sake and for the love of souls; and that all that is so given and done will be acknowledged and rewarded as given and done to him, “Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these, my brethren, ye did it unto me;”—I am also bound to add, that he will frown in his indignant anger, and repel from him for ever, all those who, disregarding the cry of the poor, darkened souls for whom he died, shall in effect despise his cross, and disregard the offering of his blood: “Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, my brethren, ye did it not to me.” “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.”

My Christian brethren, in coming before you to-night as the advocate of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Church, I am well aware that with some (of you we are

persuaded better things) the office is unhonoured, and the errand thankless; that, to the infidel the whole Missionary scheme is odious; and that there are even Christians who will abate somewhat from their estimate of his discretion and intelligence who bears and owns a love and zeal for Missions. But I remember, and am not discouraged, that the cross of Jesus was "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness." I remember, and am not discouraged, that Paul, for his Christian earnestness and boldness, was accounted mad. And that with the Heathen of the first ages of the Church, it was a current taunt, "A very good man that, only he is a Christian!" Now, from the infidel, these things are reasonably expected. He has declared war against Christianity, and he is, of course, opposed to all that is part and parcel of it; and with a degree of violence exactly in proportion to its intrinsic excellence, and its importance to the cause. But when the reproach is heard from Christian lips, is it from ignorance, (an ignorance, how needless and unpardonable!) or is it from entire and utter selfishness, hardening the heart, till it can seek to save of the perishable dross of earth, even at the price of other souls, and of its own? For, brethren, what is the meaning of this mystic and misrepresented term? What is a Mission? What is a Missionary? What is the Missionary enterprise? Was not the Son of God the great first Missionary, from the bosom of his Father, to our fallen race? Is not the world one great, dark, devious Missionary field? Were not the Holy City, the hill of Calvary, the mountain Olivet, the earliest Missionary stations? Are not the Ministers of Jesus, Missionaries all? And is not our religion all a Mission,—a message, so denominated by the angels, of "glad tidings to all people,"—a Mission sent from heaven, the endearing proof of God's paternal love,—a Mission sent to men, his erring children, to guide their feet here in the way of peace, and lead them through the darkness of the grave to happiness in heaven? And is the Missionary enterprise, then, an idle undertaking? Is the name of Missionary a dishonourable name? Is it a reproach to be the friend, the advocate, the humblest of the servants of Missions? Then welcome dishonour, if it be incurred in Jesus's cause! Welcome reproach, if it be shared with Luke, and

Barnabas, and Paul! "God forbid that we should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!" God forbid that we should count labour unwelcome, or reproach opprobrious, or our life itself dear unto us, so we may but proclaim to sinners, poor and needy, the unsearchable riches of the Gospel of Christ!

It ought not to be withheld that there is, by those who discountenance the cause of Missions, (strange, indeed, that in a Christian land there should be any such!) some show of seeming argument. For, say they, if the Heathen have not the Gospel, or if some Christians live less in the light of it than others, then they have less to answer for; since a God of justice and of mercy will never judge them by a rule of which they could not know. We account as highly as they can of the justice and of the goodness of God. We believe, and we tremble to believe it, that the rule of His judgment will strictly be, "Of him to whom much is given, much will be required." We doubt not that "in every nation he who feareth God and worketh righteousness" will be accepted "with him." But we repeat, with emphasis, the searching and decisive question which has often been asked before, Where, in a Heathen nation, is he found who feareth God and worketh righteousness? We ask if, in our high, meridian, Gospel day, there is too much light upon the path of duty, or the bed of death? And we ask, if, with all the advantages and consolations which he enjoys, the Christian "scarcely be saved," how shall the poor Heathen, or the half-enlightened convert, or the forest exile from his father's home and house of prayer, prepare to meet his God? But the argument proves too much, and so proves nothing. It might with as much reason be contended that the whole world needed not the Gospel; that God has sent his Son to die for men who might have been saved as well without the sacrifice; and that the Holy Spirit, poured out from heaven to sanctify the faithful, is poured out all to waste. My brethren, it is not so. The Heathen, bowing down to wood and stone, are perishing for lack of knowledge. Our brethren (pioneers of civilization and of the Church) are languishing in sorrow for the want of spiritual light and spiritual consolation. Even in the midst of us, the poor are famishing for the bread, and thirsting for the water, of life.

Now, surely, brethren, if these things are, so, and if they are

of concern to us, they are of urgent concern; they press for our immediate attention; there is no time to be lost. While we are thinking, or, perhaps, not thinking, of the matter, thousands of Heathens are going down to the grave, without a ray of hope to light its passage; and others, who in better days have known and valued the consolations of religion, are falling from their hold upon its precious truths; are fainting and dying, alone and unconsolated. And, besides, brethren, let it not be forgotten, our own "time is short." "While we have opportunity," then, "let us do good." What we do we must do quickly; "for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave," to which we hasten.

In the plea which I have thus sought to urge before you in behalf of Missions, I have not recognised any distinction of foreign or domestic operations. Why should I? Is not *the field* THE WORLD? Let every man choose his portion of it to reap for the Lord's garner. Only let all choose some. Whatever is done, is done for God's glory, and the good of souls. Done with a single eye to those great ends, God will accept it, and bless it with increase. The Society which claims our prayers, wisely and happily combines in one the foreign and the domestic interest. God forbid that they should ever be divided! God forbid that where his blessed Son made no distinction, we should think it needful! He died alike for all the souls of men. God forbid that our bounty, our labours, our intercessions should not also comprehend them all! Individual designation, and the force of circumstances, may give to the one object or to the other occasional predominance. But the constraining love of Jesus is a motive which prompts alike to both, and both look but to a common end,—the salvation of sinners for whom Jesus died. With "ample room, and verge enough" in each direction to engage us all, let us give to each its full proportion of our best and most disinterested zeal. Ages must pass, even were the whole strength of Christendom brought out, before the fulness of the Gentiles can come in. Generations must be numbered, before the Church, in her best human enterprise, can overtake, with her Master's holy word and ordinances, the rapid march of civilization towards the ocean of the west.

Meanwhile, what are we, Protestant Episcopalians, doing in this great cause of God and man? What regions of the dark Pagan world have we undertaken to enlighten? What portion of our own vast wilderness have we pledged ourselves to reclaim? On what part of the dreary African coast are our Missionary stations set, as light-bearers to the degraded Ethiopian? Where, in the barren wastes of Asia, or in our own magnificent and verdant woods, is the voice of our Missionary heard, speaking peace to the sorrowing, and pardon to the sinful, soul? What is the number of societies, to spread the Gospel to all who have it not, that, like a constellation, gladdens with their concentrated glory all our lands? And by what sums, in thousands and in tens of thousands, is their income told? Had these questions been asked twelve months ago, I must have hung my head to answer them. I must have told you, that in all the world, Christian or Heathen, there was not an effort making that deserved the name, which had its origin with us; and must have been compelled to the confession, full of sorrow and of shame, that the average annual income of the only institution in the whole American Church for general Missionary purposes, had been, in the last nine years, but fifteen hundred dollars! But, blessed be the name of God, a day of better things has dawned! The favour of the Holy One has crowned with signal mercy the exertions which his own gracious Spirit has put it into the hearts of the faithful servants of his Church to make. The adoption of a plan, not more to be admired for its beautiful simplicity, than for its comprehensiveness and power, has breathed into the seat of central life a new vitality; and sent to every limb, and member, and organ of the whole frame, a more intense, concentrated, and vigorous action. There is the beginning of an organization made, which soon, we fondly trust, will be commensurate with our whole communion; and, like the circumambient air, while, by its moderate and equal pressure, it is nowhere felt, shall stimulate to healthful and enduring energy the universal system, even in its minutest portions. The reproach is wiped away,—thank God! the reproach is wiped away,—that Protestant Episcopalians are indifferent to the extension of the blessings of the Gospel; I do not say to their brethren and immediate neighbours alone;

but to any, to all, who have them not. The spirit of Missions has gone abroad. We mark its first, we frankly own its faintest, symptom, in the replenishing treasury of the Lord. I say, its faintest symptom. For, needful as the gold is and the silver to the preaching of the priceless Gospel, these are not the ends to which we look, nor the results for which we labour, nor the blessings for which we pray. No; there are treasures far more rare, far more precious, far more desirable. The heart, filled with the love of God and man, prompting the gift, the act, the prayer of charity,—this is the choicest jewel out of the mediatorial diadem of Jesus. The spirit of Missions, the spirit of celestial, of evangelical love, the flame enkindled by the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier,—this is the ray by which, as gold is ripened in the mine, such hearts are formed. Give it free course, then, brethren, that it may be fully glorified. Prompt it by wish, and word, and act. Seek its promotion by the kindling breath of fervent prayer, till it fill all hearts, and burn in every soul. It will pour you out treasures freely, as the water is poured out from heaven. It will do more than this. It will pour you out *hearts*; hearts, like the martyr Stephen's, filled full “with faith and with the Holy Ghost,” to labour in the work of saving souls, to bear everywhere the word and bread of life; to live and die, true Christian soldiers, beneath the banner of the cross.

My Christian brethren, the spirit of Missions is the spirit of our religion; emphatically, it is the spirit of our Church. It fired the Apostles' hearts at first to plant it. It ever since has fired the hearts of their successors to tend and water it. It burns upon the altars of the Church of England. It sent her Middleton and Heber to India. It brought to the land which we inherit and inhabit, the faith and worship in which our souls rejoice. Friends, brethren, and fathers, shall we not acknowledge, shall we not repay, the pious debt? Shall we not transmit to others, and still to others, even to generations unnumbered and unborn, the rich inheritance which we enjoy? Let us arise, then, in the strength and name of God, and gird ourselves like men, for the performance of this most glorious, this most charitable, work. The experience of the year just closed, demonstrates that there is not wanting the ability, nor yet the inclination, to

discharge it. It is knowledge that we need; it is system; it is union of purpose, and untiring perseverance in action. The plan before us offers them. Its success, thus far, gives pledge and promise of its future efficacy. Let us accept, let us pursue, the glorious, the auspicious, omen. "For Zion's sake let us not hold our peace, and for Jerusalem's sake let us not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth!" Above all, brethren and fathers, let us pour out before the Giver of increase our fervent and untiring prayers, that he would be pleased to "make his ways known unto all men, his saving health to all nations;" that the light of his glorious Gospel may shine unto all lands, and that, "all who receive it may live as becomes it;" that he would "have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and heretics, and take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of his word, and so fetch them home to his flock, that they," and we, may be saved with the remnant of the true Israelites, and made one fold under the "one" great "Shepherd, JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD!"

DISCOURSE IV.

THE MORAL DIGNITY OF THE MISSIONARY
ENTERPRISE.*

BY THE REV. FRANCIS WAYLAND, D.D.,

PRESIDENT OF BROWN UNIVERSITY.

MATTHEW xiii. 38.

"The field is the world."

PHILOSOPHERS have speculated much concerning a sensation, which has commonly been denominated the emotion of sublimity. Aware that, like any other simple feeling, it must be incapable of definition, they have seldom attempted to define it; but, content with remarking the occasions on which it is excited, have told us that it arises in general from the contemplation of whatever is vast in nature, splendid in intellect, or lofty in morals. Or, to express the same idea somewhat varied, in the language of a critic of antiquity, (Longinus, sect. vii.) "That alone is truly sublime, of which the conception is vast, the effect irresistible, and the remembrance scarcely if ever to be erased."

But although philosophers alone have written about this emotion, they are far from being the only men who have felt it. The untutored peasant, when he has seen the autumnal tempest collecting between the hills, and, as it advanced, enveloping in misty obscurity, village and hamlet, forest and meadow, has tasted the sublime in all its reality; and whilst the thunder has rolled, and the lightning flashed around him, has exulted in the view of nature moving forth in her majesty. The untaught sailor boy, listlessly hearkening to the idle ripple of the midnight wave, when on a sudden he has thought upon the unfathomable abyss beneath him, and the wide waste of waters

* Delivered before the Boston Baptist Foreign Missionary Society.

around him, and the infinite expanse above him, has enjoyed to the full the emotion of sublimity; whilst his inmost soul has trembled at the vastness of its own conceptions. But why need I multiply illustrations from nature? Who does not recollect the emotion he has felt whilst surveying aught in the material world of terror or of vastness?

This sensation is not produced by grandeur in material objects alone. It is also excited on most of those occasions in which we see man tasking, to the uttermost, the energies of his intellectual or moral nature. Through the long lapse of centuries, who without emotion has read of Leonidas and his three hundred associates, throwing themselves as a barrier before the myriads of Xerxes, and contending unto death for the liberties of Greece?

Nor is it in the field of patriotism alone that deeds have been achieved to which history has awarded the palm of moral sublimity. There have lived men, in whom the name of patriot has been merged in that of philanthropist; who, looking with an eye of compassion over the face of the earth, have felt the miseries of our race, and have put forth their calm might to wipe off one blot of the marred and stained escutcheon of human nature, to strike off one form of suffering from the catalogue of human woe. Such a man was Howard. Surveying our world like the spirit of the blessed, he beheld the misery of the captive, he heard the groaning of the prisoner. His determination was fixed. He resolved, single-handed, to gauge and to measure one form of unpitied, unheeded wretchedness, and, bringing it out to the sunshine of public observation, to work its utter extermination. And he well knew what this undertaking would cost him. He knew what he had to hazard from the infection of dungeons; to endure from the fatigues of inhospitable travel; and to brook from the insolence of legalized oppression. He knew that he was devoting himself upon the altar of philanthropy, and he willingly devoted himself. He had marked out his destiny, and he hastened forward to its accomplishment with an intensity "which the nature of the human mind forbade to be more, and the character of the individual forbade to be less." Thus he commenced a new era in the history of benevolence. And hence the name of Howard will be associated with all

that is sublime in mercy, until the final consummation of all things.

Such a man is Clarkson, who, looking abroad, beheld the sufferings of Africa; and, looking at home, saw his country stained with her blood. We have seen him, laying aside the vestments of the priesthood, consecrate himself to the holy purpose of rescuing a continent from rapine and murder, and of erasing this one sin from the book of his nation's iniquities. We have seen him and his fellow-philanthropists for twenty years never waver from their purpose. We have seen them persevere amidst neglect, and obloquy, and contempt, and persecution, until, the cry of the oppressed having roused the sensibilities of the nation, the "Island Empress" rose in her might, and said to this foul traffic in human flesh, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther."

It will not be doubted that in such actions as these, there is much which may truly be called the moral sublime. If, then, we should attentively consider them, we might perhaps ascertain what must be the elements of that enterprise which may lay claim to this high appellation. It cannot be expected that on this occasion we should analyze them critically. It will, however, we think, be found, upon examination, that to that enterprise alone has been awarded the meed of sublimity, of which the conception was vast, the execution arduous, and the means to be employed simple but efficient. Were not the object vast, it could not arrest our attention. Were not its accomplishment arduous, none of the noble energies of man being tasked in its execution, we should see nothing to admire. Were not the means to that accomplishment simple, our whole conception being vague, the impression would be feeble. Were they not efficient, the most intense exertion could only terminate in failure and disgrace.

Whilst the general assertion is true, that man is awake to all that is sublime in nature, and much that is sublime in morals, there is reason to believe that there is a class of objects, whose contemplation thrills all heaven with rapture, at which he can gaze unmelted and unmoved. The pen of inspiration has recorded, that the cross of Christ, whose mysteries the angels desire to look into, was to the tasteful and erudite Greek

foolishness. And we fear that cases very analagous to this may be witnessed at the present day. But why, my hearers, should it be so? Why should so vast a dissimilarity of moral taste exist between seraphs who bow before the throne, and men who dwell upon the footstool? Why is it that the man whose soul swells with ecstacy whilst viewing the innumerable suns of midnight, feels no emotion of sublimity when thinking of their Creator? Why is it that an enterprise of patriotism presents itself to his imagination beaming with celestial beauty, whilst the enterprise of redeeming love is without form or comeliness? Why should the noblest undertaking of mercy, if it only combine among its essential elements the distinctive principles of the Gospel, become at once stale, flat, and unprofitable? "When there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth," why is it that the enterprise of proclaiming "peace on earth, and good-will to man," fraught, as it would seem, with more than angelic benignity, should, to many of our fellow-men, appear worthy of nothing better than neglect or obloquy?

The reason for all this we shall not on this occasion pretend to assign. We have only time to express our regret that such should be the fact. Confining ourselves, therefore, to the bearing which this moral bias has upon the Missionary cause, it is with pain we are obliged to believe that there is a large portion of our fellow-citizens who look with perfect apathy upon the present system of exertions for evangelizing the Heathen; and we have been greatly misinformed, if there be not another, though a very different, class, who consider these exertions a subject for ridicule. Perhaps it may tend somewhat to arouse the apathy of the one party, as well as to moderate the contempt of the other, if we can show that this very Missionary cause combines within itself the elements of all that is sublime in human purpose; nay, combines them in a loftier perfection than any other enterprise which was ever linked with the destinies of man. To show this will be our design; and in prosecuting it, we shall direct your attention to the grandeur of the object; the arduousness of its execution; and the nature of the means on which we rely for success.

I. THE GRANDEUR OF THE OBJECT.

In the most enlarged sense of the term, "*The field is the*

world." Our design is radically to affect the temporal and eternal interests of the whole race of man. We have surveyed this field *statistically*, and find that, of the eight hundred millions who inhabit our globe, but two hundred millions have any knowledge of the religion of Jesus Christ. Of these, we are willing to allow that but one-half are his real disciples, and that therefore there are seven of the eight hundred millions to whom the Gospel must be sent.

We have surveyed this field *geographically*. We have looked upon our own continent, and have seen that, with the exception of a narrow strip of thinly settled country, from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the mouth of the Mississippi, the whole of this new world lieth in wickedness. Hordes of ruthless savages roam the wilderness of the west, and men almost as ignorant of the spirit of the Gospel, are struggling for independence in the south.

We have looked over Europe, and behold there one nation putting forth her energies in the cause of evangelizing the world. We have looked for another such nation; but it is not to be found. A few others are beginning to awake. Most of them, however, yet slumber. Many are themselves in need of Missionaries. Nay, we know not but the movement of the cause of man in Europe is at present retrograde. There seems too evidently a coalition formed of the powers that be, to check the progress of moral and intellectual improvement, and to rivet again on the human mind the manacles of Papal superstition.

We have looked over Africa, and have seen that upon one little portion, reclaimed from brutal idolatry by Missionaries, the Sun of Righteousness has shone. It is a land of Goshen, where they have light in their dwellings. Upon all the remainder of this vast continent there broods a moral darkness, impervious as that which once veiled her own Egypt, on that prolonged and fearful night when no man knew his brother.

We have looked over Asia, and have seen its northern nations, though under the government of a Christian Prince, scarcely nominally Christian. On the west it is spell-bound by Mohammedan delusion. To the south, from the Persian Gulf to the sea of Kamschatka, including also its numberless islands,

except where, here and there, a Syrian Church or a Missionary station twinkles amidst the gloom, the whole of this immense portion of the human race is sitting in the region and shadow of death. Such, then, is the field for our exertion. It encircles the whole family of man; it includes every unevangelized being of the species to which we belong. We have thus surveyed the Missionary field, that we may know how great is the undertaking to which we stand committed.

We have also made an estimate of the *miseries* of this world. We have seen how in many places the human mind, shackled by ignorance, and enfeebled by vice, has dwindled almost to the standard of a brute. Our indignation has kindled at hearing of men, immortal as ourselves, bowing down and worshipping a wandering beggar, or paying adoration to reptiles and to stones.

Not only is intellect everywhere under the dominion of idolatry prostrated: beyond the boundaries of Christendom, on every side, the dark places of the earth are filled with the habitations of cruelty. We have mourned over the savage ferocity of the Indians of our western wilderness. We have turned to Africa, and seen almost the whole continent a prey to lawless banditti, or else bowing down in the most revolting idolatry. We have descended along her coast, and beheld villages burnt or depopulated; fields laid waste; and her people who have escaped destruction, naked and famishing, flee to their forests at the sight of a stranger. We have asked, What fearful visitation of Heaven has laid these settlements in ruins? What destroying pestilence has swept over this land, consigning to oblivion almost its entire population? What mean the smoking ruins of so many habitations? And why is yon fresh sod crimsoned and slippery with the traces of recent murder? We have been pointed to the dark slave-ship hovering over her coast; and have been told that two hundred thousand defenceless beings are annually stolen away, to be murdered on their passage, or consigned for life to a captivity more terrible than death.

We have turned to Asia, and beheld how the demon of her idolatry has worse than debased, has brutalized, the mind of man. Everywhere his despotism has been grievous: here, with merciless tyranny, he has exulted in the misery of his victims.

He has rent from the human heart all that was endearing in the charities of life. He has taught the mother to tear away the infant as it smiled in her bosom, and cast it, the shrieking prey, to contending alligators. He has taught the son to light the funeral pile, and to witness, unmoved, the dying agonies of his widowed, murdered mother.

We have looked upon all this; and our object is, to purify the whole earth from these abominations. Our object will not have been accomplished till the tomahawk shall be buried for ever, and the tree of peace spread its broad branches from the Atlantic to the Pacific; until a thousand smiling villages shall be reflected from the waves of the Missouri, and the distant valleys of the west echo with the song of the reaper; till "the wilderness and the solitary place shall have been glad for us, and the desert has rejoiced and blossomed as the rose."

Our labours are not to cease until the last slave-ship shall have visited the coast of Africa, and, the nations of Europe and America having long since redressed her aggravated wrongs, Ethiopia, from the Mediterranean to the Cape, shall have stretched forth her hand unto God.

How changed will then be the face of Asia! Brahmins and sooders, and casters and shasters, will have passed away, like the mist which rolls up the mountain's side before the rising glories of a summer's morning, while the land on which it rested, shining forth in all its loveliness, shall, from its numberless habitations, send forth the high praises of God and the Lamb. The Hindoo mother will gaze upon her infant with the same tenderness which throbs in the breast of any one of you who now hear me; and the Hindoo son will pour into the wounded bosom of his widowed parent the oil of peace and consolation.

In a word, point us to the loveliest village that smiles upon a New-England landscape, and compare it with the filthiness and brutality of a Caffrarian kraal; and we tell you that our object is to render that Caffrarian kraal as happy and as glad-some as that New-England village. Point us to the spot on the face of the earth where liberty is best understood, and most perfectly enjoyed; where intellect shoots forth in its richest luxuriance, and where all the kindlier feelings of the heart are

constantly seen in their most graceful exercise; point us to the loveliest and happiest neighbourhood in the world on which we dwell; and we tell you that our object is to render this whole earth, with all its nations, and kindreds, and tongues, and people, as happy, nay, happier, than that neighbourhood.

We have considered these beings as immortal, and candidates for an eternity of happiness or misery. And we cannot avoid the belief that they are exposed to eternal misery. Here you will observe that the question with us is not, whether a Heathen unlearned in the Gospel can be saved. We are willing to admit that he may. But if he be saved, he must possess holiness of heart; for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." And where shall we find a holy Heathen? Where is there the vestige of purity of heart among unevangelized nations? It is in vain to talk about the innocence of these children of nature. It is in vain to tell us of their graceful mythology. Their gods are such as lust makes welcome. Of their very religious services, it is a shame even to speak. To settle the question concerning their future destiny, it would only seem necessary to ask, What would be the character of that future state, in which those principles of heart which the whole history of the Heathen world develops, were suffered to operate in their unrestrained malignity?

No! solemn as is the thought, we do believe, that, dying in their present state, they will be exposed to the wrath of Almighty God. And we do believe "that God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Our object is to convey to those who are perishing the news of this salvation. It is to furnish every family upon the face of the whole earth with the word of God written in its own language, and to send to every neighbourhood a Preacher of the cross of Christ. Our object will not be accomplished until every idol temple shall have been utterly abolished, and a temple to Jehovah erected in its room; until this earth, instead of being a theatre on which immortal beings are prepared by crime for eternal condemnation, shall become one universal temple, in which the children of men are learning the anthems of the blessed above, and becoming meet to join the general

assembly and Church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven. Our design will not be completed until

“ One song employs all nations, and all cry,
 ‘ Worthy the Lamb! for he was slain for us;’
 The dwellers in the vales, and on the rocks,
 Shout to each other, and the mountain tops
 From distant mountains catch the flying joy;
 Till, nation after nation taught the strain,
 Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round.”

The object of the Missionary enterprise embraces every child of Adam. It is vast as the race to whom its operations are of necessity limited. It would confer upon every individual on earth all that intellectual or moral cultivation can bestow. It would rescue a world from the “indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish,” reserved for every soul of man that doeth evil, and give him a title to “glory, honour, and immortality.” You see, then, that our object is, not only to affect every individual of the species, but to affect him in the momentous extremes of infinite happiness, and infinite woe. And now we ask, What object ever undertaken by man can compare with this same design of evangelizing the world? Patriotism itself fades away before it, and acknowledges the supremacy of an enterprise, which seizes, with so strong a grasp, upon both the temporal and eternal destinies of the whole family of man.

But all this is not to be accomplished without laborious exertion. Hence we remark,

II. THE MISSIONARY UNDERTAKING IS ARDUOUS ENOUGH TO CALL INTO ACTION THE NOBLEST ENERGIES OF MAN.

Its arduousness is explained in one word: Our “*field is the world.*” Our object is to effect an entire moral revolution in the whole human race. Its arduousness then results, of necessity, from its magnitude.

I need not say to an audience acquainted with the nature of the human mind, that a large moral mass is not easily and permanently affected. A little leaven does not soon leaven the whole lump. To produce a change even of speculative opinion upon a single nation, is an undertaking not easily accomplished. In the case before us, not a nation, but a world, is to be

regenerated: therefore, the change which we would effect is far from being merely speculative. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." Nothing short of this new creation will answer our purpose. We go forth, not to persuade men to turn from one idol to another, but to turn universally from idols to serve the living God. We call upon those who are earthly, sensual, devilish, to set their affections on things above. We go forth exhorting men to forsake every cherished lust, and present themselves a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God. And this mighty moral revolution is to be effected, not in a family, a tribe, or a nation; but in a world which lieth in wickedness.

We have to operate upon a race divided into different nations, speaking a thousand different languages; under every different form of government, from absolute inertness to unbridled tyranny; and inhabiting every district of country, salubrious or deadly, from the equator to the poles. To all these nations must the Gospel be sent; into all these languages must the Bible be translated; to all these climes, salubrious or deadly, must the Missionary penetrate; and under all these forms of government, mild or despotic, must he "preach Christ, and him crucified."

Besides, we shall frequently interfere with the more sordid interests of men; and we expect them to increase the difficulties of our undertaking. If we can turn the Heathen to God, many a source of unholy traffic will be dried up, and many a convenience of unhallowed gratification taken away. And hence we may expect that the traffickers in human flesh, the disciples of mammon, and the devotees of pleasure, will be against us. From the Heathen themselves we have the blackest darkness of ignorance to dispel. We have to assault systems venerable for antiquity, and interwoven with everything that is proud in a nation's history. Above all, we have to oppose the depravity of the human heart, grown still more inveterate by ages of continuance in unrestrained iniquity. In a word, we go forth to urge upon a world dead in trespasses and sins, a thorough renewal of heart, and an universal reformation of practice.

Brief as is the view of the difficulties which surround us, and time will not allow us to state them more in detail, you see that

our undertaking is, as we said, arduous enough to task to the uttermost the noblest energies of man.

This enterprise requires *wisdom* in the Missionary who goes abroad, as well as in those who manage the concerns of a Society at home. He who goes forth unprotected, to preach Christ to despotic or badly governed nations, must be wise as a serpent, and harmless as a dove. With undeviating firmness upon every thing essential, he must combine the most yielding facility upon all that is unimportant. And thus while he goes forth in the spirit and power of Elias, he must at the same time become "all things to all men, that by all means he may gain some." Great *abilities* are also required in him who conducts the Mission at home. He must awaken, animate, and direct the sentiments of a very large portion of the community in which he resides, whilst at the same time, through a hundred different agents, he is exerting a powerful influence upon half as many nations a thousand, or ten thousand, miles off. Indeed, it is hazarding nothing to predict, that if efforts for the extension of the Gospel continue to multiply with their present ratio of increase, as great abilities will, in a few years, be required for transacting the business of a Missionary Society, as for conducting the affairs of a political Cabinet.

The Missionary undertaking calls for *perseverance*; a perseverance of that character which, having once formed its purpose, never wavers from it till death. And if ever this attribute has been so exhibited as to challenge the respect of every man of feeling, it has been in such instances as are recorded in the history of the Missions to Greenland, and to the South-Sea Islands; where we beheld men, for fifteen or twenty years, suffer everything but martyrdom; and then, seeing no fruit from their labour, resolve to labour on till death, if so be they might at last save one benighted Heathen from the error of his ways.

This undertaking calls for *self-denial* of the highest and holiest character. He who engages in it must, at the very outset, dismiss every wish to stipulate for anything but the mere favour of God. His first act is a voluntary exile from all that a refined education loves; and every other act must be in unison with this. The salvation of the Heathen is the object for

which he sacrifices, and is willing to sacrifice, everything that the heart clings to on earth. For this object he would live; for this he would die: nay, he would live anywhere, and die anyhow, if so be he might rescue one soul from everlasting woe.

Hence you see that this undertaking requires *courage*. It is not the courage which, wrought up by the stimulus of popular applause, can rush now and then upon the cannon's mouth; it is the courage, which, alone and unapplauded, will, year after year, look death in the face, and never shrink from its purpose. It is a principle which will "make a man intrepidly dare everything which can attack or oppose him within the whole sphere of mortality, retain his purpose unshaken amidst the ruins of the world, and press toward his object while death is impending over him." Such was the Spirit which spake by the mouth of an Apostle when he said, "And now, behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things which shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me, 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."

But, above all, the Missionary undertaking requires *faith*, in its holiest and sublimest exercise. And let it not be supposed that we speak at random, when we mention the sublimity of faith. "Whatever," says the British moralist, "withdraws us from the power of the senses; whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future, predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings." And when we speak of faith, we refer to a principle which gives "substance to things hoped for, and evidence to things not seen;" which, bending her glance on the "eternal weight of glory," makes it a constant motive to holy enterprise; which, fixing her eye upon the infinite of future, makes it bear upon the purposes of to-day; a principle which enables a poor feeble tenant of the dust to take strong hold upon the perfections of Jehovah; and, fastening his hopes to the very throne of the Eternal, "bid earth roll, nor feel its idle whirl." This principle is the unfailing support of the Missionary through the long years of his toilsome pilgrimage; and when he is compared with the heroes of this

world, it is peculiar to him. By as much, then, as the Christian enterprise calls into being this one principle, the noblest that can attach to the character of a creature, by so much does its execution surpass in sublimity every other.

III. Let us consider THE MEANS BY WHICH THIS MORAL REVOLUTION IS TO BE EFFECTED.

It is, in a word, by the preaching of Jesus Christ, and him crucified. It is by going forth and telling the lost children of men, that God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son to die for them; and by all the eloquence of such an appeal, to entreat them, for Christ's sake, to be reconciled unto God. This is the lever by which, we believe, the moral universe is to be raised; this is the instrument by which a sinful world is to be regenerated.

And consider the commanding *simplicity* of this means, devised by Omniscience to effect a purpose so glorious. This world is to be restored to more than it lost by the fall, by the simple annunciation of the love of God in Christ Jesus. Here we behold means apparently the weakest, employed to effect the most magnificent of purposes. And how plainly does this bespeak the agency of the omnipotent God! The means which effect his greatest purposes in the kingdom of nature are simple and unostentatious; while those which man employs are complicated and tumultuous. How many intellects are tasked, how many hands are wearied, how many arts exhausted, in preparing for the event of a single battle; and how great is the tumult of the moment of decision! In all this, man only imitates the inferior agents of nature. The autumnal tempest, whose sphere of action is limited to a little spot upon our little world, comes forth attended by the roar of thunder and the flash of lightning; while the attraction of gravitation, that stupendous force which binds together the mighty masses of the material universe, acts silently. In the sublimest of natural transactions, the greatest result is ascribed to the simplest causes. "He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast."

Contemplate the *benevolence* of these means. In practice, the precepts of the Gospel may be summed up in the single command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,

and thy neighbour as thyself." We expect to teach one man obedience to this command, and that he will feel obliged to teach his neighbour, who will feel obliged to teach others, who are again to become teachers, until the whole world shall be peopled with one family of brethren. Animosity is to be done away by inculcating universally the obligation of love. In this manner we expect to teach rulers justice, and subjects submission; to open the heart of the miser, and unloose the grasp of the oppressor. It is thus we expect the time to be hastened onward when men shall "beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; when nation shall no more lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

With this process, compare the means by which men, on the principles of this world, effect a melioration in the condition of their species. Their almost universal agent is, threatened or inflicted misery. And, from the nature of the case, it cannot be otherwise. Without altering the disposition of the heart, they only attempt to control its exercise. And they must control it by showing their power to make the indulgence of that disposition the source of more misery than happiness. Hence when men confer a benefit upon a portion of their brethren, it is generally preceded by a protracted struggle to decide which can inflict most, or which can suffer longest. Hence the arm of the patriot is generally and of necessity bathed in blood. Hence with the shouts of victory from the nation he has delivered, there arises also the sigh of the widow, and the weeping of the orphan. Man produces good by the apprehension or the infliction of evil. The Gospel produces good by the universal diffusion of the principles of benevolence. In the former case, one party must generally suffer; in the latter, all parties are certainly more happy. The one, like the mountain torrent, may fertilize now and then a valley beneath; but not until it has wildly swept away the forest above, and disfigured the lovely landscape with many an unseemly scar. Not so the other,—

"It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice bless'd;
It blesseth Him that gives, and him that takes."

Consider the *efficacy* of these means. The reasons which teach us to rely upon them with confidence may be thus briefly stated:—

1. We see that all which is really terrific in the misery of man results from the disease of his moral nature. If this can be healed, man may be restored to happiness. Now the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the remedy devised by Omniscience specifically for this purpose, and therefore we do certainly know that it will inevitably succeed.

2. It is easy to be seen, that universal obedience to the command, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself,” would make this world a heaven. But nothing besides the Gospel of Christ can persuade men to this obedience. Reason cannot do it; philosophy cannot do it; civilization cannot do it. The cross of Christ alone has power to bend the stubborn will to obedience, and melt the frozen heart to love. “For,” said one who had experienced its efficacy, “the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again.”

3. The preaching of the cross of Christ is a remedy for the miseries of the fall, which has been tested by the experience of eighteen hundred years, and has never in a single instance failed. Its efficacy has been proved by human beings of all ages; from the lisping infant to the sinner a hundred years old. All climates have witnessed its power. From the ice-bound cliffs of Greenland to the banks of the voluptuous Ganges, the simple story of Christ crucified has turned men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Its effect has been the same with men of the most dissimilar conditions; from the abandoned inhabitant of Newgate to the dweller in the palaces of Kings. It has been equally sovereign amidst the scattered inhabitants of the forest, and the crowded population of the densest metropolis. Everywhere, and at all times, it has been “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.”

4. And, lastly, we know, from the word of the living God, that it will be successful, until this whole world has been

redeemed from the effects of man's first disobedience. "As truly as I live," saith Jehovah, "all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." "Ask of me," saith he to his Son, "and I will give thee the Heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." In the revelation which he gave to his servant John, of things which should shortly come to pass; "I heard," said the Apostle, "great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." Here, then, is the ground of our unwavering confidence. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the word of God, until all be fulfilled. Such, then, are the means on which we rely for the accomplishment of our object, and such the grounds upon which we rest our confidence of success.

And now, my hearers, deliberately consider the nature of the Missionary enterprise. Reflect upon the dignity of its object; the high moral and intellectual powers which are to be called forth in its execution; the simplicity, benevolence, and efficacy of the means by which all this is to be achieved; and we ask you, Does not every enterprise to which man ever put forth his strength dwindle into insignificance before that of preaching Christ crucified to a lost and perishing world?

Engaged in such an object, and supported by such assurances, you may readily suppose we can very well bear the contempt of those who would point at us the finger of scorn. It is written, "In the last days there shall be scoffers." We regret that it should be so. We regret that men should oppose an enterprise, of which the chief object is to turn sinners unto holiness. We pity them, and we will pray for them. For we consider their situation far other than enviable. We recollect that it was once said by the Divine Missionary, to the first band which he commissioned, "He that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me." So that this very contempt may, at last, involve them in a controversy infinitely more serious than they at present anticipate. The reviler of Missions, and the Missionary of the cross, must both stand before the judgment-seat of Him who said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to

every creature." It is affecting to think, that whilst the one, surrounded by the nation who, through his instrumentality, have been rescued from everlasting death, shall receive the plaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servant;" the other may be numbered with those "despisers who wonder and perish." O that they "might know, even in this their day, the things which belong to their peace, before they are hidden from their eyes!"

You can also easily perceive how it is that we are not soon disheartened by those who tell us of the difficulties, nay, the hopelessness, of our undertaking. They may point us to countries once the seat of the Church now overspread with Mohammedan delusion; or, bidding us look at nations who once believed as we do, now contending for what we consider fatal error, they may assure us that our cause is declining. To all this we have two answers: First, the assumption that our cause is declining, is utterly gratuitous. We think it not difficult to prove that the distinctive principles we so much venerate, never swayed so powerful an influence over the destinies of the human race as at this very moment. Point us to those nations of the earth to whom moral and intellectual cultivation, inexhaustible resources, progress in arts, and sagacity in council, have assigned the highest rank in political importance, and you point to us nations whose religious opinions are most closely allied to those we cherish. Besides, when was there a period, since the days of the Apostles, in which so many converts have been made to these principles, as have been made, both from Christian and Pagan nations, within the last five and twenty years? Never did the people of the saints of the Most High appear to be going forth in such serious earnest, to "take possession of the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven," as at this very day. We see, then, nothing in the signs of the times which forbodes a failure; but everything which promises that our undertaking will prosper. But, secondly, suppose the cause did seem declining, we should see no reason to relax our exertions; for Jesus Christ has said, "Preach the Gospel to every creature." Appearances, whether prosperous or adverse, alter not the obligation to obey a positive command of Almighty God.

Again: suppose all that is affirmed were true. If it must be, let it be. Let the dark cloud of infidelity overspread Europe, cross the ocean, and cover our own beloved land. Let nation after nation swerve from the faith. Let "iniquity abound, and the love of many wax cold," even until there is on the face of this earth but one pure Church of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. All we ask is, that we may be members of that one Church. God grant that we may throw ourselves into this Thermopylæ of the moral universe!

But even then we should have no fear that the Church of God would be exterminated. We would call to remembrance "the years of the right hand of the Most High." We would recollect there was once a time, when the whole Church of Christ not only could be, but actually was, "gathered with one accord in one place." It was then that that place was "shaken with a rushing mighty wind, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." That same day, three thousand were added to the Lord. Soon we hear, they "have filled Jerusalem with their doctrine." The Church has commenced her march. Samaria has with one accord believed the Gospel. Antioch has become obedient to the faith. The name of Christ has been proclaimed throughout Asia Minor. The temples of the gods, as though smitten by an invisible hand, are deserted. The citizens of Ephesus cry out in despair, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" Licentious Corinth is purified by the preaching of Christ crucified. Persecution puts forth her arm to arrest the spreading "superstition:" but the progress of the faith cannot be stayed. The Church of God advances unhurt, amidst racks and dungeons, persecutions and death; yea, "smiles at the drawn dagger, and defies its point." She has entered Italy, and appears before the walls of the Eternal City. Idolatry falls prostrate at her approach. Her ensign floats in triumph over the capital. She has placed upon her brow the diadem of the Cæsars!

After having witnessed such successes, and under such circumstances, we are not to be moved by discouragements. To all of them we answer, *Our field is the world.* The more arduous the undertaking, the greater will be the glory. And that glory will be ours; for God Almighty is with us.

This enterprise of mercy the Son of God came down from

heaven to commence, and in commencing it he laid down his life. To us has he granted the high privilege of carrying it forward. The legacy which he left us, as he was ascending to his Father and our Father, and to his God and to our God, was, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." With such an object before us, under such a Leader, and supported by such promises, other motives to exertion are unnecessary. Each one of you will anxiously inquire how he may become a co-worker with the Son of God in the glorious design of rescuing a world from the miseries of the fall.

Blessed be God, this is a work in which every one of us is permitted to do something. None so poor, none so weak, none so insignificant, but a place of action is assigned him; and the cause expects every man to do his duty. We answer, then,

1. You may assist in it by your *prayers*. After all that we have said about means, we know that every thing will be in vain without the influence of the Holy Spirit. "Paul may plant, and Apollos water: it is God who giveth the increase." And this influence is promised, and promised in answer to prayer alone. Ye then who love the Lord, "keep not silence, and give him no rest, until he establish and make Jerusalem a praise in the whole earth."

2. You may assist by your personal *exertions*. This cause requires a vigorous, persevering, universal, and systematic effort. It requires that a spirit should pervade every one of us which shall prompt him to ask himself every morning, "What can I do for Christ to-day?" and which should make him feel humbled and ashamed, if at evening he were obliged to confess he had done nothing. Each one of us is as much obligated as the Missionaries themselves, to do all in his power to advance the common cause of Christianity. We, equally with them, have embraced that Gospel, of which the fundamental principle is, "*None of us liveth to himself.*" And not only is every one bound to exert himself to the uttermost; the same obligation rests upon us so to direct our exertions, that each of them may produce the greatest effect. Each one of us may influence others to embark in the undertaking. Each one whom we have

influenced, may be induced to enlarge that circle of which he is the centre, until a self-extending system of intense and reverberated action shall embody into one invincible phalanx, "the sacramental host of God's elect." Awake, then, brethren, from your slumbers! "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." And recollect that what you would do, must be done quickly. "The day is far spent; the night is at hand." "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."

3. You may assist by your *pecuniary contributions*. And here, I trust, it is unnecessary to say, that in such a cause we consider it a privilege to give. How can you so worthily appropriate a portion of that substance which Providence has given you as in sending to your fellow-men, who sit in the region and shadow of death, a knowledge of the God who made them, and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent? We pray you, so use "the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." But I doubt not you already burn with desire to testify your love to the crucified Redeemer. Enthroned in the high and holy place, He looks down at this moment upon the heart of every one of us; and will accept of your offering, though it be but the widow's mite, if it be given with the widow's feeling. In the last day of solemn account, He will acknowledge it before an assembled universe, saying, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me!"

DISCOURSE V.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST THE MOTIVE OF
MISSIONARY EFFORT.*

BY THE REV WILLIAM R. DE WITT.

2 CORINTHIANS v. 14.

"The love of Christ constraineth us."

It is only when men feel deeply that they act with energy. The mere calm intellectual contemplation of an object will avail but little in calling forth the energies of the soul in untiring action to secure its accomplishment. That object must seize hold upon the heart. It must break up its deep fountains of feeling, and bring the mind under the influence of its high and powerful excitement. Under such an impulse, men have gone forward in the successful prosecution of enterprises which, to other minds, have appeared embarrassed with difficulties, and encumbered with dangers, that would have rendered every attempt at their accomplishment the effect of childish folly or mad presumption. Superior eminence in any of the pursuits of life has usually been the result of an engrossing passion for that pursuit. No great moral or political revolution was ever achieved without first awakening an enthusiastic devotion in its behalf.

Though this principle of our nature has been perverted by depravity, and men, under the strong impulse of unholy feeling, have been borne onward, with indomitable energy, in the work of death; yet, in itself, the feature is god-like. Its prototype is found in Him who is the perfection of excellence. It was not the mere calm intellectual contemplation of our apostacy

* Preached in Norwich, Connecticut, 1842, before the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

and consequent ruin that led to the achievement of man's redemption. That achievement, in which has been made the fullest and clearest developement of uncreated excellence; which has waked up the strains of the everlasting song; and which will yet fill God's holy kingdom with perfect and eternal blessedness, is the fruit of the throes of infinite love. It is to the strong impulse of this holy affection that we owe the gift of God's eternal Son; that we are indebted for those scenes of thrilling interest through which he passed during his voluntary exile from heaven; and for that dark and mighty, though ultimately triumphant, conflict in Gethsemane and on Calvary. It is incarnate love enthroned in heaven that now holds the sceptre of universal dominion; and, with an eye that never sleeps, and an arm that never wearies, is carrying forward to their consummation the purposes of infinite benevolence. This same affection, with a congruity so characteristic of God, he has made not only the brightest ornament of Christian character, but the impulsive motive to every duty required of us, as his followers. In the lives of the Apostles and primitive Christians, we are furnished with the best examples of its power. The love of Christ constrained them.

In the context, the Apostle is justifying the conduct of himself and his fellow-labourers against the cavils of false and mistaken brethren in the church at Corinth. They had represented their zeal as fanaticism; as the indication of a monomania, that rendered them incompetent to instruct and govern the Church of God in those periods of peril. The Apostle seeks to correct the impressions made by these representations, by stating the principles and the motives that influenced their conduct. "Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause; for the love of Christ constraineth us: because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." It is, we conceive, of little importance, whether we understand the Apostle as referring to the love of Christ for us, or our love to Christ. If the former, it only becomes a motive to devoted effort in his cause, by exciting in our hearts a reciprocal affection. If the latter, (which we think

the Apostle intended when he penned this passage,) it is ever the effect of Christ's love for us.

This affection, my brethren, is the fruit of the Spirit of God; and springs from a spiritual apprehension of the transcendent glory of the Redeemer's person, and from a deep sense of individual obligation to him for his unmerited mercy. It is an affection which seeks its own nourishment, and grows strong and permanent, by daily meditations on the scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary, and by daily communion with its object at a throne of grace. Such was the affection which reigned in the hearts, and governed the lives, of the primitive disciples of our Lord; which bore them onward through trials and persecutions, and led them to count not even their lives dear, in their efforts to bring the world under the holy and peaceful dominion of the Son of God. It was the love of Christ transfusing its purity through their characters, and breathing its sweetness in all their actions, that gave them, under God, their efficiency, and crowned their labours with such abundant success.

It will not then, I trust, be deemed inappropriate to the present occasion, to illustrate, in a few particulars, the adaptation of this affection to our holy vocation; especially as called, by the providence and the grace of God, to sustain an important agency in sending the Gospel of Christ, as the richest boon of heaven, to every creature.

I. In the prosecution of this object, I remark, in the first place, that the love of Christ is an *elevating* affection.

The Missionary enterprise associates mankind, universally, with the destinies of an immortal existence. The results at which it aims lie above and beyond this world, and reach onward through the ages of eternity. It does, indeed, effect the improvement of their condition in this life. But this is only an incidental good. The great, the ultimate, object is, to bring them under an influence from Heaven, that will enlighten and purify their souls, restore them to the knowledge and friendship of God, and prepare them for a deathless existence beyond the grave. This is an object in which most men feel no interest, for which the world at large has no sympathy. It is as far above the designs of its greatest philanthropists as the heavens

are above the earth; and it can be properly appreciated and successfully prosecuted by those alone, whose views, and purposes, and feelings have undergone a corresponding elevation. Such an elevation, my brethren, the love of Christ secures, by bringing us into intimate communion with himself; by destroying, as far as it prevails, every low and selfish purpose; and by identifying our very being with his interests and with his glory.

The tendency of ardent affection is to mould, insensibly, the character to the image of the object loved. It seeks its own gratification in the intimacy of friendship, and dwells with delight on those attributes which have called it into exercise, until the mind yields to their impression. Beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, even from glory to glory. While this affection produces this conformity to the image of Christ, it destroys, as far as it prevails, every selfish purpose, and makes us one with him. It identifies our interests with his interests, our glory with his glory. It elevates the thoughts and purposes of the mind above the current of this world's influences, and associates them with the great objects of the mediatorial reign;—with the scenes and the destinies of eternity, in which that reign will be consummated.

Brethren, the relations and the interests of time will ere long terminate for ever. The fashion of this world is passing away; and soon the last ray of its glory will rest upon the bosom of that dark cloud which comes charged with its final doom. But earth has interests connected with the councils of an eternity that is passed, and with the ages of an eternity to come. Over the ruins of our apostasy the thoughts of the Son of God lingered, before the foundations of the world were laid, or the heavens were stretched abroad as a curtain. Even then, in anticipation of achieving the redemption of man, he rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights were with the sons of men. Immediately on the fall of man he interposed his mediation to arrest the progress of the curse, and to bring the apostate race under a dispensation of mercy, which, in its final consummation, will realize all that infinite benevolence can desire. From that period he has gone forward in the pro-

secution of his plans. For this the world has been upheld in existence. Empires have risen and fallen. Nations have dashed against nations. The earth has been one scene of wild misrule. But over this scene the Son of God has presided, ordering and directing all with unerring skill, for the attainment of his own ends. It was not until he had made, by his sacrifice on the cross, an expiation for sin, and thus laid a sure foundation for his eternal kingdom, that his regal dignity was formally assumed and publicly announced. Then, having spoiled principalities and powers, he visibly ascended, in his glorified humanity, to his throne in heaven. There he now reigns, and will reign, until he has put all enemies under his feet; until he has extended his mild and peaceful sceptre over a redeemed and subjugated world, and accomplished the purposes of infinite benevolence by gathering into his eternal kingdom the multitudes of the saved.

The love of Christ, my brethren, elevates the soul to communion with him in the vast designs of his mediation. He in whose heart it predominates, is absorbed in the greatness and glory of the achievement. To him it is not less real than sublime. He sees around him the agencies that are now in active operation for its accomplishment, and he anticipates the grandeur of its consummation with unhesitating certainty. The relations and the interests of time are lost sight of, and he regards it as his highest honour to be associated with Christ, though in toil, in suffering, and in reproach, in carrying forward his designs. Such is the elevated spirit of our holy enterprise. Such was the spirit of the Apostles and primitive disciples of our Lord. No one can read their lives without admiring their abstraction from the secular interests that surrounded them, and the vivid impressions of eternal realities under which they lived. Though in the world, they were not of the world. They lived above the current of its influences. They gazed upon the visions of eternity. At Jerusalem, at Athens, or at Rome, surrounded by the imposing ceremonies of their ancient faith, by the proudest monuments of art, by academic groves, or by the splendours of the Eternal City, they lost sight of all in the absorbing anticipations of their Redeemer's glory, when he should come to gather into his kingdom the purchase of his

blood, and seal up the doom of the lost. Regardless of reproach and toil, they prayed and wept, and entreated men to fly from the wrath to come, and lay hold on eternal life, as though they were listening to hear the sound of the last trumpet, the wailing of the lost, and the triumphant shout of the glorified. Such was the spirit of faith and love that glowed in their bosoms, that elevated them above the world, and bore them on in the duties of their high calling. In proportion as the Church has possessed this spirit, has she enjoyed the blessings of her exalted Head, and been honoured with success in her efforts to extend his kingdom. May this spirit be ours, brethren, in its largest measure, that we may be prepared to go forward to the achievement of that glorious destiny to which God is now calling his Church.

II. In the second place, the love of Christ is admirably adapted to the peculiar exigencies of the Missionary enterprise, as it is not only an elevating, but also a *self-sacrificing* affection.

It is the nature of love to seek its highest gratification in the happiness of its object. Love lives in the enjoyments it bestows. This is the element of its existence. It delights in occasions of manifesting its strength by the extent of its sacrifices in promoting the good of those that are loved. The eye, brethren, can linger upon nothing more beautiful than the manifestations of this affection. The heart can be subjected to no influence richer in the purest enjoyment. The brightest emanations of Deity, ever contemplated by created minds, are the outgoings of this affection toward our guilty race, by our Lord Jesus Christ. He loved us, and gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for our sins. The gift was the most costly that could be bestowed. The treasures of the universe are nothing in comparison with it. To comprehend its magnitude we must comprehend the nature and resources of the Godhead, for its fulness dwells in him; we must comprehend the infinite delight of his own bosom as he surveyed, from his exalted throne, myriads of holy beings to whom his power had given existence, brightening and exulting in the sunshine of his complacency, pouring forth the song of ecstasy in his praise, and bowing down in solemn adoration at his footstool; and from these celestial heights we must descend through all those stages of deep humiliation, and those scenes of unparalleled sufferings

through which he passed, until, on the cross, he exclaimed, "It is finished," and bowed his head in death. Though there were seasons when, pressed down under his extreme agony, he prayed that, if it were possible, the cup of bitterness might pass from him, he knew from the beginning what he must endure. He knew that poverty, toil, reproach, and persecution, would be his constant attendants; that upon him would be poured the fury of the powers of darkness, and the wrath of offended Heaven; that, smitten, afflicted, and forsaken of God, he must die in untold agonies on the accursed tree. Yet, such was the strength and devotedness of his love, that he willingly came. He delighted to enter upon his work. He pressed forward with holy impatience to the darkest hour of his agony, and bared his own bosom to the sword of eternal justice, that man might be saved. Such, my brethren, is the love of Christ; the grand example, the exalted pattern, after which God will mould, in eternal assimilation to himself, the subjects of his holy kingdom. The minds of the Apostles were absorbed in admiration of this love. In their solitary musings it was the subject of their devout meditations. It was the theme, the burden, of their public ministrations. It woke up in their bosoms a reciprocal affection, that sought its highest gratification in pleasing Christ; and rejoiced in occasions of manifesting its strength and devotedness by the greatness of the sacrifice made in behalf of his cause. For Christ they forsook all. They cheerfully suffered the loss of earthly friendships, riches, and honours; and endured poverty, reproach, sufferings, and death itself. Nay, they gloried in tribulation, and rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ. It was the impulsive influence of this self-sacrificing affection that bore them onward from land to land, and from shore to shore, amid perils the most imminent, though the Holy Ghost bore them witness that bonds and afflictions awaited them wherever they went. But none of these things moved them. No regard for their own personal safety, nor the solicitations of weeping friends, restrained them from pressing forward into thickest dangers where duty called them. They counted not their lives dear unto themselves, that they might finish their course with joy, and the ministry they had received from the Lord Jesus.

Brethren, with this spirit of self-devotedness must the Church be deeply imbued before she will be prepared to discharge her solemn obligations to her ascended Lord. We cannot do what God requires from us in the conversion of the world, abiding in our sealed houses, enjoying the pleasures and luxuries of wealth and refinement. Nor will we approximate to the measure of our responsibility, by offering up a few prayers for the success of Missions, and giving a few dollars of the increase of our substance to aid in sustaining them. The work indeed is the Lord's, and "cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the living God." But now, as ever, the agencies by which he will accomplish this work, he has entrusted to his Church, and upon her has he imposed the solemn responsibility of employing them, in humble dependence on his blessing. Who, as he surveys the moral condition of the world in the light of God's word, of his promises and commands, and contrasts with it the efforts that have been made, or are now making, to reclaim it from its guilt and degradation, is not painfully convinced that the Church, as yet, is far from having any adequate views of the extent of her obligations, or possessing, in any adequate measure, the spirit of her high vocation? If, with her numbers, her wealth, her political and social influence, and the facilities she now enjoys for employing the means ordained of God for the conversion of the world, the Church possessed the same spirit of self-sacrificing devotion to the cause of her Redeemer, which distinguished her primitive members, how soon would she realize the brightest visions of prophecy respecting her future glory! Under the influence of this spirit, ambition, and pride, and the love of worldly ease and pleasure, would disappear. Wealth, now held with a miser's grasp, would be cheerfully consecrated to God. Talent and learning, now devoted to vain speculations in philosophy, and to the bitterness of unhallowed controversy, would be devoted to the affectionate and earnest preaching of the Gospel, in the fulness of its blessings. Thousands and tens of thousands of devoted youth would come from the soul-subduing contemplations of the scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary, with hearts filled with the love of Christ, ready to part with all for his name's sake; to endure toil, suffering, and death itself, if need be, to

make known the provisions of eternal love to a perishing world. Then, from united and believing hearts, importunate supplication would continually ascend to the throne of God for the interposition of his almighty arm, and the communications of his Holy Spirit. That arm would then be made bare for salvation, and that Spirit poured out from on high; and the earth would soon be filled with the knowledge and the glory of the Lord.

III. In the third place, another attribute of this affection which commends it, as peculiarly adapted to the Missionary enterprise, is, that in its greatest strength, and to whatever sacrifice it prompts, it is a *reasonable* affection.

Though, as has been said, it is only when we feel deeply that we act with energy, yet, in order to secure the permanency of such action, our feelings must be sustained by a sound judgment, and meet with an approving response from an enlightened conscience. These are their appointed arbiters; and there are seasons of frequent occurrence in every man's life, however borne forward by strong emotion, when they will vindicate their high prerogatives, and sit in judgment on the character of those affections which excite and control their actions. Unless these affections meet with their decided sanction, there will be misgivings that will cool their fervour, repress their energy, and induce that hesitancy which must ever be fatal to the accomplishment of results embarrassed with difficulties.

The Christian, and especially the Christian Missionary, can have none of the excitements to effort which the world administers to its votaries. To him it is of the utmost importance that the motives which induce him to enter upon his self-denying, and often perilous, career, should be sustained in those seasons of retirement, when, thrown back on his own sober reflections, they undergo the scrutiny of a sound judgment and an enlightened conscience.

The love of power and the prospect of earthly renown feed the fires of unhallowed ambition, and nerve the soul with energy in the prosecution of difficult and dangerous enterprises. The field of battle is the field of earthly glory. There, amid the perils of the conflict, are displayed those energies of mind which, with stern composure, control the fury and direct the storm of war; and the proud and haughty bearing of the victor

shows that he is conscious of the world's admiration, though he has crushed beneath his feet every sentiment of justice, and every feeling of humanity. But the Christian toils in obscurity. He wastes his energies in unremitting effort to do good, without attracting the notice of the world. He tears himself from home, from kindred, from the sympathies and the privileges of Christian society; goes to unfriendly climes, seeks an abode among the dark and degraded Heathen; and, exposed to the most imminent dangers, he toils, and suffers, and dies, that he may bring them the knowledge of salvation, and direct them in the way of life. But no trumpet heralds his fame. No garlands are wreathed to deck his brow. No festive board is spread as the tribute of admiration for his self-denying deeds of beneficence. Reproach instead of honour, denunciation as a madman or a fool, are the only rewards bestowed by an ungodly and a misjudging world. Even from the bosom of the Church, where he had a right to look for that sympathy and that encouragement which are his sweetest earthly solace, he sometimes meets with a repulsive apathy, far worse than direct opposition. Thus is he thrown for support on his own deep and sober conviction of the reasonableness of the motive by which he has been actuated, and his confidence of its approval at the bar of God. This conviction, and this confidence, brethren, will not fail to yield their support, if the love of Christ has been his constraining motive. In this hour of its greatest trial, and under the severest scrutiny, it will receive the sanction of reason, and meet with the approving response of conscience. The more calmly the Christian weighs the claims of his Saviour, the deeper will be the conviction of his obligation, and the more reasonable will appear that affection which constrains him to withhold nothing, but cheerfully to consecrate his all to his blessed service. In those seasons of sober reflection, it is not what is given, but what is withheld, that troubles an enlightened conscience. To be entirely relieved from perplexing embarrassments, and fears, and doubts; and enjoy the fulness of that liberty with which Christ blesses his people, the heart must let go its hold on everything else, and cling to him in the strength of his love. Then the conflict between the convictions of duty and the power of selfishness and unbelief

ceases; and there is peace, quietness, and assurance for ever. Never was there a cup of cold water given, from love to him, without its reward: and the greater the sacrifice we make, the more will his consolations abound in the soul. "There is no man, that hath left house, or parent, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come, life everlasting."

With what striking and beautiful illustrations of this truth are we furnished in the biographies of our Missionaries. Sometimes, brethren, when I have thought of them as far off, surrounded only by the darkness and degradation of Heathenism, suffering every privation, toiling from year to year under every outward discouragement, with no friendly voice to animate them, and no sympathizing bosom on which to repose their aching heads, in the hour of despondency and gloom;—when I have thought of the delicate, the refined, the enlightened female Missionary, the dew of her youth wasted in ceaseless anxieties and unremitted toil;—when I have followed her in my imagination to some secluded spot to which she is wont to retire, perhaps in the stillness of the evening hour, to think of her home, and to recall the looks and the affections of those from whom she is separated until they meet beyond the vale of death, where parting is unknown;—and when I have there witnessed the deep convulsive throes of her heart, while the tears chase each other over her pale and care-worn cheeks;—I have said in my haste, "It is too much. Can, *does* God require it?" But when I have read of their love for their work, and how their consolations abounded in the midst of their trials;—when I have read of their holy enjoyment in God, of their sweet peace of mind, of their ardent aspirations after heaven, as faith unfolded to their enraptured vision the brightness of its glory;—when I have read of their composed, of their peaceful and triumphant, deaths, and thought of the unfading brilliancy of that crown which shall encircle their brows;—I have said, "It is *not* a vain thing to serve the Lord: whatever sacrifices it involves, its rewards are infinitely preferable to earth's highest honours and purest pleasures."

IV. In the fourth place, the love of Christ is an affection

peculiarly adapted to the exigencies of the Missionary enterprise, as it is the bond of union among the followers of the Redeemer, and thus prepares them for efficient co-operation in the advancement of his kingdom.

Union to Christ, and their participation, in common, of one spirit from him as their living head, is the only firm and enduring bond among his people. To those thus united to Christ, he is the common foundation on which they all rest, as lively stones, in one spiritual temple. He is the vine to whom all adhere as branches, receiving from him those vital influences by which they live, and grow, and bring forth the fruits of righteousness. He is the common object of their faith, their hope, and their love. In his cause centres all their interests, and his glory is the end at which they all aim. The one spirit they receive from Christ is pre-eminently the spirit of holy love. It uproots, as far as it prevails, the pride and selfishness of the human heart. It abolishes private and separate interests, and unites them in cheerful and self-denying efforts to advance the kingdom of their common Saviour.

The manifestation of this spirit is among the means ordained of God to convince men of the divinity of the Gospel. It illustrates more than anything visible, its power over the otherwise unconquerable dominion of human depravity; and it demonstrates its heavenly origin by bringing the victims of this depravity from the collisions and strifes of pride, and selfishness, and lust, into one peaceful brotherhood of holy love.

How intensely was the heart of Christ fixed on this union among his people! It was the burden of this petition, in his last prayer for his Church: "Neither," says he, "pray I for these alone, but those also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they all may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou hast given me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; that the world may know that thou hast sent me."

Can we hope, brethren, for the conversion of the world to God while the Christian Church presents the spectacle it now

does; organized into various sections, whose separate interests, sometimes advanced even by artifice and slander, are guarded with sleepless vigilance? While the professed friends of Jesus, instead of combining their efforts to advance the common cause, are marching under the banners of party rivalship, and exhausting their strength by mutual hostilities?

At the close of the last century, when Christians first began to unite their efforts for advancing the kingdom of their Redeemer, it seemed to some, in the ardour of Christian hope, as the very dawn of the millennium. "Astonishing spectacle!" said one at that time, "the spell of party is broken; the antipathies of the cradle expire; the strife of ages ceases; and a sweeter harmony of heart and of measures is produced in an hour, than has been granted to the entreaties, the labours, and the prayers of the best men for centuries."* O, that this union, so auspiciously commenced, had been permitted to go on until consummated in that blessed result for which the Saviour wept, and prayed, and died! But, alas! after the expiration of nearly half a century, what do we witness in portions, at least, of the Church of Christ? The spell of party and antipathies of the cradle are revived; and the strife of ages is renewed; and the fond anticipations of pious hope are blasted by the bitter animosities and strifes that have been engendered by the ambitions and the violent, who, regardless of the prayer of the Redeemer, have torn asunder the cords of Christian union, and given occasion to the common enemy to glory over the wasted and ruined heritage of God.

Among the fallacies which the arch-deceiver has imposed upon the minds of some, in this divided and weakened condition of the Church, is the *one*, that separate and sectarian action will effect more for the conversion of the world, than the combined efforts of the consecrated host of God. It is unnecessary to suggest even an argument in confutation of a position so at variance with the whole genius and spirit of Christianity, with the dictates of sound discretion, and with the experience of ages. Is it too severe a judgment to affirm, in regard to such

* Sermon of the Rev. J. M. Mason, preached 1797, before the New York Missionary Society.

an opinion, that it is the spirit of party, seeking its own justification by virtually repudiating the magnanimous spirit of Christian love?

There is, brethren, but one remedy for all these evils in the Church of God. It is the love of Christ shed abroad in the hearts of its members by the Holy Ghost given unto them. United to Christ in the bonds of this pure affection, we shall be united to each other. Individual and sectarian feelings and interests will all be merged into that love which "seeketh not her own," but the things of Jesus Christ. Then the prayer of the Redeemer will be answered; and, one in affection, one in purpose, and one in effort, the living members of his spiritual body, his Church, will go forth in the spirit of might to accomplish the predicted glory of Zion.

V. In the fifth place, this affection is of the utmost importance in accomplishing the great object of our association, as it involves a spirit of holy dependence on Christ, and of earnest believing prayer for his blessing.

Love is a confiding affection. The Christian in whose heart the love of Christ glows, delights in reposing on the almighty arm of his Saviour, and in seeking directly from him the blessing he desires, and giving him all the glory in their reception and enjoyment.

It is, my brethren, a question of great practical importance, whether, in this age of comparative zeal and benevolence for the spread of the Gospel, there is cherished in the hearts of Christians, that deep sense of dependence on God, and that habit of holy, earnest, believing prayer in secret, which are essential to secure that blessing, without which all the efforts of the Church must be in vain. While there is a beautiful consistency and harmony, according to the economy of grace, between the spirit of unceasing and laborious activity in the cause of Christ, and the spirit of entire dependence on him, and earnest believing prayer; yet it cannot be disguised, that, owing to the imperfection of Christian character, we need to watch constantly, lest, in the cultivation of the one, we overlook the other. The Apostles united both. They gave themselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word. Unceasing and self-sacrificing as were their labours, it was with

them a practical truth, that pressed with all its weight upon their hearts, that, whosoever planted and whosoever watered, God must give the increase. They felt, that of themselves they could do nothing; that all the instrumentalities they employed, though mighty through God, to the pulling down of the strongholds of Satan, and building up the kingdom of Jesus Christ, were feeble, were weakness itself, without his co-operation. With what confidence, then, must they have reposed on the arm of their almighty Saviour, as they girded themselves for the conflict, and went forth to contend not merely against flesh and blood, not merely against the organized forms of evil on earth, but “against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” With what holy importunity must they have borne on their agonizing hearts, before a throne of grace, the cause of a world perishing in sin. They prayed without ceasing. They continued instant in prayer. They went from their knees to their work, and intermitted that work only to seek the blessing of God, their Redeemer, in prayer. This, unquestionably, was one principal cause of their success. They prayed like Jacob when he wrestled with the Angel of the Covenant, and would not let him go without the blessing. They prayed like Abraham when he pleaded for Sodom, and prevailed with God.

The same spirit of earnest prayer was a striking characteristic of the Reformers. The age of the Reformation was an age of mighty intercession with God. And the whole burden of prophecy intimates that the Church will be deeply imbued with this spirit as she enters upon her millennial glory. What can be accomplished, brethren, without the arm of the Almighty? and what can we not achieve if that arm be made bare for salvation? The results that have been already secured are the earnestness of what he is willing to grant. When the people of God, reposing with unlimited and affectionate confidence on the arm of their almighty Saviour, and pressing his throne with their ceaseless supplications, go unitedly forward, in the spirit of self-devotement to the work of their high calling, how soon will they exclaim, in holy astonishment at the result of their own efforts, “Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as doves to

their windows?" "Then," says God, "thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee."

Finally, brethren, the love of Christ is an affection adapted to the great objects of our association, as it is itself the essential element of successful effort.

"Knowledge is power," is the saying of one of the most gifted of mankind. But a greater than Bacon has taught, and demonstrated, too, that love is power. The Author of our being has interwoven with the very fibres of our existence a strong susceptibility to its influence. Depravity must, indeed, have wrought a fearful ruin in the soul that is steeled against its impressions in every form. It may be doubted whether such a monster is permitted to live in this world, as yet the scene of moral probation. Before such a consummation takes place, the soul is removed to those dark regions where malignity reigns unrestrained, and despair, with raven wings, broods over his immortal destiny. Go where you will, among the most debased, the outcasts of mankind, and you will find, amid the ruins that sin has affected in their moral natures, there still lingers a chord responsive to the manifestations of goodness. Nay, where reason itself is dethroned, and the darkest images of horror haunt the mind, or maniac rage distorts the features, the love of kindness has subdued the soul to gentleness, and won the heart to confidence and gratitude. It was this that gave to Howard his power over the reckless and the violent. Beneath his look of benignity the heart of the hardened convict relented, and at his voice of kindness the dawn of hope gleamed over the sullen gloom of the desperate in wretchedness. What influence has wrought that wonderful, that almost miraculous, reformation among the inebriates of our land? Our statute-books are crowded with penal enactments against the drunkard. Society frowned indignantly upon his vice. The respectable loathed his appearance, and turned him with disgust from their doors. Argument and expostulation were tried in vain, until the friends of temperance, wearied with their fruitless efforts, gave over the confirmed inebriate to a hopeless doom. But love interposed. She sought, with tears of pity, the poor

degraded outcast in the dens of pollution and infamy. She took him from the loathsome gutter, and addressed him with the voice of kindness. She whispered hope to his heart, inspired him with confidence, and thus redeemed him from his degradation, and restored him to respectability and usefulness.

Amid the ruins of the fall, the susceptibility to the power of love remains in the human soul, to save it, by the grace of God, from utter abandonment, and bring it back again, under the dominion of holiness, that it may eventually be prepared for the purity and bliss of heaven. It has not with more eloquence than truth been observed, that, "God, who knew what was in man, seems to have known that in his dark bosom there was but one solitary hold that he had on him; and that to reach it he must put on a look of graciousness, and tell us he had no pleasure in our death, and manifest towards us the longings of a bereaved parent, and even to humble himself into a suppliant in the cause of our return, and bid his messengers bear, through all their habitations, the tidings of his good-will to the children of men.—And now that every barrier which lay across the path of acceptance is levelled by the power of Him who travailed in the greatness of his strength for us, is the voice of a friendly and beseeching God lifted up without reserve in the hearing of us all; and this one mighty principle of attraction is brought to bear upon our natures, that might have remained sullen and unmoved under every other application." * And, brethren, with a congruity so like God, he has entrusted the publication of his loving-kindness not to angels' lips, of burning eloquence, but to the children of depravity and wretchedness, whose hearts have been won and subdued and blessed by the power of this love, that from the fulness of their own experience they might testify of its truth and richness to their brethren in depravity and wretchedness. Then it is, when, subdued and burdened with a sense of their personal obligation to their Saviour, they go, as redeemed sinners, to speak of his infinite goodness, to commend him as the hope of the guilty and the wretched, and urge them with tears of tenderness and love to confide in his mercy; then it is that their words find their way to the hearts

* Dr Chalmers.

of their hearers, subdue them to penitence, warm them into love, excite them to confidence in God, and fill them with holy peace. And when the hearts of the Ministers and members of the Church of Jesus Christ are bathed in the pure fountain of a Saviour's love; when they live, and pray, and preach, and labour under its constraining influences; it will not be long before, from the mount of God, they rejoice with joy unspeakable over a redeemed and regenerated world.

If these things be so, beloved brethren; if I have not unduly estimated the importance and adaptation of this holy affection to our high vocation (especially as called by the providence and grace of God) to sustain an important agency in sending the Gospel to every creature, then it only remains that I urge you, not forgetting my own obligations, to cultivate this holy affection. How numerous and how solemn the motives that press upon us this duty! The claims of that Saviour who loved us, and gave himself for us; the vows we have made before God and man; the condition of a perishing world; the signs of the times; the shortness of life; the approaching retributions of eternity, and the importance of being fully qualified to achieve, under God, the high destiny to which we are individually called,—all, all urge us to cherish the love of Christ in our hearts, as the controlling motive of our lives, and to devote ourselves unceasingly to the advancement of his kingdom.

Brethren, there is one thought connected with this subject to which, I trust, the occasion will justify me in alluding. We are not left without the most delightful examples of the power of this sacred love to incite us to its cultivation: and the place where we are now assembled, on this return of our anniversary, brings to our remembrance the names of many* who here imbibed this spirit, until, constrained by it, they tore themselves away from their weeping friends and kindred, to go and carry to the benighted Heathen the tidings of salvation. There are few places where we could meet with so many hearts, connected by the most tender recollections, and the most solemn associ-

* The city of Norwich, and its immediate vicinity, has furnished twenty-eight Missionaries to the Heathen.

ations, with our holy enterprise. There are many here, honoured of God, who have resigned the cherished objects of their fondest earthly love to the claims of Christ and the Heathen. Some of these are now in the field of labour, bearing with cheerfulness the burden and heat of the day; while others, having finished their work, have been called to their reward in heaven. The very places consecrated by the prayers and tears of these devoted servants of God, where, constrained by a Saviour's love, they first gave themselves to the cause of Missions, are full of interest. Around these places we could linger, musing on their bright example, until we caught a portion of their spirit, and were excited to emulate their devotedness.

But, brethren, there are places and scenes of far deeper interest, that invite our attention. It is among the deep shades of Gethsemane, and at the foot of the cross on Calvary, that we must linger, and meditate, and pray. It is here, in the contemplation of the love of Christ for us; a love, the height, the depth, the length, and the breadth of which, no finite mind can measure, that we must learn to estimate the extent of our obligations, and imbibe the spirit which will prepare us to act our parts in achieving the vast results of his mediatorial reign. Toils and sufferings, in the prosecution of our work, may be ours. We may not see what our eyes long to see, before our lips are sealed in death, and our bodies descend into the grave. But the kingdom of the Redeemer shall be triumphant. The diadem of the nations shall adorn his brow. At his feet shall bow a ransomed world; and in the day of his glory, among the myriads of the blessed, as they ascend, with the shout of triumph, to the kingdom prepared for them from the foundations of the world, shall all appear who have here yielded their hearts to the constraining influence of his love.

DISCOURSE VI.

MORAL FREEDOM CONFERRED ONLY BY
THE GOSPEL.*

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JOHN viii. 36.

“If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

IN this world truth and error are struggling for victory. The field of contest is the human intellect. The prize contended for is man, immortal man; and it is his destiny either to be bound for ever in the chains of error, or to be led forth in eternal freedom and glory by the hand of truth. From the earliest times, this conflict has been going on; the war is still waging; nor will it cease, until delusion shall loose its hold of the human mind, and the kingdom of truth and righteousness be established throughout the earth. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, coming from heaven, brought the truth to men, in order to liberate them from the miserable bondage of sin. It is implied in his instructions, connected with the text, that all other supposed methods of freeing men from the servitude of error and iniquity are ineffectual. “If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” The point here set before us is, that THE GOSPEL IS THE ONLY POWER WHICH CAN DISENTHRAL ENSLAVED MAN, AND BESTOW UPON HIM THE FREEDOM OF HOLINESS AND JOY.

I. In attempting to establish this position, I shall first consider the inadequacy of the other influences which have been supposed to have an important bearing on the welfare of the world.

1. The power of *civilization* is feeble in the contest with

* Preached before the American Board of Foreign Missions.

moral and natural evil. Although the contrast is very striking between a barbarous and civilized state, and although the descriptions which have been given of the Arcadian simplicity and innocence of the children of nature have been found to be mere romance; yet the blessings of civilization are often very limited, and fail to remove the evils by which the family of man are afflicted. In the result of civilization we may see the deep spirit of revenge and the secret blow of retaliation yielding to the power of law. Many domestic and social virtues may spring up. Many conveniences and luxuries, before untasted, may be enjoyed. But civilization has not the effect of removing the most cruel superstition and degrading idolatry. The most refined of the nations of antiquity were worshippers of gods of every name and form, often with rites of indescribable turpitude. The very governments themselves which had been established supported idolatry, and bound the people to it by chains which could be broken only by the power of God. Even now there are nations highly civilized, where yet the people are the wretched thralls of superstition and the most deplorable idolatry.

Besides this, there have prevailed, and still prevail, among civilized states, very gross and flagrant vices; and sometimes enormous crimes are tolerated. The government established is, perhaps, a grinding tyranny; and, although the subject may be shielded against injuries from a fellow-subject, yet all may be in the power of a proud master, accustomed to indulge his passions without restraint and without fear. What can be more wonderful than to see civilized nations punishing with merited death the midnight assassin, or solitary murderer, and yet eagerly, and for slight occasions, arraying themselves for battle,—rushing upon each other with hideous shouts, with the ferocity of wild beasts, and the malignity of devils, and in the shock falling together by thousands in miserable death? What can be more astonishing than this, excepting that the civilized survivors agree to obliterate from their minds the thought of *murder*, and speak only of noble bearing, and heroic resistance, and glorious victory? Yet such has been the custom of civilized nations in all ages.

2. The progress of *mechanical ingenuity* is incompetent to secure the happiness of the human family. Never has the

power of mind over matter been so wonderfully displayed as in the present age. The elements are now made to perform, with the greatest rapidity, the work which was formerly done by the slow and tedious labour of human hands. The superintendence of one, with the aid of water and fire, now brings out results which formerly required the toil of thousands. Millions of little wheels, apparently self-moved, are spinning the threads which, by shuttles, seemingly thrown by invisible hands, are woven into the finest webs. The old method of travelling by the fleetness of horses is going out of repute, and three or four times the former speed is now gained by the power of steam. Whether the same power will unyoke our oxen from the plough we are not yet able to determine. Many, however, are cherishing high hopes of the improvement of the human race from the progress of mechanical philosophy. It has been thought that human hands will be so freed from the necessity of labour, that ample leisure will be furnished to the great mass of mankind for intellectual culture, and thus that a new aspect will be given to the condition of the world. Will these hopes be realized?

The accumulation and general diffusion of wealth in the community will indeed release many hands from labour; but the leisure enjoyed may be abused to purposes of luxurious and criminal indulgence, and *will be*, without the restraint of moral and religious principle. Besides, there are very obvious limits to this anticipated release from manual industry. Almost all the hundreds of millions who are nourished on the earth, are dependent for their food on the careful, toiling hand of agriculture. The ground must be cultivated; the seeds cast into the furrow; the fruits of harvest gathered. Mechanical improvements will not repeal the sentence passed upon man,—“Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life: thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground.”

Were it possible to release all men from the necessity of labour, would there be any reason to hope that the amount of happiness would be increased? In the present state of society,

who is the most virtuous, and who partakes most fully of earthly felicity,—the man of wealth and leisure, or the industrious husbandman? Should we survey the manners of the idle masters of slaves in the tropical climates, could we think that they are as uncontaminated, pure, and virtuous, as the hardy cultivators of the soil where slavery is unknown?

It may well be doubted whether, with the present relative power of virtue and vice in the world, there would be any moral advantage in the diminution of the necessity of labour. If the man of leisure is likely to suffer his faculties to rust in indolence; or if, when excited to action, his course is likely to be ungoverned and disastrous; it were better for him and for the community that he should be subjected to constant and innocent toil. If, however, while mechanical philosophy shall create leisure for men, they shall be taught to live for objects for which only life is of any value, then the influence of mechanism, or of labour-saving inventions and improvements, will be favourable to the world. But in mere leisure, by reason of the easy supply of physical wants,—in leisure unguided and unemployed in wise, mental, and moral pursuits,—there is no promise of good.

3. The influence of *general education*, and the prevalence of *free institutions*, through the earth, however important, will not alone secure the happiness of man. Never, perhaps, was there so great confidence as at the present moment in the power of education. When the unthinking people shall be roused to thought, and their wild, uninstructed children shall be trained up in various useful branches of learning, then, it has been supposed, the golden age will come. There are, doubtless, important effects which would result from the general diffusion of knowledge. Men, now ground to the dust, if they become enlightened, and discern their natural rights, and perceive how they have been despoiled of them, will no longer bear the yoke of debasing servitude. Old and flagrant abuses will cease to be tolerated. Could all the inhabitants of Europe be made intelligent, and have before them in distinct vision the miserable degradation to which so many are reduced,—not by any necessity of nature, but by the sensuality, the vanity, the pride, the ambition of their rulers, and particularly by the spirit of

war, which in the last fifty years has expended five thousand millions of dollars, and which annually extorts from them five hundred millions of dollars for the support of the pageantry and murder of several millions of soldiers,—think you that they would approve of a system which overwhelms them with the most oppressive taxes? Think you that half a million of intelligent, undeluded, unenslaved men would, at the call of a demon-spirit, march into the wilds of Russia, to perish by cold, and famine, and the avenging sword? Could the beams of knowledge be poured upon the mind of the Turk, would he any longer, cheerfully, and as a matter of duty, yield his neck to the Sultan's scimitar? or would he not be likely to strike for liberty? But oppression is only one of the evils to which the family of man is subjected; and such is the condition of the world, that sometimes submission to injustice is a matter of prudence, and resistance often aggravates the misery which it aims to remove.

In countries already free, useful knowledge may easily be diffused among the people, and great improvements may be made in the methods of education; but perhaps with an entire failure of the grand anticipated results. If with the culture of the mind there should be no culture of the heart; if a moral and religious influence is to be banished from our schools and colleges; if man, an immortal being, shall study only the laws of the material world, and overlook his relation to God and to the scenes of eternity; if he is taught everything excepting that which it is ineffably the most important that he should understand; then we shall find that a new and terrible energy is given to unholy passion, and, although knowledge is power, that undirected, misapplied, perverted power is an object of dread.

For the advantages of *civil liberty* in our country we have great occasion of gratitude to God. Our rulers proceed from ourselves, and are responsible to the people. The Church is distinct from the State. Our Ministers of religion are not idle shepherds, who care not for the flock, yet clothe themselves with the fleece, dyed in scarlet. Our Ministers, happily for our country, are *working men*; not working in the cause of superstition and delusion, but in the cause of the people, and

in the cause of God; and every man is allowed to worship God agreeably to the dictates of his own conscience, and is under no compulsion to support any form of religion whatever. The Jew and the Mohammedan may live among us undisturbed; the Infidel and the Atheist have nothing to fear, excepting from truth, and their own conscience, and God. Never can we be sufficiently grateful to Heaven that we behold the temple of liberty rising in fair proportions, capacious, easy of access, an asylum to the oppressed of all nations. But while the people are free from external restraint, are they also free from the malignant influence of party, and the sway of unholy passions? Is there not something else necessary to their happiness besides the knowledge and enjoyment of their natural rights, and the protection of the most perfect government on the face of the earth? Have we not seen, and do we not see, in our country exemplified and verified, the maxim, that "party or faction is the madness of many for the benefit of a few?" We are apt to attach great importance to the party distinctions which have prevailed since the adoption of the federal constitution. The success or the defeat of a particular party has been thought to have a decided bearing on the welfare of the community, and the great interests of republican liberty. But on this point listen to an eminent statesman, who says, "Our collisions of principle have been little, very little, more than conflicts for place." Such is the humiliating result of the experience and observation, for forty years, of one who has witnessed all the conflicts of party, and has occupied the highest place in the government of the United States.

If this be a true account of the past, then is it not probable that, unless some new influence be felt, the future will resemble it; and that hereafter, as heretofore, the earnest struggles of party will be struggles for office? Our citizens will be arrayed against each other for bitter conflict; but the end will be like that of most of the wars which have ravaged the earth,—after the battle is over, at the expense of the hardships and sufferings of the combatant dupes and slaves, a few men, their leaders and masters, reap all the little honour and profit of the warfare. Were this evil remediless, it were idle to dwell upon it: but a cure may be found in the diffusion of *moral and religious*

instruction, in connexion with literary and scientific improvement. Let there be a firm and immovable principle of Christian virtue, conjoined with intelligence, among the people, and they will prefer the triumph of right to that of party, and they will ask for no other victory but that of truth. A calm and virtuous mind will detect the imposture of the pretended patriot, who speaks much of the public good, meaning only his own. To the man of covetousness and greedy ambition, what is the peace of the community? what are the great interests of morality and order, of virtue and religion? The welfare of the people is the pretence, the lure; but self is the moving power. Let the people be disciplined in virtue; let a spirit of mutual kindness and goodwill govern them, instead of a spirit of scorn, and hatred, and defiance; and they will not suffer themselves to become the instruments by which the unprincipled and worthless may lift themselves to office and power. Let them unite virtue with intelligence; and then will wholesome laws be uniformly carried into effect.

But were the energy of our laws always sustained; were our Magistrates always men of upright, noble, disinterested views, having no aim but the public welfare; what is the amount of good which would spring from this perfection of government but this,—that the facilities of procuring a subsistence, or of acquiring wealth, are increased, and that the people are protected in the enjoyment of their rights? Let it be that a good government will shield from injustice the lowest as well as the highest; let it be that such a government will shut out the losses, the corrupting influence, the desolating miseries, of war. But can government stay the destroying plague, which, in its march from India, has trampled on the lives of fifty millions, and has come to our shores? Or can government stay the prevalence of error and vice which infects our whole atmosphere, predisposing and preparing victims for eternal death? No. This freedom from sin and consequent misery is not the direct result of government; but of the truth of God. The Gospel must come with its purifying energy to the hearts of mankind, or the deadly plague of sin will still prevail, and continue to people hell with its victims.

4. The confidence, which is placed in *philosophy* for the

advancement of human happiness, will be found fallacious. If even the general education of the people will not of itself secure the public welfare; what shall we think of those grand anticipations of human improvement and perfectibility which are founded upon the progress of science among the learned? Are they anything more than the creations of fancy? The most learned nations, nations which have been the most prolific of philosophers, have not always been the most virtuous and happy. Science has ever been attended with a corruption of manners. It might be an error to regard them as bearing the relation of cause and effect. Both may have a common origin in a high degree of civilization and national prosperity, affording, on the one side, leisure and opportunity for intellectual culture in minds eager for philosophical inquiry; and, on the other side, furnishing scope for depraved and degrading indulgence. Who is not aware, that some of the most learned men have been abandoned to enormous vices? And who is not aware also, that, among nations holding a proud rank in science, the moral virtues have been, like the plants in a sandy desert, rarely seen, and, when seen, struggling for life in the arid plain and under a parching sun?

Of all the sciences of the present day the most boastful as to its effect on human happiness is *political economy*. Its aim is the production and distribution of wealth: but is wealth the highest good of man? Let it be, that this science may lead to the abrogation of many absurd laws, which put chains upon human activity, and may teach the few, who have leisure for its study, to add wisely to their individual wealth. But can political economy ever abrogate the law of God, which is stamped upon the condition of man, and which subjects him to the necessity of procuring his bread by the sweat of his face? Can the six hundred millions of men live without food, and clothing, and habitations? And will the stubborn earth yield its fruit, without human labour, at the call of political economy? or, while the hand of man is idle, will the prolific ocean deliver its funny tribes upon the shore for our subsistence? Though the wheel and the loom may move without human power, yet can the materials for clothing be raised by the magic of science? or will the rocks, and the clay, and the trees of the forest fashion

themselves into houses for indolent, happy man? Political economy has for a few years past been the pride of Great Britain. What has it effected? Let the ten thousands of the degraded and starving population of Britain, who have been poured upon our shores in pursuit of work and of bread, bear witness.

It is *metaphysical philosophy*, which peculiarly and emphatically claims the name of philosophy, and which in different ages has called forth the utmost efforts of men of the most powerful intellect. If the truth makes men free, how can philosophy have any effect in promoting the liberation of man, unless it be true? And what has been the character of human philosophy? What has been its relation to truth? What have been the proud *theories*, which learned, contemplative men have constructed by the toil of years, and what have been most of the celebrated *schools*, which have succeeded each other from age to age, down even to the present day, but theories and schools of error and folly? What shall we think of the system of Pantheism, which makes all nature, all worlds, every plant and animal, a part of God? and what of the opposite system, which asserts, in the metaphysical language, an *absolute unity*, exclusive of all plurality, and which regards the world as having merely a shadowy existence, and our relation to it as an illusion? Yet for these theories have learned philosophers in different ages contended,—for a world without a God and a Creator, or for a God without a world; for a visible God to the denial of spirit, or for an invisible God to the denial of matter.

What shall we think of a philosophy which wastes its strength in the discussion of *ideas* as the eternal essence of things residing in absolute intelligence, and as general existences, which make the foundation of all true knowledge? Yet such was the philosophy of Plato, which still clouds the minds of many learned men. What shall we think of the philosophy which asserts that pain is no evil? or of that which says that motion is impossible, and that nothing is certain except its own scepticism? What shall we think of the philosophy which asserts that all human volitions result from causes beyond the control of man, who is thus made a machine, instead of being a

moral agent, and which infers that man has no occasion for the sentiment of remorse, and cannot be exposed to future punishment? Yet such is the doctrine of modern Socinianism, and of ancient Materialism. The same philosophy is that of Kapila in India, maintaining that our determination or volition, which we imagine to be free, is only a necessary effect; thus subjecting man to Fatalism. We might let huge errors or absurdities pass unnoticed, were they harmless; but if philosophical theories, which God permits in order to humiliate the pride of reason, are perilous to morals and religion, then it is time to examine the foundations on which they are built. If the ancient Atomists deduced from the doctrine of Fatalism consequences unfriendly to virtue; if the same consequences were deduced by the Materialists of India; if the Infidels of France and Great Britain have as an inference denied the guilt of man or transferred it to God; if Socinianism concludes confidently, that the Necessarian has no cause for self-reproach; and if modern Universalism, in its influence blasting to morals and piety, derives all the nourishment at its root from the conceit that God absolutely and irresistibly forms every man's sinful character; then surely they who hold to the doctrine of necessity must have a difficult task to prove, that all these conclusions, in which men of different ages, and nations, and intellect, and moral character have concurred, are really illegitimate deductions; and that man, though bound in chains of iron, walks forth unshackled, free, and moveable as the air of heaven.

The present most distinguished philosopher in France, after describing the succession of what he deems the four great and best systems, into which the philosophy of every age may be resolved, *sensualism*, *idealism*, *scepticism*, and *mysticism*,—all, in his opinion, very good and useful, though in part erroneous,—comes to this conclusion, which strikes as with a thunderbolt the pretensions of philosophy,—“Error is the law of our nature; we are condemned to error; and in all our opinions, in all our words, there is a great mixture of error, and even of absurdity.” Such is the sentence which the eloquent Lecturer at Paris pronounces upon the host of philosophers who have preceded him for three thousand years. His own attempt to present an eclectic system in which the wheat is winnowed from

the chaff, shows very clearly that his sentence upon others is not inapplicable to himself. Such is the judgment of a distinguished metaphysical philosopher: "Error is the law of our nature." But Jesus Christ says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. He that believeth in me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

After examining the history of philosophy in the different ages of the world, one is constrained to believe, that, by the wild, contradictory, incredible, monstrous philosophical systems which have risen one upon the ruins of another, it has been the purpose of Providence to "stain the pride" of human reason, and to show to the universe that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." The mere philosophy of man is thus brought into contempt, that the revelation from God might be honoured, and that men might see the wisdom of receiving, with the docility and the implicit confidence of children, the instructions which their omniscient Father has given them.

The conclusion from this survey of philosophy is this,—We must come to the Bible as the fountain of moral and religious wisdom. When the Scriptures are proved to be the word of God, and the plain, obvious meaning of the revelation from heaven is unfolded; when the truth is thus brought to the mind of the sinner; then, and then only, can we hope to see the blessings of salvation descend upon the soul. Philosophy is powerless in this work of saving. If it does not lead down to hell, it can never guide up to heaven. The Bible, the Bible only, contains the true philosophy which, accompanied by the divine Spirit, reconciles man to God, changes the depraved character into the form of excellence, and conducts the poor child of mortality through the dark valley of death to mansions of eternal light and glory.

5. The general happiness of the world can never be secured by *irreligion*, nor by any erroneous and *corrupt form of religion*.

What has been accomplished by *Atheism* and *Infidelity* for the benefit of mankind? You may learn by looking at ancient Rome, when the restraints of superstition were loosened by the prevalence of the atheistic system: for soon the general dissolution of manners destroyed the foundations of public order,

and despotic power rose upon the ruins. From the horrors of the Revolution in France, at the close of the last century, it is impossible to separate the systems of Atheism and Infidelity, which, by the banishment of all moral restraints, had prepared the minds of men for every enormity of crime. A decided and thorough spirit of irreligion pervaded the people. Infidelity extinguished the fear of God; it resigned conscience to passion; it rescued no victim from the bloodthirsty aspirant; nor lifted a voice of mercy against the ferocious madness of the times. No. It is not by denying a God, a Providence, a future reckoning, an eternal judgment, that the dagger is wrested from the hand of the assassin; that property is secured against the grasp of covetousness; and that the pollution of universal lust is changed into purity and honour. There must be a divine law, of unchanging rectitude, and a stern sanction, which is competent to bend the iron sinew of pride, and to bring the terrors of eternal justice to bear upon the solicitations of appetite, and the otherwise ungovernable energies of passion.

Infidelity in Great Britain and America is seen in a different point of view from the public theatre on which it was displayed in France; its appropriate influence is to be sought in the professed principles and in the more private lives of the masters of the school. In their lives we shall find either degrading vices and crimes, or a dearth of the great and generous virtues; and in their doctrines we shall find loose moral instructions, accommodated to the unholy passions of the heart, and designed to fortify the depraved spirit in its hostility to the pure and perfect law of God. It has been manifested and proved to the world, that the system of Infidelity, by denying the righteous government of God, and the rewards and punishments of eternity, subverts the foundation of morals; that it breaks down the distinction between right and wrong, substituting every man's variable judgment in the place of the immutable standard of Heaven; that under powerful temptations to crime, arising from insatiable cupidity or raging ambition, it removes, if there be a prospect of present impunity, all restraint; and that it cherishes an absorbing egotism or vanity, an unpitiful ferocity, and an unbridled sensuality, by the indulgence of which the tranquillity and happiness of society are laid waste.

Paganism is the great parent of iniquity and of unutterable abominations among several hundreds of millions of the human family. Shall we ask for truth, for instance, from the religion of India? Among the sects of the Brahminic system, to which shall we apply? Shall we ask the followers of Vishnu, of Sheeva, or of Bramha? The voice that responds to us will speak of numerous forms and incarnations of male and female gods; of successive annihilations and reproductions of all created existence, including the gods; of interminable and ridiculous fables; and of idolatrous and shameless worship, which in a Christian country cannot even be named. Shall we ask for virtue, purity, goodness, from the religion of India? Alas, the question will excite only a smile! Indian idolatry is drenched in pollution, and the idolatry of every other country is associated with crime and misery.

Mohammedanism is the religion of sensuality and of violence, awakening the spirit of scorn instead of a spirit of benevolence, and cherishing with the utmost care, and as the first object, the ferocious energies of war. Ignorant, degraded, profligate, enslaved Turkey, exhibits at the present day the benefits which the world may expect from Islamism: the millions who have perished by the sabre of the Prophet and his followers, could they rise from the dead, would speak aloud of the character and tendency of the Mohammedan religion.

Romanism has set up an authority on the earth, which comes in the place of God, and exhibits an ecclesiastical Monarch at Rome, often of a notoriously profligate character, who, either by himself or a Council, claims the right of settling for the whole human race the faith of the understanding and the decisions of conscience, and which thus would enslave to ambition, pride, lust, and covetousness, the intellect and moral feelings of all mankind. Popery appears under the double aspect of a frightful persecuting power, and the teacher of most pernicious and fatal error. In its history we may see mingled the flames of persecution, the blood of the martyrs, the tortures of the Inquisition, the various massacres of heretics, with the idolatry, covetousness, pollution, pride, and horrible crimes, which have marked the seat of the beast on the seven-hilled "Eternal City." Is the dread of Popery an idle apprehension, produced by a bugbear?

We trust it may be so soon. It may be so now, in some Protestant countries: it may be so in our own. But Popery has been in past ages, and is still in many nations, a most terrific power. We may, indeed, look without trembling on the yellow-maned lion of Africa, who is brought to America in a strong cage: but on his native sands, where he roams in majesty, King of the desert, there is neither man nor beast that can abide his roaring. Has not the foot of the Pope trodden on the neck of Monarchs? It was but a few years before the French Revolution, that the degraded, enslaved States of Europe annually poured into the treasury of the Roman Church more than two millions of dollars, while the revenue of the Papal territory itself, was three millions; making an income to the pretended Vicar of Jesus Christ of five millions annually. Had the Pope been, indeed, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, with this sum annually poured into his hands, it would seem, that in any period of half a century it would have been in his power to have sent out such an agency of truth, as would have converted the whole family of man to the Christian faith, and made this desolate earth as the paradise of God. But instead of being employed in building up the kingdom of Jesus Christ, the revenue of the Catholic Church has been wasted in supporting the regal splendour of the servant of servants; in providing for his *nephews*, as a nearer relationship is conveniently expressed; in purchasing curious works of art; in building splendid churches and palaces; in keeping up a standing army, and in carrying on war; and the consequence is, that this *god* on the earth is now burdened with a public debt of a hundred millions of dollars, which he will never be able to pay. Popery, as to its physical power, is now comparatively weak. Its spiritual dominion also has been much curtailed by the resistance of reason and common sense to absurdity and tyranny, resulting, from the want of Protestant light, in a wide-spread infidelity in the Catholic countries of Europe. Still a great part of the people of Europe know nothing of the Christian religion but in that new form of idolatry into which it has been cast by the great magician at Rome. And who is not aware, that Popery exerts in no moral country a powerful moral influence, and that the history of the past forbids the hope that it will ever be able to meliorate

the condition of the Pagan nations of the earth? We may hope, that at no remote period, as the authority of Romanism sinks into contempt, and the judgments of God strike the guilty city, the Kings of the earth, whose fetters shall be broken, will say, "Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come." Then will "the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, saying, Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought." And then will all, who love the truth, say, "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy Apostles and Prophets; for God hath avenged you on her."

The various forms of error among the Protestant Christian sects cannot be pointed out. Happily, most of the principal sects have a considerable degree of harmony in respect to the most essential articles of their faith. If some sects deny the great and essential doctrines of the Gospel, and discharge the conscience of the sinner from the dread of future retribution; we cannot be ignorant, that their errors have no tendency to restrain men from criminal indulgence, nor to lead them to the abandonment of iniquity, nor to excite them to the generous toils of a self-denying charity, without which the face of the earth will never be renewed.

Thus it is obvious that civilization, mechanical invention, intellectual culture, government, philosophy, and false religion, are incompetent to secure the happiness of man.

II. The GOSPEL *has power* to liberate enslaved man, and to render him holy and happy.

That, when the earth was the abode of error and crime, and the unhappy race of man was corrupt and lost, God so loved the world as to send his Son, the brightness of his glory, by whom he created the universe, down from heaven to appear in the form of man as the Minister of his mercy; to expiate sin by his death upon the cross; to rise from the dead as a victorious King; and to disclose the laws, truths, and motives,—pure, sublime, and energetic,—by which, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the human character is transformed, and depraved man is made the friend of God,—seem to be the chief elementary principles of the religion of Christ.

1. The power of the Gospel is seen in the nature of its instructions. The Gospel frowns upon and banishes those *pernicious maxims* of conduct, by which the peace of society is destroyed and communities are laid waste. The eager thirst for honour, the insatiable ambition which preys on many a mind, often leading to the commission of great crimes, and, in a powerful Monarch, leading to the destruction of thousands or millions of lives in war, is not tolerated by the Christian morality. The honour which cometh from God may be sought; but not the honour which cometh from man. In like manner the maxims of retaliation and revenge are condemned; and, instead of being devoted to the busy cares of covetousness, occasioning injustice, fraud, and oppression, men are required to toil chiefly for incorruptible treasures.

Besides interdicting all false principles, the Gospel makes known and enjoins *right rules* of conduct, the observance of which by all men would completely change the face of human affairs. Were the precepts universally obeyed, "As ye would that others should do unto you, do ye even so unto them;" "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" much of the complicated machinery of government would be superseded and rendered useless. As no wrongs would be suffered, so there would be none to be redressed. Courts might be generally abolished; prison-houses pulled down; chains, and bars, and bolts, thrown away. Wise legislators might certainly rest from many of their labours, together with scheming politicians and subtle statesmen; and the affairs of the world would go on prosperously without the pageantry of a Court.

It is to be considered also that the Gospel, in order to promote virtue, and consequent happiness, not only prescribes right rules of conduct, but also presents *motives* to obedience, powerful at all times and in all circumstances. The fine-spun theories of moralists relating to the beauty of virtue and the fitness of things, are at once brushed away by any strong temptation. Even a regard to present interest is often borne down by violent passion. But the Gospel demands obedience with the threatening of everlasting punishment, and invites to holiness with the promise of everlasting joy and glory. Its influence is felt in all the conditions of our being; binding the soul in secret as well as

in public; addressing with authority the reason and conscience; warning of a greater evil than death; and urging to the resolute performance of duty in the midst of scorn, obloquy, and persecution, with a firm confidence in the promised favour of the Almighty.

There is one peculiar principle of action inspired by the Gospel, of amazing efficacy; and that was announced by the Apostle, when he said, "The love of Christ constraineth us." When the sinner, condemned and perishing, becomes a true believer in the crucified Son of God; when, by faith, he is redeemed, pardoned, justified; when he is led forth from his prison by the hand of his Saviour, and, through grace, breathes the air of freedom; his heart swells with unutterable emotions of gratitude and love to his great Deliverer, and he is impelled to live, not unto himself, but unto Jesus Christ, who loved him and died for him. This is the principle which causes liberality to abound even in the depth of poverty; this is the principle which carries the Missionary of the cross to the Heathen, and the martyr to the stake, and which, in every age since the Gospel was made known, has achieved wonders of beneficence that have surpassed the comprehension of a selfish world.

While the Gospel produces the character of true virtue, it also confers permanent felicity on those who feel its influence. Under the unavoidable trials of their condition, in poverty, affliction, and sickness, it gives them submission to the correcting but merciful hand of God. The raging passions, which cause much of the misery of men, are quieted. The fury of the tempest is converted into a calm. The selfish toils of men are changed to honourable and joyous labours of charity, which bring their own reward with them.

But the Gospel also inspires the loftiest hopes of good beyond the grave; of new and perpetual discoveries of God's character; of pleasures "which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the imagination conceived;" of visions of the grace and mercy of Him who died for sinners, and who is altogether lovely; and of communion with all that is venerable, and holy, and majestic in the universe. Under the inspiration of such hopes the Christian meets the King of terrors without dismay. He goes down into the grave, as the Ceylon diver after pearls plunges into the

wave, with the certainty of coming up, loaded with treasures, to behold the splendours of heaven.

2. The Gospel has already *wrought a great change* in the condition of the world, and when its influence shall be universal, all nations will be made virtuous and blessed. The power of the Christian religion, it is well known, has changed many of the evil customs of the world. It has abolished many cruel superstitions, and banished many enormous crimes; it has cast down the idols from their pedestals, and purified the temple of worship; it has mitigated the ferocity of war; it has broken the fetters of the slave; it has made provision for the poor, and established hospitals for the sick: it has promoted civilization, refinement, learning, charity, and every thing that tends to enlarge the mind and ennoble the character. In this country, which owes its form of government to the early Christians of New-England, it has created for ten millions of men free institutions, which are perceptibly spreading their leaven through the earth.

When the influence of the Gospel shall be universal, the horrible superstitions and crimes by which the earth is desolated will no longer exist. There will be no more sacrifices of purity and of life in the service of idolatry. No man will be found lifting his hand against his brother. No covetous, hard-hearted oppressor will catch the poor man in his net. There will be none who trade in the flesh and blood of their fellows. No throne of iniquity will be supported; no proud despot will reign over outraged and degraded subjects. When Jesus Christ shall have dominion "from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth," there will be peace to all people; the rude and boisterous passions will be quelled; the tempest of war will no longer sweep over the globe; the King in Zion will "judge the poor of the people; he will save the children of the needy, and break in pieces the oppressor." When the Son shall make men free, they will be "free indeed."

Nor is there any other hope for the world. God is wiser than man. Infinite benevolence and wisdom have devised and disclosed the way of human improvement. The rational offspring of God must be assimilated to their Creator. Intelligent and moral agents must be enlightened by the truth, and per-

sualed to choose the right, and to practise holiness. The perfect laws of the universe must be obeyed, or happiness will take its flight from the earth. Other hopes will fail. The fine-woven theories of perfectibility, not associated with religion, will prove but webs of gossamer. Even in our own country, the boasted intelligence of the people, if unallied to goodness, will be found inadequate to the security of the public welfare. If we stand before God as his enemies, with the stain of national crimes unavenged and tolerated, he will punish us; we shall have, like other nations, our retribution upon the earth. Nor are the instruments of punishment difficult to be found. The angel of the pestilence may breathe upon us; the tempest may spread desolation; angry, ambitious spirits may dissever the bonds of our union; our fields may be reddened with blood. Should we be ripe for ruin, God cannot fail to find instruments for our destruction.

No; it is not by the wisdom of statesmen and legislators; it is not by civil institutions, by the checks and balances of the powers of government, by laws and courts, by armies and navies, that the peace, and order, and happiness of mankind can be secured, and crime and suffering banished from the world. By these the flame may be smothered for a while, but it will again burst out. These expedients have been tried; and what has been the result? The history of mankind is but the history of crime and misery. It is the history of cruel superstitions, and debasing idolatries. It is the history of pride, envy, malignity, and ferocious ambition. It is the history of perpetual wars, by which fields have been ravaged, cities plundered and burnt, and countless millions of infuriated men swept from the earth. It is the history of crimes and iniquities of every hue; of inhuman oppressions and fiend-like tortures; of secret assassinations, and of more open and what are called honourable murders; of frauds, thefts, and robberies; of secret slanders, bitter revilings, and savage contests; of headlong gaming, besotting intemperance, profligate indulgence, and heaven-daring blasphemy. Make a true survey of the past history and the present condition of mankind, including our own favoured country, and then say whether there is any remedy for the miseries of the world but in the pure Gospel of the Son of God?

1. It may be inferred from these considerations that we are bound to make *the most strenuous and unceasing exertions* to spread the Gospel through the world. The bonds of our common nature oblige us to this charity. Our Master says to us, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." There is no way by which the lost children of men can be saved, except by the knowledge of *the truth*; and there is no appointed way by which the truth is to be spread through the earth, except by human effort. What if, in the spirit of Mohammedanism, we could send armies of well-accounted and brave Christians to all the nations, and, with the alternative of conversion or death, subdue them to the Christian profession? Would this set them free from error and sin? What if, in the spirit of Romanism, we could subject all the tribes and families of man to the Papal yoke, and impose on every forehead the Roman mark? This would not be conferring liberty. The beams of truth must come upon the darkness of the mind. Hence it is that in our Protestant endeavours to propagate the Gospel, we send the Bible to the nations, and that we send out religious tracts,—those little lights, which revolve round the great central orb, the glorious sun in the firmament, the Bible. And hence it is that we educate young men to explain the Bible, and that we send them out, not to make converts to a shadow; not to baptize ignorance and superstition into the Christian name; but to "*teach* all nations" the great truths and duties of the kingdom of Christ. For we believe that it is Christian truth, and that only, which can save men; not the knowledge of natural or political science, but the knowledge of the relation of man to God, of the law and government of God, of the mercy of God in the amazing scheme of redemption, of the judgment of the great day, and of eternal retribution; the knowledge of those truths which will subdue the violence of passion, and turn the energies of the soul from the pursuit of the low trifles of earth to the pursuit of the honour of God, of the welfare of immortal beings, and of the everlasting glories of heaven.

But these truths are to be communicated by the effort of man; and what it is the duty of the whole Church to promote, it is the duty of every individual to promote according to his

ability. It seems to be the purpose of God to accomplish all his great designs on the earth in such a manner, by the efforts of individual Christians, as to combine the perfection of their own character with the enlargement of his holy kingdom. This is the honour to which we are all invited,—to toil for God, and at the same moment to rise in resemblance to him and in preparation for the immortal bliss of his presence in heaven. Christians are to attain to new purity, elevation, and energy; and, as a sure consequence and glad reward, they will see the cause of their Redeemer spreading and triumphing.

If money is requisite for the conversion of the world, the silver and the gold are God's. He might have touched the heart of one man in our country, and, from his single accumulations, have poured, in the present year, into the treasury of Christian enterprise from ten to fifteen millions of dollars. But it was not the will of God in this manner to supersede the self-denying offerings of a multitude of believers, who are poor in this world, though rich in faith. Instead of such a splendid bequest, we may look at a nobler spectacle,—that of sixteen thousand poor Moravians, who, at an annual expense equal to several dollars each, now support one hundred and thirty Missionary establishments, originating in the purest benevolence, and conducted by a strong faith in the power of Jesus. Here is an example of obedience to the command of Christ; a model for the imitation of the Church. Shall not American Christians generally go and do likewise; and, in the proportion of their numbers and wealth, enlarge those holy enterprises which send out truth and happiness to the world, and bring back to the conscience sweet peace and heavenly joy?

2. While the truth is communicated, the strength of the depravity which it is designed to subdue, should impress us with *the necessity of divine power* to give efficacy to truth; and a view of the promises of God should lead us to seek and expect the exertion of that power. Whoever may plant or water, it is Jehovah only who giveth the increase. It is not light alone, though always necessary to moral action, which can change the heart. Is the devil ignorant of the great principles of Christianity? Is it supposable that he can have any shadow of doubt that Jesus Christ died upon the cross, in order to expiate the

sins of the world, and to destroy *his* works and kingdom? Yet he remains the adversary. And so it is with the heart of the sinner. Light may shame and may terrify him; but, unaccompanied by the Holy Spirit, it will not convert him. We see on the earth—we see every day among respectable citizens—the same hostility to God's truth which rages in the world beneath; and it is indicated by contempt, scorn, ridicule, uncharitable surmises, malignant accusations, and flagrant acts of injustice. To rouse up by solemn words of terror a slumbering conscience, and to array conscience against unyielding pride, or any predominant and cherished sinful passion, is to enkindle the rage of the depraved heart; and the most humble and benevolent teacher of God's truth will be accused of priestcraft, of planning a union of Church and State, of wishing to destroy political freedom, and to domineer over the imprescriptible rights of man. If such is the resistance to truth in a country where republican liberty protects the Preacher from violence, in other countries the same resistance of the heart will arm itself with the power of persecution. How can the truth anywhere triumph without the interposing grace and converting energy of the Almighty? And that grace, we are assured, is adequate to the conversion of every sinner whose obstinate rebellion it may be the purpose of God to subdue. Let all Christians, then, pray most earnestly to God that he will cause his "kingdom to come."

When Paul and Silas, in the dungeon at Philippi, prayed to God, the numerous prisoners heard the appeal of those righteous men to the Almighty, and immediately there was a great earthquake, which shook the foundations of the prison, and burst open the massy doors, while at the same moment every prisoner was disencumbered of his fetters. Good Christians! pray in earnestness to your God, and the great prison-house of idolatry, and delusion, and error, and iniquity, in this world will tremble to its deep foundations: every strong iron-bolted door will fly open; and the startled prisoners, dropping their chains, will rise up in astonishment, the freemen of the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. In the success which has already attended Missionary efforts, we have grounds of encouragement to engage with new zeal in

the attempt to bring the whole world in sweet submission to the law of Christ. No one, acquainted with the history of the world, can be ignorant, that the efforts of Romanism have been very ineffectual in respect to the enlightening of the minds and the purifying of the hearts and lives of the Heathen. The Pope has long had at Rome a college for the propagation of the faith, and several of the sects and orders of Romanism have sent out Missionaries to different parts of the world, to Syria, to Egypt, to Ethiopia, to India, to China, to Paraguay, to Mexico, to Canada; and many of these Missionaries have been men of learning, who wrote interesting descriptions of the countries they visited. But of all that has been accomplished by the Catholic Missionaries on the face of the earth, scarcely a fragment of good remains. The reason is, that their system of new idolatry has not the capacity of contending with more ancient idolatry, and that their labours have not been directed to the communication of the simple, uncorrupted truths of the Gospel. A few Protestant Missionaries in a small spot of the earth have within thirty years past accomplished more for the overthrow of idolatry, and for the illumination and renovation of the dark-minded and depraved Heathen, than all that has been accomplished, during three hundred years past, by all the Missionaries which Romanism has employed. Do you doubt this? Repair then to an island of the Pacific Ocean, and compare the present condition of its inhabitants with their depravity and wretchedness, before the English Missionaries went to them with the message of God's mercy in the Gospel, and you will now call it "an island of the blest." Or repair to another cluster of islands, occupied at a more recent period by our American brethren. The sudden change from horrible crimes to Christian virtue, from abject misery to pure and heavenly joy, is almost too wonderful for belief. We have in the condition of these islands an emblem of the happy state of the world, when Jesus shall make all men free; free from idolatry, superstition, error; free from pride, ambition, malignity, avarice, and lust; free from crime, and guilt, and woe.

But we need not limit our views to the islands of the Pacific. God has given animating success to our Missionary labours in other parts of the world, at Bombay, at Ceylon, and among

various tribes of our own Indians. At the fifty-five Missionary stations of the Board, there are thirty-six churches as lights in a dark place, having eighteen hundred members, who seem to be walking in the fear of God. More than twelve hundred schools are supported, containing about sixty thousand scholars. Eight presses are at work in eleven different languages. Thus is the seed sown, which, we may confidently hope, will in good time yield an abundant harvest. But are sixty-eight Preachers, with their companions and assistants, the whole amounting to only two hundred and thirty-seven, all that our three thousand Congregational and Presbyterian Churches, having *three hundred thousand communicants*, ought to send out for the conversion of the world? Is the average of one-third of a dollar to each communicant the proper limit of our contributions for the holiest, sublimest, dearest, and most blessed of all objects?

The spirit which we should engage in the support of Missions, and thus in the extension of the kingdom of Christ through the world, is the same spirit of faith which animated the Apostles, the martyrs, and the Reformers of Christianity; the same spirit which burned in the hearts of Swartz, of Mayhew and Eliot, of Brainerd and Wheelock, of Vander Kemp, Buchanan, and Martyn, and many others, who have toiled for the conversion of the world.

Let us hope that a new spirit of heavenly zeal will be awakened in our Churches. Let us hope, that the race of such men as Newell and Hall, of Mills and Parsons and Fisk, of Richards and Warren, who have entered into their rest, will ere long be increased tenfold. Let us hope, that in a few years the Missionaries from America shall go out as the faithful Preachers of the Gospel to all the nations of the earth. Even now our well educated, noble-minded young men, accompanied with the grace and loveliness of woman, may be seen mingling with the savages of our western forests; breathing the sultry air of Hindostan; walking in the cinnamon groves of Ceylon; ascending the long rivers of Burmah; knocking at the gates of China; climbing the volcanic hills of the Pacific Islands; encountering the pestilential atmosphere of Turkey, and the hot gales of Malta; sitting amidst the ruins of Athens; and dwelling near the sacred mountain of Lebanon; not for the gratification of

their taste as travellers, but as the laborious, self-denying teachers of Christ's truth to their brethren.

But I had forgotten two, who are in a more interesting position than any of those, and who, for confiding in the integrity and good faith of our general Government, and preaching the Gospel to the Cherokees, are now grinding in the prison-house, not of some eastern despot, but of an American free state; of Christian Georgia, which was originally settled for the avowed purpose of *doing good to the Indians!* "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon!"

Let us hope, however, soon to see many of our young men,—fearless of great trials, and even rejoicing if counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus,—passing the Rocky Mountains of the west, and penetrating the vast plains of the south; contentedly sharing with the Greenlander in his coarse and cold fare; reposing with the African in the shade of his palm-tree, or following, mounted on his camel, the hardy Moor in his marches through the desert; breathing the spices of Arabia, or wandering amid the flowering shrubs of Persia; accompanying the Tartar hordes in their migrations; passing the wall of China, and penetrating to the villages of its two hundred millions of people; approaching the throne of barbaric Kings, and visiting the huts of the lowest of their subjects; gliding from island to island in all the seas of the east and the west; and everywhere assailing idolatry, conflicting with error, making known to men the true God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent; and by instruction, example, and prayer, conducting their grateful, happy brethren in the way to glory, honour, and immortality. But for the accomplishment of such a hope every Christian must do his duty. And to this we are called by a voice from the perishing Heathen, which says,—By the love of Jesus Christ, who came down from heaven and died for you and for us, by the hope which ye cherish of awaking from the dead in his likeness, by the grace and mercy of God which ye have experienced, by the horrors of that awful destiny which ye have escaped, and by the glories of that eternal heaven which ye regard as your sure inheritance, we entreat you to send to us "the truth as it is in Jesus," that we also may be made "free." Then, with you and with all the redeemed from among men, a

great multitude of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, shall we stand before the throne and before the Lamb, and join in the loud song, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb!" Amen.

DISCOURSE VII.

THE GOSPEL ADAPTED TO THE WANTS OF THE WORLD.*

BY THE REV. NATHAN S. S. BEMAN, D.D.,

TROY.

PSALM lxxii. 17.

"His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed."

THIS divine song has a primary reference to the kingdom of Solomon, the son of David; but was intended, at the same time, to typify the kingdom of Jesus Christ, David's more exalted Son. With this single explanatory remark, I would leave the general structure of the Psalm, and the exposition of its various parts, to your own reflections. The passage to which I particularly invite your attention, asserts the extent and duration of the reign of Jesus Christ upon the earth; and presents a glowing picture of its prosperity and happiness. In relation to its extent, it is to embrace "all nations;" and in duration, it "shall be continued as long as the sun." In other words, the kingdom of Jesus Christ, the Gospel kingdom, shall embrace all the nations of the earth; and endure, with undiminished power and glory, while the world itself shall stand. It is clearly asserted, too, that the happiness of the

* Preached in Providence, 1840, before the American Board of Foreign Missions.

human family will be greatly increased under the predicted reign of the Son of God. "Men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed."

Nothing can be more obvious than that this prediction asserts, that the religion of the Gospel will hereafter become, and will continue to be, the prevailing religion of our world. This fact is fully settled in the Bible. It was, for ages, the grand theme of the Old Testament Prophets; and the truths which they committed, in strains of exalted poetry, to the sacred lyre, have been taken up and expounded with such clearness by their New Testament successors, by the Son of God and his Apostles, that not a shadow of a doubt can rest upon their import. The same fact, that is, that Christianity will become the religion of the world, might be inferred, with equal certainty, from the admission that God is its Author, or that the Bible contains a revelation from heaven.

But, waiving these considerations, there is another important truth intimately associated with the universal spread of the Gospel, to which I would invite your attention on the present occasion. The truth to which I refer is this:—that the religion of the Bible is adapted, in its nature, to become the exclusive religion of our world. This sentiment, it is apprehended, is more than intimated in the text. Jesus Christ, the appointed King of Zion, shall not only reign as long as the sun shall shine upon the earth, but "men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed." The Gospel is adapted to man as such; to all men. It contemplates, not a specific class or order of men, but *man* in the large and generic sense. The Son of God has "received gifts for men." His empire embraces and secures the best interests of our fallen race. "Men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed." The Gospel is adapted, not to the Jew, nor to the Gentile, alone; not to the civilized, nor to the barbarous, exclusively; but to "all nations." And one nation after another, under the agencies which God has ordained, shall welcome the Gospel, as adapted to their common circumstances and their common wants; till an entire world of nations shall mingle their voices and send up the homage of their hearts in one universal song.

The single sentiment I shall attempt to illustrate is this:

THE RELIGION OF THE BIBLE IS ADAPTED, IN ITS NATURE, TO BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE RELIGION OF OUR WORLD.

I. It is accommodated to every *stage of human society*.

I shall not here enter upon any nice speculations respecting the natural state of man, considered merely as an intellectual and social being; nor attempt to settle the question whether that state is savage or civilized. The apostacy of our race occupies so early a page in the history of the world, that it may be difficult for us even to picture to ourselves, with any degree of certainty, what our condition would have been, as it regards social habits, intellectual progress, or the arts of cultivated life, had sin never marred this once lovely heritage of God. What is now called the state of nature (the wild and savage state, to which we may easily trace back the most refined and polished nations) would probably never have existed; and the more elevated conditions of society, which are now altogether adventitious, and which are superinduced by much care and culture, might have been perfectly natural to man. But, these speculations apart, it is sufficient for my present purpose to refer you to the social condition of nations as it is, and remind you of the diversified forms of human society which the world actually presents. These are not less marked and various than the geographical surface of different countries, or than personal form, the colour of the skin, or the features of the human face.

A single glance at the world as it is (and this the intelligent eye has already taken) will save the speaker the necessity of entering into detail. We have on the surface of this globe a population almost infinitely diversified: the polished European, and his descendants, not less elevated, in almost every land; the wild Arab; the wandering Tartar; the inert southern Asiatic; the bigoted Jew; the proud and self-confident Turk; the fierce cannibal of Australia; the debased Hottentot; the ignorant Greenlander; and the rude and savage tenant of our own native forests: and these furnish but a mere specimen of the human race. Nations differ in almost everything; in their modes of obtaining a livelihood, in civilization and intellectual culture, in moral habits and religious rites.

But the Gospel makes an appeal which men, in all these diversified national circumstances, are capable of feeling. This

appeal they have felt. In the days of the Apostles, the truth of God overleaped the framework of national caste, and evinced, in every land where its truths were announced, its power to save. And facts of the same character are interwoven with the whole history of modern Missions. Such have been the triumphs of the Gospel in our day, that the foolishness of infidelity, which has loudly asserted that Christianity cannot be propagated among the nations who differ in their habits and religions from those who have long been under the influence of this system, has been rebuked and put to silence. The religion of the Bible is just such a scheme as is demanded in order to accomplish the great objects which it proposes. As it is designed for a world, so it is suited to the exigencies of a world. It has a universality of purpose, and a universality of character, in order to carry out and perfect that purpose. It takes the world as it is, and goes about the work of making it better. It can reach men just where they are, notwithstanding their national peculiarities, and make them the friends of God and the heirs of heaven. It needs no pioneer. It asks for no herald to invoke other agencies to prepare the way for its coming and reception. It is itself the pioneer of Jehovah; the herald of the great King.

These things can be affirmed only of the Gospel. Were we to examine all the systems of ancient and modern philosophy which have proposed to make men wise and happy, and submit them to a critical analysis, we should perceive that they are all strongly tinged with the spirit of the age and nation in which they originated; and were, at the same time, capable only of a limited application. Carry these systems across a few lines of latitude or longitude, and they become exotics in an ungenial clime, and perish of themselves. Protract their existence a single century upon the very soil which gave them birth, and among the very people who originated and cherished their dogmas, and they become superannuated, and die of old age. The same is true of the religions of the world. They are all local and temporary; and well they may be, for they are dependent on circumstances for their very existence. It would be a thing next to impossible to bring the Turks and the Greenlanders to exchange religions; and yet Turkey and Greenland may be made to feel the truth of God, and submit

to its power. No system of false philosophy has ever been universal; no single form of Paganism has established its dominion over the nations of the earth. But the Gospel is indigenous in every soil where it is planted. It is at home in every land. It accomplishes its own appropriate work wherever it goes; for God is in it.

I would not intimate in these remarks that different states of society may not be more or less favourable to the propagation of the Gospel; nor deny that auxiliary agencies may be employed to unfold, diffuse, and enforce the truth of God; and least of all would I affirm that the Gospel will leave a nation as it finds it. Civilization and the useful arts of life, letters and refinement,—in one word, all that can elevate man in the scale of being, promote his happiness, or adorn and beautify his social character,—have never failed, other things being favourable, to follow in the footsteps of this revelation from heaven.

2. The Gospel is suited to the *common wants of man*.

This system was not contrived to relieve us from some factitious evils, nor to minister to our artificial wants; but it contemplates the world in its true light, and undertakes at once to mitigate, and ultimately to root out, all suffering from the kingdom of Christ.

And here we may see the difference between the Gospel and every antagonist and conflicting system. It is the difference between what is particular and what is general, between what is limited to individuals, and what is common to all men, between what is restricted to one country or one age, and what may be applied with equal propriety and practical effect to every country of the globe, or to every period from the beginning to the end of time. The Gospel overlooks, as unworthy of its high and heavenly aims, that which is circumstantial, local, and temporary; and selects, as the object of its benevolence, that which is essential, unlimited, and enduring. Among the Pagans, many a deity has derived his existence from a mountain, stream, or forest. Altars and forms of worship have been called into being to avert some impending calamity, to stay the ravages of famine, to mitigate the rage of pestilence, or to turn aside the bloody scourge of war. The

form and productions of a country, the customs of domestic and social life, the prevalence of certain types of disease, the peaceful or warlike habits of a people, and an endless catalogue of like circumstances, have not only shaped and modified, but have actually created, systems of religious belief and practice.

But the Gospel is constructed upon another principle. It professes to supply what is most needful for man, upon a nobler and more magnificent scale. It never attempts, as most false religions do, to remove the trivial and incidental evils of life; to guard men against the disabilities which belong to their specific circumstances; nor to ward off disease or death by charms or talismanic power; but regarding all these as light afflictions which endure but for a moment, it settles down at once upon the common wants of men, as pilgrims on the earth, and the heirs of eternity.

A few of the common wants of our dying world, for which the Gospel effectually provides, may very properly be enumerated in this place.

Man, in relation to all kinds of knowledge, is the subject of instruction; and in nothing does he more imperatively demand it than in religion. The lights of this world have become so dimmed, that he never clearly sees, nor fully performs, his duties to God or his fellows, till a purer and brighter orb in heaven shines upon him. Sin has well nigh obliterated the perceptions of God and duty from the human mind. The world is perishing for the want of spiritual knowledge. This is seen and felt everywhere. Not a soul on earth can find the way to heaven without the special interposition of God; and whether he communicates himself silently and mysteriously, in here and there a solitary case, without a written revelation, we are not informed, and it is a problem which we are not required to solve. But this we do know, for God has taught it, that the Bible is the grand source of religious instruction. The nations are in midnight without it. It is a darkness without a prospect of a dawn. It is deep, dense, central, visible; and not a star of promise has been seen in the heavens, as the harbinger of an opening day, by any telescope which nature or art has been able to construct. Without the Gospel, men are everywhere

destitute of that knowledge necessary to the well-being of the soul; and with it, they have everything which God himself deemed essential when their salvation was the grand object to be accomplished. This fallen world needs an infallible guide, and that guide is to be found alone in a written revelation. No decrees of Popes or Councils can supply its place. No tradition, though it were to descend from heaven, and emanate from the throne of God, can become a substitute. The Jew, the Pagan, the Mohammedan, the Catholic, the Protestant, all need this volume. It is adapted to the common wants of a world; and the nation, whether refined or barbarous, that is destitute of it, is living without the sun.

But man needs not only an infallible instructor, but support under the nameless evils which sin has inflicted upon him. In every country under heaven, on every continent and every island of the sea, he is hardly less miserable than he is sinful. And yet the religion of the Saviour can mingle the ingredients of comfort in every bitter cup. Passing over a long list of ills which flesh is heir to, I would fix your attention on two to which all men are subject, in whatever state of society or condition of life, and for which the Gospel provides a perfect remedy. I refer to remorse of conscience, and the sting of death. These are co-extensive with the fallen race. Sin is an evil of so malignant a character, that it reveals itself in the present life, it is followed by a present retribution. Verily, there "is a God that judgeth in the earth." The poor Pagan feels this, and hence his sacrifices and his self-inflicted tortures. It is on this principle that penance and pilgrimages belong to most systems of false religion. But the Gospel alone can calm the troubled spirit, pluck away the deep-seated anguish of the heart, and inspire that hope which prophesies of heaven. And not only are the great evils of life provided for by the religion of Christ, but death itself; that event everywhere dreaded in our world; that event, which may, in itself, be considered the sum and concentration of all earthly ills, the primeval curse of God upon a world of rebels, may be divested of all its unloveliness, and disarmed of all its inflictions, and be converted into the richest blessing. The Christian victor's song is, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

3 The Gospel is adapted to every order of mind.

In this respect it differs from all human systems. Among the most distinguished ancient nations they had one religion for the learned, and another for the illiterate. This was true in Greece, and probably, to some extent, in Rome. Their great men, and especially their sages and philosophers, gave little or no credit to the doctrines of polytheism admitted by the vulgar; but on the other hand approximated to something like a pure theism in their religious belief. I would not affirm that this is universal, possibly it was not even general; but, in many cases, it is an unquestioned fact. As to their systems of philosophy, they were too refined and subtle to be received by common minds. I do not say *understood*, for it may be fairly doubted whether they were understood by any. They were marked by intellectual caste; and this stamp had been put upon them intentionally, in order to protect the prerogatives of great minds, and to show the common mass of men that they had no right to think. Neither the system of the Stoics nor of the Epicureans could have become universal. They were limited by their very nature; the former to a certain order of mind, and the latter to a certain moral or physical temperament, and both of them entirely inapplicable, in all their parts and ramifications, to the society or population of any country. Were we to examine the speculations of any or every ancient philosopher, trace out the various systems, examine their origin, scrutinize their purposes or intentions, and follow their progress to their final results, we should arrive at this conclusion,—that they were never designed for the world at large; and being adapted to a particular order of intellect, their influence, whether good or bad, would be restricted to a small number of individuals, wherever their doctrines might be embraced.

By the side of these intellectual and moral schemes, contemplate the character of the Gospel in relation to the single feature of its adaptedness to every order of mind. While some religions are suited to the unlettered, and some to the cultivated, and while the same may be affirmed of certain systems of philosophy and morals, the Bible scheme is adapted to the intellect of every man. No elevation of mind can rise above the sublimity of its truths, no stretch of thought can go beyond the vast reach

of its purpose, no analytic powers can detect a discordant element in its grand and complicated system. It teaches the great man, and makes him wiser and better. Time would fail me were I to attempt to enumerate the men of mighty minds, the giants of the earth, who have towered above their fellows, as the oak above the saplings of the forest, who, at the same time, have acknowledged themselves indebted for their best lessons of instruction to the Bible. Boyle, of whom it has been said, "To him we owe the secrets of fire, air, water, animals, vegetables, fossils, so that from his works may be deduced the whole system of natural knowledge," was in the habit of reading this letter from heaven upon his knees; and Newton, that child-like sage, investigated the wonders of revelation with an intensity not less excited and profound than that which he scanned the starry heavens, or passed his measuring-line around the earth, or unbraided the complicated tissue of light.

Nor was this communication from God made for the instruction or entertainment of great minds alone, but is equally adapted to the humble and the unlettered. It is in revelation as in nature: sublimity and simplicity are always united. The same volume which furnishes the richest instruction to the sage, can be understood and enjoyed with as fine a relish by the husbandman who follows the plough, by the mechanic in his work-shop, or by the child in the Sabbath-school. What a vast variety, with respect to mental power and acquirement, may be found in the ranks of believers; and yet, gathered as they are from the four winds of heaven, they all entertain essentially the same views of the way of salvation, and have manifestly imbibed the same spirit. Indeed, I may add, what no one who has studied this subject can have overlooked, that the Gospel, being designed for a world as it is, a world in which the great majority of its inhabitants are ignorant and uninstructed, has been formed for the very purpose of meeting this case. It is a revelation to the benighted and the lowly. It teaches the sublimest truths in such a manner that babes may understand them, and inculcates the simplest with such a heavenly elevation and pathos, that minds of the largest compass and the profoundest thought are instructed and delighted.

4. The Gospel counteracts sin in *every possible condition*.

Sin is the source of all the other evils which prevail under the government of God; and the object of the coming of Christ, and the introduction and propagation of the Gospel, is the extermination of this great evil from our world. The Bible describes its nature, and tells us of its present and future consequences. It holds up, in the sun-light of eternal truth, its malignant features, and, for an illustration of its fruits, points us to a bleeding earth and a burning hell. The introduction of this evil into our world was the work of Satan; and "for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." No other system of morals or religion has made an attack upon sin as such. Some particular sins have been denounced, and to a certain extent, no doubt, counteracted by their practical influence; but it was reserved for the Gospel alone to proclaim war against every sin, great and small. It spares no man; it has no protecting shield for the transgressor. It has no mantle of charity to inwrap the sinner, and thus cover up his true character as the enemy of God. It lays the axe "at the root of the trees," and hews down the tall cedar as well as the withered bramble. It condemns the sinning Monarch in terms as unsparing and uncompromising as it does the sinning beggar. For the city and the country, for the refined and the ignoble, for Christian and for Pagan lands, there is but one law: "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." It has no respect to age, station, learning, country, kindred, sex, family, or profession in life, but bears testimony against all who love and practise sin.

But the Gospel does something more than describe the nature of sin, and point out the present and future woes which hang around a wicked heart and life. It proposes a remedy. It would relieve our sinful and suffering world from its accumulated evils by striking a death-blow at the very root of all mischief. The Gospel is a scheme contrived of God, and revealed from heaven, for the removal of sin. It undertakes to make men happy only by this process. It provides for the pardon of sin, though the blood of the atonement; and, by the instrumentality of truth, and the agency of the Spirit, carries on, in the heart of the penitent and believing sinner, a work of

progressive sanctification, which will be rendered perfect and triumphant in heaven. And unless this effect can be produced, of what use is any scheme of religion for such a world as this? A man may pass through a thousand changes, and till he pass from death to life, from sin to holiness, he wears his chains, and is on the way to execution. The great curse is still on him, and he must be miserable. Sin is uncanceled, and he cannot be happy. Of what avail are the stripes and lacerations which are self-inflicted by the poor Pagan; or the austerities and penance of the Romanist; or the fine speculations of the Unitarian, or the Deist, on the beauty of virtue, and the benevolence of God; while no radical change is effected in the character? Man is everywhere a sinner; and in all these human schemes and devices, there is no provision for the removal of this fundamental evil. No system of religion, whatever name it may wear, whether Christian or Pagan, can supply the moral demands of such a world as ours, unless it commence with sin. Spare this, and you ruin the world. Leave this unprovided for, and you shut for ever the gate of heaven. Omit this single item, and you open wide the door of perdition. Strike out from your scheme the provision for pardon, and the power of sanctification, and you have a religion which can never become universal; and would be of no use were it to become universal, for it would bring no relief to a sinful world. But such is not the Gospel of the Son of God.

5. The Gospel is not dependent on any system of *human philosophy*.

The Bible teaches "as one having authority, and not as the Scribes." In narrating facts, it records them as they are, and in their proper relations; in the revelation of doctrines, it presents them as fundamental truths which are to be accredited; and makes no explanations of the former, and enters into no reasoning respecting the latter. It discloses facts and principles of which all men, or the generality of men, were before ignorant; or in which, at least, they were but imperfectly instructed; and there it leaves them. And there these truths stand stereotyped for ever, without change of form and feature. The Gospel borrows nothing from the reigning philosophy, for it has nothing to decorate that it may attract the eyes of men; nothing to render palatable by courting the popular taste;

nothing to explain; nothing to reconcile. From the commencement to the close of its communications to our world, though these extend through more than fifteen centuries, and were furnished by a large number of sacred penmen, it never loses sight of one fixed purpose, and that is to tell men what *truth* is. And when this is done, its work is finished. It never comments or philosophizes upon its own production. Hence the Bible, like its Author, has a kind of ubiquity, and can live everywhere; and, like him, it has a perpetuity of existence, and is the same in every age. Systems of human philosophy may rise and fall; and yet Bible truth flows on in a steady and majestic stream, and not even its surface is rippled by the change.

In the interpretation of revealed truth, and in the construction of human creeds and symbols, as well as in all the systems of false religion, the philosophy of the age, both intellectual and moral, and perhaps I might add, in some cases, natural philosophy too, has exerted a very perceptible influence. This is what we might expect. If men construct a religion, it must be, of course, a human religion; and it will partake of human thoughts and qualities. Men cannot beget angels. We can hardly look upon one of these earthly productions without being able to detect its parentage, and to tell the age and country of its birth. The same is the case, to some extent, of all human symbols of the true religion. The creeds and commentaries of each particular age and nation embody much which belongs to that age and nation. Indeed, we cannot expect it should be otherwise; for they are the productions of men, and fathers generally live a second life in their children. But the Bible occupies an independent position. It is the production of God. It depends on no other system. It borrows nothing from any other. Other systems live, flourish, wane, and die; but this remains the same. It has already survived, amidst the changing theories and speculations of the world, almost six thousand years; and it is yet clad in all the freshness of its glory, as it was in the day when it was born in heaven, and sent down to the earth for our instruction. Time has not whitened its locks, or palsied its hand, or chilled its heart. Systems of philosophy, and modes of interpretation, one after another, have gone down to the sepulchre, and are known only in

their epitaph; but the Gospel lives, and^s is powerful to save. Other systems, which are founded in error, will in like manner pass away; but the religion of the Bible will never cease to exist and act upon the world, till all that God has greatly purposed, and kindly promised, shall be fully accomplished. Its truths may be tinged, or obscured, by a false philosophy, or by human speculations; but this effect is local and temporary. These things are no part of the system. The Bible remains the same; and, at another day, or in another country, all is restored. Clouds and mists may, in one hemisphere, or for a few days cover the face of the sun and shut out the light; but the sun is not extinguished. He is always shining somewhere; and the clouds and mists of all human theories will, by and by, be dissipated; and he will break forth, and in full-orbed radiance shine everywhere.

6. The Gospel has no necessary connexion with any form of *human government*.

The Bible acknowledges the right, and sanctions the powers and prerogatives, of civil government; but it does not prescribe any particular form. The most that is said on this subject in the New Testament, is rather incidental than direct; and is addressed, principally, to Christians; enjoining it upon them to be peaceful subjects of whatever government may happen to exist. The following are specimens:—"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." And again: "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour." It is also said, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the King, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well."

This language is accommodated to the existing governments of the Apostolic age; but the spirit of these precepts may be applied with equal propriety to any and every form of civil and political institutions. Had the Gospel assumed any other ground

than this, it would have been fatal to its prospects as designed for a universal religion. If any one form had been selected and approved, and others condemned, it would have converted the message of heaven into a political proclamation, and all nations, except those whose institutions might have received its approval, would have armed themselves against its approach. It would have been met and repelled with the same spirit with which men are accustomed to meet and repel invading fleets and armies.

That the Gospel is friendly to the rights of man, and the liberties of the world, is a proposition too obvious to need proof. The influence of this system, wherever it is cordially received, is felt upon every great interest of society; upon the people and upon the government. It will show itself upon the legislation of a country; upon the character and the execution of its laws; and in various ways, and by pervading and controlling influences peculiar to itself, destroy oppression; and diffuse and protect equal rights among men. It makes good citizens and good rulers, without interfering, directly, either with the form or administration of government.

It was owing to this characteristic of the Gospel, that the first heralds of the cross gained access with their message to every country, notwithstanding the peculiar jealousies of the age respecting international communication; and though often accused of treason, they were never convicted of the charge. And it was on this principle that, without an attack upon any political institution, they introduced a train of moral causes which have greatly modified, and well-nigh revolutionized, the governments of the civilized world. And it is on the same principle that modern Missionaries might be permitted to go everywhere, and freely and fully proclaim their message, without any alarm on the part of existing governments. Indeed, this is the prevailing temper of the reigning powers of the earth at this moment. And in those cases where Christian Missions are excluded by the laws of the land, their enactments are either founded on ignorance of the real objects of the enterprise; or, as is more generally the fact, are designed to protect some false system of religion which has become publicly wedded to the State, and which, every one must know, would inevitably fall before the powers of the Gospel.

REMARKS.

1. The religion of the Bible must be *true*.

It cannot be the product of the human mind. Its adaptation to the complicated circumstances, to the wants, the sins, and the miseries of the whole world, and that too through every period of its existence, is peculiar to itself, and has a parallel in no other system. This one property of the Gospel would require a greater compass of thought and stretch of ingenuity; a more intimate knowledge of facts; a clearer perception of causes and effects, and final results; of existing evils, and their infallible remedies; than belong to the finite mind. You have only to compare the religion of the Bible with other systems, and you discern the difference between God's work and man's. The one undertakes only to provide for what is limited to time and place; the other, dispensing with ages and localities, takes a broad sweep, like the mind of its Author, and actually provides for what always exists, and is everywhere to be found.

There is not an individual religion of Paganism among the nameless varieties that fill the world; not a speculation of ancient or modern philosophy; not a thought in the Vedas or shaster of the Hindoos; not a disclosure in the Koran, the pretended revelation of Mohammed; not a system of error, or any part of a system, in any age or country, but might be the production of the human intellect and heart, and would ever be likely to be, in the same existing circumstances. But I ask, Who but God could make the Bible? I speak now only of its adaptedness to the purpose for which it was intended. What eye but that which surveys the world at a glance, and beholds all nations, with their multifarious ills and complicated wants, as they are, and reads with intuitive certainty the moral pulsation of every heart, could see far enough, and wide enough, and deep enough, for such a work? What but the all-comprehensive Mind could devise a religious system, humble in its grandeur, and majestic in its simplicity, which should be equally applicable to men in every nation and every age; which has power to reclaim the heart and control the life; to disarm the world of its enmity against God; to restore the wanderer; raise the disconsolate; and light up a smile on the pale cheek of death? Surely this is no common undertaking. There is but one Being

who ever thought of doing it; and the volume that reveals this purpose has, written deeply and indelibly upon its sacred page, *the signature of God.*

2. The Gospel will finally *prevail.*

This might be inferred with great certainty from the fact, or the admission, that God is its Author. If he constructed the scheme, it was with some object in view; for some great and worthy purpose. The sins, and tears, and death-groans of our world had gone up to heaven, and God had fixed his heart on man's redemption. For this he formed the plan, sent his Son, accepted the sacrifice of his blood, and made, in his name, proclamation of pardon and peace to this great family of rebels. And shall not this plan go into full effect? Will the great Architect leave his noble edifice half-finished? "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Hear his own declaration:—"The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." His purpose is clearly expressed, and every jot and tittle shall be accomplished.

For the renovation of this world we are not to forget that God has adopted a system of agencies suited to the object to be accomplished. The Gospel is not a dead letter; but "the power of God, and the wisdom of God." It embodies in itself the most effective moral influences which operate anywhere in the vast empire of God. It was contrived for a world in the ruins of sin; and it is the master-piece of Jehovah, the concentration of all that is wise and magnificent in heaven. It is just what the dying millions of our world need. It can reach and save them. Its appeals are such as human minds and hearts can comprehend and feel. It comes home to "the business and bosoms" of men with a conviction and pathos with which no other system is armed. Every blow it strikes in our world is felt upon some interest, and tells upon its final destiny. And securing, as it does, in the hands of a faithful ministry and a praying Church, the presence and power of the Spirit of God, it will go forth in its strength to the conquest of the world. And what shall stay the progress of that scheme of grace and

restoration which God has constructed; which is adapted to man anywhere and everywhere; which has already gathered the first-fruits of the coming harvest; which has saved its millions in ages past; which is saving its tens of millions in the present age; and in reference to the faithful administration of which, by his devoted servants, Christ himself has said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world?"

3. All who possess the Gospel should do all they can *to communicate it to others.*

This subject makes an appeal to Christians which they must not, cannot resist. The Gospel, my brethren, has been committed to us; and there is no aspect in which this matter can be viewed which does not urge, in the tenderest and most powerful manner, our duty and our responsibility upon us. We have the very scheme of mercy which the world needs, and without which the world must perish. And this dearest gift of heaven was put into our hands, not that we should imprison or chain it, but that we should, to the very last stretch of our power, give to it "the wings of the morning," and bid it fly to the uttermost parts of the earth. The wants of our dying world, the nature of the Gospel, the command of heaven, the principle of benevolence, the pledge of success, the seal of God upon all past efforts, and the cheering aspect of this heaven-born enterprise of Missions, all, *all* urge us to stand up like men upon whom the vows of God rest, to whom the eyes of perishing millions are directed, and whose hearts have taken hold on the interests of eternity, and then do as Christ and conscience would have us. God has opened wide the door of the world before us. The unevangelized millions of the earth feel at this moment, more deeply than they ever felt, their need of the Gospel and its attending institutions, and its consequent moral, literary, social, and political blessings. And can we go back, or even stand still, when we contemplate what God has already permitted us to do, or has kindly done by us, in the work of making the world what he would have it? Let the American Board and American Christians look at things as they are;—at their eighty Missionary stations, which appear as so many cultivated spots scattered here and there through the deep and dense wilderness of Paganism; at their four hundred and

seventy-eight foreign and native labourers, whose toils have already beautified these gardens of God; at their ten thousand eight hundred and ten reclaimed wanderers who have taken shelter in the bosom of the Church the last year; at their twenty-four boarding-schools, with their eight hundred and seven pupils; at their four hundred and fifteen free-schools, with their twenty-one thousand six hundred and six little inmates praying for instruction;—and then ask, Shall this work cease? Shall another midnight succeed this dawning day? This is the time and this the place to settle this question. O! let us lift our streaming eyes and bleeding hearts to heaven; and, with a simple reliance on God, say, This work must not cease!

We, my Christian friends, are engaged in an enterprise that honours God and blesses men; an enterprise in which the angels might wish to bear even an humble part; the progress of which is intensely engaged upon by all the good on earth, and all the perfected in glory; and the completion of which will fill the world with songs of blessedness, and heaven with shouts of endless triumph.

May God inspire us for this work, and take the glory to himself! Amen and amen.

DISCOURSE VIII.

HOPE FOR THE HEATHEN.*

BY THE REV. JOHN M. MASON, D.D.,
OF NEW YORK.

ISAIAH XXV. 6, 7.

“The Lord of hosts—will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.”

THE exercise of divine mercy towards man is coeval with his need of it. The shock of the fall was hardly felt, remorse had only begun to prey upon the conscience, and guilt to rally his terrors, when a hope, as consoling as it was unexpected, dawned from heaven upon our revolted race. “I will put,” said God to the tempter, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” In this original promise were included all subsequent revelations concerning the redemption of sinners. The doctrine of Messiah’s person, of his sacrifice, of his triumph, together with that vast system of prediction which extends from the beginning to the end of time, and all the corresponding dispensations of the new covenant, are nothing but its regular developement. But this being slow, as well as regular, and all flesh corrupting his way, the Lord selected the family of Abraham to be for ages both the witnesses of his grace, and the depositaries of his truth. To them were committed his living oracles; to them, the ordinances of his worship; to them, the symbols and doctrines of the great atonement. Among them he deigned to dwell, and to raise up an illustrious line of Prophets, who should direct their faith and hope to Jesus the Saviour. “To him,” saith Peter, “give ALL the Prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.”

* Preached before the American Board of Foreign Missions.

But though the children of Israel enjoyed these privileges while other nations were "suffered to walk in their own ways," they were taught that the covenant of peculiarity should one day be abrogated, and be succeeded by a more general and more glorious economy. "In thee and in thy seed shall ALL the nations of the earth be blessed," was the catholic promise to Abraham, their father. As the time of its accomplishment approached, the circle of prophetic vision grew brighter and larger. Later Prophets were enabled to explain the enigmas of their predecessors; and to speak, with precision and clearness, both of the coming of the Messiah, and of the glory that should follow. Isaiah, in particular, appears to have been favoured with the most liberal disclosure of the divine purposes. Borne on high, by the revealing Spirit, he sees far beyond the common horizon. The extremes of the earth, and the ages of futurity, are commanded into his view. He sees the Sun of Righteousness ascending the heavens, and breaking in upon the thick darkness which inwraps the globe. He sees the fiends of night stretch their foul wings, and fly from the spreading day. He sees the tabernacle of God descending to dwell among men: his eye rolls ardent over the wondrous scene; his bosom heaves with mighty emotions; and when utterance is granted, he bursts forth in the language of the text, "In this mountain will the Lord of Hosts destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations."

The Lord hath not been slack concerning his promise, nor have the words of his servant fallen to the ground. The elementary dispensation of Moses is no more; its shadows have received their substance, and its types their truth, in the person and offices of the "Word made flesh." Millions of Gentiles, and among them believers of this assembly, who were once "afar off, are now brought nigh by the blood of Christ, and are no more strangers and foreigners; but fellow-citizens of the household of God."

But though all this hath happened, according to the Scriptures, much is yet required to their complete fulfilment. Many families of the earth are still unblest. These, too, are reserved for the trophies of Emmanuel's grace, and are to be subjected to his authority, by the same means which he hath

ever employed in converting sinners,—the Gospel of his cross. There are three topics of discourse, not less appropriate to the design of our meeting, than plainly suggested by the text: For “in this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.”

I. Many families of the earth are yet unblest. They are described as destitute of spiritual and saving knowledge: an idea obviously conveyed by the figures of a “veil” and a “covering.” Darkness, thick darkness, enshrouds their minds, and conceals from them those facts and principles which it most interests them to know and to improve.

Of the nations thus under a veil we reckon four classes.

1. The families which adhere to the *man of sin*. Enticed by his lying wonders, and given up to strong delusions, they have deviated into the paths of apostacy; they are under the veil of *anti-Christian error*.

2. The families of rejected Israel. Having disowned their Messiah when he came, and being disqualified, by judicial blindness, for discerning the real sense of their Scriptures, which testify of him, the veil upon their hearts is the veil of *obstinate unbelief*.

3. The families which embrace the doctrines of Mohammed. Turned aside after fables, and amusing themselves with the belief of lying vanities, they are under the veil of *gross imposture*.

4. The families which are usually called Pagan. With no other instruction than the glimmerings of natural reason, and the refracted rays of distant tradition, they are covered with the veil of *deplorable ignorance*.

All these are characterized in the text. But our attention is invited more immediately to those who are without any scriptural revelation. Though true of all, it is of them pre-eminently true, that they are under the double veil of a benighted understanding, and an erring conscience.

God is the source of intellectual light, for he alone is perfect reason. Wisdom in natural things is his gift; much more that wisdom which is spiritual and divine. Loss of ability to discover the chief good, was at once the just reward, and the

native consequences of revolt. For as all spiritual light in the creature beams from the effulgence of the Godhead, whenever sin had intercepted the communion of man with his Maker, the day which shone around him vanished; the gloom of the pit thickened on his soul; and from that accursed hour to this, unless illumined from above, he hath wandered out of the way, and his feet have "stumbled upon the dark mountains." Does the assertion need proof? Proofs innumerable are furnished by the unhappy Heathen. Of the very God who "breathed into their nostrils the breath of life," on whose bounty they are continual pensioners, and at whose tribunal they must shortly stand, they are fatally ignorant. The "heavens may declare his glory, and the firmament show forth his handy work;" but the Pagans, unaccustomed to decipher their language, and to study their lessons, do not thence derive, in fact, just and clear perceptions even of his eternal power and Godhead; far less of his moral character; less still can they learn that he is the only satisfying portion of rational beings, and least of all, that he is accessible to the rebellious. Those general notices of his being which have prevailed in all countries and at all times, have never sufficed to direct men aright in their inquiries after him; nor do they now prevent the most foolish, the most extravagant, the most abominable conceptions of his nature, and of his operations.

Mistake in the first principles of religion and of morals, must generate uncertainty in all the subordinate principles of both. The rule of obedience, is, therefore, at best, a subject of conjecture. What is the genius, measure, and manner of acceptable worship; what are the relative duties of society; wherein they come short; and what shall be the fruit of transgression; few of the Heathen ask; and none can tell. Yet they are under a law of righteousness which saith, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." The origin of their wants and woes they are unable to explore. To the demerit and wages of sin they are utter strangers. The consequences of death they are utterly unprepared to meet, or to estimate. All beyond the grave is impenetrable obscurity. Their notions of immortality are less a speculation than a dream. When called hence, they plunge into the world of spirits, unconscious of their destiny; and, till that consummation of sorrows, they

grope, at a venture, after the path of life; but grope, alas! in vain; "having the understanding darkened; being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart."

Of this intellectual darkness the inseparable companion is an *erring conscience*.

Although light in the understanding does not, of course, imply moral excellence, yet, without the former, there can be none of the latter. To this it is necessary not only that there be a law of morals, but that it be obeyed from a regard to the authority of the lawgiver. Both the lawgiver and law must, therefore, be known, or conscience will inevitably go astray. The general sentiment of right and wrong, though sufficient, if violated, to leave men without excuse, will by no means conduct to the proper discharge of duty. The fact is notorious, and a glance at the heathen world will desery a thousand monuments of it. To those who have the advantage of revelation, no truths appear more simple and luminous, than that there is but one God, and that he only is entitled to religious homage. Yet how dubious, on these points, were the most celebrated Heathen philosophers! how embarrassed their research! how conjectural their opinion! And of that spiritual devotedness which is the life of real religion, they had as little knowledge as the sons of modern unbelief. If from them we turn to the mass of their cotemporaries, or to those who are now in a similar condition, we are startled and shocked to see them "worship and serve the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever." One poor idolater bows to "the host of heaven;" another trembles before an evil spirit. Here, he finds his divinities in birds, and beasts, and reptiles; there, he "changes the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man," and lies prostrate before a deity of stone or of wood, the work of his chisel or his axe. "He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak. He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: and the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me, for thou art my

god. And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?"

The rites of Paganism are worthy of its creed. Instead of a worship, reasonable, reverend, and pure, it exhibits all the frightful varieties of whatever is absurd, or blasphemous, or obscene. Its effects on individual and social character, are precisely such as we might anticipate. Unrestrained by any just apprehensions of God, of his law, or his government, the most baneful passions domineer in the heart, and the most horrible excesses pollute the life. Moral distinctions confounded, the sense of relative obligation extinguished, crimes the most atrocious perpetrated with deliberation, and upon principle, are, among the Heathen, the result of being *without God*.* If, in the midst of this degradation and these enormities, the thought should occur, "that they who do such things are worthy of death," a secret horror creeps through the blood; conscience, the scorpion of guilt, strikes his sting into the bosom; forebodings, equally dark and intolerable, the mysterious presentiment of "judgment to come," harrow up the soul. Whither, in this extremity, shall they turn for succour? All around them is one dreary waste; the reign of silence and of desolation. No friendly voice is borne to the listening ear; no tower of help rises up to the anxious eye. The Comforter, who should comfort their souls, is afar off. They have not heard, like you, of the name of Jesus. They have none to tell them of "redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." And the termination of their mortal course. O brethren, how tremendous! The heavens blacken, the tempest roars, the whirlwind rushes by, down pours the torrent, and without a refuge, and without a hope, they are swept away in the ruin of the nations that forget God.

Exposed to this melancholy fate, the Heathen claim our

* Ward's "History of the Law of Nations," Vol. I.

sympathy; and we eagerly ask, Is their doom to such woe irreversibly sealed? Are they shut out, for ever, from the divine compassions? No! to the praise of his grace, Jehovah hath thoughts of mercy, rich mercy, towards them. HE WILL DESTROY, saith the Prophet, “the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations;” a design, the contemplation of which forms

II. The second part of discourse.

From the days of eternity, the Father hath given to Messiah “the Heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.” The whole earth, therefore, being included in the covenant-grant, shall be filled with the knowledge, and subdued to the obedience, of Jehovah. On the maxims of carnal wisdom, the fact is, indeed, impossible, and the expectation wild. To extirpate prejudices, implanted in infancy, nurtured by habit, confirmed by example, and consecrated by tradition; to enlighten the stupid idolater, and soften the ferocious savage; to persuade men to despise as contemptible, and loathe as abominable, the objects of their respect and veneration: in a word, to change the opinions, the customs, the characters, of nations, and unite them in a religion, simple, holy, heavenly; a religion opposed to every vicious principle, and every vicious act; a religion which proscribes all human merit, and prostrates all human pride; this is an undertaking which equally defies the policy and the power of man. And the belief that it shall at any time be attended with success, furnishes incessant matter of derision to the philosopher, and of sneer to the witling. Their mistake lies in supposing the God who made them to be as foolish and as feeble as themselves, or as little concerned in the salvation of sinners. But we, according to his promise, look for the interposition of his arm; by which, however mean the instruments, this prodigious revolution shall be effected with no less ease than certainty. For,

I. He directs the complicated movements of the universe. However confused and contradictory things may appear to our little minds, with Him whose “understanding is infinite,” there is neither surprise, perplexity, nor chance. “Known unto the Lord are all his works from the beginning of the world.” Not only are the laws of matter his sovereign will, and their

operation his continual agency, but the whole system of intellect is under his control. All the discordant passions, interests, designs, which dash, in eternal collision, the affairs of men; all the activities of superior intelligences, as well the enmity of fiends as the ministry of angels, are combined, in the harmony of Providence, to produce the result which he hath ordained; and hither every occurrence irresistibly tends. "He doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth." He causeth "the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain." The unpromising situation, therefore, of the Heathen is no obstacle to Israel's God, and should be none to Israel's faith. Be the mountains of difficulty ever so impassable, at his presence they flee away. Let the "nations rage, and the kingdoms be moved," if he "utter his voice, the earth is melted."

2. The glory of Messiah is a chief end of the dispensations of Providence.

The vicissitudes of Kings and kingdoms, and all the stupendous events which shine in ancient annals, were important chiefly as they served to prepare the way, and to spread the triumphs, of Him who was "a light to lighten the Gentiles." For this God gave the learning of the world to Greece, and its empire to Rome. Both contributed to facilitate and extend the victories of the Gospel. The same design is prosecuted in the events which, at this moment, astonish the world. If "nation rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; if establishments, imposing from their antiquity, and formidable from their strength, be undermined by the progress of opinion, or shattered by violent explosion; if impiety and ambition, and all the infuriate passions, be permitted to take their course, and scenes of desolation and blood, such as history hath not learned to record, nor imagination to paint, be opened to our view,—it is, that God may destroy the dominion of hell by her own chosen legions, and make them subserve the introduction of that kingdom, which "is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Thus saith his high decree, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn, until He shall come whose right it is, and I will give it him."

3. In the Scriptures of the Prophets, the spiritual revolution

by which the "kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ," is frequently predicted, and strongly marked. "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee." "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths." So that "from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, his name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto his name, and a pure offering." Is there then a nation that yet "sit in darkness and the shadow of death?" For them "light is sown," and to them shall "light spring up." Is there a nation "mad upon their idols?" Jehovah shall "famish all the gods of the earth," and teach their votaries that he "is the God of salvation," and that "there is none beside him." Is there a nation enslaved to superstition, or abused by imposture? He shall "frustrate the tokens of the liars, shall make the diviners mad," and convert the bondage of their followers into the liberty of his dear children. "Rejoice therefore, ye Gentiles, with his people." "Faithful is he that hath promised, who also will do it."

But here occurs an important query. By what means are these predictions to be fulfilled, and these prospects to be realized? The means are prepared; they are extremely simple; they are in your hands,—even "the doctrines of the Gospel of peace." And this is the

III. Third and last topic, which I proposed to discuss. "*In this mountain,*" saith the Prophet, "shall the Lord destroy the veil that is spread over all nations."

Mount Zion, to which Isaiah refers, is a figure, most familiar to the Scripture, of the Church of Christ. The Apostle Paul, addressing believers under the New Testament, says, "Ye are come unto Mount Zion." And the plain sense of the text is, that the Lord will bless the Heathen outcasts, by "causing them to pass under the bond of his covenant," and to inherit

the privileges of his house: and this shall be effected, by diffusing among them the glad tidings of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. "Behold," saith the sure word of prophecy, "behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee."

Our faith on this point will, indeed, provoke the ridicule of a tribe equally vain and licentious, who claim to be the exclusive benefactors of mankind. Rejecting, with opprobrium and insult, the Gospel of Christ, they hail, as they speak, a new order of things, and the world is to be regenerated by a reason without conscience, and a philosophy without religion. "No doubt ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you." But after all the ostentation and clamour of Infidels, what reformation has been wrought by *their* doctrines or by *their* spirit? During forty centuries, reason and philosophy had the world almost to themselves. Where did they overthrow the reign of idolatry? From what vice did they reclaim the nations? One sect of philosophers rose on the ruin of another, to be itself the aggrandizement of a third. But the world lay still in wickedness; its diseases rankled with increasing fury, and struck deeper and deeper their poisonous roots, under the successive treatment of these "physicians of no value." Eighteen centuries more have nearly elapsed since "God manifested in the flesh put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" and what has been done in elevating the character, in purifying the morals, in ameliorating the condition of man, that has been done without the aids of his Gospel? What countries have the priesthood of unbelief rescued from barbarism? Where have they resisted the influence, or wiped off the shame, of profligacy? Where have they promoted either happiness or virtue in public or in private? Whom have they taught to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly?" "By their fruits ye shall know them."

How different is the genius, and how different has been the career, of the Gospel of Christ! When it was promulgated to the Heathen, the philosopher pronounced it folly, and stalked disdainfully by the Missionary of the cross. Yet through the

cross did the Missionary preach forgiveness of sins, and life everlasting; and, lo, the throne of darkness tottered to its fall; the Gentiles "turned from idols to serve the living God." Abandoning at once their prejudices, their delusions, and their lusts, they "fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them." The face of the world was changed, and the worldling knew not how. No deep speculations, no subtle reasonings, no displays of science, converted the nations. The process was very short, and very simple. Their guilt and their depravity; their certain destruction, without pardon and renovation; the grace of God in sending Christ Jesus to die for sinners; his ability to save unto the uttermost; and the freedom of his salvation to the most worthless and vile, are the truths which won the Gentiles to the obedience of Christ. It is this same Gospel which, at this hour, turns men "from darkness to light," and which is destined to "carry the banners of the cross victorious round the globe." Those refined moral disquisitions which, under the garb of sermons, expel vital godliness from the Church, will never introduce it among the Heathen. Whoever hopes to gain them to the faith, must imitate the Apostle Paul. He must "preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." Adapted to every clime of the earth, to every stage of society, and to all descriptions of its members; unveiling their real misery, and bringing near the only remedy; discovering at once their wants, and the means of supplying them; and seconded by the energy of the quickening Spirit, this precious Gospel fastens on the conscience, melts the heart, thrills the very bones and marrow, and transforms the most obdurate rebel into a willing subject of Jesus Christ. When the "Lord gives testimony to the word of his grace," it shall have "free course and be glorified." No darkness is too dismal for it to dispel, no prejudices too obstinate to subdue. "Mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds," this very Gospel shall force its way through every physical and every moral difficulty; and in his name and strength shall its messengers cast down imaginations and every high thought that lifteth itself up against the obedience of Christ. "Every valley

shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

Come, then, my brethren, let us ascend the hill of God; and, aided by the torch of the skies, let us look through the surrounding gloom to the glories that lie beyond. See! an "angel flies through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." The standard of Shiloh is reared; his banner waves on high; the great trumpet is blown; the nations hear and gather unto him. From the east, from the west, from the north, from the south, they press into the kingdom. On the one hand is the plundering Arab; on the other, the pitiless savage. Here, are the frozen children of the pole; there, the sable tribes of Africa; and yonder, the long-disinherited Jew steals silently to his Messiah, weeping as he goes. Hark! the din of arms, and the tumult of battle, cease; discord and war retreat back to hell; and again that hymn of angels is heard below, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will towards men." The redeemed of the Lord raise their responsive song, "Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our Lord, and the power of his Christ." Brethren, it is no illusion; it is "the sober certainty" of truth divine. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. Hallelujah!

And now, dear brethren, shall not the first sentiment of our hearts be a sentiment of gratitude for the grace of God manifested unto us?

Let it never be forgotten that we, in our ancestors, were among the perishing outcasts. Yet to us hath the word of salvation been sent. Without the Gospel of Jesus, we should this day have been burning incense unto idols; without the Gospel of Jesus, we should have been strangers to that blessed hope which gives to life its best relish, and takes from death both his terrors and his sting. O Christian, Christian, remember that if thou hast escaped the wrath to come, and art made "an heir of God, and a fellow-heir with Jesus Christ," it is to the praise of sovereign mercy! Thy father was an Amorite, and

thy mother a Hittite; and thou mightest have been left, with the Amorites and Hittites, to die in thine iniquity. Yet thou livest; livest unto God; livest for glory; and shalt never come into condemnation, and never taste of the second death. Thrice blessed Gospel, which "hath brought life and immortality to light!" Thrice glorious grace, which hath constrained any of us to receive "the truth in the love thereof!" And thrice condescending Saviour, who hath "washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and the Father!"

2. Since the Lord hath destroyed the veil that was spread over us, by revealing to us the great salvation, let all who have hitherto been indifferent about it be deeply impressed with the duty of embracing it without delay, and with the sin and danger of neglecting it.

"It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save" the chief of "sinners." On the authority of the most high God, that Gospel which we preach tenders to *you*, my brethren, to *every one* of you, a free grant of this Saviour, and, in him, of eternal life; and suffer me to add, with all solemnity, enjoins your acceptance of it at the peril of your souls. This is *his* commandment: this, therefore, is *your* duty, your immediate, your indispensable duty,—to believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, that you may be saved. A refusal is the most aggravated crime which you can possibly commit. For it not only approves, with deliberation, all your deeds of rebellion against the God of your mercies, but pours contempt on the riches of his grace, and throws scornfully away the only hope that ever has been, or ever shall be, proposed to guilty men. The experiment, therefore, is not less dangerous than sinful. For if ye reject Christ Jesus, the Lord, "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin." And when Jehovah writeth up the people, he will count that ye "trampled under foot the Son of his love, and deemed the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and did despite unto the Spirit of grace." Think not that this is a matter of trifling moment. If the Gospel, which you hear from day to day, be not the instrument of your conversion to God, it shall be the occasion of your more dreadful

condemnation. If not "the savour of life unto life," most certainly "the savour of death unto death." The Heathen will rise up in the judgment against you, and will condemn you; for they never shared your means of salvation. The devils will rise up in the judgment against you, and will condemn you; for no Saviour was provided for them, and therefore, whatever be their crimes, the rejection of a Mediator's blood will not be one of them. Now, then, "as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." O that ye may know, in this your day, the "things that belong to your peace, before they be hid from your eyes!"

3. In the assurance that Jehovah will destroy, by the prevalence of his Gospel, the veil spread over the nations, believers may see how little they have to fear for the existence or for the triumph of their religion.

Infidelity, it is true, prospers, and hath assumed a most effrontful air, and a most imperious tone. Her threats are loud, and her expectations sanguine. But threats as loud have, more than once, been put to shame; and expectations as sanguine, more than once, been blasted. Seventeen centuries ago did the adversaries of the Church predict her speedy downfall; but, unlike the Prophets of Jehovah, they proved to be the seers of a lie: she hath lived to see their rage perish, their monuments moulder, their names sink into oblivion. And such shall be the issue of her present conflict. She can meet with no assault more furious and formidable than those which she hath a thousand times met, and a thousand times foiled. "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early." Therefore, "no weapon that is formed against her shall prosper; and every tongue that riseth against her in judgment she shall condemn." The temporary success of the Infidel should, indeed, confirm our faith; because it verifies the Scriptures. Our Master, Christ, hath told us that this shall be one of the signs of his approach:—"When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Every Infidel under heaven is, then, a witness for Christianity, and carries in his forehead the proclamation that it is divine. Let him enjoy his exultation. Under a control which he can neither elude nor resist, he is really, though ignorantly, working

his own destruction, and the aggrandizement of Messiah. His progress shall be arrested, and his boast confounded, whenever he shall have performed the part allotted to him in the "determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." In our patience, therefore, let us possess our souls. What though blasphemy display his columns in defiance to the armies of the living God? What though disorder spread from pole to pole, and mingle the nations in universal uproar? What though the foundations be destroyed, their fabrics overturned, and earth quiver under the falling wreck? That Jesus whom we worship, sitteth King for ever. He

"Rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm."

With all power in heaven and earth, he will bring order out of confusion, and light out of darkness. In the moment of decision he will arise and plead his own cause. When he appears in glory to build up Zion, his enemies shall lick the very dust. The Infidel, to his astonishment, will find that in planting the seeds of unbelief he was planting laurels for the cross; and the believer, to his unspeakable joy, that all the trials of the Church, and all the tumults of the world, were but preparative to the reign of righteousness "in the ages of peace."

4. The subject which has this evening occupied our attention, places in a strong light both the *obligation* which lies on Christians to evangelize the Heathen, and their *encouragement* to attempt it.

If we count it life eternal to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent, our bowels must yearn over those who are acquainted with neither. But it would be more than unkind, and worse than reproachful, were our best sympathies to evaporate in empty words, or empty wishes. We are called not merely to condolence, but to action. A number of the families yet under the veil are our neighbours. They border on our country; they are accessible to our enterprise. Prompt and spirited measures for introducing among them the Gospel of Christ are our bounden duty.

Our *duty*,—because we *have* the means of grace, and they *have not*. The unsearchable riches of Christ have been poured in upon us, while they are languishing in spiritual poverty.

They must address themselves for help to some more favoured than themselves; and to whom with a more imperious claim than to *us*? The very difference of our situations creates us their debtors: the vicinity of our residence doubles the debt. The word and ordinances were bestowed upon us, not only that ourselves might be saved, but that we might minister to the salvation of others. Our possession, therefore, of the glorious Gospel, implies, in the very nature of the privilege, an obligation to extend it as far as possible. Freely ye have received, freely ye must give. This is the way in which the Gospel ever has been and ever must be diffused. Though the employment would dignify angels, God hath committed it to men. They who possess the treasure must impart it to others; and these again, to more; till passing, "in earthen vessels," from people to people, and from clime to clime, it enrich the world. An attempt to monopolize, or, which amounts to the same thing, a refusal to circulate it, is treason against the law of the kingdom. And let it not, my brethren, be our dishonour and our crime, to betray both ingratitude to our Redeemer, and cruelty to our fellow-men, by declining to communicate to them the mercies which, through the instrumentality of others, he hath lavished upon us.

With the superiority of our privileges, the genius of our profession conspires to challenge our interference in behalf of the Heathen. As Christians, we profess that the glory of the Lord Jesus is the object most dear to our hearts, and most worthy of our pursuits. We profess to believe that the redemption of the soul is precious, and that, without the virtue of his blood, it ceaseth for ever. Is this a *sincere* profession? Can it at all consist with unwillingness to use every means in our power for diffusing, far and near, the sweet savour of his name? Must not a guilty blush crimson our faces, if we presume to pray, "Thy kingdom come," when we are conscious that we have *done* nothing, are *doing* nothing, *endeavour* to do nothing, for the promotion of his kingdom? Do we, in very deed, believe that there is no salvation in any other; no "name given under heaven whereby sinners can be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ;" and yet look coolly on, while multitudes of the Heathen are perishing within our reach, nor ever stretch

out a hand for their relief? Yes, my brethren, a generous and persevering attempt to proclaim among them the glad tidings of a Saviour, is a tribute to the *decency* of our Christian profession; and it is a tribute which their most afflicting necessities forbid to be deferred any longer.

If you heard of a number of human beings shut out from every sustenance, and falling, in rapid succession, the victims of famine, and knew, at the same time, that vigorous exertion might rescue the survivors, what anxiety would thrill every heart, what eagerness animate every countenance! How would the hand pour forth its spontaneous benefactions! How speedily would messengers be dispatched with the staff of life! Alas! my brethren, we speak to you of a more terrible famine; "not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the word of the Lord." We plead with you not for expiring bodies; it is the spirit, the spirit that dies! To the heart of the Christian be our appeal. Suppose thy Bible taken from thee; thy Sabbaths blotted from thy days; the mercies of the sanctuary fled; thy Father's fellowship denied; thy hopes, "full of immortality," vanished; the shadows of eternal night stretching over thy soul. And if the thought be more intolerable than ten thousand deaths, think of yonder Pagans, without God, and without hope. Ah! while the sentence is on my lips, they are passing, by hundreds, into that world unseen, with no renewing Spirit, and no atoning blood! "O that mine head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears," that I might weep unceasingly over the mighty ruin!

If any additional argument can be needed to render the proof of our duty, on this point, completely triumphant, that argument is supplied by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. When he left this world, and went unto the Father, his parting injunction to his followers was, "Go ye, and teach all nations." And that the precept is binding upon the whole Church to the end of time, the promise of his presence and support most clearly evinces, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." The command, being express and full, leaves no room for evasion. It either obligates *all* or obligates *none*. If we may be exempted without sin, the exemption must extend to every Christian society under heaven: and then the Master's

commandment would be a nullity, and his promise have neither grace nor meaning. In this matter, therefore, my brethren, we are by no means guiltless. With a single exception,* all denominations of Christians among us have violated their faith to their Lord; and are now chargeable with habitual disrespect to his authority. Instead of hastening, with generous emulation, to the aid of the Heathen, we have gone, one to his farm, and another to his merchandize: we have clamoured for the shibboleths of party, and have been unanimous (ah! shameful unanimity!) in declining, on carnal and frivolous excuses, that work of faith, that labour of love. "Now, therefore, thus saith the Lord, Consider your ways." If we persist in neglecting these Heathen, while we have the means of sending the Gospel to them, they shall die in their iniquity; but their blood may be required at our hands.

Let no one object difficulties.† In a question of plain duty,

* The honour of this exception belongs to the Moravian brethren.

† An objection to Missions among the Indians, or other savages, which many view as unanswerable, is, "that some considerable progress in civilization is previously necessary to prepare a people for the reception of Christianity. You must first make them men, say the patrons of this opinion, before you make them Christians. You must teach them to live in fixed habitations, to associate in villages, to cultivate the soil, and then you may hope that they will hear and understand when you unfold the sublime principles of the Gospel." *

Plausible and popular as this objection is, it is equally unsupported by reason, by Scripture, or by fact.

If the Gospel cannot succeed among the Indians, for example, the obstacle must be either in their understandings, or in their manner of life.

The former opinion "supposes a wider difference between the understanding of the man of the woods and the man of the city, than what does, in fact, take place. The human mind is not, in any country, below the reach of discipline and religious instruction. The American Indian, the Pacific Islander, and the African Negro, are shrewd men, whose intellectual capacity will not suffer in comparison with the uneducated classes of people on the Continent of Europe." † Why should it, since it is culture, and that alone, which destroys the level of abilities naturally equal? Surely the Indian, whose necessities compel him not only to hunt and fish for his subsistence, but to be, in a great measure, his own artificer, as well as the guardian of his private and public right, must be superior, in point of general understanding, to those vast bodies of Europeans whose intelligence the division of labour has confined

* Dr. Hardy's (of Edinburgh) Sermon before the Society, in Scotland, for propagating Religious Knowledge. Page 14.

† Ibid. Page 15.

a believer is not to be deterred by difficulties. "THUS SAITH THE LORD," is his warrant: and as long as there is nothing too hard for Omnipotence, there is nothing to justify disobedience

to a detached article of manufacture, or to the merely servile operations of agriculture. Indeed, all the national transactions with the Indians show them to possess great acuteness, and no small share of, what learning cannot bestow,—common sense. How seldom will you find, I do not say among the vulgar, but among the polished orders of society, better specimens of well formed idea, and of genuine eloquence, than are frequent in the Indian talks?

If, on the other hand, their manner of life be considered as presenting the decisive obstacle, this opinion supposes it much more difficult to alter outward habits than inward principles. Christians will not dispute that the Gospel can, and does, transform both the heart and the character; yet it is thought unable to overcome a propension to wandering from place to place. The plain meaning of the objection, therefore, is this, that some means *more powerful than the Gospel* must be applied to civilize the Indians, and prepare them for its reception. For if it be admitted that the Gospel can civilize, as well as save, the objection falls at once to the ground. But if its power to civilize be denied, while its power to save is admitted, it becomes the objectors to show the reason of this distinction, and also what those more effectual means of civilization are. Be they what they may, since the Gospel is excluded, they must be merely human; and then the principle of the objection turns out to be this,—that the wisdom of man is better adapted to civilize the Indians, than the wisdom of God.

Further: the objection supposes that savages are to be civilized without *any* religious aid. For whatever arguments prove the utility, in this matter, of religion at all, conclude, with tenfold energy, in favour of the religion of Christ. But to neglect the religious principle, would be to neglect the most potent auxiliary which can be employed in managing human nature; and to act in the spirit of that wise philosophy which would erect civil society upon the basis of Atheism.

It would swell this note into a dissertation, to state the various considerations which militate against the idea of civilizing the Indians before we attempt to Christianize them. But granting this, for a moment, to be necessary, who shall effect it? Philosophers? Merchants? Politicians? If we wait for them, the sun will expend his last light, and the business be unfinished. The Indians have had intercourse with the whites, in the concerns of trade and policy, nearly two hundred years, and most of them are as wild as ever. To put off evangelical Missions to them, till, in the ordinary course of things, they become civilized, is, therefore, equivalent to putting them off for ever.

2. If the opinion that the Gospel can succeed only among civilized people receives little countenance from reason, it receives less from Scripture.

No such restriction of its influence is contemplated in prophecy. Its universal reception is the subject of numberless predictions; but they contain not a hint that the want of civilization shall be such a bar to its progress as is commonly imagined. On the contrary, it is expressly declared, that the most roving and untutored tribes shall rejoice in Messiah's salvation, even while they retain their unpolished characters and manners. "Sing unto the Lord a new song. Let the wilderness and the

or demur. Unbelief looks at opposition, and faints. Faith looks at the promise of God, and conquers. In the strength of

cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages * that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing; let them shout from the top of the mountains." Beyond all controversy, the general sense of the Prophet, in the words of that elegant scholar, Bishop Lowth, is, that "the most uncultivated countries, and the most rude and uncivilized people, shall confess and celebrate, with thanksgiving, the blessing of the knowledge of God graciously imparted to them." † And he particularizes, as an example, those wild Arabs, who, in every point of comparison, were as inaccessible to the Gospel as the American Indians.

No such restriction was thought of by the Apostle Paul. He was a debtor not more to the Greeks than to the barbarians. He maintains, that in the body of Christ "there is neither Greek nor Jew, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free." A position which evidently assumes, that barbarians or Scythians might be Christians no less than Jews or Greeks, bondmen or free.

No such restriction is to be found in the commission which the Lord Jesus hath left his Church. Thus it runs, "Go and teach *all nations*. Go ye into *all the world*, and preach the Gospel to *every creature*," manifestly every human creature, for such only are the objects of the Gospel salvation. Not a syllable about civilization. And unless it can be proved that Indians, and other savages, are neither nations nor human creatures, or, if they are, that they are in no part of the world, the prejudice we are combating must be abandoned as in direct opposition to the will and the commandment of Christ.

Such a restriction, moreover, effaces the chief character and glory of the Gospel, namely, that "it is the *power of God* to salvation." Were it, what many take it to be, a system of mere moral suasion, of cool, philosophic argument, the case would be different, and the prejudice just. Indians and Hottentots are, indeed, rather rough materials for a religion cantly styled *rational*. But whoever knows anything of *real* Christianity, knows that the conversion of a sinner is the exclusive work of JEHOVAH the SPIRIT. It is this principle, and this alone, which makes the preaching of the word to men "dead in trespasses and sins," a *reasonable* service. Now, to say that the Gospel *cannot* succeed among a people not previously civilized, is to say, either that it is *not* the power of God, or that there are some things too hard for Omnipotence.

3. This opinion, dissonant from reason and Scripture, is also contrary to fact.

Was the world universally civilized when Christianity was promulged; or did it prosper only in civilized countries? What were the ancient Getulæ, in Africa; the Sarmatians and Scythians, in Europe? If we can credit history, they were as remote from civilization as the American Indians. Yet among these, and other nations equally uncultivated and savage, had the Gospel, in the time of Tertullian, established its reign. ‡ And in Britain it penetrated into those places which Roman arts and arms had never been able to reach.§

* Or tents.

† Translation of Isaiah. Notes, page 198. 4to.

‡ *Tertull. adversus Judæos*, cap. vii.

§ *Inaccessa Romanis loca*. *Id. ib.* A number of testimonies to the same facts are collected in that learned work of Grotius, *De Veritate Religionis Christianæ*.

the promise, worm Jacob thrashes the mountains, and beats them small as chaff. It is the way of the Holy One of Israel to order his servants on difficult duty, without showing them immediately how they are to succeed. Reserving to himself the manner and praise of their victory, he lays upon them a necessity of trusting his faithfulness; and they never did and never shall trust it in vain.

But why do I speak of difficulties? The most formidable ones which must be encountered in a Mission to the Heathen have been overcome, and are daily overcome, by the firmness and intrepidity of carnal men. *They* can visit the savage tribes; can cross their rivers, climb their mountains, traverse their forests; can learn their language, conform to their manners, acquire their confidence; can patiently submit to hunger and cold, fatigue, and peril. For what? To decorate earthly science, or to collect the dust of lucre or the vapours of fame. They pretend to no divine command; they think of no divine support. Yet we, who talk familiarly of both, turn pale at the mention of those obstacles which they continually surmount. Whence this resoluteness on the one side, and this timidity on the other? The uncourtly truth is, that the men of the world are *in earnest* and we are *not*. And what must they, what can they, conclude from our supineness? Either that our religion is false, or that we do not believe it. How long ere this reproach be wiped away? Duty urges, misery implores, thousands of precious

This general assertion might be amplified in an interesting detail, and might receive additional force from the sanctions of modern history. But either would protract, to an immoderate length, a note already too long. We may, however, ask, why the Gospel should be unequal to the effects which it formerly produced, and of which its friends made their just and unanswerable boast? Let us fairly risk the experiment, whether the cross of Christ has lost its influence on barbarian minds. Instead of waiting till civilization fit our Indian neighbours with the Gospel, let us try whether the Gospel will not be the most successful means of civilizing them. The grace of the Lord Jesus will do what philosophy and the arts will never do,—tame the wild heart: and there is no doubt of a corresponding alteration in the conduct. One Christian institution alone, the holy Sabbath, will go farther to civilize them in a year, than all human expedients in a century. Driven continually before an extending frontier; their manners debauched by the commerce of unprincipled whites; their numbers diminished by war and vice; the only alternative which seems to be offered them, is,—conversion or extermination.

souls are the depending stake, and not a moment is to be lost. In the work before us, in the immortal work of evangelizing the Heathen, let us rouse each latent energy, and brave opposition like good soldiers of Jesus Christ. And certainly the encouragement is as great as the call is pressing. As far as man, with the lights of prophecy, can judge, the time is not very distant when God shall arise, and have mercy upon Zion. What means these dire convulsions? this crash of kingdoms? these torrents of blood? He who can discover only the shock of human interests, or the madness of human passions, hath not penetrated beyond secondary and instrumental agencies. From the eminence of scriptural prediction, a humble believer overlooks the mole-hill of worldly politics, and descries the moving power, and the necessary effect, of the machinery of Providence. To him it is evident that Jehovah "shakes the nations," and is shaking them, that "the Desire of all nations may come." And hence his faith derives an establishment, and his hope an elevation, which earth is as unable to destroy as to create. Impending calamity, then, should stimulate, and not dishearten, the disciples of Jesus. The walls of Jerusalem are commonly built in troublous times. Nor hath the career of the Gospel been ever more ample and brilliant, than in the days which were memorable for "distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and looking after those things which were coming upon the earth." In these circumstances of disaster and dismay, the people of God are charged to look up, and lift up their heads, because their redemption draweth nigh, and the Son of man is coming with great power and glory. If these are, in any degree, the signs of the times, then *now* is the time for the armies of Israel to gird every man his sword on his thigh, and follow David, his King, to conquest and glory.

If from the sphere of politics we turn to that of religion, we should behold events which ought to convert every doubt into proof, and every wish into a vow. While the spirit of discord rages in the world, the spirit of union and of love descends upon the Church. Beyond the waters of the Atlantic, our brethren in the faith and patience of Jesus rejoice in his most benignant influences. Astonishing spectacle! the spell of party is broken,

the antipathies of the cradle expire, the strife of ages ceases, and a sweeter harmony of heart and of measures, among Christians, of different name, is produced in an hour, than has been granted to the entreaties, the labours, the prayers of the best of men for centuries together!

Do you demand the cause of this unanimity? It is the doing of the Lord. Its object? It is the extension of the Mediator's kingdom. Its fruits? They are, already, embassies of peace to the Heathen. Great is the company who have gone forth, with primitive zeal, to publish the word of life. The probability is that Christ crucified, that Christ whom our souls love, is, at this moment, preached to the barbarians of the southern seas; and that an evangelical Mission is on its way to the interior of Africa! Ye servants of the most high God, who show unto the Gentiles the way of salvation, all hail! May the Breaker go up before you; even Jehovah on the head of you; may he cheer you with his presence, fill you with his Spirit, clothe you with his blessing! And what more auspicious omen can we, my brethren, desire? When the work is actually begun, when it has received the most unequivocal tokens of divine approbation, shall we still linger, and tempt the Lord by asking any further signs? To him who is not blind, the finger of his providence points; to him who is not deaf, the voice of his providence calls. Incitement of a more imperious kind would encroach on the province of miracle.

If to these encouragements we add the promise of our Master in heaven, reluctance will be cut off from her last retreat. He hath said, that he will be with his people in their attempts to teach the nations. If, on a design so truly Christian, we go in *his* name, and in *his* strength, we have a *right* to expect his aid; nor is it possible that he should abandon us, or put us to shame. He hath bound himself, by the oath of his covenant, to beat down opposition before those who, obedient to his authority, constrained by his love, and confiding in his truth, enter upon arduous duty; and the glory of his crown is staked on the issue. With the Lord of hosts on our side, whom or what shall we fear? To him all difficulties are alike. At his command the treasures of the earthling shall flow in the service of the cross; and hundreds shall arise to solicit, as an enviable distinction, the

office of a Gospel herald to the savages. Clad in the armour of the sanctuary, and conducted by the "Captain of salvation," they shall go forth "conquering and to conquer." Ere his promise fail, the mountains shall sink, the valleys rise, the rivers be driven back to their sources, and ocean again divide his waters. Who, then, are on the Lord's side? Who prefer the salvation of men above their chiefest joys? Who burn to hide the dishonour of the past in the glory of the future, and aspire to the dignity of being fellow-workers with God? Let them, with one heart and one soul, in the faith of the Gospel, in the good-will of brethren, in the bowels of Jesus Christ, forthwith pledge themselves to each other, to those apostolical believers beyond the sea, to the Heathen who are perishing for lack of vision, that they will unite their efforts to fill the dark places of the land with the light of God's salvation. Should we succeed in the conversion of a single Pagan, the acquisition would infinitely repay our expenditure and our toil. For our Lord himself hath pronounced the whole world, in comparison with *one soul*, to be a thing of nought. But O, my brethren, who shall count the number, or define the extent, or limit the duration, of those blessings which *our* exertions may be instrumental in imparting to the Heathen? Who shall stop the river of life in its course through their parched soil? Most transporting thought! that thousands of believers whom we shall never see in the flesh, and tens of thousands who shall come into being when we are gathered unto our fathers, may trace their knowledge of the Saviour to the execution of that plan in virtue of which I address you this evening! and that its magnificent result may never be fully disclosed, till the mystery of Providence be finished, the election of grace brought in, and the shout of final redemption thunder through the temple of God!

DISCOURSE IX.

CONCERN FOR THE SPIRITUAL WANTS OF MEN.*

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PHILIPPIANS ii. 20.

"I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state."

THE rare and exalted character which St. Paul here sketches at a single stroke, belongs to Timothy. The passage which contains it appears to have been written at a time when the Apostle was particularly solicitous to obtain correct information respecting the state of the Philippian Church. He was unable to visit Philippi himself. He could not immediately send Timothy; and among the persons then around him, there was no other on whose concern for the welfare of the Church he could rely.

This passage suggests several remarks which have a direct and important bearing upon the object of the present discourse.

I. The first remark suggested by the passage is, THAT THE SITUATION OF MANKIND, IN A MORAL AND RELIGIOUS VIEW, IS SUCH AS OUGHT TO AWAKEN THE UNAFFECTED CONCERN OF GOOD MEN.

This proposition is, I conceive, fairly deducible from our text. The Apostle evidently supposed it to be necessary that some one should care for the state of the Philippian Church. Yet neither in this Epistle, nor elsewhere, does he intimate that there was anything peculiar in their situation, which rendered it more necessary to care for them than for others. On the contrary, that Church appears to have been at this time in a remarkably flourishing state. It was furnished, as we learn from the introduction to the Epistle, with Pastors

* Preached a short time previous to the Author's triumphant death.

and subordinate officers. Of course, it enjoyed all the means of grace. Its members had recently given the Apostle proofs of their affectionate remembrance, and their liberality, by sending him pecuniary supplies; and he expresses a strong persuasion that God had begun a good work in them, and that he would perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ. Now if such a Church, if persons professedly and hopefully pious, favoured with the enjoyment of Christian privileges, and disposed to improve them, still needed some one to care for their state, how imperiously does the situation of a very large proportion of our fellow-beings call for attention and concern? If it were necessary to corroborate this remark, it might easily be done. From the immense mass of information which has been collected and embodied by a zealous few, who care for the state of perishing men, it would be easy to select a multitude of the most alarming facts, illustrative of the moral and religious situation of the world; facts sufficient to convince insensibility itself of the necessity of vigorous exertion, and to rouse the most torpid into activity.

But can it be necessary to do this, after such a flood of light has been poured upon the situation of the dark places of the earth; bringing afresh to our view the fact long known, but little regarded, that they are filled, not with the habitations only, but with the temples and altars, of cruelty and lust? Must we again lead you through the recently explored and almost immeasurable wilds of Paganism; again measure the length and breadth of this Arabian Desert of the moral world; again show you six hundred millions of immortal beings sitting in the darkness and shadow of death; and place before you the new-born infant sacrificed, or exposed by its parents; the widow's funeral pile; the blood-stained car of Juggernaut; with other sickening scenes from which even unsanctified nature recoils? Or, escaping from those regions of moral death to the shores of our own comparatively favoured land, must we repeat the calls which have so often summoned you to survey the waste places of her Zion, and to explore her moral wildernesses? Must we repeat the melancholy truth, that a large proportion of our countrymen are destitute of stated religious instruction, and that in consequence of the unexampled increase of our popu-

lation, this deficiency is annually increasing, notwithstanding all the exertions which are made to supply it?

With these facts, and with the Bible before us, can any thing farther be requisite to prove that the religious state of a very large proportion of mankind is such as demands the most active, unremitting concern? If this be not the case, why has the all-wise God lavished such a profusion of care upon us? Why did he send his Son into the world? Why did his Son send forth disciples? Why direct them to pray the Lord of the harvest, that labourers might be sent forth into his harvest? Why was it his last command;—"Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature?" Why did his first gift, after his ascension to heaven, consist of Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and teachers, sent expressly to care, to watch, for the souls of men? Why did those Apostles ordain Elders in every city? Why charge those to whom they left the care of the Churches to commit the things they had received to faithful men, who should be able to teach others also?

Has all this provision for the spiritual wants of men ceased to be necessary? Has such a change taken place in their character and condition, that watchmen are no longer needed? Are the enemies which once opposed their salvation dead, or asleep, or converted to friends? Does the broad road no longer lead to destruction? Are the fires of hell extinguished? Are the glories of heaven departed? Or, has the long expected day arrived in which it is no longer necessary to "teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord?"

No, my brethren, we have around us but too many proofs that this is not the case. You well know that the moral state of our race is still essentially the same as in the days of the Apostles: that the dangers to which they are exposed are still as great, and the enemies that oppose their salvation as numerous, as artful, and as powerful as ever: and that, therefore, they still need faithful watchmen to care for their souls. Has not experience taught you, my brethren, that such watchmen are necessary for yourselves? If so, remember, they are no less necessary to others. And if they are thus necessary, then care and exertion are requisite to provide them. By whom shall

this care be exercised, this exertion made? Will you reply, by those whose necessities require them? And is it then needful to remind you that by them it will never be done? Have not observation and experience taught you, that men are never more insensible to their spiritual wants, than when those wants are most numerous and pressing? This, this is the circumstance which, above all others, renders it necessary to care for the spiritual state of mankind. They will not; no, they will not care for themselves. When would the Son of God have made his appearance in our world, had he waited till its prayers drew him down? When would he have sent his Apostles to the Heathen, had he waited till they solicited such a favour? And when, O Christian, would the Spirit of God have visited your heart, had he waited till it became spontaneously desirous of his presence? Why then should we expect the present inhabitants of the world to be more spiritually wise, more concerned for their eternal interests, than former generations, or than we ourselves have been? Like the merciful God, we must have compassion on those who have no compassion on themselves, and listen to the speechless cry of their necessities.

But why do I insist on this obvious truth? From many of the destitute an imploring cry is already heard. Wakened by the still small voice of God, or by the occasional warning of some transient messenger of the cross, they are becoming sensible of their wants, and beseech us to care for them. Hundreds and thousands would at this moment receive with gratitude and joy the fragments, the crumbs, of your spiritual repasts. They cry for the bread of life, but there is none to break it to them. To provide a supply for themselves is beyond their power. And even if it were not so,—if all the destitute of our own country and in the world possessed the disposition and the ability to care effectually for themselves,—who is to care for posterity, for *your* posterity? Who is to make the present exertions which are necessary to preserve them from suffering a famine of the word of God? Of this, chimerical as the apprehension may appear, there is no small nor doubtful danger. Only suffer things to pursue their present course, and it is certain that your descendants, at no very distant day, will experience the fulfilment of that awful threatening; “Behold

the days shall come, saith the Lord, that I will send a famine upon the land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the word of the Lord." You can, in some faint degree, conceive of the miseries attendant upon a famine of bread, though the unmerited goodness of God has never permitted you to witness them. But what are these in comparison with the evils occasioned by a famine of the *bread of life*? As far inferior, as is corporeal pain to mental anguish; as is the death of the body to that of the soul; as are a few days of suffering to an eternity of wretchedness. To witness these evils, is to see the moral wilderness, with all its briars and thorns, its wild beasts and noxious reptiles, rapidly encroaching upon the vineyard of God. It is to see our golden candlesticks successively removed out of their places, and one burning and shining light after another extinguished; while none are set up in their room to dispel the hourly increasing darkness. It is to see the ways of Zion mourn because few come to her solemn feasts; the houses of God decaying, shut up, or desecrated; the temples of vice multiplying; the barriers which protect the sanctity of the Sabbath prostrated; the Bible cast aside and forgotten as a useless book; the exertions of religious and charitable institutions suspended, and even their existence terminated; the few remaining disciples of Jesus destitute of strength, of activity, and almost of life, constantly diminishing in number; the rising generation growing up without God and without hope; and darkness which may be felt overspreading the land; while an insulted God, looking down from above, commands the clouds to rain no rain upon it, and pronounces it a spot rejected, and nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned. Such are some of the effects which result from a famine of the word of God; such the evils under which a large proportion of our own country and of the world now groans. If we wish either to remove this most terrible of God's judgments from those who are now suffering it, or to avert it from our posterity, immediate and vigorous exertion is indispensably necessary.

Will any one reply, These apprehensions are groundless? It is impossible that in our country, or at least in the most highly favoured parts of it, the gloomy scenes which have been

portrayed should ever be realized? My brethren, let no one be too confident of this. Must I remind you that every spot occupied by the Church on earth is a spot which, like the territory of Holland, has been won from an ocean; and that nothing but an adequate mound can prevent that ocean from reclaiming what it has lost? This mound consists, under God, in a faithful and well educated Christian ministry. Remove this, or neglect to repair the breaches which are constantly making in it, and you will soon see the billows, whose rage it even now scarcely restrains, bursting upon you with irresistible violence, and sweeping away the labours of ages in a day. Where are now the seven churches of Asia, which rose and smiled like so many verdant islands amid the surrounding waves? Go to Asia, or take up the glass of history, and see.

II. A second remark, suggested by our text, is this: **MEN WHO PROPERLY CARE FOR THE SPIRITUAL STATE OF THEIR FELLOW-BEINGS ARE RARELY TO BE FOUND.**

This was the case in the days of St. Paul. It has been so ever since; and, we are constrained to add, it is so still; though, blessed be God, in a less degree than formerly. Will any one attempt to disprove this assertion by referring to the numerous societies which have been formed, to the sums which are collected, to the zeal and activity which are displayed, for the promotion of almost every religious object? To every thing which can be urged of this nature, I would allow its full weight. That much has been done, that much is now doing, to meliorate the moral condition of man, is readily acknowledged. Still there exists, I conceive, ample foundation for the remark, that men who are suitably concerned for the spiritual condition of their fellow-beings are very rarely to be found. It must be recollected that warmth and coldness are relative terms, no less in the spiritual than in the natural world. Our climate might be thought warm by a visiter from Nova-Zembla; but how would it appear to a native of the torrid zone? So to us, natives of this frozen world, the present temperature of our spiritual climate may appear sufficiently high. But how would it appear to an inhabitant of heaven, were he condemned to reside among us? How would it appear to our benevolent Saviour, should he revisit the earth? Would he not find it intolerably chilling?

Would he not regard the warmest love, the most fervent zeal, which are to be found among us, as comparatively cold? Would he not tell us that in comparison with what ought to have been done, almost nothing has been done?

And, to allude to a term employed by our translators in the text, how small a portion of that which is done appears to be done *naturally*? How much of the concern displayed for the destitute is *artificial*; how much of it is *forced* into action; what exertions, what importunities, what appeals to every principle of our nature are required to procure even the most scanty supply for their necessities! Alas! my brethren, were the fervent Apostle of the Gentiles now on earth, labouring, as he was wont for their salvation, would he not too often have occasion to address them in the language before us,—“ I have no man who will *naturally* care for your state?”

III. It will not perhaps be departing from our subject, certainly not from our object, to notice SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL CAUSES OF THIS UNCONCERN: for a knowledge of the causes of existing evils is often necessary to their removal.

Of these causes, one is an inordinate and criminal *self-love*. To this cause the Apostle ascribed the deficiency of which he complained. “ All,” says he, “ seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s.” It is needless to remark, that this cause still operates with undiminished force. It is frost in the heart, and palsy in the hand. It draws around us a magic circle, beyond which our affections and exertions with difficulty pass. It presents to our eye a false glass, through which our own interests appear immeasurably important, and the interests of others comparatively trifling. It is ever suggesting some scheme of self-gratification, or self-aggrandizement, which engrosses, and exhausts the vigour of the soul, and leaves nothing but spiritless languor for plans of benevolence. In a word, it prompts us to care so much for ourselves, that we find little leisure or disposition to care for others.

This cause, however, prevalent and operative as it is, does not alone appear sufficient to produce all the evils of which we complain. It does not, except in some few instances, prevent us from relieving the wants of the body. Why, then, should it prevent us from relieving the far more pressing wants of the soul?

The most selfish individual among us would scarcely suffer a beggar to famish and expire at his gate. Yet how many, who are by no means slaves to avarice, suffer their immortal fellow-beings, while within hearing of their cries, to expire under the pressure of spiritual famine! Inordinate self-love, then, however prevalent, is not alone sufficient to account for the existing indifference to the religious interests of mankind. We must seek a still more general and operative cause; and such a cause we may find in the prevalence of *unbelief*. We do not, my brethren, properly believe the account which inspiration gives us of the spiritual state of mankind. Still less do we believe its awful descriptions of the fate of those who die in their sins. Did we fully credit the declarations of God, relative to these subjects; did we, like the Apostle, “know the terrors of the Lord;” concern for the spiritual state of sinful men would be one of our main-springs of action; and to effect their salvation would be the great object of our exertions. Were such a belief universally prevalent in Christian countries, it would engage their whole population in one grand, combined effort to rescue slaves of ignorance and depravity from impending ruin. Comparatively speaking, no tears would then be shed for merely temporal calamities; for they would be regarded as light afflictions, and not worthy to be compared with that far more exceeding and eternal weight of wretchedness, which must overwhelm the impenitent. Natural sympathy alone would then do more for the salvation of mankind, than Christian benevolence has ever done since the days of the Apostles. This is not mere conjecture; it is a conclusion founded on facts. For, look at the scenes which were exhibited in Europe, during those dark ages when men really believed the dogmas and superstitions of Papal Rome. See the churches which were erected, the convents which were endowed, the treasures which were lavished, the numberless masses which were said, and the almost endless succession of prayers which were offered, for redeeming departed souls from the purgatorial miseries they were supposed to be suffering. Had all the exertions thus made, to redeem sinners from a fancied purgatory, been employed, under the direction of an enlightened zeal, in arresting their progress to a real hell, every nation on earth would now

be enjoying the benefits of a preached Gospel, and the Bible would be in the hands of every individual of our race. And why is this? Why has superstition possessed, apparently, greater power to touch the heart and open the hand, than faith has had, at least in these latter ages of the Church? Because, I answer, our faith is so weak that it scarcely deserves the name. Because the Papists did, in one sense, believe the existence of a purgatory; and we do not, or act as if we did not, really believe the existence of a hell. Brethren, these things ought not so to be. As far as the sufferings which we believe to await impenitent sinners beyond the grave, surpass in magnitude and duration those fancied sufferings which excited the compassion, and called forth the exertions, of Papal devotees; so far ought we to surpass them in our efforts: and so far we should surpass them, did we properly believe the declarations of eternal truth. We should then feel, that he who prevents but one immortal from incurring those sufferings, takes more from the mass of human misery, and adds more to the sum of human happiness, than would he who should banish sorrow from the earth, and secure the highest temporal felicity of the whole human race.

It must, however, be acknowledged that there is another cause of supineness and inaction, which, perhaps, affects those most powerfully who are least affected by the causes mentioned above; and that is, *despondency*. When the persons to whom we now refer, contemplate the situation and prospects of sinful men, as portrayed by the pencil of inspiration; when they survey the mighty mass of human wretchedness, together with the apparently insurmountable obstacles which oppose its diminution, and the many powerful causes which are ever operating to increase it; they are overwhelmed, crushed, and paralysed. They feel like men required to empty the ocean by the daily removal of a drop, while a thousand rivers are incessantly pouring into its bosom. All that their utmost exertions can effect, appears so much like nothing, that they almost resolve to attempt nothing, and to say that nothing can be done.

It appears, then, that the three great causes, to whose influence all our unconcern for the spiritual wants and miseries of mankind is to be ascribed, are *selfishness*, *unbelief*, and *despondency*. And by which of these, my hearers, permit me to ask,

can you consent to be influenced? Shall it be *selfishness*? Is any one willing to acknowledge, even to himself, that he is controlled by a principle so base? Is any one prepared to say as follows:—"I renounce all pretensions to that charity which seeketh not her own; all pretensions to any union of feeling with the benevolent Redeemer, or any similarity of character to those whom he approves and rewards; and when the great Husbandman gathers in the immortal harvest, it shall not be said, that any of the seed which produced it was sown by my hand, or watered by my tears?" If this language appears too shocking to be adopted, will any one say, "Selfishness shall not control, but it shall counsel, me; it shall not entirely repress, but it shall limit, my exertions? It shall preserve me from the dangers into which a too ardent charity might plunge me, and prevent its sacred flame from rising too high?" My brethren, if any of you are in danger of loving your neighbour more than yourselves, of surpassing in benevolence the Son of God, or even of exceeding his Apostles, it may perhaps be necessary to ask the advice of this base counsellor. But if no such danger exists, its advice may safely be dispensed with. And if no one is prepared to utter such sentiments in language, let no one express them in action.

Shall we, then, yield ourselves to the palsy influence of *unbelief*? Shall we plead a disbelief of God's declarations, as an excuse for disobeying his commands? Even if we disbelieve, or explain away, the declarations of Scripture relative to the present and future state of sinners, how shall we evade the no less plain and forcible language of *facts* which it records. The plain, the undeniable, inference from all these facts is, that the situation of mankind without a Saviour, without a knowledge of the Gospel, is unspeakably dangerous. Nor can this inference be avoided; unless we assert, that neither the Apostles, nor our Saviour himself, knew anything of the matter. Unless we are prepared to assert this, we must, with the Apostle, judge, "that since one died for all, then were all dead;" that if Christ died to redeem men, from the "curse of the law," from the "wrath to come," from the "power of sin," and from "spiritual wickedness in high places;" then, to all these evils and dangers are men exposed.

Yielding to the impressive language of these facts, and escaping from the insensibility of unbelief, shall we then plunge into the dead sea of *despondency*? Believing the threatenings, shall we inconsistently disbelieve the promises, of revelation, and forget the faithfulness and omnipotence of Him who has said to his Son, "I will give thee the Heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession?" Could a Roman exhort his countrymen not to despair of the commonwealth; and shall we despair of the kingdom of Christ, supported and defended as it is by the eternal purpose and oath of Jehovah? We talk of difficulties; but what are difficulties to Omnipotence; to Him who speaks and it is done? Away, then, with every desponding thought: and while you contemplate a world in wickedness, remember who hath said, "The knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth, as the waters cover the seas."

And now, who is prepared to deny that the principles which lead to this melancholy unconcern for the spiritual wants of men, are base, sinful, and utterly unworthy of rational, social beings? Will you not, then, by displaying an enlightened, active, and liberal concern for your destitute fellow-men, evince your freedom from the power of such principles; and efficiently patronize the Society* in whose behalf I address you?

With the great object of this Society you are already acquainted. By educating pious, indigent youth, of promising talents, for the Gospel ministry, it seeks to supply the melancholy and alarming deficiency of religious teachers which exists in our own country, and in the world. Including among its friends and supporters, Christians of different religious denominations, it aims at nothing less than furnishing all our destitute fellow-men, at home and abroad, with a well-educated and pious ministry. Without derogating from the importance of other benevolent objects which claim and receive the support of the friends of religion and mankind, it may be said with truth, that the object of this Society is second in importance to no other. Its success is essential to the success of every other object of a religious nature. The exertions of Missionary

* The American Education Society for the training of Missionary Candidates.

societies must be circumscribed and paralysed, unless suitable men can be obtained to be employed as Missionaries. The distribution of the Bible will effect but a comparatively small part of the good which it is designed and calculated to produce, if its contents are not explained by able and faithful interpreters, giving voice and utterance to its solemn truths, and pressing them upon the heart and conscience. Already are the Scriptures in the hands of thousands, who, were they asked in the words of Philip to the Ethiopian nobleman, "Understandest thou what thou redest?" would be constrained to reply with him, "How can we, except some one should guide us?" It is by *hearing*, rather than by reading the word, that faith comes. It is by the "foolishness of preaching, that it pleases God to save them that believe." But "how can they hear without a Preacher? and how can they preach except they be sent?" And who is to send them, if we do not? By educating pious, indigent youth for the ministry, we shall instrumentally send many into the vineyard of our Lord, who, without our assistance, will never enter it. We shall aid Bible and Missionary societies, by furnishing the former with skilful interpreters, and the latter with faithful labourers. In a word, we shall put in motion the means which God has appointed for the salvation of men; means which he will therefore crown with success.

And now, my brethren, what will you say? or rather, what will you do? I am aware that the calls upon your liberality are many and great; but they are calls which it seems impossible to disregard. They are the calls of immortal beings, perishing for want of the assistance which it is in your power to afford. They are the expiring, agonizing calls of a drowning world: a world deluged by a flood of ignorance and misery, far more terrible than all the waters of Noah. Shall those, then, whom the arm of omnipotent grace has snatched from the fatal flood, rest unconcerned while millions are sinking around. "If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death,—if thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth he not know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?" My brethren, thousands of your countrymen, and millions of your fellow-men, are drawn unto death, and you

cannot even say, "Behold, we knew it not." If, then, we refuse to care for their state, will not He who pondereth the heart consider, and He that keepeth the soul, will not He know it? and as we have refused to deliver the soul of our brother, will He not refuse to keep our souls? Has not the voice of inspiration said, "Whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" Much more, then, may we conclude that the love of God never entered the heart of him who, seeing his brother ready to perish for ever, and possessing the means of affording relief, refuses to afford it.

But I will not suppose that you need to be urged by motives of this nature. Appealing to your compassion, rather than to your fears, I will ask, If a Saviour had never been provided for the world, and could wealth or suffering procure such a blessing, what, with your present views of the spiritual state of mankind, would you give, what would you suffer, to purchase it for them; to draw down an all-sufficient Saviour from heaven, with pardon, and peace, and salvation in his hands? Would any sacrifices, any sufferings, appear too great for the attainment of such an object? My brethren, without making great sacrifices, without any personal sufferings, you can, in an important sense, do this. The situation of those who are destitute of the Gospel is in effect the same as if a Saviour had never been revealed. In vain, as it respects them, have the glad tidings of great joy reached our world. In vain have life and immortality been brought to light, and the gates of heaven opened. Of these wonders of redeeming love, of the only name given under heaven whereby men can be saved, they have never heard. He, then, who shall send them the Gospel, will instrumentally provide for them a Saviour, snatch them from perdition, and give them life and immortality.

He who restores sight to one that is blind, not only gives him eyes, but does in effect give him the luminaries of heaven, the colours of which adorn the earth, the beauties of nature and of art; in a word, all the benefits which the faculty of seeing imparts. So he who sends the Gospel to the destitute, gives them Christ, gives them a Saviour, and all the blessings which that Saviour has

purchased. O what gifts, what blessings, are these to be dispensed with a mortal hand. Who will not spring forward with eagerness to share the privilege of dispensing such treasures? Who will not thank that God who thus allows us to imitate himself? to share with him the happiness of doing infinite good? Compared with this privilege, even the miraculous powers of the Apostles, which gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and life to the dead, shrink into insignificance. We may place a Saviour, a heaven, within the reach, not of one only, but of thousands. It may be fairly presumed, that every pious, indigent youth who is educated for the ministry, will preach the Gospel to at least a thousand souls. The question, then, whether a pious young man shall be prepared for the ministry, whether the means necessary for his preparation shall be afforded, comes to this;—Shall a thousand immortal souls be favoured with the Gospel, or possibly live, and die, and perish without it? What a question is this for the consideration of accountable beings! Is there, can there be, any doubt respecting the proper answer?

Again: reasoning from what has taken place within a few years, it is not perhaps too much to suppose that every pious and well-educated youth who is introduced into the sacred ministry, will be instrumental in the conversion and salvation of one hundred persons. These, in their turn, will prove instruments of converting and saving others; some of whom may also become Ministers, and preach the Gospel to thousands after we are laid in dust. Thus the happy effects produced by one whom we assist to educate, like a river widening as it runs, will flow down to posterity, and produce consequences which finite minds cannot estimate. Compared with such results, how worthless, how insignificant, does wealth appear! And yet, when employed in bringing about these results, how unspeakable is its value! Viewed in this light, it is the most valuable of all temporal gifts which Providence bestows: more valuable even than intellectual talents, or literary acquirements; since he who possesses it may call into the service of Christ greater talents than any one man ever possessed. He may exert a power over minds little less than creative. He may call from the poverty and obscurity in which it now lies, the most

vigorous intellect; may develop its energies; cause its faculties to expand and brighten; and send it forth to promote, beyond all calculation, the glory of God, and the happiness of men; he may thus prepare it to shine hereafter, with a great multitude of others, "as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever." What, my hearers, is the building of a palace, a pyramid, or a city, in comparison with the erection of such a pillar as this in the temple of our God above?

Learn then, O learn, ye wealthy, the true value of riches! Learn it at the foot of Emmannel's cross. Learn it of Him to whose words we have been attending; and who by that cross was crucified to the world, and the world to him. Were he now on earth, and possessed of your wealth, to what end would he apply it? But the example is too bright for the imitation, almost too dazzling even for the eye of this cool, calculating age. Christianity, at least as she exists in our hearts, seems to feel, in common with men, the contracting influence of old age, and to have lost the sympathetic, compassionate ardour which warmed her youthful bosom. O! to see her once more in her pristine form, adorned with the beauty, and strong with the vigour, of renovated youth; breathing that fervent benevolence which she inspired when she first descended from the bosom of Infinite Love; when not wealth, but blood, was the price paid for the privilege of communicating her blessings to an ungrateful world; and when that price was paid by her disciples more cheerfully than a small portion of wealth is given now! Blessed be God, some symptoms of this desirable renovation begin to appear. Christianity, as it exists at the present day, resembles, in some faint degree, Christianity as it glowed in the breasts of Apostles and martyrs. But, brethren, let us strive to make the resemblance more perfect. Let us convince mankind that our heaven-born religion still glows with the ardour of youth; still breathes the angelic sentiment, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men." And let us never forget, that our approximation to the standard of primitive Christianity must be estimated by the degree in which we make Christ, and his cause, all and in all, and manifest a readiness to do all things, to suffer all things, and to part with all things, for his sake.

DISCOURSE X.

 THE OBLIGATION OF CHRISTIANS TO PROMOTE
 THE EXTENSION OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

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ROMANS xiv. 7, 8.

“For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.”

THIS passage contains a comprehensive description of Christian obligation and character. The good man refuses to “live unto himself.” In all his designs and movements he feels bound to act “with an eye single” to the glory of the Saviour and the extension of his kingdom.

Thus briefly explained, this passage lays the foundation for the following statement, which it is my present purpose to illustrate and apply: THE FRIENDS OF THE LORD JESUS OUGHT TO DEVOTE THEMSELVES, WITHOUT THE SLIGHTEST HESITATION OR THE LEAST RESERVE, TO THE SINGLE OBJECT OF STRENGTHENING THE INTERESTS AND EXTENDING THE LIMITS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. A construction is often put upon the obligations asserted in this statement, which makes them rest easy upon the conscience of the lax professor. This construction may be thus given:—We ought *in our hearts* to give up ourselves, all we are and all we have, to the Saviour, with the resolution, *if God requires*, ACTUALLY to make the surrender. Thus many a professed Christian is ready to rejoice that he has fallen upon better times than those in which others have been led to prison and to death. He rejoices, that besides the demands which his religious profession has upon him, he is permitted to have another department of interest and exertion. After devoting a small portion of his income to the

support of Christian institutions at home and abroad, he is happy to think that he may expend his strength in enlarging his possessions, in securing the luxuries and elegancies of life, and in accumulating an inheritance for his children. This is a construction of the Christian's obligations as mischievous as it is false. It has furnished a pillow on which not a few professed disciples lay their heads in deep slumber, while the perils of perdition thicken around them. They are invited to contemplate their obligations under a very different construction. According to this, they ought *actually* to devote themselves, in the strictest sense of the thrilling terms; they ought ACTUALLY to devote themselves, "arm and soul," to the interests of the Church. The meaning of this language I hope to place beyond the reach of misapprehension.

I know a man belonging to a class which is called *indigent*. For the support of his growing family he depends, under God, upon his daily industry. He is a Christian. And when at the Missionary meeting he threw a dollar into the treasury of the Lord, he thus explained the grounds on which he proceeded:—"All I am, and all I have, I have joyfully devoted to Him who redeemed me with his blood. I am under the most sacred obligations *to do what I can* to promote his kingdom. From these obligations I cannot, would not, break away. I cannot help, then, tasking my ingenuity, and urging my powers to the utmost, to furnish my proportion of the means of diffusing far and wide the sweet influence of Christian truth. What that proportion is, it may help me to determine, to reflect upon the exertions I certainly should make to redeem a child from servitude. Poor as I am, I know full well that, by practising the most wakeful industry and the most rigid economy, I should be able, besides supporting my family, to raise a considerable sum every year *for such an object*. And, O! can I do less to save a world, weltering in its own blood, from the horrors of eternal death?"

Another man I know, who has a *full competence*. He also is a Christian. He thinks it not enough to maintain among his fellow-men a reputable profession. "Bought with a price," how can he think himself his own? Whatever he is and has, he resolves shall be sacred to the Saviour. In the general outline

and minute details of business he feels himself bound, continually, to act with a direct and honest reference to the welfare of the Church. When he sows and when he reaps his fields; whenever he goes a journey, and whenever he makes a contract; in the style of his living, and in the education of his children; he is governed in every movement by strong desires to extend the kingdom of the Saviour. For this he "lives." Here is the spring of his activity, the source of his enjoyment.

The other man, you see, is a "*wealthy disciple*." He is one of the few who, in despite of the obstacles thrown in the rich man's course, is making progress in the "strait and narrow way." A happy exposition of the principles on which, as a Christian, he feels bound to act, you may find in a short address once made to his collected family. "It is my distinguished privilege," he said, "to be a Christian. Alas! how few who are held by the same embarrassments, rejoice in the same hopes! May I never for a moment cease to feel the peculiar obligations under which discriminating grace has placed me! What return can I make, as a proper expression of gratitude and love to my gracious Benefactor? I am his, wholly his, his for ever. You would not expect, you would not desire, that your father, held by such obligations, would consult his own ease, or your natural propensities. *Your father is a Christian*. He may not live to himself. The large resources which are placed within his reach, are sacred to the Saviour. To appropriate them as an inheritance to you would be little less than sacrilege. Know, then, that from your father you may expect whatever may contribute to form your character on the Christian model. The best means of mental and moral discipline he will promptly furnish. He will not fail to do his utmost to prepare you to be extensively useful and happy in the stations which may be allotted you. But further than this he cannot go. The Church is required by her Lord to put forth an agonizing effort to save a sinking world. God forbid that I should be wanting to this effort. My time, influence, and property I cannot withhold. It is my duty and privilege to bring forward whatever acquisitions I can command, to meet the various claims of my Christian profession." Illustrations such as these may sufficiently explain

the obligations asserted in the statement with which this discourse begins.

Of the truth of this statement, strong presumptive evidence may be found in the fact, *that to every professed Christian is furnished, in the providence of God, a sphere of exertion in building up the Church, which demands the highest exercise of all the powers he may possess.* A company of firemen with their enginery gather around a house. At different points the smoke already begins to issue through the covering. Here and there the pent-up flame fitfully breaks forth. The proprietor is at a distance, the family are asleep, the neighbourhood is unalarmed. These men are trained to the work of contending with the flames; the agency through which they may exert their powers with decision and effect is fully within their reach; a sphere of exertion is open before them, which demands the highest efforts they are able to put forth. Can they doubt for a single moment what they ought to do? Are not their obligations to exert every power clearly written out on the smoking building before them?

Take another case. A surgeon, a physician, and their attendants, enter a hospital. Here lies a wretch with a mangled leg, and there another with a broken arm. On that heap of straw lies a poor creature, well-nigh consumed with a burning fever; and at no great distance beyond, a companion in affliction ready to die through mere neglect. Can these men, skilled as they are in the healing art, doubt what they ought to do? Do not the imploring looks, the deep groans, the wasted frames of the sufferers before them, urge home their obligations clearly, impressively, powerfully? Will not the sphere of usefulness on which they have entered, constrain them to see and feel that a demand is made for whatever of professional skill and activity they are able to employ?

Contemplate, Christian brethren, the circumstances in which the providence of God has placed you. Behold a world "lying in wickedness." There at a distance, wrapped in the gloom of the shadow of death, are unnumbered Pagans. Here, near at hand, are young communities, growing settlements, feeble churches, "ready to perish" for the bread of life. Does not every object which you see, and every sound which you hear,

urge you to do what you can to save a dying world? Are you qualified to preach the Gospel? Have you received a discipline, intellectual and moral, which has fitted you to explain, apply, and enforce the truths of the Bible? And can you not see and feel, that to this work you ought to devote your time and strength, cordially, skilfully, untiringly? How can you indulge in literary leisure, engage in secular employments, toil for the luxuries of life, while those who are "bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh," are sinking by hundreds and thousands to perdition, for want of the aid which you are able to assist in furnishing! How can you help feeling called upon, as by a thousand voices breaking on your ears, in tones of deep distress, to rise up and toil, to the utmost of your powers, for guilty, bleeding humanity!

Or, it may be that you are distinguished for skill and experience in forming the young mind to habits of correct thought and feeling. You are qualified to arrest and fix their attention; to interest and animate their minds; to urge home, with warm affections and arousing pungency, the healing truths of the Gospel. Extend your view, then, to the "Valley of the Mississippi." Behold the multitudes of youth and children! Here, their education is utterly neglected; there, it is entirely perverted. In one place, they are left to wander in ignorance, and become the prey of some artful superstition; in another, the life-blood is poisoned at the fountain by Infidelity. And yet these young minds, thus neglected or perverted, are, under God, at no distant day, to give shape to the destinies of this mighty nation! Can you think of this, and not see a sphere of exertion, which loudly and imperiously demands the exercise of all your powers? Now extend the limits of your field of observation. A world is before you. Unnumbered millions of young immortals stretch out their hands, and, by signs of distress which cannot be mistaken, implore assistance. And can you doubt whether you ought to make sacrifices, and submit to self-denial, to task every power of mind and body, to afford relief?

Or, perhaps, you are distinguished by elevated station; weight of character; extent of influence. Your name is known, your opinions are quoted, your views are adopted by a large circle. Look upon your right hand and left. Wherever you go do you

not behold appalling monuments of hostility to the Son of God? At the inn, in the stage, on board the steam-boat; in the fashionable circle, and the literary club; in the hall of legislation, and on the seat of justice, do you not often see your Saviour contradicted, opposed, derided? And can you look on without emotion? Are not appeals thus sent home to your souls, calling you to stand up in the defence of the name and truth of your Redeemer? Ought you not to put forth prompt, decisive, untiring efforts to purify public sentiment? Can you hesitate a moment on the question of your obligations?

Or, perhaps, you are affluent. O, then, consider the wants of the Church, and the miseries of the world! Mark the condition of the various institutions around you, whose object and tendency are to diffuse the light of life. See, by what embarrassments their movements are retarded. Can you look upon their exhausted treasuries without feeling your obligations to consecrate your gold and silver to the service of your Lord? Ought you not to lay your accumulated treasures at the foot of the cross; to devote your shining dust to the great work of extending the triumphs of your King?

Whatever, fellow-Christians, may be the stations which you occupy; whatever the means of usefulness you command; the spheres of Christian effort opened before you clearly and impressively require you to devote all you are, and all you have, to the single object of building up the Church.

A SECOND argument, to sustain the statement at the beginning of this discourse, may be found *in the design of the probation by which the Church, considered collectively or individually, is to be trained up for heaven.* As *individuals*, Christians are to be trained up in the Church, to find their happiness in the service and enjoyment of God. In this, heaven itself consists. There, the disciples of the Saviour behold the glory of their Lord. There, "His servants serve him." To find in his service the source of eternal blessedness, to find in his presence the fountain of life, our character must be conformed to his. Otherwise his service would disgust us; his presence would torment us. Now, just so far as we are under the control of that benevolence which appropriately expresses itself in exertions to build up the Church, just so far is our character con-

formed to the divine. And in whatever degree we are selfish, in the same degree must we be unable to find our happiness in God; and nothing but selfishness can lead us to cultivate a field of exertion, and maintain a deportment of interest, separate from the kingdom of heaven. A just estimate of the different objects to which we are related, of the different interests in which we are concerned, would constrain us to regard ourselves, in all our plans and movements, as entirely subservient to the glory of his name, and the advancement of his cause. Practically to regard ourselves in this light is to be benevolent; is to be like God. That discipline which is fitted to bring us thus to regard ourselves, is adapted to the design of the probation in which we are placed; and this discipline is involved in the obligations which bind us to consecrate ourselves, without hesitation or reserve, as a living sacrifice to God. Those who yield to these obligations secure this discipline. Its healthful influence reaches their inmost hearts. The plague which was preying upon their vitals is stayed. Life throbs through all their veins. They are "strong in the Lord." The image of the Saviour, in all its beauty, smiles through all their "inner man." They already enter into the sympathies, and breathe the spirit, of their brethren in heaven; and when they pass from probationary scenes, they will be prepared to enter into "the joy of their Lord."

As *Christian communities*, if they would answer the end of their probation, the Churches must devote themselves altogether to the service of Christ. They are here to be trained up, in their collective capacity and social interests, for the everlasting employments and joys of the upper world. This can be done only by a discipline which will bring their feelings to flow forth in the same strain with delightful harmony; all their powers to act in the same direction, in full, unbroken concert. But this precious result can never be produced, while they "look every one upon his own things." While to any extent they allow themselves to pursue selfish designs, harsh discord must interrupt or mar the songs of Zion. Separate interests, private objects, will set brother against brother; discord will rend the Church. Of the truth of these statements, what frightful illustrations may be found on almost every page of our history.

To be prepared for the harmony of heaven, professed Chris-

tians must receive the very discipline which an entire consecration to their Saviour's service affords. Mark the movements and study the character of a Christian community, to which a description like the following may be justly applied. The object which attracts their attention, and engrosses their affections, and calls forth all their active powers, is the extension and prosperity of Zion. Every man, woman, and child in this community, keeps his eye upon this object, as the end of his existence. To advance the common design, they all seek and find each his proper place, the sphere best suited to his own talents and means of usefulness. Whatever of intellectual vigour, of mental acquisition, of impressive eloquence; whatever weight of authority, extent of influence, amount of property; whatever sagacity, skill, and energy they may possess; they bring directly and unceasingly to bear upon the great enterprise in which they are engaged. From this they never turn their eyes, never withdraw their hands. Now tell me, is not this community acting under an influence which binds them together as by golden bonds? Must they not see eye to eye? Must not heart mingle with heart? Will they not bow, as by a common impulse, before the throne of Messiah? Will not the same desires move their hearts? the same songs flow from their lips? Will not the same living peace pervade every heart, soothe every bosom, smile upon every countenance? And when you look upon this community, you cannot help recognising the image of heaven. They are prepared, as a body, when they reach the presence of their King, to fall each into his appropriate place, and act in concert in fulfilling his sovereign will. They have secured the very discipline which the holy employments and joys of the upper world demand.

A THIRD argument, sustaining the same position, may be found *in the conditions on which we are required to lay hold of the benefits offered in the Gospel*. Consider, brethren, the import and bearing of the following piercing words, from the Saviour's lips: "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that taketh not up his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life, shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake,

shall find it." Strong language! And yet not too strong to describe the conditions on which the benefits of redeeming mercy may be secured. The glory of your King, the extension of his sway, the fulfilment of his designs, you are to prefer to the dearest earthly gratification, to the highest worldly interest. The ties which bind you to the nearest relative, your hold on life itself, you must break asunder, if the interests of the kingdom of heaven demand the effort. Wherever you may go, you must bear around a cross, prepared at any time to "be lifted up upon it." Nor can you think these hard conditions on which to receive the offer of eternal life, till you forget the atoning agonies which broke the heart of our great High-Priest.

Now it was a leading object of the Saviour to be the "light of the world." To this object his labours and sufferings were directed. The balm of life he would offer to a bleeding world. It is his sovereign will, that to all the human family infected "with the plague of the heart," his healing power should be proclaimed. His gracious heart is set upon bringing all nations under the shadow of his throne. Whoever, then, loves the Son of God more than every other object, will feel himself constrained at all times, and in every thing, to act with simple reference to the prosperity of his kingdom. This reference will give shape to every plan, and force to every movement. Is he engaged "in business?" He will see that its claims and tendencies do not interfere with his obligations to the Saviour. Whatever goes to diminish his influence as a Christian he will promptly avoid. The means requisite to enlighten his understanding, to keep his conscience wakeful and tender, to bring his heart under the full control of Christian motives, he will not fail at any expense of time and strength to employ. Whenever the question arises (and such questions will arise) whether he shall lay out his resources in gratifying taste, in humouring appetite, in pampering passion, in feeding avarice in himself and children, or in efforts to build up the Church, he will not long hesitate. He will not forget the cross which his profession requires him to bear. How can he toil for the elegancies and luxuries of life; gratify the demands of ambition or cupidity; or divide his substance among worldly-minded

heirs; and still be complying with the conditions on which the smiles of Messiah are dispensed?

In this connexion it may be proper to repeat another declaration of the Saviour. "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." Whoever will examine this declaration, in the connexion to which it belongs, will see that it involves a clear exposition of the terms of Christian discipleship. Along with this statement it may be well to contemplate the practical application of the general principle it contains, which the Saviour himself has given to us. A young man, of fair morals and amiable spirit, once presented to him the inquiry, "What shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?" Our Lord first directed his attention to the obligations which grew out of the relations he sustained to his fellow-men. Upon this the young man assured him, that to these obligations he had ever paid a practical regard. The amiable aspect of his character attracted the Saviour's love; and he immediately called his attention to the great principles on which Christian character is formed, and on which Christian hopes may be justly cherished. Hitherto only the relations which man sustains to man had been brought to view. The principle, just alluded to, then was presented in a form modified by these relations. "Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me." With the condition of salvation implied in this direction, the youth refused to comply. He clung to his wealth at the expense of his soul. If he must devote himself entirely to the cause of benevolence, or make shipwreck of his hope of heaven, his hope of heaven, though with many tears, he was prepared to relinquish.

What think ye, Christian brethren, of this practical exposition of the conditions on which you are to be admitted to the fountain of life? Say not that its application was peculiar to the poor young man to whom it was first applied. You cannot help seeing that the exposition just covers the ground furnished by the abstract principle already quoted. The principle, then, with its exposition, *belongs to you*, belongs to every professed Christian. Take home, then, to your inmost thoughts the condition on which the life of your souls is suspended.

What, friends of the Lord Jesus, will you do with your wealth, your talents, your influence? Will you live merely or chiefly to promote your own private interests? Will you extend your possessions, for the sake of exulting in affluence? Will you increase your influence for the sake of bending your fellow-men to your designs? Will you seek an exalted station for the sake of enjoying the pomp of place? Ah! brethren, this you may not do without drawing down the curse of Jesus Christ. If you would have his smiles, you must yield up your souls to the control of that charity which brought him from the bosom of blessedness to the agonies of crucifixion. You must live for the single purpose of doing good. Whatever strength you have, you must freely expend in urging forward the triumphal chariot of Messiah.

In this connexion, the last injunction which fell from the Mediator's lips well deserves attention. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." The obligations of this command reach every professed Christian. It may be said, that they direct their binding influence especially to Christian Ministers. It may be so. What then? Are not their Christian brethren held by the same solemn bonds to furnish the Ministers of Christ with whatever means are requisite to enable them to offer the "bread of life" to the famishing nations? "Who goeth a warfare at his own charges?" The great work of gathering the human family around the cross, lies fully before every friend of Jesus. In this work he is bound, by the authority of God, to engage with a zeal and resolution proportioned to the magnitude of the task imposed upon him. Remember, then, Christian brethren, that your "field is the world." A frightful majority of the human family are shrouded in gloom, palpable as the darkness which once oppressed Egypt. It is yours to offer them the "light of life." While you linger, myriads fall to rise no more. With your utmost efforts, a multitude, "which no man can number," will miserably perish before your hands can reach them. With every breath you draw, they are sinking by thousands into the abyss! Your Saviour bids you haste to their relief; to snatch them from ruin, "as brands from the burning." If they die through your neglect, you must answer for their blood? What,

then, ought you to do? To stand unmoved amid the ruins of the world? With the censer in your hand, will you refuse to rush in "between the living and the dead," to contend with "the plague" which is every moment sweeping thousands to an untimely grave? And for what? That you may be at ease? That you may heap up golden dust? That you may attract the gaze of admiration? That you may crush your children with the weight of an inheritance? And will you sell "the souls for which Christ died" for trifles such as these? This you cannot do without casting off your allegiance to Christ, and breaking the ties which bind you to his throne.

A FOURTH argument, adapted to convince professed Christians that they ought thus, unreservedly, to consecrate themselves to the service of the Church, may be found *in the example of the best men, who have risen up from time to time to bless mankind.* The example of the man Christ Jesus shines with peculiar lustre. O, let us keep our eyes upon it! He came into the world to place the Church on a foundation which could not be shaken. Now trace his course, from the manger to the cross, from the cross to the mediatorial throne. How is every footstep marked, every movement distinguished, by entire consecration to the kingdom of heaven! How did the most vehement desires for the immortal happiness of man move his soul! With what ardour did his affections cleave to this object? How studiously and skilfully did he improve every opportunity, and employ every agency, which might promote his design! When did he shun an effort, however expensive; decline self-denial, however trying; shrink from sacrifices, however expensive, which the glory of God and the "saving health of nations" required? Surely, not when in solitary places he poured out his soul in prayer at midnight; or when "he went about doing good;" or when he "endured the contradiction of sinners;" or when he lay prostrate in agony at his Father's feet in the garden; or when he meekly bore the taunts and jeers and buffetings of his accusers, in the judgment-hall; or when, in agonies unutterable, he "gave up the ghost" upon the cross! "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

And what shall we say of the example which the primitive Churches set? Observe with what devotedness they cling to the heavenly cause. Their time, substance, influence, are sacred to the Saviour. "Of one heart, they have all things common." Whatever the common interest demands, each in his proper place is forward to supply. They "take joyfully the spoiling of their goods;" they welcome the prison, embrace the stake, when their Christian profession requires the sacrifice. Are these *your own brethren*? Trace their shining course; and answer the inquiry.

Read the history of the Apostle to the Gentiles. How he breathes the spirit of Christian heroism. Now he encounters the perils of the deep, and now the dangers of the wilderness. He welcomes heat and cold, hunger and thirst, in his sacred work. He shakes the lean hand of poverty, meets the frowning face of opposition. He breaks through every embarrassment, and rises above every obstacle. "*One thing he does.*" And to this one thing all he is and has is cordially devoted. "Brethren," you may hear him say, "*be followers of me.*"

And what shall we say of the course of our Missionary brethren, who are carrying the lamp of truth to the "dark places of the earth?" Were they to keep back aught "that they possess," should we be slow to expose in pointed terms their delinquency? We require them "to know nothing save Jesus Christ, and him crucified;" to live merely to extend the triumphs of the cross. But say, brethren, are they held by obligations from which you are free? Were they bought with richer blood, with severer agonies, than you? Was higher grace displayed in the means employed to bring them to the Saviour's feet, to raise them to the hope of heaven, than has been bestowed on you? Do they need a more rugged discipline than you, to wean them from the world, to fix their hearts upon an enduring treasure? Do not you live under the same government? Are you not bound by the same laws? Let such inquiries receive an honest answer. You cannot help seeing that you ought, in your own proper sphere, to be as much devoted to the kingdom of heaven, as the most laborious and self-denied Missionary?

The truth of all this some of your brethren, engaged in secular as well as sacred employments, have already welcomed.

Their daily business they have learned to transact with an “eye single to the glory of God.” They push forward their designs with promptness and energy, merely to be able to do good. These men may be found all along on the declivity, from the heights of affluence to the vale of poverty. The Lord increase them a hundred-fold!

Now what is Christian example, however modified, and wherever presented, but human obligation, embodied in a living and attractive form. Behold the form! Can you resist charms so divine? Can you refuse to imbibe a spirit so heavenly? How can you refuse to tread in the foot-prints of those who “through faith and patience inherit the promises?”

I see a heavenly vision. “The ransomed of the Lord,” each in his appropriate place, gather around the “Captain of their salvation.” None is wanting; none reluctant. Behold the “sacramental host of God’s elect!” One object engrosses their attention; one spirit animates their bosoms; one enterprise calls forth their collective powers. The “one thing” they do is to support the throne, and extend the kingdom, of their Messiah. To accomplish this they glory in labours, sacrifices, tribulations. They task every power to fulfil the will of the Majesty by whose behest they are awed and controlled. As it is his will, so it is their steadfast purpose, to bring a world in subjection to his feet. Thus they welcome the condition on which his smiles are bestowed. Thus they are receiving the very discipline by which they may be prepared to join the heavenly hosts. Thus they are breaking the chains in which a world has long been held; and, lo, the shout of emancipated myriads, “like the voice of many waters,” shakes the pillars of the universe!

The foregoing train of thought involves a *test by which professed Christians may try their own character*. Let each of us, dear brethren, seriously weigh the inquiry, Do I belong to that happy number to whom the Apostle applies the graphical description, “None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s?” This, clearly, is a description of Christian character. Am *I*, then, a *Christian*? Is it the great end of all my designs, plans, and exertions, to glorify the

Saviour, and build up his cause? Do I rejoice to live and toil for an object so dear to God? Or do I regard the prosperity of Zion only as an object of *secondary* importance? Do I meet the expenses which are requisite to support Christian institutions, at home and abroad, reluctantly and grudgingly? Am I more anxious to enjoy the privileges of the Gospel cheaply, than to derive from them the highest benefit? When called to incur expense and sacrifices, for the sake of advancing the Redeemer's kingdom, am I apt to be cold, impatient, peevish? Am I prone to wish that the friends of God and man, in their efforts to "spread the Gospel," would act on plans less comprehensive and expensive? Am I often tempted to suspect the purity of their motives, to misinterpret their language, and misrepresent their conduct? Do I often eagerly and loudly complain of the burden which my Christian profession imposes on me? Do I sometimes detect in myself sentiments of regret that I ever joined the Christian standard? Ah! brethren, these, and such as these, are serious questions, and deserve a serious answer. They bear directly on the soundness of our religious character. They point to the ground on which multiplied decent professors betray the rottenness of their hearts. It is high time for us to urge home upon our souls, with searching hand, the inquiry, whether we are living to God or to ourselves. The apathy and selfishness of thousands in the Church have already occasioned the endless ruin of unnumbered millions. Long ago, had professed Christians, as a body, yielded to the obligations by which their Lord had bound them, long ago had the "earth been filled with his glory." Never will his grace and power be universally known, till the Church more generally and accurately answers to the description of character given at the commencement of this discourse. Let those who would not, in the final day, be required to answer for the blood of their brethren, look well to this matter. Woe to the false disciple who, in despite of obligations as sacred as the authority of God, lives to himself; lives for any other object than the prosperity of Zion! He may have his frames, his joys and sorrows, his fears and hopes, and after all miserably perish. Who, then, is he who, while he lays his soul at the feet of Jesus Christ for salvation, is ready to devote himself a living sacrifice to his service?

He is the man who, in the day of retribution, shall be welcomed to the "joy of his Lord." Be ours the blessedness of, and full participation in, his labours and rewards!

DISCOURSE XI.

HINDERANCES TO THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL.

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ISAIAH lxii. 1, 2.

"For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all Kings thy glory."

SUCH was the love which the evangelical Prophet felt for Jerusalem, and such his desire that its glory might be extended. It was a desire which gave him no rest, but prompted him to incessant labour and prayer for the accomplishment of its object. Desires similar to this have been felt, and similar efforts made, by the faithful servants of God, from age to age, for the propagation of the Christian religion. Since the commencement of the present century, the spread of Christianity has been a subject of growing interest. Good men have been excited, in an unusual degree, to unite their efforts and prayers for the enlargement of the Church. The God of heaven has shown, by the promises of his word and the dispensations of his providence, that he regards this object with the highest favour, and that it is his unalterable purpose that the earth shall be filled with his glory. It would certainly be reasonable to expect that the cause of Christianity, thus aided and supported, would soon prevail

* Preached before the American Board of Foreign Missions.

through the world; that the reign of righteousness and peace would speedily be extended from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same. And it becomes a subject of serious inquiry, why this is not the case. Why has not this blessed cause, which is eminently the cause of God, become universally triumphant? Why has not the inherent excellence of the Christian religion, united with the power of all holy beings in heaven and earth, brought the whole world to feel its influence and receive its blessings? No doubt this would long since have taken place, had there not been some mighty obstacles in the way, some opposing causes powerful enough to counteract the salutary tendencies of Christianity itself and all the influence which has been exerted in its favour.

That the world is not converted to Christianity cannot be ascribed to the operation of any one cause exclusively. In this, as in most other things, a variety of causes are at work. The chief of these are found in all unsanctified men, consisting in their sinful affections and pursuits. These are referred to in the parable of the sower, as the great hinderances to the good effect of divine truth. The seed which fell on good ground sprang up and bare abundant fruit; while the fruitfulness of the other seed was prevented by the state of the ground, and other unpropitious circumstances. The hinderances referred to in the parable were the unholy dispositions of the human heart, together with those temptations and snares which beset unrenewed man, and which derive their influence chiefly from his moral corruption. Besides the general causes just mentioned, there are causes which are peculiar to particular classes of men; such as the superstition and ignorance of the Hindoos, and the power of caste among them; the intellectual and moral state of Jews, Mohammedans, and Papists. By these and such like causes, the minds of men are closed and barred against the truth. Preaching the Gospel to them in their present moral state generally proves like sowing seed upon the face of a rock, or upon the snows of winter. Other hinderances may be found in the hostile and persecuting power of civil governments; and others still, and perhaps the most difficult of all to be overcome, in the radically erroneous impressions made upon the minds of men in different parts of the Heathen world, and even in

countries blessed with the light of the Gospel, by the flagrant errors and vices of nominal Christians. A greater obstacle to the spread of true Christianity can hardly be conceived, than the influence which the emissaries of the Church of Rome have exercised by their attempts to make proselytes. To account fully for the little progress which has been made by Christians in their endeavours to evangelize the world, it would therefore be necessary to bring into view all the obstacles just alluded to; obstacles so many and so great, that they have left but a small measure of success to the most faithful servants of Christ in any age.

But there is another class of hinderances to the spread of the Gospel; I mean those which are found *in Christians themselves*. It is this class which I propose particularly to consider on the present occasion. The members of this Board, together with a large portion of the Ministers and people of these United States, have been engaged for twenty years in sending the Gospel to the unevangelized parts of the world. What we and our fellow-labourers have performed in this great work has not been in vain; and we are encouraged to go forward in our endeavours to spread the Gospel through the earth. But still how small the measure of our success compared with our desires! How little has been done compared with what remains undone!

Remembering that I am never again, on such an occasion as this, to address my beloved brethren, the members of this Board, and other friends of Missions now present, and confiding in your candour, I shall use an affectionate plainness of speech, endeavouring with sincerity of heart to promote that precious cause which, I trust, is the supreme object of our desires.

Our particular inquiry is, **WHAT OBSTACLES TO THE CONVERSION OF THE WORLD ARE FOUND AMONG THOSE WHO, IN DIFFERENT WAYS, ARE ENLISTED IN THE CAUSE OF FOREIGN MISSIONS?**

The first obstacle I shall mention is, *the defect of our Christian character, or the want of a higher degree of holiness.*

In order to form a just estimate of our religious character, we must examine ourselves by the standard of God's perfect law. And what is the fair result of such an examination? When, in the hour of retirement and stillness, we honestly compare our

affections and lives with those divine precepts which require us to love God with all the heart, to love every human being as we love ourselves, and to be holy as Christ is holy; what can we do but adopt the language of humble confession, and say, "If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" Before Him who searcheth the heart and knoweth all things, and in whose sight the heavens are not clean, we must, every one of us, be filled with shame and self-abhorrence, and penitently cry out, "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer?"

That this imperfection of our Christian character must prove a great hinderance to the success of the cause we are endeavouring to promote, appears from the *very nature* of that cause. It is the cause of *holiness*. And no one can be a fit instrument to promote such a cause, except in the degree in which he himself is holy. The proper agents to be employed in this work are men who walk in the Spirit; men dead to the world, and alive unto God. Without holiness, no right efforts for the enlargement of the Church and the propagation of true religion through the world, will ever be made. Without holiness, we are unfit to have any agency in this undertaking. The work of converting sinners and building up the Church is a holy work, and should not be touched with unholy hands. We may be willing to employ our time and our worldly substance in the cause of Missions, and to do this in the highest degree which can be justly demanded of us. Still if we contribute these external services *without love to God in our hearts*, how little shall we be likely to accomplish! The system of means necessary to the spread of the Gospel is indeed partly external and visible; but it has also an inward invisible part, consisting in compassion to the souls of men, and in strong desires and fervent unceasing prayers for their salvation. However important may be the outward means above-mentioned, these inward operations of holiness, these benevolent desires and fervent prayers, which are visible only to the eye of God, are still more important. It is this inward, invisible machinery (if I may so call it) which gives efficiency to these external means. It is this spiritual, devout, fervent action of a purified heart, which exerts the most certain and powerful influence in promoting the salvation of men. Who can estimate the amount of

good which twelve men, possessing the character of the twelve Apostles, might accomplish at the present day?

Let it be remembered, brethren, that if we fall short of the proper degree of holiness, our success in the cause of Missions will be essentially hindered. And though we may give a portion of our time and our substance to this cause; though we may stately meet to deliberate and act in behalf of the perishing millions of our race; yet those humble Christians who live in retirement, and who take no part in these more public transactions, may in reality stand higher than we do as instruments of good to the world. By their pure affections and fervent prayers in secret, they may do more for the advancement of Christ's kingdom than can be done by any outward means, unaccompanied by the spirit of holiness. The God who rules over all will so conduct the affairs of the Church and the world, as to make it manifest that he is the immutable friend of holiness.

Secondly. If the mere want of a proper measure of holiness detracts from our success in spreading the Gospel, this unhappy effect must result in a still higher degree from *the direct indulgence of affections which are selfish and earthly.*

Selfish, earthly affections aim at a selfish, earthly interest. But the spread of the Gospel through the world is a benevolent and spiritual interest. These two interests are directly opposite to each other; and the dispositions and efforts which are suited to the one are not suited to the other. If, then, while we seem to be labouring for the spread of the Gospel, we give a place in our hearts to pride, ambition, or any selfish affection, we throw an obstacle directly in the way of our success in promoting that benevolent object. This is true, even where the sinful affections we indulge do not make themselves visible by any irregular conduct. If, when we retire for secret devotion, or kneel around our family altars; if, when we meet in the sanctuary, or at the monthly concert, there should be in our hearts a predominance of worldly affections; especially, if we should bring these affections with us, when we engage in more public and more important transactions relative to the interests of Christ's kingdom; such a state of mind would prove a mighty clog to the cause of benevolence. With the outward man we

might, indeed, be labouring to advance that cause; but the inward man would be a hinderance in the way; a hinderance invisible, perhaps, to man, but none the less real. Indeed, such a secret, invisible counteraction is attended with peculiar danger. It is a concealed enemy, whose power cannot be successfully opposed, because it cannot be seen. When, therefore, the cause in which we are enlisted is at a stand, and our various Missionary operations are attended with no encouraging success, it will become us to inquire, very seriously, whether this may not be owing, in a great measure, to some unholy passion which finds indulgence in our hearts; and which, like the sin of Achan, provokes the displeasure of a holy, heart-searching God.

But the operation of these counteracting causes is not always concealed. If worldly and selfish passions prevail in any considerable degree, they will have a visible influence. And we may be somewhat aided in getting a just conception of what this influence will be, and also of the opposite influence, by taking a comparative view of two public bodies of men, one of which is influenced by right motives, the other by those which are worldly and selfish.

Look, then, first, into an assembly of Ministers and Christians, who have come together to consult for the salvation of their fellow-men, and who are influenced in all their deliberations by holy affections. Delightful, happy assembly! Their object is one. Their hearts are one. They are knit together in pure and fervent love. They consult, not for their own interest or honour, but for the cause of Christ; and they do it in the spirit of Christ. Each one contributes to that cause all the intelligence and all the active power which he possesses. Each one is gratified with all the talents and influence which belong to his brethren, for the same reason that he is gratified with his own. And if others are able, by their superior talents and influence, to contribute more than he to that object which is dearest to his heart, the more is he gratified. No one expends his zeal in favour of any measure because he was the first to propose it. And no one has such confidence in himself as to suppose that a measure must be right because it originated with him. No one is pertinacious, or self-willed. The wisdom which reigns among them "is from above; and is pure, peaceable,

gentle, easy to be entreated, full of merey and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." In such an assembly, all is candour and kindness. The inquiry is, What will please Christ? What will promote the prosperity of his kingdom? If on any subject the members for a time differ in judgment, they still agree in feeling; and in the end are likely to agree in judgment too; so that important measures are not commonly carried either by a small or large majority, but with perfect unanimity. Thus, pursuing their object with Christian love and condescension, and singleness of heart, and with earnest prayer for divine guidance, they enjoy the presence and favour of God. He graciously superintends their deliberations, and gives them success in promoting the Redeemer's kingdom.

Look, now, at an assembly professedly engaged in promoting the same cause, but among whom a selfish, earthly spirit prevails. A regard to reputation, or some worldly policy, may, perhaps, preserve them from open disorder and violence, and induce them to pursue such a course as will render their assembly respectable and honourable. But when their business is specially important, and when circumstances are such as to try men's souls, and to require special effort and self-denial, they are likely soon to show what their ruling passions are. Being without any common affection to unite them, they will have division and strife. Individuals will strenuously oppose a measure, though altogether salutary in its tendency, because it is not calculated to gratify their personal feelings, or to promote their private or local interests. It is manifest, from their transactions, that they have lost sight of the great object of Christian benevolence. And as they do not truly consult for the prosperity of the Redeemer's kingdom, their measures are not suited to promote it. And if the cause of Christ is in any measure advanced, yea, if it is not essentially injured, it will be owing to that sovereign providence of God which brings good out of evil.

The same selfish spirit, which has such a blasting influence upon Ministers and Christians in their public transactions, will show itself also in their private life, and will hold them back from those labours, and sacrifices, and prayers which are the appointed means of extending the reign of Christ. Men will act according to their ruling passion. If the love of any worldly

object predominates, their thoughts and efforts will be directed to that object. As to the measures which ardent, devoted Christians are pursuing, for the salvation of men, they will look upon them with coldness or aversion. Now, what influence can such men be supposed to have in promoting the salvation of the world?

Thirdly. The advancement of Christ's kingdom is essentially hindered by *division and strife among his followers*.

The cause of Missions must be promoted by the *united* exertions of Ministers and Christians. The good actually accomplished must be the result of such exertions. If, then, any disunion prevails among those who are enlisted in that cause, the amount of good they will be able to accomplish will certainly be diminished. The injury which division occasions is twofold. First, it detracts from the benevolent efforts of the individuals concerned. Though the subject about which they disagree may be ever so unimportant, it is likely to occupy no inconsiderable portion of their thoughts, and to turn off their attention from the cause of Christ, which is the great end of their united efforts. In consequence of this, each one will have less affection for that cause than he otherwise would have, and will do less to promote it.

Besides this, there is a *clashing of influence*. The efforts actually made for the cause of Christ by one part will be more or less resisted, and their good effect prevented by the counter efforts of another part. Just as it is with an army, divided and contending among themselves. The different portions of it, instead of making an united assault upon the common enemy, are broken and exhausted by annoying each other; and the few efforts they may make to gain a victory over the enemy are rendered powerless by division and counter movements among themselves.

As the want of a cordial union among Ministers and Christians is such a hinderance to the spread of the Gospel, how great is the evil of whatever tends to produce division. By indulging such feelings or pursuing such measures as have this tendency, by unscriptural novelties in doctrine, by abstruse or eccentric speculations, or by any such disputes as are likely to gender strife among the friends of evangelical religion, we may

throw an obstacle in the way of the success of the Gospel, which our most painful efforts will not be able to remove, and which will be a subject of deep regret to us through the remainder of our life.

Fourthly. We may hinder the cause of Missions, by the *unnecessary excitement of popular prejudice*.

The Missionary enterprise must fail of success, without the cordial affection and support of the Christian community. It essentially needs the aid of their efforts, contributions, and prayers. Now, if those who are entrusted with the sacred interests of Missions are chargeable with any misconduct, or any manifest indiscretion, such misconduct or indiscretion proclaimed, as it will be, in the ears of the public, may cool the affections, excite the prejudices, and prevent the contributions and prayers of thousands. In this way, our power to do good may be greatly diminished, and a lasting injury be done to the cause which we are striving to promote.

Fifthly. We hinder the spread of the Gospel, *so far as we fall short in our duty in regard to the benevolent use of property*.

Just in proportion to the magnitude and excellence of the object, should be our liberality in contributing of our substance for its promotion. It is the dictate of sound judgment, as well as of piety, that we should use our worldly property in such a manner as will afford us the greatest pleasure in our future reflections. Now, let any Christian consider how he will view this subject after the delusions of the present world shall have passed away, and the light of heaven shall reveal things as they are. Let him inquire with himself, "Will it be most pleasing to me, in the mansions of the blessed, to remember that I devoted this particular sum, be it larger or smaller, to the cause of Christ in Heathen lands, or to remember that I used it for the purpose of self-gratification, or the aggrandizement of my family? Shall I have the greatest pleasure then in reflecting that such an amount of property was made the means of advancing the kingdom of Christ, or the means of increasing the wealth of my heirs?"

Brethren, suffer me to speak freely. The Christian community has of late years been waking up, in a measure, to better views in regard to the proper value and use of money;

and many examples have been exhibited of a very honourable liberality in contributing to benevolent objects. But is not the prevailing practical sentiment still very far below the right standard? Can it be that men of wealth make the cause of Christ their great object, when they generally give it so small a proportion of their substance? They love religion, no doubt, and wish to communicate its precious blessings to those who are ready to perish; and with a view to this object they contribute from year to year, and contribute liberally, too, in comparison with the generality of those around them; and then make legacies to some charitable societies. For these acts of Christian love we sincerely honour their memories; and we thank God, who gave them the ability and disposition to do good. But, after all, what is the real amount of their charities, compared with the whole of their property? In a few instances, after a comfortable provision for their families, they devote the residue of their estate, which is the greater part, to the service of God. This is as it should be. But how is it generally with them that are rich? Have we not often occasion, after they are gone, to regret their mistakes, and to mourn that they did not entertain such views of the value of wealth, while in this world, as we are sure they must in the world above? After the decease of one good man and another, are we not constrained to say, "How happy would it be, had they, while here, anticipated the feelings they now have as to the right use of their property, and had their contributions and legacies done full justice to their own hearts, and made it manifest, not only that they loved the cause of Christ, but that they loved it *supremely*? Alas! it is evident that Ministers and Christians generally need stronger faith, more deadness to the world, and a clearer view of eternal things. They are not as spiritually-minded as they ought to be. They have not fully emerged from the darkness of a worldly life. In this state, do they not look at their property chiefly as the means of pleasing themselves, and promoting worldly objects? And if they use it in some measure for the interest of Christ's kingdom, is it not still manifest that they make that no more than a secondary object? Now, whether we have more or less of worldly substance, if we entertain mistaken or inadequate views of our duty respecting the use of it, and fall

short of the high standard of self-denial and benevolent action set before us in the word of God; if we give one dollar when we should give ten, or ten when we should give a hundred, a thousand, or ten thousand; this deficiency will be sinful in the sight of God, and will directly hinder the success of the Missionary cause. This is one of the great hinderances which now stand in the way of the propagation of Christianity. Ah! brethren, there are better times approaching. Generations of Christians will ere long rise up, in the different walks of life, who will remember that the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, and that the silver and the gold are to be devoted to his service. The time, we trust, is not far distant, when the Church and its Ministers will have higher views of duty, more self-denial, more simplicity in their modes of living, more devotion to that blessed cause for which the Son of God became poor. And those better Ministers and Churches will look back upon us, in this our season of twilight and heaviness, and will wonder that we did so little for so great an object, and that the work of evangelizing the world was carried forward so slowly in our day. Through the mercy of God, there is to be a visible growth of Christian character. Our children and children's children will, we doubt not, rise far above the highest zeal and devotion of the present time; will be heartily grieved at the remembrance of our deficiencies; and will say among themselves, "We honour the memory of our fathers, who lived in the former part of the nineteenth century. We bless God that they had such a measure of zeal for the spread of the Gospel, and began to labour and pray in earnest for the salvation of the Heathen. But it is truly a matter of regret, that they had so imperfect a view of their obligations in regard to the use of their property, and that they contributed so little to the march of Christianity through the world."

The only remaining obstacle to the spread of the Gospel, which I shall mention, is, *the want of a proper feeling and acknowledgment of our dependence on God, for the success of our efforts.*

There is nothing which stands in more direct opposition to the truth, than the spirit of pride and self-dependence. For whatever importance we may attach to our own efforts in the

work of evangelizing the world, and whatever good we may expect from the faithful labours of Missionaries, yet all success comes from God. The Gospel, which is to be preached among the Heathen, does, indeed, contain the most interesting truths, and urge the most powerful motives. But such is the moral state of man, that the preaching of it, even by the most faithful Ministers, will be, as it always has been, utterly in vain, unless it is made effectual by the power of the Holy Spirit. The word of God teaches, and universal experience teaches the same, that the unrenewed heart is enmity against God; that it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. There is in man a loftiness of spirit, a love of the world, a selfishness which pertinaciously resists the influence of divine truth, and all the attractions of divine love. So that the Gospel, both in Christian and Pagan lands, will be preached in vain, unless this resistance in the hearts of men is effectually subdued. But it is too strong to be subdued by any power short of Omnipotence. In the most favourable circumstances, therefore, nothing can be effectually done to bring men into the kingdom of Christ, except by the special operation of God. And we depend equally upon the divine blessing, for the success of those measures which we adopt as preparatory to the extension of the Church. The efforts we make to stir up the people of our country to compassionate those who are in moral darkness, and to contribute of their substance to the salvation of the world; and all our efforts to train up young men for the Missionary service, and to send them forth to different fields of labour, will entirely fail of their effect, unless they are accompanied with the divine influence. As friends to the Heathen world, we are engaged in a benevolent, holy work. The unrenewed heart is against us. The spirit of the world is against us. The remaining ambition and selfishness of good men is against us. The whole current of earthly interests and pursuits is against us. These hostile powers, which form such a mighty combination, both without the Church and within it, are unceasing in their opposition. They never sleep. They are always watching for opportunities to obstruct the progress of the Christian religion. And even when we seem to be most prosperous, and when the prospect before us is the most bright and animating, and we may begin

to congratulate ourselves, as though the victory were won, we may soon find that there has been some counter current beneath, some malignant cause working, and gaining strength in secret; and this malignant cause, thus concealing itself till it becomes powerful, may mix itself with the self-interest, the passions, and the prejudices of the irreligious, and with all that is earthly in the pious; and so a torrent of dreadful force may be formed which will scorn all restraint, and be ready to overwhelm us and our cause. The hostile powers of which I now speak meet us everywhere. Whatever measures we adopt for the enlargement of Christ's kingdom, in our own or in foreign lands, we must look for resistance from the thousand forms of depravity existing in the world, in the Church, and in our own hearts; resistance so subtle and determined, as not only to check our success, but entirely to dishearten us, and to constrain us to abandon our object, unless God interpose to strengthen us, and to turn back the power of the enemy.

Now, as we are thus encompassed with dangers, as we are so feeble and imperfect ourselves, and are labouring to promote the spiritual kingdom of Christ in a world where self-interest, and pride, and numberless other forms of sin are constantly arrayed against us; and as the unsanctified hearts of men are everywhere full of unyielding opposition to the holiness of Christianity, we ought ever to remember and to feel, that our success depends ultimately on the mercy and power of God. If we do not feel this; if we do not remember that we are nothing, and that God is all in all; if we rely upon the wisdom of our measures, upon the strength of our arguments, or the persuasiveness of our eloquence, or even upon our prayers; and forget Him, whose Spirit prompts all wise counsels, and all holy endeavours, and whose blessing alone renders human efforts effectual; we place ourselves in opposition to the truth, we rob God of his glory, and make ourselves an offence and an abomination in his sight; and so we cut ourselves off from that divine blessing on which our success absolutely depends. For how can we expect that he will give us success in such a way as will minister to our pride? If we bring into our transactions, for the promotion of Christ's kingdom, a spirit of self-dependence, we create an obstacle to the progress of our

cause; we act against our prayers, and bring a blast upon our labours.

Beloved brethren of this Board, and all friends of the Missionary cause, the great object for which we are unitedly labouring is, the establishment of Christ's kingdom in Heathen lands. This is the object for which the Saviour submitted to suffering and death. This is the cause which the prayers and labours of the saints and the ministration of angels are intended to subserve. It is the cause, to the promotion and ultimate triumph of which God is directing all the movements of his providence. With such labours and prayers on earth, and such powers and operations in heaven in its favour, we should think this glorious cause must make rapid advances. And it certainly would make rapid advances, and would speedily triumph in every part of the world, were it not for the many and mighty obstacles which resist its course. These obstacles, so far as they arise from ourselves, we have now taken into serious consideration. We have seen that those who are engaged in promoting the kingdom of Christ may obstruct its progress, by the want of higher degrees of holiness; by the indulgence of selfish and earthly passions; by division and strife among themselves; by unnecessarily exciting popular prejudice; by falling short of duty in regard to their worldly substance; and by the want of proper feeling and acknowledgment of their dependence on God for the success of their efforts. If, then, we would effectually advance the reign of Christ, we must take care not to put any of these hindrances in its way, nor to leave them there. We must rise above that low and defective state of piety which tends to obstruct our success; and by higher attainments in holiness, prepare ourselves to be better instruments, and to exert a higher and better agency, in extending Christ's kingdom. We must oppose and subdue all selfish and earthly passions; as these passions, so far as they prevail, will array themselves against the benevolent spirit of the Gospel, and will turn us off from our great work to those interests which are private or local, and which ought never to be permitted, and which I trust never will be permitted by us, to come into competition with the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom. We must look upon division and strife among friends of the Missionary cause as a great evil; and, for

the sake of preventing it, we must watchfully guard against all indiscretions, all rash and doubtful projects, all, in our modes of thinking and acting, which would be needlessly offensive, all love of pre-eminence, and all aiming at personal or selfish objects. We must earnestly seek the wisdom which is from above, and endeavour to be followers of Him who was meek and lowly of heart. In pursuit of our object, we must form a just conception of the real value of property, and faithfully use it as a means of doing good. We must endeavour to have our wants few, and cultivate a taste for Christian simplicity. As to the objects of benevolence, our hearts should be large. We should make it our maxim to be sparing in self-gratification, but liberal in giving; to save what would please the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, that we may contribute more bountifully to the cause of our blessed Redeemer. And, finally, in regard to the building up of the Church, and the conversion of the world, we must remember that we are nothing, and that the blindness of man's understanding, and the perverseness of his heart, will baffle all our efforts, unless God is pleased to interpose, and accomplish the work by his own omnipotence. While we devote ourselves unreservedly to Christ, and make faithful exertions in his service, we must watchfully check every tendency in our minds to self-esteem and self-dependence, and rely wholly on the grace of God to give us success. This renunciation of self-dependence, this deep sense of our insufficiency, and humble, child-like confidence in divine grace, is more pleasing to God, and will have more influence in advancing his kingdom, than the highest intellectual powers, and the most splendid actions, without it; for God resisteth the proud, but bestows favour upon the humble.

We have now seen what are the obstacles on our part to the accomplishment of the great and excellent work we have undertaken. Let us only keep these obstacles out of the way, and the religion of the Gospel will soon make more rapid progress, for the causes which operate in its favour, under the administration of a benevolent God, are numerous and powerful; and, in my view, there never was a time when they were so numerous and powerful as they are now, or when the accomplishment of

the great and precious promises in favour of the Church was so manifestly approaching. If we and our fellow-labourers only keep in our place, and do our work faithfully, and throw no hinderances in the way, the cause of our Redeemer in Christian and in Heathen lands will prosper. Powers, human, angelic, and divine, are united in its favour, and will press it forward. All the perfections of Jehovah, all the principles of his merciful administration, all the truths of his word, the power of his Spirit, the glowing benevolence and swift obedience of myriads above, and all that is pure and holy in the affections and labours and prayers of Christians on earth, conspire together to bring forward the salvation of the world. See what a mighty influence these various causes are exerting! See what a bright prospect there is that things will soon be accomplished for the salvation of men, which Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, and Reformers never saw! Behold the Son of God coming to inherit all nations! O! take care, brethren, not to cast any hinderance in his way. I charge you and myself not to clog the motion of any of these wheels of Divine Providence. If we have put a hinderance in the way, let us quickly remove it. And if any one finds *himself* a hinderance, let him remove himself. Better be an exile from creation, than to stand in the way of God's work.

Finally. Let us never forget that it is owing to the grace of God that the cause of Christianity, with so many obstacles in its way, has made such progress in the world. Is it not rather a matter of wonder, that this light of the world has not been totally extinguished, than that it does not shine more brightly? I might have pointed you to the general perverseness and obduracy of man, the whole current of the world, and the powers of darkness, as obstacles to the progress of Christianity. But I have dwelt only upon our own deficiencies. We who profess to be friends to religion, and to act in its favour, how little have we done to promote it, and how much to hinder it? May not some of us have reason to fear, that the cause of Christ has been more injured by our failings than benefited by our services? O! what would become of this precious cause if left in our hands, and if its success rested ultimately on our faithfulness? What would be the consequence if the salvation

of men had no better security than our own efforts? Were all our affections devoted to it, and all our powers exerted in its behalf, still how feeble we are, and how little we should be able to accomplish! But have we devoted all our powers and affections to this holy cause? Has not the greater part of the little we possess been on the wrong side? And it becomes a very serious inquiry, whether, taking our whole character and life into view, the spiritual kingdom of Christ might not have been better without us than with us? Is it not a miracle of divine power, that religion maintains a place in the world, and is making any progress, when there is so much to oppose it even among its friends? For, go where we may, what Christians are there who do not mingle great imperfections with all they do in the service of Christ? Let it, then, be an abiding sentiment of our hearts, that the cause of religion cannot be entrusted to man; that it is safe only in the hands of Him who is the author and finisher of our faith; that whatever we may do, and whatever our Missionaries may do, the Heathen will never be enlightened except by the power of Him who first caused the light to shine out of darkness; that not a soul will ever be quickened and saved, except by the sovereign energy which raises the dead. Let, then, the pride of man be abased; let every high thought be brought low, and let God alone be exalted.

DISCOURSE XII.

 THE MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE DEPENDENT ON
 THE RELIGION OF PRINCIPLE FOR SUCCESS.*

BY THE REV. ALBERT BARNES,
 PHILADELPHIA.

LUKE xiv. 28—32.

“For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold him begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what King, going to make war against another King, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.”

It may be admitted that this passage of Scripture originally had reference to the views with which an individual should enter on a religious life. With such a reference, it implies that he who becomes a follower of the Saviour should calmly and deliberately look at all the consequences of such an act, and be prepared to meet them. Men, in other things, act with prudence and forethought. They do not begin to build without a reasonable prospect of being able to finish. They do not go to war when there would be every prospect of defeat. It implies, also, that we are to expect difficulties in religion. It will demand of us a life of self-denial, and will involve a conflict with spiritual foes, and, perhaps, expose us to the enmity and scorn of the world. It implies, also, that there is a necessity of a calm and fixed purpose of soul in true religion; and that no man can properly enter on a religious life who does not resolve, by the grace of God, to struggle until the victory shall be achieved, and who has not confidence that there are resources sufficient to enable him to secure the triumph.

* Preached before the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, at Worcester, Mass., September 10th, 1844.

But still, though this was the primary meaning of the text, it is not departing from a fair interpretation of it, to make use of it with reference to the great purpose for which we are convened. Substantially the same principles in religion apply to an individual, and to the aggregate of individuals who compose the Christian Church; to the one, in securing his own salvation; and to the other, in the highest enterprise in which it can be engaged,—that of spreading the Gospel around the world. Thus applied, the text would mean, that in this work there should be a calm survey of the strength and resources of the enemy, and the means of overcoming him; that there should be a resolution to persevere in the work in the midst of all embarrassments; that it should be conducted under the direction of firm principle, and not by impulses and temporary excitements; and that it should be undertaken with a belief that the enterprise is practicable, and that the ultimate success is certain.

A tower may be built from various motives, and different reasons may urge on the architect to the completion of his work. It may be prosecuted under the auspices of a settled plan, including all practicable estimates of the expense and time requisite for its construction, and of the obstacles to be overcome; or it may be hastily begun, with no proper sense of the expense and of the difficulties to be encountered, and carried forward by impulses, rather than by settled design. The architect may rear it as a place of refuge from an invading foe, or to perpetuate some illustrious deed in the history of his nation, and may be stimulated to complete it with the thought, “that the last object on the sight of him who leaves his native shore, and the first to gladden him who re-visits it, may be something which shall remind him of the liberty and glory of his country;” and with the “wish that infancy may learn the purpose of its erection from maternal lips, and that weary and withered age may behold it, and be solaced with the recollection which it suggests.”

A war, also, may be engaged in and conducted from a variety of motives. It may be a war of principle, where, though the immediate matter in issue may be of trifling importance, yet some great point is involved, on which is suspended the liberty of a nation; or it may be a war commenced with the love of

conquest, the desire of fame, and the purpose to extend the limits of empire. Its expenses may be met, and its perils may be encountered, because everything dear is at stake; or it may be rushed into under the impulse of excited feeling, and be sustained by the love of glory, and the hope of brilliant achievements. Settled principle; the love of country; ambition; the glare, and pomp, and splendour of military triumph; or a desire to humble a rival, may all be motives entering into the commencement or the prosecution of a war, and may all play their part in the perils and privations to which it is incident. The Saviour speaks of a tower built as the result of deliberate calculation; of a war prosecuted where the plan was calmly laid, and where the issue could not be regarded as doubtful.

It is the design of this discourse to show, that the Missionary enterprise is to be carried forward in a similar manner, not by impulses, but with deliberation and system; and that it must rely for success, not on temporary excitements, not on the romance of Missionary feeling, not on brilliant achievements, and not on the beauty and grandeur which may be thrown around the enterprise, but on the religion of settled principle.

It is presumed in the Missionary enterprise that religion does not concern us as individuals only. It teaches us to look on our families, on our country, on the world. There are great things to be accomplished on the earth, to which nothing else is adapted but religion. There are, indeed, valuable objects which can be secured by education, by science, by good government, by commercial regulations, by treaties of peace, by the wholesome influence of laws. Valuable as these things are, however, there are interests pertaining to men of greater magnitude which they can never secure, and which are reserved for the influence of religion alone. No advancement in the organizations of social life; no progress in the physical sciences; no improvement in the methods of education; no perfection which the science of government or jurisprudence can reach, can accomplish the objects which it has been reserved for religion to secure. There is a field which is entirely its own; and no encroachment has been made on its prerogative by any advance in the other departments of human influence and action. Those objects relate to such points as the following:—the renovation of the

human heart; the imparting of peace to a guilty conscience; the reconciliation of the alienated soul to God; support in times of trial, and in the hour of death; the elevation of debased and degraded communities to the enjoyment of equal rights; the emancipation of the soul from the fetters of superstition; and the diffusion over the earth of the knowledge and worship of the Creator. Into this sacred and wide circle of influences other things enter not with power sufficient to accomplish the great results desired; and however much they may be made tributary to these objects when kept subordinate, the power which is to achieve the result is religion.

It is also presumed that there are great and undeniable evils existing upon the earth, which can be removed only by religion. Those evils are not removed by victories achieved in battle, however brilliant they may be, for the triumph decreed to the conqueror furnishes no evidence that the moral and social evils of mankind have been in the least diminished by the success of arms. They are not wholly remedied by science and education. Valuable as the discoveries of science, and the teachings of education, are, yet there are evils in the human condition which the perfecting of the telescope, and the measuring of the dimensions and distances of the stars, and the analysis of minerals do not remove. The knowledge of the chemical properties of alcohol does not of necessity reform the drunkard, nor will the most thorough scientific acquaintance with its effects on the human frame save the well-educated youth from a drunkard's grave. They are not remedied by outfits for discovery, nor in exploring foreign regions can we find a cure for human ills. The traveller to distant lands brings back no knowledge that will remove the evils of his own, nor will his passage through those lands for scientific purposes remove the evils there. They are not remedied by political changes. Such changes occur in a higher region, and the great and far-spread ills which affect the mass of mankind are little more influenced by them than the condition of the vapours in an humble vale is affected by the storm in the higher regions of the air. The tempest sweeps along the Apennines; the lightnings play, and the thunders utter their voice, but still the malaria of the Campagna is unaffected, and the pestilence reigns there still. So with most

of the evils that affect mankind. The malaria remains settled down on the low plains of life, and scarcely is the surface of the pestilential vapour agitated by all the storms and tempests of political changes. Under all the forms of despotism; in the government of an aristocracy, a republic, or a pure democracy; and in all the revolutions from the one to the other, the evil remains the same. There are evils in the world which have survived all political changes; and which are destined to live until they are reached by some more efficient reforming power than mere political revolutions. Great evils among the Greeks survived all changes in the government. Such evils lived among the Romans substantially the same under the Tarquins, the Consuls, and the Cæsars; when the Tribunes gained the ascendancy, and when the Patricians crushed them to the earth. They lived in more modern Europe, when the northern hordes poured down on the Roman empire, and when the Caliphs set up the standard of Islam in the Peninsula. They lived in all the revolutions of the middle ages, alike when spiritual despotism swayed a sceptre over the nations, and when they began to emerge into freedom. Under the British rule they lived in the time of the Stuarts, during the Protectorate, and under the administration of the House of Hanover. In all the fierce contests for rule in this land; in the questions about changes of administration, there are evils which are no more affected, whichever political party gains the ascendancy, than the vapour that lies in the valley is by all the changes from sunshine to storm on the summits of the Alps or the Andes. Such changes are to be wrought only by the influence of religion.

To effect these changes there are the following kinds of religion upon the earth, on one or all of which reliance is to be placed; that of *sentiment*, that of *form*, that of *feeling*, and that of *principle*.

The religion of *sentiment* is founded on the beautiful and grand in the works of nature, or in the scenes of redemption. It finds pleasure in the contemplation of the starry heavens, of hills, and streams, and lakes; of the landscape and the ocean; and is willing in these things to admire and praise the existence of the Creator. In the contemplation of these things there is no reluctance to admit the existence of a God, or to dwell on his

natural perfections; for in the placid beauty of a landscape, in the silvery murmuring of a rivulet, and in the opening of the rosebud, no attribute of the Deity is revealed on which the mind, even of the gay and wicked, is unwilling to dwell. This religion is found in all the departments of poetry, and in all the conceptions of mythology. It most abounded among the Greeks, a people who carried the love of the beautiful to a higher pitch than any other, and who embodied it in the conceptions of their "elegant mythology," and in their unequalled works of art, illustrative of that mythology. Over each of the works of nature; over every element, and every event; over each tree, and flower, and breeze, and waving field, and running fountain they supposed a divinity to preside, and the art of the chisel, and the harmony of verse, were employed to embody and perpetuate their conceptions. It is impossible that the religion of the beautiful should be carried to higher perfection than it was at Athens. The character of the people led to it, as the character of a people always gives form to their religion, or is reciprocally moulded by it.

This is still the religion of poetry and romance, and over a large portion of the world, claiming particularly to be ranked among the refined and the intellectual, it maintains its dominion. The names, indeed, which were used by that refined and elegant people with so much propriety, to express their conceptions, are employed no more. Statues of breathing marble no longer embody those conceptions, but the notions of the divinity differ little from the conceptions of Grecian mythology. The heaven to which they looked forward, differs little from the Elysian fields. That which is needful to prepare for that world, differs little from the kinds of virtue which a refined Athenian deemed necessary to fit him for the world of beauty and of joy to which he looked forward.

Delighting, too, in the beautiful, this religion may find a species of pleasure in the scenes and events of redemption. There is much in the Bible which the religionist of this description may admire, and such admiration may be mistaken for true Christian piety. There is no book which has more to gratify the taste for the beautiful and the sublime, than the Bible. When the scholar can overcome his reluctance to look

into it, because it is a religious book, there is no book in which he will find more to meet all that a scholar loves than there. There is no department of poetry, (if we except the epic, which was not consistent with the design of the book, and the dramatic, which was either unknown to the Hebrews, or regarded as perilous to virtue,) which may not be found, in the most exquisite form, in the sacred Scriptures. The world may be challenged to produce specimens of elegiac, lyric, and pastoral poetry, that can be compared with that which is found in the poetry of David; and for sublimity of thought and language Isaiah confessedly outpeers all that was ever produced out of the land of Palestine.

This delight in the beautiful, in the religion of sentiment, may be carried farther than this. It may find a kind of pleasure in the peculiar scenes of redemption; and in the enterprise and romance of carrying the Gospel to distant nations. "I confess," said Rousseau, who, more than any other man, has illustrated the nature of this religion, "that the sanctity of the Gospel is an argument which speaks to my heart; and I should regret to find any good answer to it. Look at the books of the philosophers, with all their pomp; how little they appear by the side of this! Can it be that a book, at once so sublime and so simple, should be the work of man? Can it be that the person whose history it relates, was a mere man? Is such the manner of an enthusiast, or a mere sectarian? What sweetness, what purity, in his deportment! What touching kindness in his instructions! What profound wisdom in his discourses! What promptness, what ingenuity, and what pertinence in his replies! What entire command of his passions! Where is the man, where the sage, who can act, suffer, and die, without weakness, and without ostentation? Yes, if the life and death of Socrates are those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God!" This religion, too, aims to hide away what is repellent in the stern character of the justice of God; turns away the thoughts from future wrath; adores the divinity within man; regards it as the great object of religion to raise him up to the perfection of his nature; would conceal all that is repulsive in the grave, and goes forth to beautify the tomb, with the charms of nature and of art, to make the grave itself a pleasant place

of repose; "the last device of man, without religion, to get rid of the fear of death." The faith of this class of religionists is recorded on marble monuments, and proclaimed in obituaries and eulogies. If we may credit such records, heaven is made up of poets and philosophers; of warriors and statesmen; of the amiable, the refined, and the gay; of the beautiful and the accomplished; of those who have lent a charm to society by their wit, or diffused happiness through halls of pleasure by the sweetness of their manners.

The religion of *forms* is founded on different things. It has been the prevailing religion of the world, and there is no other to which the great mass of men have so strong a tendency. In the time of the Saviour it had become the prevailing religion of the Hebrews, and found ample gratification in the gorgeous rites of the temple service. The Saviour aimed to introduce in its place a religion of simple spirituality; with no gorgeous rites, no splendid ritual, no imposing ceremonies. Scarcely, however, had the last of the Apostles died, before, in the very Churches planted by their hands, the last remains of spirituality had disappeared; and in the rites and ceremonies which had been borrowed from Judaism or Paganism, all that had contributed to sustain formalism in the Pagan world, was introduced entire into the Christian Church. Thenceforth, for centuries of night, Christianity became a religion of forms. Ages rolled by. Luther, Farel, Zuinglius, Calvin, rose. They drew off the true Church, and restored the spirituality of the Gospel; and all that was left was, and continued to be, a religion of forms. But the tendency to this kind of religion was not effectually checked. It still lives, and it requires all the influence of advancing intelligence, of the spirit of liberty, of revivals of religion, and of the withering rebukes of Providence, to check it; and, despite all these, nothing is more apparent than the tendency to forsake all that is spiritual in Christianity, and to relapse into the religion of forms.

This kind of religion relies on the efficacy of prescribed forms of devotion in conveying grace to the soul, rather than on simple truth applied by the Holy Spirit. It has an extraordinary respect for tradition, as if wisdom died with the Fathers, and they had authority to prescribe rites and ceremonies in the

Church. It looks with diminished respect on the Bible, as the great fountain of truth, and as embodying the doctrines which convert and save; and relies much on truth supposed to be conveyed through other channels. In this religion, a superior sanctity is attributed to men made more holy, by office, than the rest of their brethren, and appointed to convey grace to the soul. The efficacy of the truths of the Gospel is not secured by any intrinsic power which they possess, or by the direct agency of the Holy Spirit on the soul, but because they are conveyed in the channel of a ministry of regular succession. The sanctity of those through whom grace is conveyed is not in the men, but in the office; it is not in clean hands and hearts, but in an unbroken succession; it is not moral, but official, worth; it is not an excellence arising from superior mental or moral endowments, or from a greater degree of industry or deadness to worldly influences, but that which imparts or indicates official superiority, in the view of the mass of mankind. There is grace conferred in ordination; grace in the sacraments rightly administered; grace in absolution; grace in ordinances administered at the bedside of the sick and dying. This mode of religion regards certain places, and scenes, and times, as holy above others; and as somehow conveying grace to the soul. It consecrates temples, churches, chapels, and altars, and regards them as possessing a mysterious holiness. From a consecrated shrine goes forth a sanctifying power, which could be secured in no other place, and which works as a charm in subduing sin, and saving the soul. The place where the dead repose is holy, and a mystic virtue, securing salvation, encircles those who are buried there. From such a place the grossly wicked are excluded, and all others sleep there with the hope of a blessed resurrection. "There is a religion that worships God, and another that worships the altar: a religion that trusts in Christ, and another that trusts in the sign of the cross, the wafer, and holy water; a religion that brings every thought into subjection by love, and a religion that bows down the soul under the weight of ceremonies, and binds its freedom by numberless rites; a religion of broad phylacteries, and of cleansing the outside of the cup and platter, and of garnishing the tombs of the Prophets, and a religion of cleansing the heart, and of reliance on the simple

efficacy of truth, and of making the soul pure before God ; a religion where grace is conveyed to the sinner by human hands, and in the Apostolic line, and a religion where grace is conveyed by the direct influence of the Holy Ghost ; there is a religion whose justification, and whose material, external, and internal, is form, and a religion whose whole essence is faith on the Son of God."

The religion of *feeling* or *emotion* differs from those of *sentiment* and of *forms*. It is not founded in the love of the beautiful, or the grand, in the works of nature or redemption ; and is not satisfied with that which has power merely to charm and allure. It does not attempt to substitute form for spirituality, for it is often of a highly spiritual nature, and may have the most thorough contempt for forms. It lives by whatever excites the affections, appeals to the sympathies of the soul, or opens the fountains of tears. It measures religion, not by the amount of truth embraced, or by the calmness and consistency of a holy life, or by the strength of principle evinced in resisting temptation, or in carrying forward great enterprises against organized opposition ; but by the amount of excitement which can be secured, and the joy that can be made to flow into the soul. Emotion, not principle, becomes the prompter to religious duty ; happiness the gauge by which the amount of piety is determined. The facility in shedding tears at the remembrance of sin, or at the cross, is the evidence of repentance ; joy in the belief that sins are forgiven is the proof of conversion. That preaching is of the right kind which excites the passions ; those appeals only are conformable to the Gospel which wake up the tumultuous feelings of the soul ; and religion in a community, or in the heart of an individual, is not the dew gently falling each night on the meadow, but the shower descending at uncertain intervals ; it is not the stream calmly and constantly flowing, or the fountain ever bubbling, but a succession of jets irregular in the time of their bursting forth, but beautiful ; it is not the calm glory of the sun, but the sudden and ravishing brilliancy of the meteor. This religion lives, not in settled convictions of truth and duty, but in emotions, and tears, and raptures.

The religion of *principle* is different from either of those

which have been specified, though it will embrace whatever is excellent in either of them, or all. In common with the religion of sentiment, it may have a clear perception of the beautiful and the grand in the works of God, and in the scenes of redemption. In common with the religion of forms, it will be the patron of order, and will show all due respect for sacred places, and times, and modes of devotion. In common with the religion of feeling, it will cultivate the affections of the heart, and tends, more than any other religion, to produce tender sensibility and warm emotions. It refuses not to shed tears at the remembrance of sin, and in view of the sufferings of the Saviour; it weeps over the wants and woes of the world; it is filled with joy in view of pardoning mercy; and it bursts forth into praise when the Redeemer's kingdom is advanced on the earth. But it does not consist wholly of these things. It is founded on the intelligent adoption of a rule of right, and on a steadfast adherence to it. This rule is adopted, not from whim, caprice, or custom, or civil authority, but because it is believed to be the will of God. It is adopted, not because it is beautiful; not because it can be wrought into poetry; not because it will contribute to popular favour; but because it is true. It may appear rough and rugged, harsh and severe; it may infringe on many customs in society, or even on the laws of the land; it may require that our strong natural feelings should be suppressed, and that the tender ties which bind us to country and home should be severed, that we may go and do duty to our Saviour in a foreign land; but the will of God is regarded as final in the case.

It is not, in such a religion, a question that is asked whether the matter at stake be of great or little value; or whether what is done will be blazoned abroad, or will be unknown. What is done will be done because it is *right*, not because it is beautiful or grand, or will be emblazoned by fame; what is resisted will be opposed because it is *wrong*, not because the evil is of vast magnitude, and the resistance will immortalize the man. To those who do not well understand the nature of religion, this kind of religion often seems to be an obstinate adherence to trifles, and is set down as fanaticism; yet it need not be said, that a *principle* is often tested by what seems to be a small matter, as the mass of gold is tested by the assay of the smallest

portion. In the beginning of the American Revolution, it was not the *amount* of the tax that was attempted to be levied; it was the question whether the British Parliament had a right to tax the Colonies without their consent at all; and this could as well be determined by a single sheet of stamp paper, a single pound of tea, or a single box of glass, as by an attempt to support all the expenses of the Government by drains from the Colonies.

As an illustration of the religion of principle, I may refer to an incident which occurred in our history, and which may show the manner in which all who are descended from those referred to, should embark in every enterprise connected with religion. The "Mayflower," a name now immortal, had crossed the ocean. It had borne its hundred passengers over the vast deep, and after a perilous voyage had reached the bleak shores of New-England, in the beginning of winter. The spot which was to furnish a home and a burial-place was now to be selected. The shallop was unshipped, but needed repairs, and sixteen weary days elapsed before it was ready for service. Amidst ice and snow it was then sent out, with some half-a-dozen pilgrims, to find a suitable place where to land. The spray of the sea, says the historian, froze on them, and made their clothes like coats of iron. Five days they wandered about, searching in vain for a suitable landing-place. A storm came on; the snow and the rain fell; the sea swelled; the rudder broke; the mast and the sail fell overboard. In this storm and cold, without a tent, a house, or the shelter of a rock, the Christian Sabbath approached, the day which they regarded as holy unto God; a day on which they were not to "do any work." What should be done? As the evening before the Sabbath drew on, they pushed over the surf, entered a fair sound, sheltered themselves under the lee of a rise of land, kindled a fire, and on that little island they spent the day in the solemn worship of their Maker. On the next day their feet touched the rock, now sacred as the place of the landing of the pilgrims. Nothing more strikingly marks the character of this people than this act, and I do not know that I could refer to a better illustration, even in their history, showing that theirs was the religion of principle, and that this religion made them what they were. The whole scene,

the cold winter, the raging sea, the driving storm, the houseless, homeless island, the families of wives and children in the distance, weary with their voyage, and impatient to land; and yet, the sacred observance of a day, which they kept from principle, and not from mere feeling, or because it was a form of religion, shows how deeply imbedded true religion is in the soul, and how little it is affected by surrounding difficulties. In matters indifferent, and not enjoined by the high authority of God, this religion is gentle as the breathings of an infant, and yielding as the osier, or the leaf of the aspen; in all that is commanded, all that is a matter of duty, all that pertains to the law of God, it is like an oak on the hills. There it stands; its roots deep fixed in the earth; and, perchance, clasping some vast rock below the surface; its long arms stretched out, and its upright trunk defying the blast. There it stands the same, whether the sun shines calmly on it, or whether the heavens gather anger, and pour upon it the fury of the storm. It is on this kind of religion that, under the divine blessing, we are to rely in the work of Christian Missions.

The great objects contemplated by religion in the world, cannot be secured by the religion of *sentiment*. I mean, that we cannot place reliance on that in effecting what Christianity is undoubtedly designed to accomplish, in fulfilling the great command of the Saviour to publish his Gospel in all lands.

That in the theory of a Missionary enterprise there may be much attractive beauty, and much that would commend itself to this kind of religion, there can be no doubt. There *is* a beauty, a charm, a romance, a "high emprise," a manifest benevolence, and an acting out of the feelings of brotherhood, in such an undertaking, which would accord well with this species of religion. Whatever is beautiful, romantic, grand, agrees with its nature; and whatever of external glory may be thrown around this great enterprise, may be expected to awaken sympathetic feeling in the bosom of its votaries. In the Missionary cause, viewed from the scenes of quiet and ease in a Christian land, there may be much which we should expect would make no appeal to this kind of religion. The glory of exploring unknown regions; of studying nature there in forms which we have never seen; of surveying man in modes of living, of

opinion, and of laws which have the charm of novelty to us; the glory of being the first to convey there the results of science, and of causing the flowers of literature to bloom in hitherto barren wastes; the glory of carrying there the triumphs of the healing art, and of founding asylums and hospitals; the glory of unloosing the fetters of bondage, of giving to man, as an intellectual and moral being, the rank which he was designed to have in the scale of being; and of diffusing over lands now barren the beauties which smile "on a Scottish or New-England landscape;" the glory of founding schools and colleges, and of seeing pure temples rise to the honour of God, may have a charm in the view of one all whose religion is the religion of sentiment, and in such an enterprise all that there *is* in that religion we may suppose would be gratified. To such an one it might be supposed that the Missionary cause would present itself as the noblest in which man can engage.

And so it does in theory; but the romance of Missions soon dies away, and with it all the zeal of such religionists in the cause. It becomes not a thing of ideal beauty, but of sober reality, and demands other principles to sustain it, than the love of the beautiful or the grand. To leave one's country, and home, and friends for ever; to bid adieu to the comforts and refinements of a Christian land; to mingle ever onward with savages, on whose souls "fair science never dawned;" to witness their degradation; to partake of their fare; to originate among them the first notions of social order, decency, and taste; to labour on from year to year, and see scarcely any progress made; to be poor, and to be forgotten by the mass of mankind, and to be sick in a far distant land, friendless and alone, and to die there, and be buried, with, perhaps, not a friend to weep, and not a stone to mark the spot; all this is a trial, to which the mere admiration of the beautiful in religion is not adapted to prompt the soul. The religion of sentiment does not find its home in such scenes. On the soft couch of luxury, in scenes of refined social life, in the drawing-room, in the banqueting hall, or in the gorgeous temple of religion, is its appropriate abode. There, adapting itself to whatever is refined and courteous in social life; engaged in the pursuits of elegant literature or in the arts; the patron of whatever is urbane and courteous;

and diffusing a sweet charm over life, and making lovely the face of society, it meets the instinctive desires in the human bosom of a religion of some kind, and it keeps the conscience at ease. But it is not adapted to such rough and perilous scenes as the Apostles engaged in, and such as are inseparable from the life of a modern Missionary.

There is not enough in this religion to sustain those who are willing to peril their lives in such a cause. To prosecute this cause is to be a work of steady sacrifice and self-denial. It is to pursue the steady plan amidst the coolness of friends, and the opposition of foes. It is to embark in it, expecting that life will close before it is completed, and that future generations will prosecute and complete it. Now there is no mere love of the beautiful in religion that will do this. There is no protracted charm of romance that will do it. There can be no illusive splendour thrown over the enterprise to make a father willing to part with his son whom he has carefully trained, or to press to his bosom for the last time his daughter, that their lives may be spent far away in Heathen lands, to labour, perchance, without sympathy there; to be sick, with neither father nor mother to sustain them; and to die, and be buried, and forgotten there. Great enterprises for the amelioration of the world depend for success on sterner principles than this. "It is not by flowers and verses, by declamations on the beauty of the spring, and the goodness of the Deity;" by the love of adventure, and the charm of novelty, that the soul is to be supported when called to part with earthly comforts, and to meet with persecution or neglect. No mere sentimental feeling led Howard to gauge the misery of the prisons of Europe, and to inhale their pestilential air; no mere admiration of the loveliness of freedom led Clarkson and Wilberforce to devote their days and nights to the relief of the oppressed African; and no romance in the struggle for freedom could have induced Hancock and Adams to peril their lives and their fortunes in the cause of American freedom. Accordingly, the religion of sentiment has never given birth to Missions. The Grecian sage, in whose bosom this religion found its most congenial home, made no efforts to carry it abroad. He was content to impart a knowledge of its beauties in the academy, or to transmit it in

the "mysteries;" and though Solon and Pythagoras crossed seas and deserts to *gain knowledge* in other lands, they made no journeys to secure proselytes to their religion there. The Sadducee, who, among the Hebrews, was the type of this religion as it exists in other lands, originated no Missions, and submitted to no sacrifices, that his views might be propagated among the nations of the earth. Rousseau contemplated no Mission to those on whom the beauty of religion, as seen by him, had never dawned; and the theophilanthropist was content to strew flowers on the altars which he had erected in Paris, and to deliver homilies on the beauties of morality there, with no attempt to shed this light on the darkened souls of the Heathen. No transcendentalist leaves the calm retreats of the academic grove to fix his abode in Caffraria or New Zealand; nor among all those who are so charmed by the beauty of religion, by the purity of the precepts of Christ, and by the moral perfection of his character, but who deny his atonement; so loud in proclaiming the perfectibility of man, and so eloquent in praise of that Gospel which has brought life and immortality to light, but who deny the absolute depravity of the race, and the necessity of the new birth; so much in love with a religion which gives a superior cultivation to the intellect, and a charm to manners in social relations, but who see no attractiveness in the severer views of the evangelical system, has a Mission to the Heathen ever been originated and sustained. Of all this class there is not now a single Missionary to propagate these views in any Heathen land, nor does all the zeal with which these views are defended at home, nor the eloquent descriptions of the elevating tendency of that religion, and its adaptedness to remove the evils which afflict our race, prompt to a single effort to rear a temple in honour of that religion on a Pagan soil.

Equally true is it that the religion of *forms* is not adapted to such an enterprise. It cannot be denied that it has some advantages for such a work, above the religion of sentiment, and that this religion has given birth to enterprises involving sacrifice and self-denial, which would be an honour to any cause. It cannot be denied that it has often turned its attention to Christian Missions, and that powerful organizations have

been formed, and are still in operation, under its auspices, contemplating the spread of a species of Christianity, among those who are "sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death." No man will hesitate to attribute the praise of a burning zeal to Xavier; and the sacrifices and self-denials of Brebeuf, and Raymbault, and "the delicate Lallemand," among the North American Indians, have gone into the permanent records of history. From such sacrifices and self-denials, I do not intend to deny that the Missionaries of a purer Gospel may learn many an invaluable lesson, nor should the praise which is due to heroic ardour be withheld from their memory. For such zeal inspired by the religion of forms it would not be difficult to account, but it is easy to see that the great object contemplated by the Saviour can never be secured under the auspices of such a religion. The attachment for a religion of forms seizes with such power on the soul, that they who are devoted to it are willing to make great sacrifices in its defence, and even to become martyrs in spreading it through the world. It has a power which is never found in the religion of sentiment, for it regards religion as a momentous thing, and deems it essential to the salvation of man. Such is the sense of the value of religion; so deep becomes the conviction that this particular kind of religion is essential to salvation; so exclusive is it in its very nature, and, perhaps, too, so strong is the love of power, and the desire of a wide dominion unconsciously substituted for religion, that it may summon the mightiest energies of the soul for its diffusion, and boast of a catalogue of martyrs as extended as any other. The Pharisees, the great type of this kind of religion all over the world, compassed sea and land to make one proselyte, and it is not strange that the same kind of religion should produce the same zeal in every age and country.

But what will be the real objects aimed at under such auspices? What will be the effect on the converts made? The Saviour said, in reference to a convert made by enterprises of this nature, "And when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves." (Matt. xxiii. 15.) They who engage in such enterprises, will be the patrons and advocates of a religion of forms wherever it may be found, and will endeavour to adopt these forms, and accommodate them to

their own religion, as if the work were to convert forms to new names, rather than to convert the souls of men. In the systems of the Heathen there are many forms of religion, which only need a new name, and new associations, to become all that is contemplated in a religion of Christian forms. Let a Christian name be given to a Heathen temple; let the existing Heathen priesthood, even without a change of vestments, be baptized and adopted into the ranks of a Christian priesthood; let the altar on which Heathen sacrifices have long ascended, remain, and be re-consecrated, still to be an altar in a Christian temple; let the incense continue to be wafted by other hands; let baptism be substituted in the place of ablutions; let the worship of canonized Christian martyrs be substituted in the place of that of heroes; let the days consecrated to the memory of the gods become days to commemorate the virtues of the saints; and let the reverence for a sacred order of men, and for sacred places, temples, shrines, and burial-places, remain unchanged, and the work of Missions contemplated by a religion of forms is accomplished. The heart is unconverted. The mind is debased and degraded still. There has been a transfer of a *religion*, not the regeneration of a soul; a conversion of rites and ceremonies, not the renewal of the alienated human heart. The gain has been in enrolling a name among the outward friends of Christianity, not in recording it in the book of life. In the sixth century, it is said that Gregory sent to Britain, ordering that, for the accommodation and allurement of the Pagans, and to make Christianity sit easy upon them, the days on which they had been accustomed to sacrifice to the gods, should be appointed as festivals to the saints, and so the populace be allowed to bring and kill their victims, and perform their sacrifices as usual. If, in enterprises of this kind, the Gospel should be sent to those among whom the forms of Christianity already have an existence, the purpose will be to become identified with those forms, and, perhaps, to make common cause against a purer and simpler religion. The grand aim will not be to breathe the pure spirit of religion again into those dead forms, but to express towards them a fraternal feeling, to trace out the features of resemblance and consanguinity, and to glory that a new argument is found in a collateral line for the Apostolical succession. On such a

religion, therefore, we cannot depend for the conversion of the world to God.

Equally clear is it that we cannot rely on the religion of *feeling* or *emotion*. The reasons for this are too obvious to make it necessary to enter into a formal statement of them.

There is enough in the condition of the world to excite the deepest emotion, and to appeal to all the tender sensibilities of the soul. By no one, with whatever talent he may have been endowed to work upon the sympathies of mankind, has the description of human misery been overdrawn. We may be certain that such descriptions never go beyond the reality, and that, when in view of human guilt and wretchedness, our eyes run down with tears, the emotion is not caused by imaginary woes. There *is* ignorance and misery in every Heathen community so deep as to secure us against the possibility of ever being reproached for weeping over fancied sorrows. The descriptions of the widow burning on the funeral pile; of children devoted to the Ganges; of the Hindoo swinging on hooks; of infanticide in China, and in the islands of the South Sea; of the painful postures of the Brahmin; of the sickening scenes in the festivals in honour of Juggernaut; of human sacrifices, and of the debasing vices of the Heathen world, over which our hearts bleed when our brethren return from distant lands, and tell us what they have seen, are all drawn from reality, and we need not apprehend that they are over-coloured. When the Christian has wept over these things in his closet, there has been occasion for his tears; and when the great congregation has been held in breathless stillness by a description of Heathenism, by one who has come to tell us of this woe and degradation, there has been occasion for all our sympathy. It was right to weep. It was what the Saviour did when on earth he looked on dying men; it is what he would do if he dwelt among us now.

But can we depend on this sympathy, this mere emotion, in the enterprise of carrying the Gospel around the world? There are great laws of our nature which forbid it. God has made us creatures of sympathy and feeling, to prompt us to action where something is to be done for which it would not be safe to rely on cool reflection; but not with reference to enterprises which

demand years or ages for their fulfilment. We console the sufferer, we relieve the afflicted, we press through the flames or plunge into the stream to rescue a child from death, prompted by instantaneous emotion where reason would be too slow to come to the aid of the sufferer. When the pestilence breathes through a land, or the earthquake engulfs cities and towns, we at once, under the influence of feeling, open our hands and hearts for the relief of the sick and the dying, prompted to it so soon that cold avarice may not prevent the exercise of sacred charity. From the same law of our nature, we open our doors to receive the wounded soldier, and spread for him a couch on which to die. But we consult about the constitution of a republic; we found colleges and schools; we lay down an iron road, or dig a canal, or construct a breakwater; we endow an hospital or an asylum that shall diffuse blessings over distant generations, under different auspices. These things depend on a different law of our being, and appeal to different principles of our mental constitution; nor could the foundation of emotion be raised so high as to make it the basis of a calculation that these great objects could ever be secured.

There is another law of our nature which shows that, in securing these objects, you cannot depend on feeling or emotion. To secure the promptings produced by emotion, the object must be before you, or must be so vividly painted that you see it as a reality. As long as it acts it must be in the eye. But how could that object of pity be kept so steadily in the eye amidst the necessary business and the allurements of life as to prompt to steady action? How can the image of distress be so constantly before us as always to affect the heart? The circumstances of our being forbid it; and even if it were always there, the laws of our nature would make us soon cease to be affected by it. Soon, for our nature cannot bear long excitement, we learn to look on scenes of woe without emotion. We go into a hospital and shed not a tear; we walk over a battle-field, strewed with the dying and the dead, without emotion; we hear the piteous wail of the beggar without concern; and we should soon learn to look upon the sufferings of the whole Heathen world, without being prompted to any great effort for their relief. The cry, too, that comes from the Heathen world,

is distant. It almost dies away before it reaches our ears; and when the vibrations come to our atmosphere, they are so driven from their direction, and so drowned in the hum of business, that they reach not the ears of the great mass of those who call themselves Christians, and we continue to urge on the affairs of commerce, and ambition, and pleasure, as if not a Heathen had a soul to be saved. You cannot depend, then, on the religion of feeling or emotion, to accomplish the great purpose contemplated by Christian Missions.

But if you can depend on neither of these kinds of religion, there remains but one other source of reliance. It is

THE RELIGION OF PRINCIPLE.

We shall see its value, by a brief specification of particulars in reference to the nature of the work to be accomplished.

First. It is an enterprise stretching into coming ages. It is not expected, unless it be by a few visionary men, to be accomplished in a single generation. They who embark now in the enterprise for converting the world, do not dare to hope that they will see its consummation. They expect to be withdrawn from the field before the standard of victory waves on the ramparts of the enemy, and, perhaps, before a single blow is struck that shall make its strongholds tremble. The laurels which they hope to wear are not those which shall be conferred as the result of the final triumph; and whatever banners they may see floating "when their eyes shall be turned to behold the sun in heaven for the last time, they do not even hope to see, what they believe will yet be seen, the banners of salvation, all clothed with living light, floating over the sea and the land, and in every wind under the whole heaven," in demonstration that the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. That sight will be reserved to greet and bless other eyes here below. *They* will see it when they shall look down from the battlements of heaven; or, if from those heights they cannot look upon the earth where they dwelt, and toiled, and prayed, they expect to learn that the victory is achieved from those who shall come up redeemed out of every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue, under the heaven, to mingle their hallelujahs before the throne.

There is not upon the earth an enterprise commenced whose

completion stretches so far into futurity, or which makes so large a calculation on the fidelity of coming ages, as the Missionary cause. In most of the undertakings in which we engage as individuals, we hope to see the completion ourselves. Of the orchard that we plant, we hope to eat the fruit; in the house that we are building, we hope to dwell; the avails of the commercial adventure in which we embark, we hope to enjoy; the land from which we cut away the primeval forest, we hope to see covered with the golden harvest; and in the growing honours that shall gather around the son that we educate, we hope, in our old age, to rejoice. And so in more public undertakings. On the canal that we are excavating, we hope to see borne along the productions of the teeming soil; over the railway that we are laying down, though valleys are to be filled and mountains levelled, we expect to see the lengthened train of cars fly rapidly along; the ship whose keel we lay down, we expect soon to see riding majestically on the deep; the college whose cornerstone we lay, we expect soon will open its doors to receive the youth of the land; and in the solemn temple whose walls we rear, we trust that we and our children will soon worship God. We have faith, indeed, in the next generation, that it will finish what we have begun; and faith, in all future ages, that they will preserve what we secure by our valour, or establish by our wisdom. But how few private enterprises would be commenced if it were foreseen that they could not be completed before the life of the individual would be closed! And how few public undertakings would be embarked in, if their completion was understood to depend entirely on the fidelity of far-distant generations! Who would lay the foundation of a college or a temple of worship, if this were the anticipation? Who would engage in a war, even for freedom, if it was foreseen that the fury of conflict was to rage from generation to generation; that the soldier and the officer were to die in the struggle, unblessed with the sight of victory, and that the laurel was to be won, if at all, by some victor of a far-distant generation, to whom your name would be unknown?

The Missionary enterprise stretches farthest into futurity, implies the highest confidence in the fidelity of future ages, and anticipates the most steady and persevering self-denial, *in* those

ages, of any cause in which men are now embarked. In this respect, it involves two things: First, Faith in God; a firm belief that he is the patron of the cause; that he will continue to keep it before the minds of his people; that he will give them the means to prosecute it; that he will convert our children, and children's children, and incline them to devote themselves to the work of rearing the glorious temple whose foundations we lay. Second, Faith in coming generations; that they will approve the wisdom of our plans; that they will be willing to deny themselves, and take up the cross, to finish what we have begun; that they will bear the cause on their hearts before God; that they will consecrate their wealth to the work; that they will devote their sons and their daughters to teach in the schools that we establish; that they will give up their choicest youth to publish the Gospel in the places where we lay the foundations of Churches; that they will finish translating the Bible, which we had begun to translate; and that when, in this warfare, every leader and subaltern has fallen, others will rush in to supply their places, till

“The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
Shout to each other; and the mountain-tops,
From distant mountains, catch the flying joy;
Till nation after nation taught the strain,
Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round.”

Such an enterprise cannot be commenced and carried forward to its completion, except under the auspices of the religion of principle. If this does not exist in the Church, after a few fitful and spasmodic efforts; after the sensibilities of the Church have been plied, until, by repetition, they have become paralysed; the cause will be abandoned, and the Heathen nations will continue to slumber on in the wretchedness of unbroken night.

Secondly. The enterprise to which the Church is called in the prosecution of the work of Missions, is one which contemplates such difficulties, embarrassments, and discouragements, that everything else but *principle* would be appalled. The friends of religion are not insensible to the existence of those difficulties. They have endeavoured, as far as possible, to gauge

them before they embarked in the undertaking. They have tried to explore the extent of the unbroken wilderness that is to be made to bud and blossom as the rose; to take the height of the mountains that are to be levelled, and the depth of the valleys that are to be filled up. They have made it their business, as far as they were able, to "count the cost," and to "number the hosts that come against them," before they have gone forth to the conquest. There has probably been no great enterprise in which man has ever embarked, where the true nature of the difficulties to be encountered has been better understood, or where there has been less effort to conceal or disguise them. Christians have been instructed by their Master not to anticipate an easy triumph, or a conflict with a feeble enemy. They understand that the warfare is against "principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places." They have seriously engaged in the great work of converting this whole world to God, and of establishing everywhere the reign of righteousness and peace. They know the obstacles before them. There are not far from six hundred millions of Heathens who are to be reclaimed and elevated; there are one hundred and twenty millions of followers of the Prophet of Arabia, who are to be converted to the faith of Christ; there are one hundred millions of nominal Christians, who are to be brought to a purer faith and a holier practice; there are three millions of the descendants of Abraham, who are to be led to mourn over the act of their fathers in crucifying their own Messiah, and over their own belief. This great multitude is to be subdued and changed without arms, or the aid of civil power, or the might of navies. It is to be done by the simple Gospel. They who embark in this undertaking are not ignorant of the moral condition of that world of mind which is to be reclaimed and elevated. They do not expect to find it prepared to welcome the Gospel; disgusted with prevailing superstitions; rising to intelligence and purity by a recuperative power of its own; or ready to cast its idols "to the moles and to the bats." They do not suppose that the nations will be awakened from their long, leaden slumbers by the first ray of light that breaks on their horizon; or that the budding charities of the soul, which have died under the long winter of super-

stitution and sin, will of themselves swell into life. They do not expect to find minds prepared by science to welcome a pure faith, or to appreciate at once the argument for Christianity. They do not expect to find the Heathen making progress in the arts, and carrying forward the conveniences and elegancies of life, till they approximate what Christianity would do, and prepare them to welcome that system as the completion and perfection of their own. They expect to find the soul as dark and debased as it can be, and the space which divides the human race from the brute reduced to the narrowest possible dimensions, consistently with preserving that distinction at all. The Heathen are, of themselves, making no advances towards the truth, or towards a better system of religion. They make no progress towards civilization, intelligence, liberty. There is no elastic energy in a Heathen mind, no recuperative power to bring it back to God, no well-spring of life to purify the soul. The effect of time is only to deepen the darkness, and to drive the Heathen farther from God. They only adore more shapeless blocks; they bow before worse-looking idols; they worship in less elegant and more polluted temples. The idols of the Heathen are not constructed with half the skill and taste with which they were two thousand years ago, nor are their temples built with such exquisite art. No idol of the Heathen world could now be compared with the statue of Minerva at Athens; no temple can be likened to the Parthenon; no sentiment originated now in China, India, or Africa, equals in sublimity or purity the views of Socrates. The Heathen world is becoming worse and worse; more degenerate, more abominable, more pitiable, from age to age. The friends of this great cause do not suppose that that degraded world of mind will arise by an elastic energy of its own; or that the river of pollution and death, by rolling longer, will work itself pure. They have entered on this work, too, feeling that evil in the Heathen world is organized and compacted; that it is sustained by law, and incorporated with institutions having the sanction of ages, and with all their views of science; that it can bring to its aid the authority of a priesthood, supposed to be heaven-appointed; and that their poetry, their apothegms, their traditions, all support the religion which we seek to displace. This great

enterprise has been engaged in, also, in full view of the apathy, and coldness, and want of zeal of the great body of the Christian Church; of all the prejudice which has been caused on Heathen shores by those bearing the Christian name, who have gone for unholy gain, for plunder and rapine; of all the unrighteous wars which professedly Christian Sovereigns have waged there; of all the injury done by slave-ships approaching a Heathen coast under the abused flag of a Christian nation, to seize and fetter its unoffending inhabitants, and to bear them away to hopeless bondage: and we expect to prosecute this great work in the very light and blaze of burning villages and hamlets, fired by those who bear the Christian name. This immense and far-spread prejudice we hope to overcome by the exhibition of that benevolence to which the Gospel prompts, and by making the Heathen understand, by a long course of efforts pursued for their good, that *all* who bear the Christian name, do not visit their shores for plunder and rapine. And this work has been commenced, in full view of the belief that all this evil is systematized and arranged under the control of one master-mind, the presiding spirit of evil, and that it is “methodized and wielded with a comprehension of plan which no man can explain upon the principle of accidental coincidence.” Under this comprehensive plan, these various forms of evil are all marshalled and wielded, and every point may be defended by a leader who seems to have the power of ubiquity of action to strengthen whatever position is attacked. In such an enterprise, on what kind of religion shall we rely? Not the admiration of the beautiful is to accomplish the work, not that religion which would go to assimilate itself to these systems or to adopt their forms as its own, and not that “goodness” which, “like the morning cloud, soon vanishes away.”

Thirdly. The Missionary enterprise is one which is to be pursued through scenes of alternate hope and fear; in times of elation and depression, when the sea is smooth and a steady breeze swells all the canvass, and when the storm arises and the billows roll. The appeal is not to be made to the Church on the ground of success. The heart is not to be unduly elated when opposition yields, and the Gospel achieves great triumphs; nor is it to be depressed when opposition becomes formidable, and

no impression is made on the powers of darkness. The Church is not to become self-confident or suddenly flushed with the hope of victory, when her sons press forward to fill the ranks of those who have fallen in her service; nor is she to be disheartened when they prefer the gains of commerce, the honours of a learned profession, or the calm retreats of the porch or the academy, to the paths of self-denial which must be trod by the Christian Missionary. It is the nature of this work to be calm, and confident in God, though the last herald of salvation on Heathen ground, faint and feeble, should lift up the cry for help, and not a youth in the land should run to his aid. The Church is not to be elated unduly, when religion seems to make its way triumphantly among mountain fastnesses, to find out an old and dilapidated church, and to kindle up again the flame of pure devotion in its ancient temples; nor is she to despond though armed hosts follow the adventurous tread of the Christian Missionary, and murder the Priests of religion, and lead Christian matrons and virgins into captivity, and extinguish there the holy flame which had begun anew on those mouldering altars. From the very nature of Christianity, it will visit these mountain fastnesses again, undismayed, with the firm confidence that the holy light of religion will yet shine unextinguished there. Nor is the Church to place her reliance on the wisdom of men, or to feel unduly elated when the leaders in this cause are blessed with uncommon prudence and sagacity, or be dismayed when such men are removed. The enterprise lives on while its earthly leaders die. It is not essentially disturbed, though such a man as Worcester, or Evarts, or Cornelius, or Wisner, be taken from its councils; for the Great Leader and Counsellor lives. Those *were* uncommon men. Few causes in which men have been embarked have had such men to lose; many a cause could not have parted with them and yet survived. Many an enterprise has been begun and ended under a single leader; and when the great mind that conceived it was withdrawn, no one was found to carry forward the plan which he had formed, and the fabric which he had reared fell by its own weight. The plans which had been commenced by Alexander could have been matured and perpetuated only by his own talents, and when he died, the immense empire which he had founded crumbled to fragments.

The empire over which Napoleon ruled rose under his own mighty genius, and had he never been driven from his throne, the world would not have had an intellect fitted to perfect his plans when he died. Cromwell left no successor to carry out the principles of that Protectorate which had made England more formidable, and more respected, than she had been under all her dynasties of Kings from the time of Alfred; and, deprived of his mighty mind, the nation bowed to the sceptre of the most miserable specimen of royalty that ever occupied a throne. Not so when perpetuity and triumph depend on principle. Had Samuel Adams and John Hancock, when proscribed by the British Government, been arrested and put to death; had the voice of Patrick Henry been silenced by a poniard or a bribe; had the sagacity of Franklin and Sherman been withheld from the councils of the Revolution; nay, had the ball from the rifle of the Indian Chief, aimed with a skill which had never before failed, pierced the heart of Washington, there would have been other Adamases, and Hancocks, and Henrys, and Shermans, and Franklins, and Washingtons, to conduct the nation to freedom; for there were great principles of liberty involved which could neither be proscribed, nor bribed, nor put to death. So in the cause of spreading the Gospel around the world. No matter what earthly leader falls, the cause is to live. There are great principles involved in that cause, and it must live on from age to age: and when a leader falls, the Church is not to be dismayed. She has embarked in this enterprise expecting that this is to be; and has learned to anticipate that a long succession of such men as Worcester, and Evarts, and Cornelius, and Wisner, *must* die before her object is accomplished.

Fourthly, the Missionary enterprise contemplates such sacrifices as can be met only by steady principle. It supposes that there must be great self-denials, great expenditure, great sufferings. It was an elementary idea in the work of the Saviour, when he undertook our redemption, that he was to be poor, despised, and forsaken; that he was to grapple, single-handed, with the most mighty enemy of God that the universe contains; that he was to endure the keenest tortures which the human frame could be made to bear. It was an elementary idea in the religion of Paul, that he was to abandon his splendid

prospects of distinction; that he was to look away from the honours of scholarship, office, or eloquence, which had glittered in his youthful eye; that he was to be regarded as the "off-scouring of the world;" that he was to leave his country and his home; that his dwelling was to be among strangers, and that his life was to be spent "in perils of waters, and of robbers; in perils among his own countrymen and among the Heathen; in the city, in the wilderness, in the sea, and among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness; in watchings, and hunger, and thirst, and fastings, and cold, and nakedness."

The great enterprise in which the Church is embarked now involves similar sacrifices and self-denials. It is supposed that there will be found in the Church, from age to age, sufficient Christian principle to meet the requisition for those sacrifices and sufferings. When the Declaration of Independence was adopted, there was such a depth of principle required among those who signed it, as to be ready to seal their attachment to it with their blood. John Hancock supposed that his conspicuous name might make him distinguished among those who might perish on the scaffold; and in full view of such a possible result, he and they pledged to each other their "lives, their fortune, and their sacred honour." The sentiments of all those men are well known; and the language eloquently attributed to one of them (John Adams) will express the feelings of patriotism founded on principle, and may express *ours* in the cause in which we are engaged. "I see, I see clearly, through this day's business. You and I, indeed, may rue it. We may not live to the time when this Declaration shall be made good. We may die; die colonists; die slaves; die, it may be, ignominiously, on the scaffold. Be it so; be it so. If it be the pleasure of Heaven that my country shall require the poor offering of my life, the victim shall be ready at the appointed hour of sacrifice, come when that hour may. But, whatever may be our fate, be assured, be assured, that this Declaration will stand. It may cost treasure, and it may cost blood; but it will stand, and it will richly compensate us for both. Through the thick gloom of the present, I see the brightness of the future, as the sun in heaven. My judgment approves of this measure, and my whole heart is in it. All that I have, and all that I am, and all that I

hope in this life, I am now ready here to stake on it; and live or die, survive or perish, I am for the Declaration."

Such was *principle*, in a cause and on an occasion the most noble that the earth has witnessed, except that in which the Church is engaged of spreading the Gospel around the globe. That is more noble; that involves still higher principle, and that may demand still higher and more continued sacrifices. The youth, who gives himself to Christ, should do it prepared to brave the cold of the north, or the burning heats of the line, in carrying there the pure Gospel; and with the expectation that, after an hour of unpitied suffering, he may lie unburied in a foreign land. The father is to be ready to part with his son, the pride of his heart, and the anticipated stay of his age; the son, whose early course has been radiant as the light of a morning without clouds, and who is qualified by native endowment to adorn the bar, the bench, or the senate chamber,—to preach the Gospel to savages; and is to lay his hand on him and bless him, as the ship is loosening from her moorings, expecting to see his face no more. The mother is to press her much beloved daughter to her bosom for the last time, as she leaves her native land to meet the perils of the deep and the desert; and to die, perhaps, surrounded by strangers, and where *her* hand cannot soothe her dying sorrows. Youths, educated with all the care and skill that a Christian land can furnish; accustomed to the comforts and the elegancies of life; with minds classical, tasteful, and refined, like that of Henry Martyn, and with accomplishments that might adorn any circle, are yet to sing on many a deck, as the Missionary ship glides away,

“ Yes, my native land, I love thee;
 All thy scenes, I love them well;
 Friends, connexion, happy country!
 Can I bid you all farewell?
 Can I leave you,
 Far in distant lands to dwell?

“ Home! thy joys are passing lovely;
 Joys no stranger heart can tell!
 Happy home! 'tis sure I love thee;
 Can I, can I say, Farewell?
 Can I leave thee,
 Far in Heathen lands to dwell?

“ Scenes of sacred peace and pleasure !
 Holy days, and Sabbath bell !
 Richest, brightest, sweetest treasure !
 Can I say a last farewell ?
 Can I leave you,
 Far in Heathen lands to dwell ?

“ Yes, I hasten from you gladly,
 From the scenes I love so well ;
 Far away, ye billows, bear me ;
 Lovely, native land, farewell !
 Pleased I leave thee,
 Far in Heathen lands to dwell.

“ Bear me on, thou restless ocean ;
 Let the winds my canvass swell ;
 Heaves my heart with warm emotion,
 While I go far hence to dwell.
 Glad I bid thee,
 Native land ! Farewell ! Farewell ! ”

To engage in and prosecute a work thus stretching into future ages ; a work which contemplates such difficulties, embarrassments, and discouragements ; a work which is to be pursued through such scenes of alternate hope and fear, and a work contemplating such sacrifices, self-denials, expenditures, and sufferings, there can be no reliance but the *religion of principle*.

It is this religion, originated only by the Holy Spirit of God, which, we trust, gave birth to the enterprises undertaken by this Board, and which has thus far animated and sustained the Board and its Missionaries, in the great work of giving the Gospel to Heathen lands. The circumstances under which we meet, fathers and brethren, are adapted forcibly to impress this truth on our hearts. Thirty-three years ago the Board held its second annual meeting in this place. It had then but nine members, and but little more than a thousand dollars in its treasury, and had no Missionaries in the field. It had four young men under its care, ready to go wherever the Providence of God should guide them ; and whose wish to devote themselves to the work of Missions was as clearly formed under the influence of *principle*, as any purpose ever undertaken by man.

With similar feelings they who then constituted the Board, but one of whom now survives, assembled here to look over the condition of the world. It was not a spirit of romance, terminating in a Missionary enterprise, which led to their organization; it was not a desire to extend and perpetuate a religion of forms; it was not under the influence of mere temporary excitement. The Holy Spirit of God had created in their hearts a permanent conviction of the *duty* of obeying the last command of the Saviour, and of sending the Gospel to distant nations.

One third of a century, the period of a generation of the human race, has passed away. The income of the Board has increased from one thousand, to more than two hundred and thirty thousand dollars. There was then no Missionary station under their care, now there are ninety-five stations. Then, no American had left his native land, to be a Missionary among the Heathen. Now, one hundred and thirty-five ordained American Missionaries proclaim the blessed Gospel to the nations of the earth, and almost five hundred labourers are employed by this Board, in various departments of effort, in Pagan lands. Then, not one had been converted among the Heathen by the instrumentality of this Board. Now, there are sixty-three churches, and more than twenty-five thousand members. Then, the Board convened in this place in a private parlour. Now, the largest edifice will not accommodate its members and friends.

During the time which has elapsed since that meeting, there have been reverses and discouragements, trials and death. But the religion under whose auspices the Board was formed, has proved itself equal to the exigencies which have arisen, and adapted to the work. The ends of the earth have felt the influence of this Board. The sun never sets on its Missionary stations; and in all its history there has been no occasion to doubt that the religion of principle is adapted to convey the Gospel around the globe.

Fathers and brethren! from the past let us take courage in regard to the future. Let us never be disheartened by reverses; let us not be unduly elated with success; let us never confide in impulses and temporary excitements; let us, above all, never trust in our own wisdom and strength. Leaning on the arm of our God

and Saviour, and seeking to cultivate in our own hearts, more and more, the spirit of that pure Gospel which is itself nothing else than the religion of principle, let us go on, under all reverses and discouragements, labouring patiently till the Master shall call us home, and then leave the work to other hands, with faith in God, and faith in coming generations, that it will be accomplished. We shall die, some of us will soon die, all of us at no distant period. But this work will not die. It will be as deeply embalmed in the affection of those who succeed us as it has been in ours; it will be as steadily prosecuted; it will make as triumphant a progress in future times as it has done in our own. Its final triumph is the only thing that illuminates the darkness of the future; but that result is as clear as the sun in heaven. By the grace of our God we will do our duty while we live; we will be found at our post when we die; we will pass the work, then, into other hands, and in our final abode in heaven we will calmly wait until, from a redeemed world, a voice, loud as the sound of many waters, comes swelling up on high, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

DISCOURSE XIII.

 OBJECTIONS OBLIATED, AND GOD GLORIFIED,
 BY THE SUCCESS OF THE GOSPEL
 AMONG THE HEATHEN.*

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ACTS xi. 18.

“When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.”

It gives us a peculiar pleasure to accompany the Missionaries through those regions, and along the very paths, once consecrated by the residence and the journeys of Christ and his Apostles. But how much more interesting to the Missionaries themselves, to walk in the footsteps, and stand on the precise spot, where our blessed Lord walked and stood, when upon earth! What mingled emotions must be enkindled in the bosom of the pious pilgrim, while he drinks of the same fountain which afforded refreshment to the Son of God when weary with journeying! and not only this; but enjoys the privilege of gazing on the hallowed place where he became incarnate; where he first saw the light of this world; where he closed his eyes in death; where he arose from the sepulchre; and where he was parted from his disciples, and ascended into heaven, while in the very act of blessing them. It is no superstition to be tenderly affected by scenes like these: it is the genuine effect of the association of ideas, in minds imbued with the love of Christ. It must have occurred to the attentive reader of the journals of our Missionaries, that they often present facts which bear a strong resemblance to incidents recorded in the Acts of the Apostles; and we are especially struck with

* Preached at Albany, before the American Board of Foreign Missions.

this analogy, when the facts occurred in the same place: as, when we read the accounts of their visits to Jerusalem, to Bethany, to Gethsemane, to Calvary, to Bethlehem, to Nazareth, and to the sea of Tiberias; and of their journeys through Samaria to Galilee, and along the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

It is worthy of remark, also, that the principles on which the Gospel is now opposed, and its Preachers persecuted, are the same which had influence in the days of the Apostles; and that its converts are inspired with something of the same spirit of constancy and inextinguishable zeal which characterized the primitive disciples. There is, moreover, a resemblance in the manner in which the Gospel is introduced and obtains footing. The success of the Apostles on their first visit to a town or city was commonly small: a single family, or one or two individuals, were often the first-fruits of the preaching of Paul or Peter; but these formed the germ, from which a flourishing Church soon arose. "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."

The commission which our Lord gave to his disciples was universal in its extent, and couched in terms as perspicuous as could have been selected; and yet so inveterate were their national prejudices, that they confined their ministry to the Jews and Samaritans. The idea that the Church was still to be limited to their own nation had taken such complete possession of their minds, that even the plenary inspiration of Pentecost did not remove the error. It became requisite, therefore, that a special revelation should be given to the Church on this subject; which was communicated, by a vision, to the Apostle Peter, while he was sojourning at Joppa. An angel was, in the first place, sent from God to a Roman centurion by the name of Cornelius, a devout and charitable man, who had his dwelling at Cesarea; directing him to send to Joppa for Simon, whose surname was Peter; "and he," said the angel, "will tell thee what thou oughtest to do." The angel himself could have readily informed this man of everything which he could learn from Peter: but God chooses that the Gospel

should be preached by men of like passions with ourselves; and having instituted the ministry of reconciliation, he has resolved to honour *that* as the means of bringing the Heathen to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. Angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto the heirs of salvation; and, although they deliver short messages to the saints, they have received no commission to preach the Gospel. Cornelius was, therefore, directed to send to Joppa for Peter, who should tell him what he ought to do. But what would Peter think of such a message from a Gentile, with whom he had always been accustomed to believe it was unlawful to hold any intercourse? The same God who had sent his angel to Cornelius, had taken care to prepare the mind of the Apostle for this extraordinary communication; for, while he was engaged in fasting and prayer, in the retirement of the house-top, he saw a vision, the import of which was, that all national distinctions between Jews and Gentiles was done away, and that the middle wall of partition was broken down. But doubting, at first, what the meaning of this vision might be, he was relieved from all suspense by the suggestion of the Holy Spirit, who said to him, “Behold, three men seek thee: arise, therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.” Peter, in obedience to the divine command, went with the men, and preached the Gospel to Cornelius and to all that were in his house; and the Holy Ghost having manifestly come upon them, he proceeded to receive them by baptism into the Christian Church. These were the first-fruits of that glorious harvest of converts who were, in a short time, gathered into the garner of the Lord from among the Gentiles.

Tidings of this extraordinary event soon reached the Apostles and brethren at Jerusalem, and produced no small surprise and agitation among them; and as soon as Peter was come up, they who were zealous for the Mosaic rites and distinctions contended with him, and said, “Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it in order unto them;” and concluded his defence by saying, “Forasmuch then as God gave unto them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I should

withstand God?" "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

It is pleasing to observe how ready these good men were to yield to the truth; and how sincerely they rejoiced that God had granted repentance unto life to the Gentiles, as well as to the Jews.

In accommodating these words to our present circumstances, I will, from them, take occasion to show,—

That the manner in which God, by his providence and grace, has prospered the efforts of his Church to extend repentance unto life to the Heathen, in our day, ought to silence all the objections which have been made to this benevolent enterprise;

That the success which has attended the labours of Missionaries among the Heathen should induce all Christians to glorify God for his great goodness; and,

That hence it may be inferred that they should go forward in the good work with increasing vigour, zeal, and confidence.

I. When it was first proposed to propagate Christianity in Hindostan, a great clamour was raised against the design, by interested men, who pretended that any attempt to change the religion of that people would be attended with civil commotion of the most alarming kind; and that the consequence, in all probability, would be the subversion of the British empire in the East. This objection to Missionaries was founded on principles merely political, and, if it had been true, ought to have had no weight with Christians to prevent them from propagating the Gospel for the salvation of men. But when the experiment was made, what was the result? Were the predictions of those wise politicians verified? So far from it, that in no single instance has the attempt by Missionaries to propagate the Gospel in India been followed by the least tumult or civil commotion; and it is a notorious fact, that the immense population of that country has never remained so tranquil and submissive as since the period of the introduction of Missionaries.

But another objection was made, which could have no other basis than indifference to all religion. It was alleged, and strongly urged, that the Heathen were contented and happy in the possession of a religion of their own, to which they had

been long accustomed, and which was adapted to their genius and climate; and, therefore, that it was not only impolitic, but inhuman, to disturb their minds with a new religion. The amount of this objection is, that all religions are equally good, and equally safe; and that Christianity possesses no such transcendent excellency as would make it a rich blessing to any and every people. Now who does not perceive that this objection, though coming from the mouths of nominal Christians, is replete with the spirit of Infidelity? But, even on mere principles of humanity, and in relation to temporal happiness, it is capable of the clearest demonstration, from undoubted facts, that Christianity would confer on the Heathen more important benefits than can be derived from any other source. Turn your eyes to the horrid system of idolatry which prevails in India, and other Heathen countries; contemplate the multitudes whose lives are sacrificed to the gods of their cruel superstition; consider the slavish and desolating effects of these false religions upon the minds of all their votaries, not only in eradicating every virtuous and generous principle, but also in withering every kind and amiable affection of our nature: and having contemplated this scene, turn your attention to the benign influence of the Christian religion, in its tendency to control and mitigate the fierce passions of man; to civilize and refine society; and to cause the obligations of justice and truth to be felt: and then, without any regard to its divine origin, or its necessity to secure future happiness, ask yourselves whether benevolence does not require that we should make every exertion to rescue our fellow-men from the horrors of superstition, by inducing them to adopt the religion of Jesus? There exists not upon earth a greater foe to human happiness than Pagan superstition. While the body simply is enslaved, the mind may be tranquil and free, and may enjoy consolations which no external violence can interrupt or destroy; but when the *soul* is held in cruel bondage, all sources of rational pleasure are cut off. And even as it relates to the sufferings of the body, no severer tortures have ever been invented or endured than those inflicted by conscience, misguided and terrified by superstition. There can, therefore, be no work of greater benevolence than to rescue our fellow-creatures from this wretched thralldom, by

the diffusion of knowledge, and the propagation of just ideas respecting the character of God, and the true nature and extent of human duty. And if we admire the philanthropy of Howard, who devoted his life to the alleviation of the miseries of those unhappy men whose bodies were immured in loathsome dungeons, how can we withhold our cordial approbation of the faithful Missionary, who labours in the midst of appalling dangers and difficulties to deliver men from the intolerable bondage of superstition?

As the Apostle Peter silenced all objections to his entrance among the Gentiles by a simple statement of facts, in humble imitation of his example, I would refer to the well-known facts which have occurred in our times, relative to the happy change produced by the Gospel in the temporal condition of some of the most wretched of our race. Let the objector impartially consider the melioration of condition in degraded Africans, rescued from slave-ships; let him ponder the wonderful progress of civilization and good moral habits among the Hottentots, the Caffres, the inhabitants of the Society and Sandwich Islands, and also among our Cherokees and Choctaws; and he will never be disposed again to bring forward this objection.

But this leads me to the consideration of one of the most plausible objections ever made against Christian Missions; which is, that it is impossible to communicate the sublime truths of our holy religion to men in a savage state, or to bring them under the influence of its moral precepts. It was confidently asserted by philosophers, and reiterated by reverend theological professors, that civilization must precede Christianity. These opinions, during the last century, were so often inculcated, and so confidently repeated, that many persons, well disposed to the diffusion of the light of the Gospel, received them as undoubted axioms. But how civilization was to commence and be carried on, no one undertook to explain. None appeared to possess zeal enough to go among the savage tribes to civilize them; and thus, as far as these sentiments prevailed, all Missionary effort was paralysed, and a cloud of discouragement cast over every prospect of seeing the Heathen brought into a better condition. It was well, however, that all Christians did not fall under the influence of this philosophical delusion: some continued to

believe that the only effectual means of civilizing barbarous nations was to send them the Gospel; and, acting on this principle, they braved the ridicule and contempt of the wise men of this world, and zealously engaged in the glorious work of evangelizing the nations,—a work which, we believe, will never be arrested, until the desired end is fully accomplished.

By mere reasoning, this class of objections could never have been so answered, as to convince those by whom they were made; but God, in his Providence, has, by a series of facts, as gratifying as they are wonderful, silenced for ever, as we would humbly hope, these philosophical dogmas, which stood in the way of the progress of the Gospel. And it was so ordered, as if on purpose to refute these prevalent opinions, that the first remarkable success in Protestant Missions should take place among the most savage and degraded tribes of the human family. The Greenlanders, the African Negroes, the Caffres, the Hottentots, the Bushmen, and the wandering aborigines of America, furnished the first trophies of Missionary exertion. And to these were soon added the inhabitants of the Islands of the South Sea and of the Pacific. Certainly, no people more remote from civilization existed in the world than some of those who have, by Missionary labours, been converted to Christianity. And, however uncandid men depreciate the work, and affect to believe that nothing has been done; yet, in the view of the wonderful reformation wrought, and the extraordinary exaltation of the character, not of a few individuals, but of whole tribes and nations, the friends of Missions have just grounds for mutual congratulation and triumph. The problem is now solved, and it is by incontrovertible facts decided, that the Gospel is capable of producing its genuine effects on the most barbarous, as well as the most refined, of the human species; and that it possesses the power of civilizing men the most savage. Indeed, if it were not so, the Heathen never could be converted to Christianity without a miracle; for we know of no other means than the Gospel by which savage ferocity can be subdued, and Pagan ignorance enlightened. And if we could communicate the arts and refinements of civilized life to savages, it is not evident that this would at all prepare and dispose them for the reception of the Gospel. When the

most refined and civilized nations throw away all regard for religion, they become, as the history of our own age attests, the most ferocious of all mankind. Genuine civilization must commence with reformation of heart; and nothing but true religion is capable of producing this effect.

Another objection, nearly allied to the above, and proceeding from the same quarter, was, that the enterprise was impracticable, by reason of the established prejudices of the Heathen. The idea of converting the world to Christianity, has been ridiculed as weak and fanatical. To the philosophic eye of men of reason, there seemed to be no proportion between the means and the end proposed to be accomplished. That a few zealots, unsupported by civil authority, and unpatronized by the learned and the powerful, should think of revolutionizing the religion of the nations of the earth, all of whom are wedded to their own systems of worship, and many of whom, by reason of their caste and prejudices, are almost inaccessible, was viewed with ineffable contempt by men who looked no farther than to second causes. And, indeed, if the Missionary enterprise be contemplated merely on the principles on which human calculations of success are usually made, the opinions of such objectors do not appear so very unreasonable. If the special aid of Almighty God might not be hoped for, then the prospect of accomplishing so great an object, by means so feeble and inadequate, would be discouraging enough. But if there be truth in holy writ, the conversion of the world is an event decreed in the counsels of heaven; and there is every reason to believe, that it will be brought about by human instrumentality. And it accords with the known methods of divine administration, in the establishment and advancement of the Church, that instruments and means are often selected which appear contemptible in the eyes of the world; and frequently, from small beginnings, the most glorious events are made to follow. Of the truth of this remark, the original propagation of the Gospel is a sufficient illustration. But the best answer which can be given to this objection is, as before, to point to the facts, and to say, "*See what God hath wrought!*" Behold the wonderful progress of the Gospel, in a short time; and where the obstacles were as great as any that exist elsewhere. Contemplate the

strange spectacle of whole nations casting away their idols; and Princes and people, the aged and the young, sitting down at the feet of the Missionaries, to be instructed in the things which relate to their salvation. I am aware, indeed, that some persons in our country have been pleased publicly to represent the Missionary enterprise to be a failure. They have gloried, as if the wisdom of their predictions was now verified; and as if, indeed, nothing had been accomplished. Now, I know not what these men would consider a successful Missionary operation; but, if the effects produced by the exertions of Missionaries in South Africa, in Tahiti, and the neighbouring isles, in the Sandwich Islands, in many parts of India, and among the tribes of our own continent, can be believed to be events of no importance, then it may be supposed, that if the world should be converted, if the Jews should be brought in with the fulness of the Gentile nations, these incredulous, or rather, uncandid persons, would not believe that anything was yet effected. With such prejudices we do not contend: they are too inveterate and deep-rooted to be shaken by argument. The facts are before the world; let every one judge of them as he pleases; but, in the mean time, the great and glorious work is advancing and spreading, in spite of the prejudice and envy of men. And what is doing in the Missionary cause, I doubt not, will, in the eyes of posterity, be viewed as far more important and glorious than the most considerable political events of our times. Then it will be admitted, that Hall, and Newell, and Mills, and Judson, and Parsons, and Fisk, and Kingsbury, and Stewart, and King, and Bingham, with their faithful coadjutors, did not labour altogether in vain. No; when the envy and prejudice of the present generation shall have died, the memory of these men will be blessed; and the simple narrative of their indefatigable labours and patient sufferings will be read with interest and gratitude, in the four quarters of the world, and in the most distant corners of the earth; and that, too, when the names of the enemies of Missions shall rot in complete oblivion.

The next objection to combined and vigorous Missionary efforts, which I shall notice, is, that the time is not yet come,—the time for the conversion of the nations unto God; and that,

until God's appointed time shall arrive, although some partial effects may be produced, yet no general or great success will attend Missionary efforts, however wisely they may be planned, or vigorously executed. If we were certain that this objection rested on the ground of truth, it would indeed discourage our hearts; but it would not alter our duty, or remove the obligation of the Saviour's command, to "preach the Gospel to every creature;" for neither the purposes of God, nor his predictions, are made the rule by which we are bound to regulate our conduct. What God requires of us is, to obey his commandments; the effects which may be produced by our exertions belong to him, and he will regulate them according to his own good pleasure, and according to his faithful promises.

But this objection may be founded, either on the prophecies, or on the present aspects of Providence. Now in regard to the first, it may be observed, that the Church will probably wait long before she begins her efforts, if she suspend them until an agreement shall take place among expositors respecting the times and seasons predicted in Scripture. Prophecies are seldom capable of a precise interpretation until they are fulfilled. We also know that learned men, who have devoted themselves to the study of prophecy, have been egregiously deceived in their most confident predictions of the course of future events. And for ourselves, we believe, "that secret things belong to God, but those which are revealed, to us and our children;" and that the "times and the seasons" are among the things which "the Father hath kept in his own power."

But considering the objection as it relates to the present aspects of Providence, we are disposed to maintain that it is destitute of a shadow of foundation. On the contrary, we are persuaded that almost everything in the existing state of the world, proclaims aloud to Christians, in a voice not to be misunderstood, that the door of access to the Gentiles is now opened, and that they are required to enter into fields which are already white to the harvest. The facilities of propagating the Gospel in foreign countries are multiplied far beyond any conception which our forefathers could have entertained on the subject. Formerly, by reason of the imperfection of naval architecture, the want of astronomical instruments, and the defect of skill in

navigation, it was considered a prodigious thing for any one to circumnavigate our globe; an event in our days of the most common occurrence. Not many centuries ago, the art of printing did not exist; all books were produced by the slow process of writing every letter with the hand; and, long since this wonderful art was invented, the ability to multiply copies of the Scriptures, and other books, was extremely limited; but recently, by the improvements of the press, and the application of steam, and other mechanical powers, books can be multiplied almost at will; and at prices far below those at which they could be afforded previous to the commencement of the present century.

The facility of acquiring foreign languages is also greatly increased in our times. More literary men travel in lands once little visited, and a greater number of those who remain at home apply themselves to the study of various languages; by which means, teachers of foreign tongues are greatly multiplied, as well as the necessary apparatus of grammars and lexicons.

To all which, it may be added, that the intercourse between parts of the earth widely separated is much more frequent and intimate than in preceding ages; so that now there is scarcely an inhabited country or island on the globe which is not visited by our hardy and enterprising seamen. Missionaries, at present, find no difficulty in reaching the place of their destination. A voyage around the Cape of Good Hope, or Cape Horn, is not, in our day, considered too arduous for tender females.

But there is another weighty consideration which shows that the time for Missionary exertion is come; and that is, the fact, that scarcely an effort has been made, by any society, in our day, which has proved abortive. Almost all denominations of Protestants have engaged in this good work, and all appear to be successful. But I have already had occasion to refer to the success of Missionary exertions, and will not now dwell upon the subject.

The only other objection to foreign Missions which I think it necessary to notice, is, that by the prosecution of this enterprise we injure the Churches at home, and neglect to supply with the means of grace the vast and increasing population in our new settlements; and that, by our exertions to send the

Gospel to the Heathen, we exhaust those funds which are requisite for the successful operation of our benevolent institutions; and also take away from our destitute Churches some of our best men, whose services at home can very inconveniently be dispensed with. More prominence is given to this objection in the statement than to the others; because while *they* spoke the language of Infidelity, or prejudice, or at best, philosophy, this speaks the language of pious zeal; and no doubt has often proceeded from the mouths of those sincerely attached to the cause of God. And if the effects of foreign Missions were indeed such as is here supposed, it would behove us to pause and consider our ways, if not retrace our steps. But I appeal again to facts, and on these we are willing to rest our cause. We say, then, that if the prosecution of foreign Missions has actually lessened the resources, or diminished the zeal and vigour of our Churches at home, we will cease to urge the subject any longer upon your attention. But how stands the fact? I appeal now especially to those who, like myself, are advanced in years. My brethren, has anything occurred within your remembrance which has given so great a spring to vital piety in the Churches, as the enterprise of sending Missionaries to the Heathen? Has it not been the means of enlarging the views and elevating the aims of Christians, in regard to the duty of promoting pious and benevolent objects of every kind? When before has so much been done to diffuse religious knowledge, and to extend the means of instruction to the poor and destitute? And who are they who most abound in acts of beneficence toward these objects? Are they not those very persons who are most zealous and liberal in the support of foreign Missions? The fact is, that a new and holy impulse has been given to the Christian Church, in consequence of this enterprise; and already the Churches have been more than repaid for all their sacrifices and contributions for this cause. The waves which have by this means been put in motion, still go forward with increasing swell, and we cannot anticipate what will be the full effect.

And as to the loss of men, I say, they are not lost,—not lost to the American Churches. The disinterested and noble act of forsaking their native land, and all their affectionate friends for ever, does more good to the Church than a lifetime of common

labour. It teaches the whole religious community that Christianity has not lost its original power by the lapse of ages. It casts a dark shade upon the grovelling pursuits of this world, and has a mighty tendency to lift the soul up to God. The departure of a few devoted Missionaries does not diminish the number of faithful Pastors, or labourers, in the home Mission; it increases them manyfold. Many a pious youth is led to devote himself to the service of the Lord, in the Gospel of his Son, in imitation of the foreign Missionaries; and many a youthful heart has received its first permanent religious impressions, from perusing the accounts of the labours of these faithful men. And, for myself, I cannot doubt, that the published journals of the Missionaries have done us more good, than the labours of their lives would have done, had they continued at home. I hope none will think that I disparage the labours of Pastors and home Missionaries: this is far from my purpose. They too are engaged in a good work,—in the same work; but their labours are rendered more useful by the existence of foreign Missions. The standard of their motives, in entering on and prosecuting their work, has been elevated by the self-denial of the foreign Missionary; so that they all begin to feel, more and more, that they are called to forsake all for Christ; to consecrate every faculty to Christ; and to determine to know nothing but Christ, and him crucified; and to glory in nothing but the cross of Christ.

II. The second thing proposed in this discourse is, to take a brief survey of the grounds furnished, by the course of events, in regard to Missions, for thanksgiving to God, and for encouragement with respect to the future. When the Apostles and brethren, at Jerusalem, heard Peter's narrative of the circumstances of the first entrance of the Gospel among the Gentiles, "they glorified God" for his goodness in "granting repentance unto life" to those whom they had before considered as abandoned to hopeless perdition. As to numbers, there was, indeed, as yet, but little to boast of; one family only had been gathered into the Church; but they viewed this as the first-fruits of a glorious harvest. Their eyes were now opened on a new field of labour. Their commission, they now perceived, instead of being confined to the small nation of the

Jews, was co-extensive with the world. By this interesting fact, their views of their future work and success must have been exceedingly enlarged. It is not wonderful, therefore, that with one voice, and with one accord, they gave praise unto God, whose goodness and grace appeared so glorious, in granting repentance unto life to the Gentiles. And here I would observe, that the situation of the Christian Church now is, in some respects, analogous to that of the infant Apostolic Church, at the time when this event took place. It will, therefore, be worth our while to spend a few moments in surveying more particularly some of the reasons which demand the fervent gratitude of every Christian and of every philanthropist, arising out of the recent Missionary operations of the Church.

And, first, it is a solid ground for thanksgiving, that the friends of Zion have been awaked from their long slumber on this subject; and have been, in some measure, made to feel their obligation to send the Gospel to the Heathen. It is truly astonishing that, among so many men of eminent piety as have flourished since the Reformation, so few should have been impressed with the duty of bringing the Heathen to the knowledge of the truth. The great Reformers themselves seem not to have turned their attention seriously to the perishing condition of the world: but it may be pleaded in apology for them, that they had work enough at home; that the obstacles which they met, and the persecutions with which they were pursued, rendered it impossible to concert a plan, or to acquire the necessary resources, for such a work. But their successors cannot be so easily justified; many of whom lived at ease, and enjoyed favourable opportunities of commencing the good work of sending Missionaries to the Heathen: and, especially, it strikes us with surprise, that none were found among the Puritans (a people eminent for piety) willing to carry the glad tidings of salvation to their perishing fellow-men in Heathen lands. When two thousand godly Ministers were at once ejected from their charges by the ruthless hand of tyranny, why did not some of them, yea, many of them, turn their faces to lands covered with Pagan darkness? Numbers of them, it is true, sought an asylum in this wide continent, and brought with them the Gospel in its purity, the light of which we now

enjoy; but, although surrounded by Pagans, few seem to have felt the importance of communicating to them the words of everlasting life. Such men as Eliot and the Mayhews will indeed be remembered by the friends of Missions as long as the world stands; but in the midst of a pious people, and surrounded by faithful Pastors, they stood almost alone in their generation, as the advocates for the Heathen of this country. And, at a later period, the Brainerds, without the hope of an earthly reward, or even the expectation of being noticed in their self-denying work, wore out their lives in fatiguing and arduous labours for the conversion of the savages of America. And although the name of David Brainerd is now known and honoured by many in the four quarters of the world; yet, perhaps, during his life, no Minister in this land pursued his course in greater obscurity, or with less sympathy and encouragement from his brethren.

But let God have all the glory: the scene is now happily changed. The United Brethren set the example of Missionary zeal, patience, and perseverance. The Church of God in Great Britain next felt the sacred impulse; and the most distant shores now see her sons coming to the Heathen, "in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ." Churchmen and Dissenters vie with each other, in holy emulation, to be foremost in extending the knowledge of a Saviour. Other European Christians have not been backward to engage in the glorious work; and none have laboured in this field with more wisdom and success than the little band of Danish Missionaries. America, also, has caught the heaven-enkindled flame; and hereafter her Missionary exertions will form the brightest pages in her eventful history. The spirit of evangelical Missions has, for years, been expanding and diffusing gradually its benign influence through our Churches. Every year witnesses an increase of zeal on this subject, manifested by a more enlarged and active benevolence.

May this leaven still continue to ferment until the whole lump is leavened! A very small portion of the Church is yet aroused to the proper tone of feeling on this subject; but for what God has done for us, we are bound with grateful hearts this day to glorify his name.

Another reason why we should gratefully acknowledge the goodness of God in the review of the Missionary events of the last few years, is the increasing ardour with which a large number of Christians have been inspired. Their pious and benevolent affections have not only been increased in intensity, but have been elevated and enlarged, so as to comprehend in their embrace a much nobler and wider field than before. Formerly, the minds of Christians were occupied altogether with the concerns of their own salvation, and of those immediately around them; and no one seemed to have his heart expanded with a benevolence which took in the whole world: but now the fact is far otherwise. Many have been impressed with a feeling of tender solicitude for the salvation of their brethren of all nations, and these feelings have gone on increasing in depth and expansion until they have prompted some to acts of noble munificence, and others to still more glorious acts of self-denial; so that we now begin to come to some just understanding of the spirit which actuated the primitive disciples of Christ.

Another ground of rejoicing which we have in the retrospect of Missionary transactions is, that men of suitable character have been provided to carry on this enterprise. When foreign Missions were first spoken of in this country, so low and contracted were the views of some of us, that we could scarcely be induced to believe that any persons would be found willing to leave all, to take their lives in their hand, and commit themselves to the mercy of a Heathen population. I can well remember the emotions of surprise excited in the minds of many serious people, when it was announced that the Baptist Missionaries (Carey and his company) had actually sailed for India; and also, afterward, when so many Missionaries left England for the South Sea Islands. But the impression became deeper when it was known that a number of young men in our own land had devoted their lives to the service of God among the Heathen. *Now* such facts have become so common, that they produce little surprise; but *then* it was like a new idea, which, while it startled, enlarged and elevated the mind.

But the point to which our attention should now be turned is the excellent character, appropriate talents, and devoted spirit

of the persons who have undertaken this arduous work. Call into review the Missionaries employed by every Society, and you will not easily find a brighter constellation of worthies. Some of them have been adorned with eminent gifts, as well as endued with large measures of grace, and have made acquisitions in literature which place them on a level with the most learned men of the age; and when we take into consideration the motives by which they were induced to make these attainments, they deserve a rank far more elevated than that to which mere literary men can ascend. The character of the Missionaries of the present day has not yet been justly appreciated: by future generations they will be more highly honoured, both on account of their learning, and their benevolent labours.

The Missionary enterprise is in itself so noble and benevolent, that when the mind of any man is fully occupied with it, it elevates not only his moral, but intellectual, character many degrees above the point to which it could have arisen in any other pursuit. Is it not a fact that some of our Missionaries, who, if they had remained at home, would never have risen above mediocrity, have manifested a wisdom and energy in their character which may be justly termed extraordinary? In composition, few writers of the present day excel some of them in those qualities which are characteristic of a truly good style. But it should not be thought strange that the prosecution of an enterprise so great and benevolent should elevate the character and impart unusual vigour to the intellectual faculties; for it is a principle of our constitution that the mind receives its cast and complexion from the objects with which it is conversant, and from the pursuits in which it is engaged.

It also affords good ground for joy and thanksgiving that there has arisen no discord among the friends of foreign Missions, to distract their counsels, and paralyse their efforts. Both in Europe and America, the utmost harmony has prevailed among those, however different in denomination, who have been engaged in the Missionary operations of the day. The little, narrow feeling of party and sect, which has on other occasions operated so banefully, has had no influence here. The Missionaries, attached to different Societies, and belonging to different denominations, meet in foreign lands as brethren of the

same family. They feel that they are labouring in the same cause, and serving the same glorious Master. With hearty good-will, and mutual confidence, they are accustomed to counsel and assist one another in the prosecution of their arduous work. Nowhere upon earth does the genuine spirit of catholicism more prevail than among Missionaries, and the ardent friends of Missions.

While it is convenient for the several ecclesiastical bodies, respectively, to devise their own Missionary plans, and superintend their operation, there is no ground for jealousy or suspicion; and there should be no provocation of one another, except to "love and good works." The field is wide enough, and the work ample enough, for all; and, under existing circumstances, they can bring forth their resources more effectually than if they were all united in one body. And it should be felt, and I trust is felt, that the success of one Society is the success of all. For the same reasons, there should exist no feeling of rivalry between home and foreign Missions. The cause of both is the same, and the love of Christ and his kingdom is the impelling motive of both in their various operations. Let, then, this brotherly love continue, and this harmony ever prevail. In that moment in which Missionary Societies begin to contend with each other for influence and pre-eminence, in that same moment it will be manifest that the true spirit of Missions has departed. And whoever shall have any agency in enkindling discord among the friends of this blessed work, will be guilty of a great offence; and wo to him by whom such an offence shall come. But it cannot, it must not, be that the progress of this work of God should be retarded or hindered by the petty jealousies of its professed friends. A better spirit prevails; and will, I trust, more and more prevail, until all our sectarian distinctions shall be melted into the complete "unity of the spirit;" when all the servants of God "shall see eye to eye," and the bond of union shall be TRUTH, PEACE, and CHARITY.

The only other cause of praise to God which I shall mention at this time is, that so many benighted Heathen have already been enlightened with the rays of divine truth; and that there is a cheering prospect that the light which has been enkindled

in Heathen lands will be diffusive; and that the knowledge of Christ, now received by many, will be handed down to their posterity, to the most distant ages. The success of the Gospel among the Heathen in our day, considering the small number of Missionaries employed, and the formidable obstacles which stood in the way, is truly wonderful. In the islands of the great sea the word of the Lord has indeed had free course, and is glorified. In Africa, Hindostan, Ceylon, and even among the Burmese, there are converts to Christianity; in opening, softening, and sanctifying whose savage hearts, the power of God has been manifested as remarkably as in the days of the Apostles. Nor should we overlook the numerous instances of sound conversion, evidenced by a holy life, which have occurred among the wandering tribes of our own forests. Of these, some have already finished their earthly course, and, in dying as well as living, have proved the efficacy of Gospel grace to support and comfort the soul in the most trying circumstances. Who, that knows the value of one immortal being, will not rejoice and glorify God for his unspeakable mercy, in granting repentance unto life to so many perishing Heathen? These fruits are the product of the humble and painful labours of your Missionaries; but they are not the harvest; they are merely the first-fruits. The precious seed which has been sown shall not be lost; it will hereafter spring up abundantly, and gladden the hearts of all who love Zion, and pray for her prosperity.

The past success of Missionary labours ought not to be estimated so much by the actual number of converts, as by the *preparation* made for future and more extended operations. The holy Scriptures have, by the diligence and learning of Missionaries, been translated into many different languages; and are now in the progress of wide and rapid circulation. Tribes, destitute of a written language before they were visited by your Missionaries, have been taught to read, and already begin to peruse the wonderful works of God, recorded in the Bible, in their respective tongues. Thousands of Heathen children are now collected in schools, through the assiduous labours of Missionaries, and are daily taught lessons out of the lively oracles. Native teachers have been raised up in many places, and are now engaged in proclaiming a crucified Saviour

to their deluded countrymen. Surely, these are not the effects of mere human exertion; but God has been with his faithful servants. He has, in much mercy, bowed his heavens and come down, to aid and bless their labours; and has, through their instrumentality, "granted repentance unto life to the Gentiles." They have received the same spirit of faith and obedience which is given unto us; and now rejoice in the name of Jesus, as we do; and place all their confidence in his atoning blood. Have we not reason, then, to exult? and ought we not, without ceasing, to praise and glorify the name of God, the Maker of heaven and earth?

III. In conclusion, I would say, that, having so much cause of thanksgiving from a retrospect of the past, it behoves us to be animated with renewed zeal and courage in the further prosecution of this great work. The way of the Lord is made ready, even a highway for our God. The most appalling difficulties have been encountered and overcome; Jordan is already passed, and the land of promise lies before us; while behind, there is nothing but a barren wilderness. The Macedonian cry, "*Come over, and help us,*" is heard from a thousand tongues. Your Missionaries most earnestly beseech you to send them aid: not because they are weary of their work, but because the harvest is too great for them to reap. Their most painful feelings arise from their inability to satisfy all the the importunate demands made upon them for instruction. Only cast your eyes on the Sandwich Islands; behold the ardour with which knowledge is there sought, by the high and low, by Princes and people, by the old and the young. Methinks I see the withered hands of the aged, stretched out to us in earnest entreaties that we should send some to teach them the way of salvation before they sink into the grave, shrouded in all the darkness of Heathenism. The multitudes of dear children, who are pressing into your schools, and the half of whom cannot be accommodated, seem to send across the wide waves of the ocean a piercing cry for more Missionaries, more Teachers, more books. And while this is the condition of a part of the Heathen world, of which we, as a Society, have taken solemn charge as our own peculiar field of labour, shall we be contented with what has already been done?

How can we be at ease, or suffer this subject of powerful interest to pass away from our thoughts, for a single hour? An individual cannot do much, but the combined efforts of many can accomplish all that is wanted, so far as relates to funds. Now is the time for the wealthy to invest their money to the best advantage. Now they have a precious opportunity of making to themselves friends, by means of the unrighteous mammon. Now, the man whose heart deviseth liberal things, may make such an appropriation of his riches as will produce a blessed gain to many and to himself through eternity. Why have we not at least a hundred Missionaries in the Sandwich Islands? Are they not needed? No one can dispute it. Are there no more pious men and women who are willing to devote themselves to this service? Doubtless there are hundreds, willing to go, who might be useful in that field; if not as public Preachers, yet as teachers of youth. What, then, is the obstacle? I am ashamed to mention it. It is the want of adequate funds. Will future generations credit the account? Will it be believed that one-thousandth part of the sum spent by serious Christians in acknowledged superfluities, was sufficient to support all the Missions in the world; and yet that it was found impossible to induce them to consecrate this small portion of the goods which God gave them, to the honour of his name, for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, and for the salvation of immortal souls? How they who owe themselves to the Lord Jesus, and who have been bought with the price of his invaluable blood, can withhold anything which his cause needs, we cannot understand. Dear brethren, if you ever mean to act with zeal and energy in this work, now is your time. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; it is, therefore, high time to awake out of sleep. Some of us will soon have made an end to all our earthly labours. Perhaps, before another meeting of this Board, some of its present members will have been called to give up the account of their stewardship. If we have any remaining duty to perform, in aid of foreign Missions, let us address ourselves to the work without delay. Since our last annual meeting, this Board has been deprived by death of three of its venerated members; * one of

* The Hon. John Jay, Hon. John Hooker, and the Rev. John Chester, D.D.

whom was among the youngest of our number; and it deserves to be remembered, that we are now met in the house in which our amiable, enterprising, and accomplished brother was wont to lift up his voice in the compassionate warning of sinners, and in preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ. May each of us who survive be ready to welcome our summons to another world, if we should be called away before the expiration of another year.

But, my beloved brethren, while we live, let us be found diligently and faithfully engaged in our Master's work. Let us gird up our loins, and be found watching and labouring when our Lord shall come. And those of you who have wealth to account for when you stand before the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ, make, I beseech you, that disposal of it which you have reason to believe would be pleasing in his sight. If any of you are meditating in your hearts to offer something to the Lord, in a way in which it may be beneficial to the cause of Christ; remember, I entreat you, the hundreds of millions who are perishing for want of the bread of life. Defer not the execution of your pious and benevolent purpose until you shall be under the necessity of resigning everything into other hands. Testamentary charities are useful; but they are often suspicious as to their motive. It is giving when we can enjoy our property no longer, and when it can scarcely be called our own. What proportion of their property or their income Christians should devote to the peculiar service of God, we presume not to prescribe. Let every one consult the suggestions and promptings of his own benevolent feelings, "and as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; for the Lord loveth a cheerful giver." The temple of God was reared of old only by freewill offerings, and the spiritual temple must now rise in the same way. We present no motives to provoke you to liberality, but such as are truly Christian. But we will say, that they will be blessed indeed, to whom shall be granted such love to Christ, and such benevolence to men, that they will cheerfully offer, not merely a part, but *the whole* of what they possess, for the furtherance of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the conversion of the world. And this would not be a new thing under the sun; for in primitive times many, out of love to Christ, gave up all their

possessions, that they might serve him more entirely. And let those of us who have neither silver nor gold to give, be careful to bestow such things as we have; and which may be much more precious than worldly treasure. Especially, let us be mindful to pray for the prosperity of Zion, and the peace of Jerusalem; and give no rest to our covenant-keeping God, until he has fully given to his Son "the Heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." The fervent, inwrought, united, persevering prayers of the true Israel of God, shall at last be the effectual means of accomplishing the great object which we seek to promote, and which Jehovah has so repeatedly promised to his Church, in the latter days.

DISCOURSE XIV.

THE GOSPEL HARVEST, AND CHRISTIAN'S DUTY.*

BY THE REV. THOMAS DE WITT, D.D.,

NEW YORK.

LUKE X. 2.

"Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest."

THE history of the world, in all ages, exhibits the extended prevalence of ignorance and error, of sin and misery. The mind of the philanthropist feels oppressed with the contemplation, and naturally inquires, Shall this state of things always continue? Will the time never arrive when truth, and holiness, and peace shall pervade the earth? Philosophy, falsely so called, has speculated on the perfectibility of human nature, while, in infidel

* Preached at Boston, before the American Board of Foreign Missions, 1830.

rejection of truths the most simple and sacred, she has ministered, by her spirit and her instructions, to the pride and corruption of our nature. The legitimate fruit of her theories and of her practical influence, appeared in that harvest of pollution and woe which is still vivid in the remembrance of many. The humble Christian, whatever may be for the present his griefs and disappointments, cherishes the confidence that a brighter scene will yet be unfolded through the world; a scene of blissful reality, succeeding the darkness and depravity which now abound. He believes that this will be accomplished through the word of divine truth. He believes this, because this truth is precisely adapted to the state and wants of human nature, as it unfolds the true character of God and man, reveals the way of salvation, prescribes a perfect rule of duty, and is accompanied by an influence adequate to subdue the heart and life to holy obedience. He believes this, because numerous instances are presented of its efficacy in renovating the heart and character, and thus becoming the "wisdom and power of God unto salvation." He believes this, in view of the numerous and emphatic promises of Him who is infinitely true and faithful. Promises like the following remain to be fulfilled, and claim and deserve the Christian's faith and hope:—"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." "For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering." "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." The Christian believes this, because the Redeemer, for his obedience unto death, is promised "the Heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." Jesus now sees of the travail of his soul, in the victories of his grace among men; and the full fruit of that travail will be enjoyed when the earth shall be rendered

tributary to his glory, and filled with his salvation. For this purpose, exalted as Mediator, he has authority in heaven and on earth, and rules in the kingdom of providence, as well as grace, rendering all events subservient to the fulfilment of his counsels, and to the final and universal diffusion of his kingdom, which is "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." The ministry of the Gospel is the great instrument for accomplishing these results. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." "The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion; rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. And he gave some, Apostles; and some, Prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." In organizing his Church he has committed (if we may so speak) into her own bosom the principle of her perpetuity and universal triumph. From the faithful discharge of the trust committed to her, under the blessing of God, stability and enlargement will assuredly result. The words of our text were spoken by Jesus to his disciples, as he contemplated the multitudes destitute of the means of religious instruction. "He was moved with compassion on them because they fainted, and were as sheep without a shepherd." The compassion that dwelt in the heart of Jesus is not foreign to the hearts of his people, for they are of one spirit with him. The text,

I. PRESENTS AN ARGUMENT FOR MISSIONARY EFFORTS. "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few."

II. URGES A DUTY IN REFERENCE TO THEM. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest."

I. An argument for Missionary efforts. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few." This harvest will be gathered when the Christian religion shall universally prevail. It is well denominated GREAT in view of,

1. *The field which it will cover.*
2. *The blessings it conveys.*
3. *The instrumentality it requires.*
4. *The means and prospect now furnished by Providence.*

1. It is GREAT *in view of the field which it will cover.* "The field is the world." As yet, Christianity has extended its

influence to but a small part of the earth; and where that influence has been found, it has been partial in its character. Here and there a spot has appeared in some degree verdant, amid a surrounding, wide-spread, arid desert. But this desert in all its extent will be cultivated and rendered fruitful. All obstacles will be overcome, and the whole earth exhibit the triumphs of truth. Benighted, degraded, and oppressed Africa shall become enlightened, elevated, and disenthralled; the wall of China (like that of Jericho) shall fall at the sound of the Gospel; the castes of the Hindoos shall be broken, and one bond in the faith and service of Christ shall unite them; the Heathen shall everywhere cast their idols to the moles and to the bats, and worship the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent; the worship of the false Prophet shall cease, and the pure light and peaceful influence of Christianity shall spread over the regions where now Mohammedism exerts its sway; the isles shall receive the law of the Lord; all the perversions of the religion of Jesus shall be removed, and the truth shall be received in love, and exhibit its fruits wherever professed. Then shall be realized

“Scenes far surpassing fable, yet all true!
Scenes of accomplish'd bliss!”

2. The harvest is GREAT *in view of its many blessings*. The religion of Christ blesses the life which now is, and prepares for happiness in the life to come. It exalts the intellectual character of man. It restores that balance and harmony in the intellectual and moral powers of man, which are so important in the proper cultivation of both. It corrects those prejudices, and subdues those corruptions, which prevent the investigation and reception of truth. Its truths, when rightly viewed, come home to the duty, interest, and affections of all; and claim, among the many proofs of their divine origin, their wonderful adaptation to the character and wants of men. It was at first a peculiar distinction of the Gospel, that it was “preached to the poor,” and it will ever remain so; while it is the only source of spiritual instruction, and can alone instil that influence which will lead to mental cultivation in the mass of the people. Where the Gospel is not known or embraced, whatever intellectual

culture may exist among a privileged few, the multitude will be found in ignorance and degradation. The spirit of Christianity has wrought itself into the frame of civil government, and in connexion with the diffusion of its light and power, we trace the existence, growth, and stability of civil and religious liberty. The religion of the Gospel refines and purifies the social affections, hallows the domestic scene, and while it dries up the sources of defilement and bitterness, it opens springs of pure and refreshing peace and joy in the various relations of life. Take the map of the world, and select those countries where Paganism, Mohammedism, and Popery bear sway, and let the following inquiries receive an answer. Are knowledge and intellectual cultivation generally diffused? Are civil and religious liberty enjoyed? Is the female character elevated and respected? Are the duties of domestic life discharged, and its delights mutually participated? Do purity and peace pervade the community? The negative to these inquiries appears in full view. As we take the contrast, and mark the countries where the Bible has shed its influence, we discover the blessings adverted to all following in the train.

But the religion of Christ sustains its distinguishing and commanding value as a revelation of truth and grace, and as the great instrument of our deliverance from everlasting death. The truths peculiar to it respect man's fallen and ruined state; redemption through the atoning merits of the divine Saviour; the regenerating and sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit in restoring to that holiness "without which no man shall see the Lord." These truths, and others immediately connected with them, constitute the vitality of the religion of the Gospel. Without them its glory departs, its influence ceases, and spiritual death continues to prevail. Under their influence the sinner, awakened and renewed, returns in penitence to his God; gratefully embraces the salvation which is in Christ Jesus; takes up feebly, yet sweetly, the song of redeeming love; cultivates purity of heart and life; and devotes himself, in reliance upon divine strength, to active exertions for the promotion of the divine glory, and the best interests of his fellow-men. These are the truths which give life to benevolent effort in seeking the spiritual and eternal welfare of men. When they are not cor-

dially embraced, the wants of men as sinners, and the value of the remedy provided, cannot be duly estimated; and an awakened interest, and cordial and efficient co-operation in the cause of Missions cannot be expected. The history of the Church clearly shows, that whenever they have been denied or kept out of sight, there has been an indifference to the spiritual wants and interests of men, and the cause of Missions has languished or died. In the first age of Christianity, the doctrine of Jesus Christ and him crucified, "to the Jew a stumbling-block, and to the Greek foolishness," proved the wisdom of God, and the power of God, to salvation, to every one that believed; and so it has proved in every age. In recent Missions we find the value and efficacy of these truths witnessed by their success in elevating character, promoting order and happiness, and preparing sinners for heaven. The lapse of a few years has exhibited in the South Sea Islands, the seat of British and American Foreign Missions, a very signal and convincing contrast in the state of knowledge, social and civil order, domestic purity and happiness, and true religion. The wisdom of the world reiterates the assertion, that it is vain to attempt to Christianize, unless we first civilize, Pagan nations; that it is vain to expect their religious improvement, unless some steps are previously gained in the process of mental culture. Facts refute this theory of infidel wisdom, and evince that Christianity, while it inspires the only pure and abiding principle of benevolent effort, at the same time alone furnishes the truths which come home to the hearts and consciences of men in all ages, ranks, circumstances, and characters of life. Divine truth, imparted by Christian Missions, has proved the great instrument of mental and moral as well as spiritual culture. The Moravian brethren, as if studious to select a field most fitted to test this point, chose nations most debased in ignorance, superstition, and pollution; and the result of their labours has furnished decisive evidence in this matter. This lovely band of believers have furnished an example worthy of imitation by the whole Christian world. In the smallness of their number, and the feebleness of their resources, they have gone forth, in the love of Christ, disregarding toils and sacrifices, and in unwearied devotion to their work, delivering the Gospel message in all its simplicity and

purity. In every place fruit has sprung up, honouring God and blessing man. Had a similar spirit prevailed throughout the Christian Church, and a correspondent amount of contributions and efforts been furnished, a far different aspect would have been presented. Many a field now desolate would have blossomed as the rose; and many a place now solitary would have been made glad. The spirit of the world, whether directed in the form of commercial enterprise, literary research, or projects of ambition, can never furnish the proper stimulus to benevolent effort. Commerce and science can never supply the proper means for curing the moral diseases and woes of men dwelling in darkness and sin. Philosophy ministers her lessons in vain, and employs her efforts without effect. She may irritate, but cannot cure, the wound. "Leviathan is not so tamed."

When the truth of God comes with power from on high, it proves "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart;" sets men free from the bondage of error and corruption, and places them in the liberty of truth and holiness. To learn the greatness of the harvest, in the value of its blessings, we should contemplate its temporal gain, in the contrast of the ignorance, error, pollution, vice, and misery which it removes, with the knowledge, purity, peace, and happiness which it introduces through all the relations and conditions of life. And we should contemplate its eternal gain, in the contrast of the everlasting loss of the soul in ever-enduring corruption and woe, under the wrath of God, with its everlasting life to the pardoned, sanctified, and saved. When the whole earth becomes filled with divine truth, great will be the harvest in the magnitude of the blessings thus secured.

3. The harvest must appear GREAT, *in view of the instrumentality it requires.* The great result is to be accomplished by the faithful use of those means which God has in his wisdom and goodness appointed. As, in the natural world, means must be used in preparation for harvest, and as, ordinarily, the product will correspond to the skill and diligence with which the means are employed; so, also, in the spiritual world, means are equally necessary, and a like correspondence in the product will exist. "It pleases God, by the foolishness of preaching, to

save them that believe." "How shall they hear without a Preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?" God will, indeed, as the latter-day glory advances, open more numerous avenues, and multiply facilities for Missionary labours, and will more abundantly bless them in the outpouring of his Spirit. But, at the same time, he will shed forth his Spirit into the bosom of his Church, and arouse her energies for promoting the work of the Lord, by all the means within her province. Zion strengthens her stakes, and lengthens her cords, at the same time. When the glory of the Lord rises upon her, she arises out of the dust, puts on her beautiful garments, and goes forth in his strength, and receives abundant increase. The necessity of a ministry well qualified in mental, literary, and spiritual endowments, thoroughly trained to become teachers and guides to the flock of Christ, and to resist the assaults of every foe, whether secret or open, is evident. The character of the ministry, in the combination of the requisite qualifications for the skilful, successful, and devoted discharge of their work, should be equally the subject of anxious prayer and diligent attention with the increase of their number. A weak, undisciplined ministry may do injury, as well as an unsanctified one. The opinion may sometimes have been entertained and expressed, that the same qualifications are not required in the Missionary going among the ignorant and degraded Heathen, as in the Pastor of a Christian flock, intelligent and refined. The opinion is very erroneous. If, indeed, a distinction is allowed, surely the higher requirements are in the case of the Missionary. Unaided by the associations and advantages which the Minister enjoys in Christian society, he goes forth to build, not upon another man's foundation, but as a master-builder, to lay the foundation. What a combination of qualities are requisite for such labourers; sound, disciplined intellect, various knowledge, elevated piety, and much acquaintance with human nature; uniform meekness, unwavering courage, and unremitted devotion to his labours of love.

In advancing the kingdom of Christ, the prejudices, interests, and policy of the world rise in opposition. In what various forms, and with what power, have they hitherto appeared! What is not required in those who go forth to meet the foe,

and fight for the cause of truth and holiness, with weapons which are not "carnal, but mighty through God!" How plainly do we behold verified, in the condition of the world, our Saviour's declaration, "The labourers are few!" In our own favoured country, while, as we hope, a new spirit and new efforts are appearing in the Church, still what exertions are needed to provide and train a supply of Ministers adequate to meet the wants of our waste places, our weak and destitute Churches, and our rapidly extending population! We cordially greet the efforts employed for increasing the number and qualifications of Ministers. And we call upon the Churches for redoubled zeal and activity; for "the harvest is still great, but the labourers are few." We look over the regions of Christendom, and mark its many and extended wastes and wants. The labourers are manifestly "few." As we look farther through the Heathen world, how large and waste is the field! while, in parts remote from each other, a solitary labourer is found. The regularly ordained Missionaries from the different Christian denominations, among the six hundred millions of Heathen in different parts of the world, as far as ascertained, amount to about nine hundred and fifty. They are in some cases aided by assistants and native teachers. Still how emphatically is the harvest great, and the labourers few; while some parts of the field are already white for the harvest!

4. The harvest is GREAT, *in view of the means and prospects furnished by Providence.* God, in advancing his kingdom on earth, prepares the way, in arranging the events of his providence. He raises up instruments qualified for his work, and often opens the way before them, as they go forth crying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." When the disciples were assembled, on the day of Pentecost, waiting for the promise of the Spirit, they were endued with power from on high, and the gift of tongues rested upon them. They went forth, working miracles as a proof of their divine commission, at the introduction of the new dispensation; and with the gift of tongues fulfilling the Saviour's injunction when ascending on high, "Go ye, and preach the Gospel to every creature." How well was this adapted to the times and circumstances in which the Apostles

were placed. When, in subsequent ages, the fine gold had become dim, and the glory had departed; when religion had become united with the power and policy of State, and converted into an engine of despotism; when the Bible was confined to a few, and the maxim was enforced, "Ignorance is the mother of devotion;" when thick darkness had for centuries brooded over the nations; it pleased God signally to prepare the way for the Reformation. The art of printing had been invented; the mariner's compass was in use; the revival of letters had commenced. Luther translated the Bible into German, saying, "Let there be light!" and the press multiplied its copies. The struggle of the Reformation was in a great measure to recover Christianity from human usurpation, and to restore it to its rightful Lord. The revival of letters furnished means for elucidating the word of God, and clearing it from corruptions. In succeeding times the reformed Churches fell into a deep slumber. While they "slept, the enemy sowed tares." We well remember how plenteously they sprang up. Infidelity presented a bold front, and threatened to destroy everything sacred. In such troublous times the true people of God were revived in spirit; and, as they trembled for the ark, mourned over the sins and woes of Zion, poured forth their intercessions, and said to each other, "Let us rise and build;" the pool which had become stagnant was stirred by the Angel of the covenant, and afforded a refreshing and vivifying influence. When reviewing the last forty years, we acknowledge with admiring gratitude the various institutions of Christian benevolence which are now in harmonious operation, exerting a mighty moral influence, and furnishing facilities and means to Missionaries before unknown. The Bible Society multiplies copies of the Scriptures in the various languages of the world, and supplies the place of the gift of tongues. It is needless to specify the various forms of Christian charity which, commencing with infancy, lays the basis of a scriptural and religious education, and follows man in every course and state of life, and seeks to apply the best relief of sin, and want, and woe.

The efforts of the present day for arresting and turning back that fell destroyer, intemperance, which has annually slain its

thousands and tens of thousands, and which has interposed such formidable obstacles to the success of the Gospel, are of incalculable worth.

The spirit of Missions, which characterizes the present period, commenced with the revival of religion in the Churches. Domestic and foreign Missions have grown and strengthened in connexion with the power of religion. The era of foreign efforts is identified with the prosperity of religion at home.

The events which have recently transpired, mark the present as an interesting crisis in the history of the world. The Christian will with care study the page of prophecy, and the movements of Providence, and mark the light which they mutually shed on each other. Though humbly conscious that it is not for him "to know the times and the seasons, which are in the Father's hand," he will carefully watch the signs of the times, and discharge the duties to which Providence invites. By common consent it is universally admitted that the prophetic period of twelve hundred and sixty years is drawing to its close, preceding the universal prevalence of Christ's kingdom in the world. Meanwhile, momentous and interesting events must transpire in the civil and ecclesiastical world; and far mightier efforts must be employed by the Church. Do we not now perceive the high and holy One shaking "not the earth only, but also heaven; that by the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, those things that cannot be shaken may remain?" The Mohammedan power is declining, and "the waters of the Euphrates are drying up." The Christian colonies on the coast of Africa furnish a presage of the entire extinction of one of the foulest blots on Christendom, the slave-trade, and the regeneration of long-afflicted and degraded Africa. Papal institutions and governments, which have pressed heavily upon the interests of civil and religious liberty, are also shaken. Literature, science, and true religion are extending their benign influence. The angel is flying in the midst of heaven, with the everlasting Gospel. God is giving proof that his word "shall not return void." The voice of Providence, then, is, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." Such is the harvest, great in the extent of its field, in the blessings it conveys, in

the instrumentality it requires, and in the means and prospects furnished by Providence.

II. The text urges our duty in relation to Missionary efforts. "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."

The spirit of the Christian is that of love to Christ and to Zion; his life is in sincere and unreserved devotion to his Saviour's glory and Zion's prosperity. Prayer is his vital breath. In proportion as his own soul prospers will intercession constitute a leading part in his addresses to the throne of grace. It should never escape our remembrance, that of the six petitions in the summary of prayer furnished us by our Saviour, three respect the display of his glory and the extension of his kingdom on earth. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee." The discharge of the duty enjoined by our Saviour supposes,

1. *That we cherish a deep and constant sense of our dependence upon divine grace.* The private Christian, in the divine life, is "clothed with humility," lives a life of faith in the Son of God, and seeks continued supplies of the grace and help of the Spirit. So the Christian Church should always be found in the attitude of leaning on her Beloved, and should realize that "all her springs are in God." "The treasure is in earthen vessels; the excellency of the power is of God." When this sense of dependence has been lost, and yielded to self-complacency and self-confidence, how often has it proved that the very instrumentality which should have promoted the purity and growth of religion has tended to its corruption and decline! How many places, once beautiful, are now desolate! They said they were enriched with goods; and they were poor. As we contemplate the spiritual building, whose base is to cover the earth, and whose top shall reach the heavens, and look forward to the time when the top-stone shall be laid, with shouting, "Grace, grace unto it; and at the same time consider the difficulties that attend the work, the weakness of the instruments employed, and the malice and power of opposing foes, we are ready to ask, How can this be? A voice from heaven speaks: "Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain. Not by might, nor by power, but by my

Spirit." Is there not danger, lest, in the midst of action, the Church should forget the proper spring of action? Where will be the glory and value of the tabernacle, if the ark of the covenant is removed?

2. *This duty requires habitual and fervent remembrance in our private devotions.* Love to the Redeemer's cause is not a transient emotion in the Christian heart; but it is a fixed principle and growing habit of the soul. "He prefers Jerusalem above his chief joy." He should, then, be frequent, fervent, importunate, and persevering in his intercession. Do we not greatly fail in this point? How often is Zion forgotten, or remembered only with coldness? In this we may find a test of our spiritual state. In asking for personal blessings, our deceitful hearts may betray us. When, in freeness and enlargement of spirit, we seek the good of Zion, we have the best proof that we are born from above. O, that from the closets and habitations of the righteous the smoke of incense, in fervent, effectual prayer, may continually ascend before the mercy-seat, as a sweet-smelling savour unto the Lord!

3. *This duty requires union in Christians.* Addressing his assembled disciples, Jesus said, "Pray ye." The true disciples of Jesus are united in spirit and service. The words of our Saviour's prayer are memorable: "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be *one* in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." What Christian can be reluctant to engage in a service so delightful and animating as united prayer for the coming of Christ's kingdom on earth? Who will not say, "I will go also?" The monthly concert, observed by various evangelical denominations, is greatly to be valued. Were it to inspire a deeper interest, and meet with a more general, punctual, and appropriate attendance, the fruits thereof would be manifest in our own bosom, and be seen spread around us. The first suggestion of a concert similar to this was made to the American Churches by one (President Edwards) who, "being dead, yet speaketh," in the fruit of his labours, and in his writings transmitted to us, and who possessed the rare combination of the acutest and most vigorous intellect, with the most simple and tender piety. His treatise on this subject deserves most careful perusal. On

the day of Pentecost the disciples were with one accord in one place, continuing in prayer and supplication. It was there that the Holy Spirit descended upon them, and they went forth and preached the Gospel of the kingdom. The same truth which they preached is committed to us; the same Spirit which descended on them, and crowned their labours, is promised. Fervent prayer will lead to corresponding effort; united prayer will lead to united effort. Among those who embrace the same fundamental truths, which humble the sinner, exalt the Saviour, and promote holiness, there exists a diversity in smaller points which properly leads to distinct organization. Here harmony is best promoted, and strength gained, by each cherishing a sacred regard to the rights and interests of others, and rejoicing in their prosperity. It is remarked by Montgomery, that the efforts of distinct denominations, in promoting the cause of religion, are like the light of the sun reflected in the rainbow, a token of peace and salvation to a lost world, while their common exertions are like the rays blended in light. While faithful in improving their particular spheres, there is a common cause in which all the servants of Christ should join: the cause of truth and righteousness, against error and sin. When tempted by the pride of opinion, in matters comparatively unimportant, or by the clashing of selfish interests, let us, found labouring with the host of Israel, say, "I cannot come down; I am doing a great work."

4. *This duty requires the use of all proper means for suitably training labourers for the Missionary field.* A suggestion has been advanced, as to the expediency of instituting a seminary, or a distinct department, especially designed for this object. It is worthy of serious consideration. It is believed that such a seminary would not only furnish greater advantages to its members, but that it would more directly and distinctly bring the cause of foreign Missions before the Christian public, and inspire a deeper interest in its favour. In our favoured Churches, where the Spirit's influence is enjoyed, let the subject of foreign Missions be presented in just prominence. In our theological seminaries, let a careful inquiry and deep interest be cultivated and cherished among their members, who shall go forth to preside in the Churches of our own land, to give a tone

to their sentiments and feelings, or else to enter themselves upon the glorious work.

5. *This duty requires that all the Churches of Christ should systematically and efficiently aid in the promotion of the cause of Missions.* It cannot be necessary to argue the duty of professed Christians to give their prayers, their property, and labours to this cause. The Christian judgment needs not to be convinced, but the Christian conscience needs to be awaked, and the heart affected. Christians should learn to give, not from the impulse of momentary excitement, but from the deliberate conviction of duty, in the discharge of which the heart seeks its highest joy. Systematically, I say, because it is to be regretted that so many Churches so readily relax their efforts, until some new impulse be given, which again soon spends itself. These are like the mountain streams, fed by sudden showers, which soon pass away. The efforts and contributions made by the enlightened judgment and disciplined heart are like the majestic river, fed by living springs, which heeds not the drought of summer, but passes on, widening and deepening. It is the genuine spirit of religion to prize and promote foreign Missions; and every proper effort to promote them advances religion at home. It is here true, as in other things, "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth." "He that watereth shall be watered himself." And, on the other hand, "There is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty." Where the Churches are blessed with the Spirit's influence, cherishing the graces of the pious, and converting sinners to Christ, there will be found free-will offerings brought liberally, cheerfully, and continually, in behalf of this cause. Look, on the other hand, to the Churches indifferent to this cause, and neglectful of duty: there mildew and blasting spread, and spiritual barrenness reigns. When the Churches of Christ shall harmoniously exert their energies, what, under the divine blessing, may not be accomplished?

We have reason to acknowledge, at this returning anniversary, the continued favour of Providence toward this Board of Foreign Missions. Twenty years have elapsed since its organization. The circumstance of a few pious youths devoting themselves to Missions among the Heathen led to its formation. It has exerted a most salutary influence on the internal state of our

Churches; and its continued prosperity stands identified with the glory of the Church, and the welfare of our nation. If there be a nation on earth more indebted to the Gospel than all others, it is ours; and shall we not testify our gratitude by contributing to extend its blessings to other nations? Everything in our history and circumstances reminds us of the invaluable privileges and mercies handed down by our ancestors, the Puritan pilgrims and others; and the responsibility resting upon us. One theme of regret, however, presents itself, in the very considerable deficiency in the revenue of this year, compared with that of last year, while new Missionary fields are opening. The march of Christian charity and munificence should be ever onward. Let every Pastor present the claims of this cause prominently before the people, and feel that its prosperity is identified with the success of his labours at home. Let information be generally extended, and every means to excite interest and combine effort be employed. While in opposing the march of truth, various errors and conflicting interests combine, let the Church of God arise in her strength, and in unbroken columns march onward under the banners of the great Captain, from victory to victory. While the enemy opposes and rages, we remember, "More are they that are for us, than they that are against us." God's truth is great, and must finally triumph.

DISCOURSE XV.

HUMAN AGENCY IN THE EVANGELIZATION
OF THE WORLD.*

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR H. P. TAPPAN,

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Acts viii. 30, 31.

“Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me?”

FOUR thousand years passed away after the fall of Adam before Jesus Christ appeared in our world. Why was his coming so long delayed? During this long period the oracles of God were confined to one small nation, shut up within the mountain fastnesses of Palestine. Why were they not published universally? Eighteen hundred years have passed away since the advent of Jesus Christ: during this period gross darkness has not only overspread the greater part of the nations, but also the nominal and visible Christian Church; at the present day two-thirds of our race remain unevangelized; and even the so-called Christian nations are not governed by Christian principles; and, what is still more sad and remarkable, the congregations and Churches organized, and stately meeting for Christian worship, are, and profess to be, but in part converted to the spiritual dominion of Christ. Since God is omnipotent, and so benevolent as to be called “Love” itself, why has he not expelled darkness and sin from the earth, and given a universal and complete triumph to the religion of the cross? If it be said that God has entrusted the work of evangelizing the nations to human agents, and they have proved unfaithful, then the inquiry arises, Why has he entrusted it to such agents? why have not his benevolence and omnipotence united to speed the work by direct interpositions, or at least by adequate agencies?

* One of the series on the Conversion of the World, delivered in the Central Presbyterian Church, New-York.

There are two answers which may readily be given to these inquiries, according to the spirit in which they are made.

First. If they be made in the spirit of the unfaithful servant who was entrusted with one talent, and refused to turn it to any profit, but went and hid it, because he believed his Lord to be an "austere man," and unjust in his requirements; then we may reply, "Out of thine own mouth" art thou answered and judged.

The facts which give rise to these inquiries, are facts which all alike admit; nay, they are facts which, if they involve difficulties, involve them in relation to natural religion, as well as in relation to Christianity; since natural religion, in affirming the omnipotence and benevolence of God, is also called upon to reconcile these difficulties with the palpable and continued ignorance, sinfulness, and wretchedness of the world. If, then, either in relation to Christianity or to natural religion, you are disposed to regard the Almighty as an austere being, and if you deem that he might have made a better world than the one in which he has placed us, or might have more speedily relieved it of the evils which oppress it, and that infinite benevolence must stand committed to such ends and endeavours; remember that the world is as it is, and that all speculations of this nature, and all murmurings against the constituted order of things, will not alter them in the least degree; and that therefore the wisest course, on your own principles, will be to propitiate, in the best way you can, the favour of this infinite and dreaded Being; to discharge most exactly and perseveringly those duties of truth, mercy, and justice which he imperatively demands, and which are seconded by your own conscience; and especially if, notwithstanding all that may appear irreconcilable with perfect goodness, he has condescended to show to you in particular decisive marks of most gracious favour, it is both prudent and right to embrace these with an earnest and faithful heart, and to put them to a wise and reasonable use, that you at least may meet happily an account, to which it is not unjust that you should be called. What if the oracles of God were given anciently only to one small people; you do not live in the ages of this destitution. What if two-thirds of the world be yet without the Gospel; you have the Gospel. What if God do

not, by his omnipotence, at once convert the world, and change the earth into a paradise of sinless and immortal beauty; you have the plain and faithful offer of eternal life made to you, through Jesus Christ; you have the most excellent precepts of duty clearly laid down, and the promise of heavenly and most efficient aids and influences. To become a righteous man is the safest, wisest, and happiest course at all events. To become just such a character as Christ has expounded in his teaching, and exemplified in his life, is a glorious attainment. To devote yourself to those labours of benevolence which the Gospel imposes, will be a wise and useful life; infinitely better than the stale repetition of the pride, foolery, and sensuality of the world. It will be a twofold blessedness: blessing him that gives, and him that takes; it will lead the soul gently and promisingly down to that dark grave which none can escape; and if there be a star of life and immortality, to light up the dark cope of this world's gloom, and to guide us to the heaven we think and dream of, the rest which our wearied spirits long for, it is here; it is here, in the faith and the duties of the Gospel.

Secondly. If the inquirer be a meek and humble spirit, afflicted with suggestions offensive to his piety, then, to such a spirit, a relief will be most readily afforded, by pointing to the actual and indisputable indications of the divine goodness in the benign master-designs of nature, the beautiful movements of a watchful and faithful Providence, and, beyond all, in the mission of the Son of God. Whatever be the difficulties which exist, the goodness which does appear is so vast and peculiar, that it is impossible to reconcile it with malevolence, or even with a divine nature austere and capricious. Besides, if we but view it aright, the very tendency in our minds to represent whatever in the order of the world appears to conflict with perfect goodness as incompatible with the idea of God, does in reality form the most solid evidence that God cannot be otherwise than perfectly good, notwithstanding these apparent discrepancies. By supposition we look into nature, and with a critical eye we detect discrepancies; we look into the divine revelation, and with a critical eye we here also detect discrepancies. We remark, how can this, and this, exist under the

government of an omnipotent and infinitely benevolent Being? Can an omnipotent and perfectly good Being permit the convulsions of nature, pestilence, and death? Can such a Being allow sin to enter the world, or delay the advent of the Saviour four thousand years, or let the world remain unconverted for more than eighteen centuries after this advent, through the inefficiency and unfaithfulness of the agents to whom he has committed the trust of publishing the Gospel? But what does this questioning and this critical judgment imply? Have we, then, in our minds such a bright and transcendent idea of what God must be, that we can decide upon the order of nature, and the great moral movements unfolded in the Scriptures? Are we thus impelled, by the very constitution of our being, to demand in both the realization of an archetype of infinite beauty and excellence; and to say of one form of creation, and one movement of providence, This is worthy of God; but of another form, and another movement to ask, How can this accord with perfect goodness united to omnipotence? And who gave us this elevated constitution of being, and kindled within us this bright and transcendent idea of what God must be? Surely, it was God himself. Has he, then, revealed himself in the reason and conscience of man as he is and must be, and in creation and providence as he is not and cannot be? Has he given us the innate and necessary power of knowing him, only that, in his works and in his moral administration, we might be enabled to spy out his deficiencies, and to see how unlike he is to himself? Has he constituted us merely to reverence and adore an idea, but to turn away in disappointment and sorrow from the reality? No, no, it cannot be; our earnest questionings respecting the apparent discrepancies in nature, and in God's moral government, prove that we have within us the perfect idea of a perfect God; and from the very constitution of the reason, as a faculty of the necessary and the absolute, God must be what reason affirms him to be. This inward teaching is God's own awful and melodious voice; the affirmation of the great I AM from the depths of the eternity which he inhabiteth, throwing its undulating notes into every mind in the widening circle of being. In the great truth affirmed here we cannot be mistaken. But we look out upon creation with eyes

that observe only a few phenomena, and which do not pry into all the mysterious laws, agencies, and final causes of this stupendous nature; and we read the leaves of providence as a deep lore written in the language of heaven, wherein are revealed to us glimpses of a glorious signification, and many clear and precious truths, but which, nevertheless, in the introduction and the consecutive parts, has not yet been clearly construed in every passage, on account of its great reach of thought and its marvellous richness; and of which the peroration is reserved to be read in another world, with eyes unbedimmed, when in the light of God we shall see light. God hath so made us that we can think of him only as infinitely wise and good, and we are ready to start up in alarm whenever anything presents itself which seems to conflict with this deep conviction; but when we reflect that the creation and the moral government in which we notice the discrepance, are his creation and government, we know that it must be only an appearance which, on account of the feebleness of our penetration, and the point of view at which we are placed, we are unable to explain. Our questionings and doubts, respecting that which we see, can be accounted for only by admitting the great truth to exist in the reason which they appear to assail, and thus are self-destroyed, or, rather, are transmuted into a form of the most glorious and stable evidence. I doubt and question what I see, because I know most surely what God is; but the moment I reflect upon what he is, doubts and questionings cease, because what I see proceeds from him, and cannot be inconsistent with his nature. Thus may the meek and humble spirit repose peacefully on the convictions of its innermost and truest being, and bide its time until it shall know even as it is known.

But, nevertheless, it is not forbidden us to exercise all our powers of thought, and to avail ourselves of all the means of inquiry within our reach, to clear up, as far as we may, what is obscure; and that we may be enabled even now to see the bright footsteps of omnipotent love amid all the convulsions of nature, the conflicts and tumults of nations, the apparent delays of Providence, and the feebleness of the appointed human instrumentalities.

I. One of the great principles in the ordering of the universe

is that of PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPEMENT. No form of existence is presented at once complete and perfect. There are perfect elements of being and perfect laws, but not perfect and complete developements. The forms of vegetable life have their germination, their budding, their flowers, their ripened fruit or seed, their stately and progressive growth: and when their decay comes on, it is but preparatory to a resurrection of new beauty without any interruption to the mysterious continuity of life. Analogous to this are the forms of animal existence: a feeble beginning, and a gradual growth and developement of strength, beauty, and sagacity. By slow, secret, but sure processes, minerals are formed in the bowels of the earth. By the abrasion of rocks soils are collected, and barrenness is clothed with verdure, and waving forests spring up and become so ancient that no one can tell the story of their birth. The ocean gradually recedes from one continent and gradually approaches another, and the headlands and harbours of the ancient navigators are changed. In the ocean depths curious and minute operatives are busy, century after century, building up the coral caves and mountains, a fairy land of the watery world, and the stable foundations of future continents. Astronomy teaches us that in the wide and illimitable space nebulous matter is gradually concreting and forming into new worlds, and thus creation through endless ages is extending by processes which appear to us slow, but which are under sure laws. Geology has detected in our own globe signs which cannot be mistaken, indicating the gradual up-building of the crust on which we live, the formation of the mountains and the valleys, the rivers, lakes, and oceans. God does not complete his works at once. The wonder, the beauty, and the glory of his skill appear in successive, and we may believe endless, presentations of new forms of increasing perfection. In a given state and order of the world, for example, the earth as it has been prepared for man, the convenience and the beauty consist in successive changes. As we are constituted, one unchanging form of nature, even if it were a form of perfect beauty in itself, would pall upon us. We would not have all day and bright sunshine; but the quiet return of night with the soft light of moon and stars. We would not have the skies always

fair; but sometimes veiled in the drapery of clouds, or quite shut out by falling showers. We would not have the fields always clothed with yellow harvests; we love also the seed-time, and the first springing of the green blade. We would not have trees and shrubbery always loaded with beautiful buds, nor yet with opened fragrant flowers, nor yet with ripe fruit; it is the orderly succession that we love. We would not have the atmosphere ever filled with loud piping winds, nor with gentle breezes, nor to lie in dead quietude; they are all grateful in the succession in which they come to us. As it is with nature, so also is it with man. Infancy, childhood, youth, manhood, and even old age, whose hoary head is a crown of glory, are all beautiful forms of life. Would we prefer that men should be produced full-grown, and with ripened powers, and that there should be no infancy, no childhood? With such a change, it would seem to us that all the poetry and music of life had fled away. And the mind of man, the noblest of all God's creations, how feeble and void at our beginning! We have not at once our fully-developed capacities, and all possible knowledge; but the mind strengthens and knowledge increases by slow degrees, with much pains-taking, from the budding-time of intellect and the simplest elements of learning. Were it not so, the dignity and excellence of mental discipline would be unknown; mind would not be presented under its different interesting phases of an upward growth; it would have no self-conscious strength in struggling onward in its own development; and by the supposition being created at once in its full and perfect form, there would not be the prospect and the aim of an immortal progression, nor the sublime stimulus to self-exertion derived from such a prospect. Every given state, both of organized matter and of the immortal mind, has its beauty, its fitness, and its benign end to answer; but it is still relatively imperfect, and its relative imperfection is the condition of a higher growth. Nothing is fixed and stolid, but all is moving in cycles of ever-varying beauty and uses, or is born into new dignities and powers.

The beginning and progress of philosophy, science, and art, furnish other illustrations. The world is presented to man subject to his observation and thought, his invention and

appropriation. In his mind are the innate capacities which meet the world harmoniously, pre-constituted to know its laws and agencies, and to perfect its forms and materials. But no philosophy, or science, or art, are revealed to him; he must work them all out for himself. And he has gloriously worked them out for himself. He has obeyed the powers of intellect wherewith God endowed him; he has used the world of which God made him the proprietor. God gave him neither his powers perfect, nor the world perfect; but God designed that by his own endeavours he should do much to perfect both: and hence we have profound philosophies, and diverse and glorious sciences of the heavens and the earth, and multifarious arts of utility and beauty; so that the ancient world of man in his infancy, has become the altered world of man in the marvellous growth and outstretching of his powers. We have here, then, in the actual world, a developement of material forms, and a progress of material perfection, by natural agents and laws working onward by a graduated process; and a developement of mind, and the birth and growth of knowledges and arts, by the free and intellectual activities of man through successive centuries; and by these free and intellectual activities we have nature herself modified and perfected,—for architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and landscape gardening, are all improvements upon the beauty of nature; and we have the world filled with accommodations and comforts which did not before exist, through the useful arts which man has invented. And since government and law have been instituted by man under various forms, and in various degrees of perfection, and the labours of the legislator and the philosopher have thrown more and more light upon the first principles of social order, and the influences and the glory of science and art belong likewise to national destiny and character, the progress of the individual is but a type of the progress of nations.

Had all things at the first been made perfect by God, the whole order of the universe would have been reversed; and who will dare affirm that the order which would then have existed would have been wiser and more benign? Both nature and mind would have exhibited a fixed and rigid splendour and majesty. There would have been no history of the past, and

no anticipation of the future; nothing to call forth activity, or to charm into being the visions of hope; there would have been no changing forms of beauty, but uniformity would sternly have reigned alone.

But it is not possible that either in matter or in created mind absolute perfection could ever exist, for absolute perfection can belong only to the infinite and eternal. If, therefore, progression were banished from the world, there would be a fixed form of imperfection without the possibility of improvement; for however beautiful and majestic a form of nature might be given, and however elevated and rich in gifts the form of mind selected for creation, relatively to still higher ideas of beauty, greatness, and excellence, which could not but exist in the divine mind, and admit of an actual developement, the selected form would still be imperfect. A finite creation by an infinite Creator, and regulated by his laws, and under his watchful superintendence, must necessarily admit of indefinite and endless progression, ever giving new exhibitions of his wisdom and benignity. And such is the creation in which we live, and of which we form a part. A creation evidently on a scale more magnificent than one cast in a fixed and unchanging mould; for however magnificent the fixed and unchanging creation supposed might be, it would at length be far surpassed by the creation of progressing beauty and perfection, even although this last should have the most feeble and imperfect beginning.

Now it is perfectly plain, that all objections made against the actual order of the world, and the actual movements of divine Providence, are really a demanding of God why he did not begin the progressive movements which reign throughout his creation at a point of higher perfection, or why the succession is not more rapid. The presumption of such a demand cannot fail to strike every thinking and reverential mind. The great Architect and Governor knew best where to begin, and how rapidly to conduct the movement. The beauty and the wisdom which are palpable ought to beget child-like trustfulness with respect to what is yet hidden in his unfathomable counsels. Such objections and speculations are an abuse of the high powers wherewith he has endowed us. He has enabled us to see that all things are progressive, and to conceive of more

perfect worlds and more perfect beings, not that we may find fault with that which is, but that we may look forward joyfully and hopefully to that which is yet to come, and strive together in our free activities for its attainment.

Now I ask whether the developements of God's moral government, and the bestowment of high spiritual gifts and privileges, may not justly come under the principle of progression? And whether, in relation to his moral improvement and well-being, man may not justly be thrown upon his own free agency, as well as in relation to philosophy, science, and art? Had man never fallen, there would have been to every mind the same obvious propriety and fitness, and, indeed, necessity, of a progressive moral improvement, as of a progressive intellectual improvement. But the inquiry which now troubles many, is the existence of sin itself, and the fact that it has been suffered to reign in the world for so many centuries. With regard to the existence of sin itself, let us at once relieve our minds from all painful inquiries, by the reflection that it is an incidental evil. God, in imparting to man the high gift of freedom, made it possible for him to sin; nor could he have prevented him from sinning but by infringing upon his free agency. Man chose to sin; and God, in his wisdom, suffered man to act out his free agency without interruption. Sin entered the world by the free act of man: he is its author. God in no wise can be the author of sin. The Bible thus represents the fact in the utmost simplicity, and then leaves it without comment or curious speculation; and there it is wisest for us to leave it. Now it appears from the Scriptures, that no sooner had man sinned than God began to develop a gracious system of measures for the removal of the evil, and the final redemption of man. The element of depravity had been lodged in the species by a law, we are constrained to believe, not arbitrary, but lying in the most intimate constitution of our being, and this element brought forth its sad fruits in the whole history of man; while, at the same time, all the constitutive faculties of his being were showing their characteristics, their force, and their direction, in civilization, education, and refinement. God's gracious measures met the element of depravity. The general elevation of the race was progressive: the working of the element of depravity

was progressive likewise: and there appeared together the most loathsome forms of intellectual greatness, and the most loathsome forms of moral defilement. The gracious interpositions of God were made on the same great principle; they were progressive, as the progressive developements of humanity called for them; and they did not set aside, but stimulated, the free activity of man to its highest and noblest exertion. From the beginning God clearly revealed himself, and made salvation possible; and vouchsafed the most kindly converse of heavenly visiters, and even spake himself in a paternal voice to those who sought him sincerely and devoutly. Twice he revealed himself to the whole race, at the creation and at the deluge, and continually sent his Prophets among men. And it was not until the nations at large had been amply tried, that he selected one man to become the father of one distinct people, and gave them to have their compact and wonderful institutions among the rocks and mountain streams of Canaan, that they might be the conservatories of his oracles, not for themselves merely, but for the world, until the times appointed should be fulfilled.

The advent of the Saviour was placed not at the beginning of the world, nor yet at the end; but midway, in the track of the successive generations. Had it been placed at the beginning, it would have met man in his feeblest development, it would have gained imperfect records, and might have appeared to the after generations as a dim and uncertain history of a remote antiquity. Had it been delayed until the end of the world, it would not have impressed itself deeply upon the advancement of society, and faith might have sickened in the long expectation. But placed midway, it burst upon the world when the experiment of almost every religion and every philosophy had been made for the moral elevation of man, and made in vain; when conquest was sated, and universal dominion consolidated; when civilization was advanced, and learning and the arts had attained a proud eminence; when there was a general pause in the tumults of the nations; when there were abundant materials for it to operate upon, and the way was prepared for making its enduring records in books, and on the monuments of art, and for diffusing itself through all the elements and interests of society. It was placed at the point where it could collect around it the

mighty energies of a progressing humanity, and shape them to new ends and higher destinies; where it could appropriate the arts and discoveries which had already attained a high perfection, and become the patron of still more signal triumphs of the human mind; and, lastly, it was placed where a prospective and a retrospective faith could meet under similar advantages, and where old prophecies would be fulfilled in attestation of its validity, and new prophecies be given to serve, by their fulfilment in after ages, the same end. Is it possible to conceive of a period, in the long march of humanity, more auspicious to the introduction of Christianity, than the period when Christ actually appeared?

Since the advent, the destinies of man and the movements of Christianity have again faithfully exhibited the phases of the great principle of progression. Christianity was, indeed, introduced by miracles, by signs and wonders, and there was a reason for this supernatural display: but ever since there have been no sudden movements, and no extraordinary indications: there have been all the activities of man at work for good and ill as from the beginning, but on wider spheres, and with more stupendous results; while Christianity, with a divine power, indeed, but under laws which ever respect the constitution of the human mind and the condition of society, has been permeating the whole mass, and leading on with various success, by slow degrees, but with sure aim, her final and universal triumph. Nature has been progressing. Philosophy, science, and art have been progressing. The general development of humanity, and the destinies of nations, have been progressing: and with all, and in some sense in all, Christianity, containing the higher life and the ultimate end of all, has been progressing likewise. When the grand consummation shall arrive, we shall have a more glorious, serene, and beautiful nature,—there will be “a new heaven and a new earth;” a peaceful ordering of the nations,—“nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more:” a glorious diffusion of the truth, for we shall “walk in the light of the Lord;” and the universal reign of righteousness, love, and blessedness,—“There shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face.” Such is

the universal constitution of the divine government; and it is wise, beautiful, and benign throughout.

II. Another great principle of the divine government, which we now proceed to notice, is the employment of fixed, definite, and appropriate agencies for the accomplishment of its ends. These agencies are two-fold: they are natural, necessitated, and irresponsible; or they are intellectual, free, and responsible.

By natural agencies the planets are impelled and guided in their revolutions; the seasons are led through their circuit; day and night are given; animal and vegetable productions are sustained and multiplied; and the whole economy of nature harmoniously and bountifully ordered. The laws which God has ordained are rigidly observed. The velocities of the planets are not changed. No new power is substituted for gravitation. The force of wind, steam, lightning, and floods remains the same. There is no vacillation, no hurry, and no delay; but the great progression of nature is led on by the powers, and according to the laws, which his wisdom assigned to this department of his universe. Every agent has its characteristics, and its sphere in which to operate. Now, were God frequently to set aside these natural agencies by direct interpositions, he would exhibit himself either as capricious in his determinations, or as miscalculating in his plans. He does, indeed, sometimes interpose, and suspend a law of nature, or produce effects beyond the reach of these laws; but these are *miracles* or *wonders*, extraordinary and unlooked-for, and introduced not for the perfecting of his system of nature, but for the accomplishment of some great moral end. The wisdom, majesty, and goodness of God in nature are displayed in the uniformity of the great elements, forces, and laws which he originally appointed, and in the unbroken system which he maintains.

The same adherence to his original appointments appears in the moral world. God has appointed no natural agents to institute government and laws among men, to invent arts, to perfect the sciences, to communicate knowledge to the human mind, and to carry on, in general, the progression of humanity; neither has he appointed any supernatural agents to do these; nor yet does he step forth to do these by the immediate exertion of his own omnipotence: these are the appropriate and the appointed

work of natural agents alone. Now it is evident, that the propagation of Christianity lies fully and fairly within the domain of human agency. The arts of printing and navigation, of propulsion by steam, of making roads and bridges; and, of course, the arts of working in various metals, and of manufacturing paper and other materials; the cultivation of mathematics, mechanics, astronomy, chemistry, and natural science in general, are all necessary subsidiaries. So also the translation of the Bible, of tracts, and kindred books into various languages, the institution of schools, and the instruction of men in reading and other branches of learning, and, last of all, the preaching of the Gospel, are all plain and indispensable means of evangelizing the world.

Whatever spiritual influences God vouchsafes, these influences do not remove the necessity of the various applications of the appointed human agencies.

Now, one may ask, why does not God reveal at once the sciences and arts necessary to the spread of the Gospel; or why does he not employ angels instead of men to teach the ignorant, and preach the Gospel? Indeed, it is not necessary to stop here, but we may at once advance to the inquiry, Why does not God, by a signal and inevitable act of his omnipotence, without delay, enlighten and convert all the nations? But is it not plain that all such inquiries imply that God, after having ordained a great system of secondary powers and agencies, with their appropriate spheres; agencies ordained for the very purpose of accomplishing certain ends, should, under certain emergencies, set them all aside, and become himself the universal and only agent? thus capriciously making and unmaking, adopting plans and systems, and nullifying them, calling agents into being, and reducing them to nonentity. As well might we ask, Why did God make worlds, and moral and natural agents? Why did he exert his creative powers at all, and not dwell in the eternal solitude of his own infinite being? The very fact of creation involves the idea of constituted powers and agencies, of regulated systems and processes, of progressive movements, and of phenomena mediately produced. Nor would the absurdity of such inquiries be obviated by admitting the wisdom of allowing the natural agents to move on in an

unimpeded course, and thus preserving the integrity of the original design of nature, but requiring that, in respect of the welfare of moral beings, the ordinary secondary agencies should be overleaped by supernatural agencies, which should more rapidly and effectually secure the aims of benevolence; for the moral agencies are the higher of the two, and form the most glorious displays of the divine wisdom; and it is just here that God may be conceived to be most deeply interested in maintaining the full and uninterrupted progression and developement of his great original plans. Besides, the very idea of a constituted moral agency forbids such a supplanting of the human by the divine. A moral agent is a free agent. It is his freedom which essentially makes him moral or responsible. But the communication of such a high gift, of a trust so momentous, pre-supposes that it shall not be interfered with; for the agent loses his responsibility the moment the acts for which he has been held responsible are taken out of the sphere of his own casuality, and made the appropriate effects of another cause. Thus the whole form and character of the moral world would be changed, and it would become absurd to speak any more of the dignity, worth, and interests of moral beings. If God cannot subserve the interests of moral beings without nullifying their proper agency, then he is presented in the light of making a bold and hazardous experiment, and after conducting it to a certain point, becoming suddenly alarmed, and preventing any farther development by crushing together the co-working elements into a confused mass, and recalling into the repose of his own nature all the energies and laws which he had given out. But we cannot make such an unworthy supposition. No, no; we have a nobler order in the universe of God. He has ordained his natural agents; given them their scope, their distinct potentialities, and linked them to their proper phenomena; and here we have the harmony, beauty, and goodness of the great system of nature. He has, likewise, ordained his moral agents a higher and nobler order of agents, because made after his own likeness in intelligence and the power of choice. These have, also, their scope and potentialities, and have arrayed before them what they may and *ought* to do; duties which they may neglect and violate, and so incur guilt and

condemnation; or in the faithful performance of which they may meet with immortal rewards. That which the natural agents are commissioned to do is done by them, and not by other agencies. That which the moral agents are commissioned to do is done by them, and not by other agencies. This is the order of the universe. And now we see that in relation to the moral agents, while God gives them a noble sphere of labour, and provides them with abundant and apt materials, and ministers to them every requisite influence, and implants within their own being the first principles of all truth, and the constitutive forms of every possible knowledge, they are required to go forth to the inventions of art, the discoveries of science, the constitution of government, the cultivation of the earth, the institutions of learning, to all that is possible for the development of mind, and the elevation and improvement of the race. Christianity takes her place among the other objects of human activity. As God provided the world with all the suitable means and appliances for a successful and productive industry; so, also, has he provided Christianity with all her heavenly revelations, her gracious and supernatural aids, and her sublime and immortal prospects, for all the higher and spiritual energies of our being. Redemption from sin and eternal life are made possible to every individual in the atonement of Christ, and the mission of the Spirit; but then they are actually attained only through the activity of the free moral agent himself, working out his own salvation with fear and trembling. The deliverance of the whole race from the guilt of sin, and the element of depravity in the human nature, a universal diffusion of spiritual knowledge, a universal elevation, refinement, and sanctification, the transformation of the world into a region of love, peace, and blessedness, are embraced within the scope of Christianity; but then men are the appropriate agents appointed to open communications between the most distant nations; to translate books into different languages; to instruct ignorant men, and to carry, and preach the Gospel to the destitute. The order, harmony, and fitness of the moral constitution of the universe clearly assigns this to human agents. God, in his highest heavens, is doing his own appropriate work, and is co-working in all the subordinate powers and agencies which he has

ordained. He has assigned to the heavenly hierarchies, the Cherubim and Seraphim, their appropriate work. He has assigned the great physical powers their appropriate work. He has also given to man his appropriate work; and here it lies; our field is the world. The purification and redemption of our being; the development and redemption of our whole race; this is our work. God does not step down from his high throne to do directly, by his own omnipotence, what he has appointed the angels to do; nor does he remove out of the order of his physical agents what his wisdom at first assigned to their laws and forces; neither does he descend to earth to take out of our hands those great labours of benevolence which fitly belong to us, and thus give us an opportunity to repose in indolence, or to pursue freely the puerile plans of our own pride, sensuality, and covetousness. His wisdom and benevolence are displayed in the order of agencies which he has ordained, and the sublime and glorious ends which are actually accomplished by, or are made possible to, those agencies. It was wisdom and benevolence to give us these high capacities, and to place us in a world so richly furnished: ours is the folly and the guilt, if science and the arts remain hidden, and the earth lie unimproved under our hands. It was wisdom and benevolence to reveal life and immortality through the cross of Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit: ours is the folly and the guilt, if we who have received the heavenly mission do not avail ourselves of it for our own salvation, and do not speed it on its way among all the people and kindreds of the earth. It is not for us to ask, Why does not omnipotence and infinite benevolence at once accomplish its work? Omnipotence and infinite benevolence has accomplished its work. It is we that are dilatory: it is we that refuse or delay to do our work, that most honourable and sublime work to which we are fitted and called in this grand order of the universe. God has provided us the light by which to see; and shall we now close our eyes, and call upon omnipotent benevolence to produce directly in our minds the phenomena of vision? God has made us capable, by industry and thoughtfulness, of improving our condition, and providing on every hand comfort and convenience; and shall we fold our hands, and call upon God to work miracles in order to save us from the

necessity of exertion? God has brought us salvation by the sacrifice of his Son; and instead of laying hold upon it eagerly and joyfully, shall we yield ourselves to indifference and worldliness, and wait for his omnipotence and benevolence to lead us to the cross by a miraculous compulsion? God has put the Gospel into our hands as his honoured almoners, and he commands us to give it to all nations; and shall we each one begin to make excuse, and turn away to our pleasures, our schemes of ambition and covetousness, and dream away this short but momentous life, and reply to the divine command, "Lord, cannot thine own omnipotence and love do this work at once, and save us the toil, the anxiety, and the self-denial?" Yes, he could do the work, but then why are we made moral agents? what is our being worth? what place do we hold, what end do we answer, in God's creation? and why are we placed under such high appointments? He could do the work, but the doing of it would imply the annihilation of our moral nature, and involve our utter worthlessness, and our unworthiness of such a high interposition. God is continually exerting his agency in our behalf; ten thousand are his secret and benign ministrations, like the falling drops of dew; and he has made, and is making, for us stupendous interpositions of grace. But there is one point where in the harmony and perfection of his universal order he must pause, or he would violate that order; and that is, where to interpose would be to infringe upon or set aside the moral agency which he ordained as the pre-eminent glory of his creation.

III. There is yet another point of view in which this subject is to be placed. The progressive developement and perfection of our being is the great and benign end which God contemplates in respect to man. "Be ye holy, for I am holy."

Now the developements and virtues to which we may attain, lose at once their distinctive characteristics, and their high and peculiar value, the moment they are conceived of as the necessary product of foreign agencies, and not of our own inner and responsible being. The arts and sciences, whether arrived at by our own invention and observations, or acquired from others, derive their value not merely from the conveniencies, enjoyments, and knowledge with which they furnish us; they derive

their highest and most lasting value from the fact that their attainment involves the permanent enlargement and cultivation of our mental faculties. These arts and sciences known in this infancy of our being, will appear but as elementary and limited acquisitions in the future glory of our being. But they have a most important bearing upon those high energies, and the wide range of knowledge prospectively opening upon us. In the efforts of the intellect to know and comprehend, it becomes more apt and vigorous to know and comprehend, and thus becomes prepared for yet higher and higher knowledges, and those sublime exertions of thought which belong to a nobler state. Thus do we know ourselves, and feel our strength, and plume our wings for a heavenward flight.

But yet more strikingly does this principle appear in the moral virtues. Benevolence, justice, and truth are not mere contemplations and speculations. They imply and demand, in their several relations, voluntary and persevering exertions. In order to be holy, to be God-like, to be prepared for the fellowship and enjoyments of the heavenly state, these virtues under their various modifications must be inwrought, and pervade our whole moral being as delightful, congenial, and habitual inspirations. And these cardinal and all-comprehending virtues are of such a nature that they can never limit themselves within a given number of objects, or within certain times. Wherever and whenever the objects and occasions of truth, justice, and benevolence appear, there must we voluntarily and cheerfully exert ourselves in administering these virtues. Had we spent ages in the practice of these virtues, we should not be relieved in the least degree from the obligation to exert ourselves to the utmost, whenever new objects and occasions should appear. Now in forming for ourselves a holy character in a world like ours, we cannot escape from the multiform duties which are opened to us on all sides in the ignorance, the sinfulness, and miseries which abound. In a less wretched world less would be demanded; but it is the condition of all virtue to answer the demands which are actually made.

What a sphere of moral discipline is then afforded in our world! Whatever be the origin of the wretchedness of our world, for all the purposes of moral discipline, it is enough for

us that it exists. Whether omnipotent goodness might not consistently relieve it without delay, is a mere speculation. But that we are bound to exert our moral agency in relation to all the forms of evil presented, is an unquestionable truth, resulting from the very nature of virtue itself. Sin and sorrow have made this world their home, and he that goes forth as the minister of mercy will be subjected to severe labours; but they are labours which, while outwardly sowing good seed abroad in the wide field, are nourishing in the soul all the springs of spiritual vitality and blessedness. There is no form of virtue but what is called forth into activity by the state of our world. There is, therefore, in God's universe probably no school of virtue so richly prepared for the purposes of the highest discipline which can be imposed upon the soul. From a cup of cold water given to a forlorn and forsaken wretch, to the sublime charity which aims to spread the Gospel like the morning light over the darkened world, lie the gradations of the benevolence which are here marked out to us. Every day, every hour, every place gives its opportunities, reveals its duties, teaches its lessons, and may enable us to take another step upon the golden ladder which reaches to the skies. Such a world is peculiarly fitted as the pilgrimage of a sinner struggling after redemption, and the possession of the divine life. All evil passions rankle by nature in these bosoms of ours: but this is a world in which we may learn to bear sorrow with patience, to forgive injuries and to bless our enemies, to repress pride and envy, to deny our lusts, to do good even to the unthankful, and to live a life of godliness for the sake of its pure and unrewarded excellence. It is in this world that it can be said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit; blessed are they that mourn; blessed are the meek; blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness; blessed are the merciful; blessed are the pure in heart; blessed are the peace-makers; blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake;" for it is in this world that the spirit is so tried and disciplined as to find blessedness in all these: and if it find blessedness in these, then hath it within itself the well of living waters springing up unto everlasting life.

But the discipline of the soul in relation to God is provided for in the state of our world, no less than in relation to man.

Had God relieved man from all scientific investigation by directly revealing to him the constitution of his own being and of the world, man could not have manifested that earnest passion for knowledge which is implied in those voluntary labours by which he now travels upwards to the sun-lit pinnacles of truth: and so also, had he relieved him from all his toilsome inquiry, and the possibility of doubt, in respect to the divine nature and government, and the mediatorial system, that most worthy and sublime desire to know God and "the invisible things of Him," and that noble faith, which is "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen," would not have been developed. God has made us capable of knowing him, and he has presented the world and the mediatorial system to us under such forms and signatures, that we need not fail of attaining a clear conviction of what he is, and a most blissful assurance of his favour: but the attainment requires a meek, trustful, reverential, truth-loving spirit; a deep and serious tendency to the pure and the divine; a supreme appreciation of the spiritual; an intense longing after God and immortality; and a diligent, wise, and persevering application of our best powers. It is meet that beings constituted as we are, should exert ourselves to collect all the scattered rays of divine light, and thus struggle onward from dim perceptions to a perfect vision; and then will the perfect vision be most fully enjoyed, because we loved at the beginning the most feeble rays. There is nothing better or clearer in the world than Christianity; and he that will not receive it, because it is not good and clear enough to satisfy the demands of his intelligence, hath neither the meek wisdom of the true philosopher, nor the reverential and earnest love that feeleth after God, if haply it may find him. It is with duty as it is with knowledge and faith. God has not commanded us to the duties laid down in the Gospel by an audible voice spoken to each one of us: the duties are addressed to our hearts and consciences. There surely is no higher form of benevolence possible, in our world, than that which forms the great aim of Christianity. To perform these duties, even if they should prove a misconception of the divine will, would show such an attachment to that exalted moral excellence which cannot but enter into the divine character, and such a sincere spirit of

obedience, that the misconception could not but be shielded by the principle which attended it. It would be far wiser and better to run the risk of mistaking a particular duty, than never to call into action the most essential principle of virtue. Such, then, is the state of our world, and such our position in it under the Gospel, that we can give the most decided proof of a disposition truly to know God, and faithfully to do what is pleasing in his sight. Whatever doubtfulness may surround us forms but a noble discipline of the intellect and the heart. And how amply shall we be repaid at the last, if we find that the doubtfulness was only that which always attends the incipient efforts of the mind in seeking after all knowledge, and which faded away as we perseveringly moved onward, examining and thinking seriously and candidly and with fervent hope, and doing righteousness and mercy in pure love, until, arrived at the full stature of our being, we are prepared to see God and to hear his voice!

It is a beautiful economy which thus unites our highest duties to God and man with the cultivation of the highest principles of our nature. We cannot win heaven without becoming heavenly. But we cannot become heavenly without leading our fellow-men to heaven. We cannot be the children of God unless we love him and confide in him; but this child-like spirit becomes most deeply inwrought, and honours God most when it appears fervent and cheerful and ready to obey, in the darkness as well as in the light, and soweth now in tears for the glorious harvest which is to come.

Shall we ask now, why the redemption of this world is so far committed to human agency? How rich, and clear, and abundant are the answers! Human agency is the fitting, congenial, directly effective, and the wisely appointed agency in the grand order of the world. Human agency accords with the great principle of progression which reigns through the wide universe of infinite wisdom. Human agency in this work, while it is fitting in relation to its objects, is no less fitting in relation to its actors, and proposes the discipline required for the formation of the character prescribed under the kingdom of heaven.

And again, barring all other considerations and inquiries,

such is the nature of truth, justice, and benevolence,—the cardinal virtues,—that they must apply themselves to their appropriate work, wherever the objects and occasions are presented. Without stopping to inquire into other methods of relieving the world, or seeking for higher agencies, if we are good men, or if we would be good men, we must teach the ignorant, comfort the broken-hearted, and proclaim the Gospel to the lost, wherever we find them. It is our work, simply because it falls within our path. This will for ever be true; and in whatever part of God's universe we may be called to reside, the great principles involved will be binding upon us.

In committing the propagation of the Gospel to human agencies, God has not debarred any individuals or any age from its possession. For in every age the great truths of salvation have been proclaimed in the world; and men either would not go to the fountains which were opened, or when committed with the great trust of publishing it to all nations, they have failed to fulfil it. Twelve poor fishermen did more to realize the command of Christ than the nominal Christian world have ever done beside.

It is time that we wake up to the magnitude and reality of this trust. **THE GOSPEL IS TO BE GIVEN TO THE WORLD BY HUMAN AGENCY.** When will it be accomplished? It will be accomplished when those who now have the Gospel do their duty. It might be done now. The Gospel is always attended with the same promises and spiritual influences, and prayer is always heard by the prayer-hearing God. The great failure has been in action. Has there not been failure in prayer? Yes; but men will never pray for the conversion of the world effectually and fervently, except as they are actually engaged in propagating the Gospel. Prayer supposes the intensest fervour of the soul, and this fervour will contentedly leave nothing undone that ought to be done. But have not the prophecies pointed ever to remote times when speaking of the conversion of the world? Prophecy is not the rule of duty, this rule is found in the plain command of Christ. Divine wisdom, it may be presumed, has intentionally thrown a sublime mystery over prophecy, lest it should be assumed as a rule of duty. The interpreters of prophecy, however, have not generally placed the

grand consummation remote from their own times. The language is so peculiar as ever to have induced the impression, "The Lord is at hand;" and, indeed, the Lord has ever been at hand. Looking at the power of the Gospel, looking at the promises, looking at what we are called to do, we are justified in affirming that the redemption of the world has been delayed by the dilatoriness and unfaithfulness of the human agents; and that the great consummation might have taken place centuries past but for this.

Prophecy, as now interpreted, (and it seems more wisely interpreted now than ever,) lends us nothing but encouragement. But, I repeat again, the prophecies are not our guide in this matter. Our great work is not the interpretation of prophecy, although this is a work great in itself: nor does our work mainly lie in profound speculations, although these be also demanded in their place. Our work is to preach the Gospel to every creature, by the press, by oral teachers, by Bibles, by tracts, by schools, by every available means to spread abroad the word of God, the glad news of salvation. Some are prone to look for extraordinary signs in the heavens and in the earth; extraordinary manifestations of divine power resistlessly bringing in the nations. But this never has been, and, I believe, never will be, the mode of divine operations. It does not accord with the great order ordained in the universe. God has already revealed the power which is to convert the nations; this power lies in, and accompanies, the Gospel. No less surely has he revealed the agency required, and that is the agency of devoted men.

In the progression of Divine Providence, in the onward developements of art, science, and civilization, we have arrived at a period most favourable for the accomplishment of the great work so long delayed. The most distant nations are accessible. Communication between nations once unknown to each other has become easy and rapid. The cheapness and rapidity with which books can be multiplied are unexampled. The most civilized and nominally Christian nations rule the earth. The Bible is already translated into the most important languages of the world. The way is already prepared; the achievement is evidently within our grasp; the evangelization of the world is

not a dream; it need be no longer delayed. O! if we would but believe that it is for this we live, and for this alone, namely, the work of the Lord; that our being is worthless and without dignity but for this, namely, that we are God's servants; then would we arouse and do his bidding, and be no longer the poor fools of time.

DISCOURSE XVI.

THE HAPPY INFLUENCE OF FOREIGN MISSIONS ON THE CHURCH.

BY THE REV. DAVID ABEEL,

MISSIONARY TO CHINA.

ISAIAH liv. 2.

“Spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes.”

THE text is a command given to the Church; in other words, a duty enjoined upon Christians. The only way to ascertain both its precise meaning, and the best mode of its accomplishment, is to consult the preceding and following verses. “Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.”

The whole passage, then, refers to the conversion of the Gentiles, or Heathen, and furnishes the following important suggestion, that

THERE IS NO SYSTEM OF MEANS SO WELL CALCULATED TO GIVE EXPANSION AND STABILITY TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, NOT MERELY TO LENGTHEN HER CORDS, BUT ALSO TO

STRENGTHEN HER STAKES, AS FOREIGN MISSIONARY OPERATIONS.

The direct benefits of Missionary exertions upon the Heathen, and their reflex action upon the Churches which put forth these exertions, are both to be considered in estimating the efficacy of these means. It is a question of great interest, and one which cannot be too freely discussed, nor too quickly determined, whether, for the good of the world, the main energies of the Church ought to be expended upon countries nominally Christian and comparatively limited, or upon the more extensive and populous regions now shrouded in Pagan darkness and Mohammedan delusion. The decision of this question would indicate duty to many a mind now vacillating and distressed; it would assure the confidence of the doubtful; it would recall his distracted attention, and concentrate his divided efforts; it would send forth streams of vital influence through those appropriate channels, which, for aught we know, are now empty and dry.

There are several reasons which are supposed by many to favour the opinion, that Christian exertion is less productive among Pagan nations than at home. In the first place, there are preliminary barriers which oppose the efforts of the Missionary, and which do not exist in Christian lands. Of these, the most important are *strange languages* and *strong prejudices*. That these are real obstacles, ignorance alone will deny. There is perhaps nothing more trying to a sensitive heart, than to be surrounded by crowds of deluded and dying men, between whom and yourself there is no medium of intellectual communication. An ocean rolling between could not more effectually separate you from the objects of your compassion. In some countries, the difficulties of acquiring languages yield to nothing but the most persevering labour. This, however, is not everywhere the case. Perhaps no two languages are equally difficult of attainment. There are places where even transient traders and travellers pick up the native tongue, and soon become eloquent in its employment. As the number of Missionaries increases, the difficulties of languages are reduced, and the facilities for their acquisition multiplied. Nay, Missionaries not merely abbreviate the term of pupilage to their successors,

but furnish them with useful labour even during their necessary studies. There are daily services to be performed at every station, which cannot be dispensed with, and which do not demand the employment of the tongue. These services are generally proportioned, in number and variety, to the efficiency of the men engaged.

Another preliminary obstacle mentioned, to the successful efforts of the Missionary, is prejudice. In a few prominent Heathen countries of the world, this barrier appears almost impregnable. China, Japan, and Cochin China, have marshalled their forces on their frontiers, and bade defiance to foreign aggression. But even to these countries there are points of attack which they cannot guard. The Gospel is gaining access to China through numerous channels, and sooner or later every barrier shall be undermined, and a highway through every part of this empire be prepared for the servants of the Lord.

In almost every Heathen land, where Missionary effort has been continued for any considerable time, prejudices have invariably yielded; and generally when they begin to subside, they rapidly disappear, and seldom return. We do not wish to overlook, nor to underrate, the difficulties of language and prejudice in Heathen lands; but is there nothing corresponding to these obstacles where the Gospel is known? Are there no serious barriers to usefulness in Christian countries? Is not much time necessarily consumed in adapting ourselves to the habits, and fashions, and fancies of the Christian world? What precious and protracted periods are devoted to such a course of reading and writing, and to such a compliance with the prescribed modes of ordinary life, as fills the heart of many a faithful Minister with regrets, and his mouth with daily complaints. These things exist to a much more limited extent, if they exist at all, at Mission stations. It is true, the necessity of translating and writing, in the foreign field, demands exertion; but this is generally the work of a few, and the literary productions of the rest are nearly equalled in number by those of Ministers at home, in this age of abounding publications. It is a common sentiment, at least it has its strong practical evidence, that authorship increases usefulness. On this supposition, the greater the number of Christian books

prepared in native languages, the more productive the labour. And here it is necessary to notice the difference between works prepared in languages employed in Christian lands, and among the Heathen. An extra lamp suspended in a hall gleaming with light, may add a little to the glare; but what is this compared with the sun, or the moon, or the brilliant lamps of heaven, where the space is wide, and the darkness total?

2. Another reason for which, it is believed, Christian effort is more profitable at home than abroad, is the systematic and stubborn opposition which the Gospel meets from the established forms of civil government and Pagan superstition. How far such opposition will be exerted where the Romish religion has loaded the cause of Christianity with its own opprobrium, we can only conjecture. Experiment has proved that these obstacles scarcely ever prevent the introduction of the Gospel, or greatly arrest its progress in any country. In many places, the policy of the government, and the prejudices of the people, have opposed no barrier, at least, no serious obstacle, to the spread of Christianity. Of one thing we may rest assured, the influence from this quarter must be powerful if it present a more unyielding obstruction to the truth than Infidelity, libertinism, Gospel-insensibility, latitudinarianism, antinomianism, and all those numerous errors of doctrine and practice which mar the beauty and sap the vitals of the Christian Church.

3. A third reason, which may be supposed to operate against the comparative advantages of foreign Missionary labour, is the risk and waste of life which it involves. If there be, as there doubtless is, a difference in the mortality of Ministers in Pagan and Christian nations, the reasons are obvious,—the number of Missionaries is so limited, that they labour harder, and suffer more, than their brethren at home; and thus far they have occupied the most unhealthful positions, often under the greatest disadvantages. When Missionaries are sent forth in sufficient numbers to supply the stations now possessed, and to occupy the far more extensive and important countries of Northern India, and all the higher divisions of Asia and Europe, the scale will turn, and health and life will be properly enjoyed to as great a degree and protracted a limit in the unevangelical world, as within the present boundaries of Christendom.

These are the principal reasons for which they can believe the servants of Christ are likely to be less useful among the Heathen than in their own country. But even in this aspect of the subject, there is so little difference between the real obstacles to success in foreign and domestic stations, that, at most, only a trifling advantage can be conceded to the latter. This, however, is but one view of the subject. There are arguments which favour the opposite opinion. There are arguments which give a high degree of probability to the conclusion, that the direct results of Gospel effort are greater in Pagan than in Christian lands. Among the reasons for such an opinion, is that one which induces almost all Ministers of the sanctuary to exchange the sphere of their labour at home,—and which would, if they were consistent with their principles, send great numbers of them abroad,—the souls to be saved are much more numerous, much more needy.

Another reason is, the means of usefulness are both more various and extensively operative. Besides the pastoral functions which are exercised profitably, except in the newest stations, there are schools to be taught or superintended; books to be scattered over hundreds and thousands of miles, and among millions of minds; itinerant labour to be performed in populous cities and villages, where thousands convene for trade, and tens of thousands for idolatrous festivals; and, in many places, medicine to be administered to crowds, who feel their obligations, and are prepared for your instructions. How different from the prescribed routine at home. Here modes of labour are defined in their nature, and greatly in their extent, by the forms of society,—the comparatively small number of population, and the fear of trespassing upon the provinces of the many fellow-labourers, by whom each one is surrounded and barricaded. We have known of striking instances in which the books, unaccompanied by oral explanation, have shed sufficient light to restore the guilty idolater to his God. Should this be the case to any considerable extent, we need no other argument than the quantities of books we distribute, to decide the direct results of ministerial labour in our favour.

Another reason which shows the superior influence of foreign labour, is the activity of native converts. Their external

condition differs essentially from that of other Christians. If they love the Saviour, and know the design of his coming, if they have the least affection for their relatives, their friends, their countrymen, all enveloped in darkness, and immersed in crime, they must be ardent and active.

Notwithstanding all that has been uttered by foes, and feared by friends, of the comparative fruitlessness of foreign Missions, if the number of converts in Christian and Heathen lands were divided by the proportion of Gospel Ministers allotted to each sphere of labour, it is probable that Christians at home would never again put the question, Where are the fruits of foreign Missions? Take, for example, the Polynesian Islands, New Zealand, Burmah, Southern India, Ceylon, South Africa, Greenland, the West Indies, among the slaves. Where in Christian lands can we find places in which the same means have been blessed with equal results. And, let it be remembered, our selection embraces nearly all the stations where the work of Missions has been undertaken with anything like wisdom and energy. In other countries, the amount of effort made has been mere child's play. The Churches have sent one man to an island, a second to an empire, and a third to a continent.

If, in connexion with the number of souls actually saved, we estimate the instrumentality prepared, not only for present but for future operation, we believe but few could hesitate in ascribing the greater influence upon the Church and the world to foreign Missionary exertion. And even if it could be shown that Christian efforts among the Heathen are not as productive as at home, even then the chief argument which supports the doctrine presented in the text, remains untouched.

We believe that *foreign Missions are the best means of lengthening the cords and strengthening the stakes of the Church, because they establish and promote an action and reaction between themselves and the Churches, which is most powerful and advantageous to both parties.* This may be demonstrated by several facts.

I. Missionary labour increases the piety and energy of the Churches. The Missionary spirit includes among its essential endowments, faith, prayer, self-denial, deadness to the world, charity, beneficence, heavenly-mindedness, a willingness to

submit to sufferings and hazards, and a supreme regard for the glory of God. We do not wish to imply that every Missionary possesses these qualifications. We simply declare that these are the elements of that character, without which they are unfit for their office. If such be the spirit which disposes and prepares men to engage in the work of converting the Heathen, it is not difficult to perceive how the Churches are benefited by Missionary labour.

There is the stimulus of example, than which nothing is more influential. Hold up to the Churches those with whom they are under equal obligations, but who have far exceeded them in the "work of faith, and labour of love," and you bring a motive to bear upon them which piety cannot resist.

It operates through sympathy. We are brethren. Our work, our aim, our strongest desires, our highest honour, our dearest interests, our eternal recompence, are the same. Just so far as we are sanctified, what one feels, and attempts, and accomplishes, must powerfully interest and actuate another.

Again, *there is the duty and blessedness of necessary co-operation*. We must labour together. Missionaries are the messengers of the Churches. The Churches must send them forth, sustain them with their prayers and contributions, and supply the increasing demand for men which the opening fields require. The energy of the one increases the energy of the other. The Missionary prepares work for the Churches, and throws the obligation of its performance upon them; and can the Churches remain inactive when urged to exertion by such a fearful responsibility?

Again, *it diverts the mind from those unimportant points of doctrinal difference, and metaphysical distinction, and abstruse speculation*, which squander the time, and pervert the talents, and ruin the souls, of thousands. It places us in full front of the enemy. It teaches us the necessity of concerted and concentrated action. It proves that neither allegiance, nor courage, nor conquest, depend upon the dress and language of the companies. Nay, more, it proclaims the unutterable folly and phrensy of those who forget their vigilant and vigorous foes, and turn their arms upon themselves.

It operates, too, through the influence of its own greatness. It

expands the mind, liberalizes the soul, elevates the aim, arouses faculties and feelings which nothing else could have addressed, and produces efforts and results which no other object could command.

These are some of the invaluable effects of Missions upon the Churches. But where are your *facts*? say they who regard this doctrine as a mere splendid theory. Such facts we are capable of furnishing.

The Missionary *himself* exhibits the powerful reflex influence of his undertaking. While those who knew him in his native land, may have wondered at the unexpected talent and energy he displays among the Heathen, this will explain the difference. His character has been disciplined and improved. He has become capable of exertions for which his powers appeared inadequate before. And then, beside the increase of his own mental and moral energy, his conspicuous situation has extended his relations, and given him an influence which he never could have exerted at home. However favourably he may have been regarded before, he now appears in a new capacity. Thousands who would never have known him, except as a Missionary, read his communications, and receive the impressions they are calculated to produce. Here, then, is not simply a new stimulus to action, but a new medium through which usefulness may be extended.

In the second place, the re-action is most salutary upon the *particular friends* of the Missionaries and their cause. But the operation extends beyond the private circle. Wherever there is the greatest degree of piety there is the most lively susceptibility on this subject; and as the cause of Missions becomes better known and appreciated, the interest of Christians must spread and deepen, until all will sympathize with the Saviour, and all live to obey his last most important command.

Where is there a Minister of the Gospel, possessing the spirit of his Master, who is not stimulated and invigorated by the self-denying labours of his Missionary brethren? Trace out the influence through these channels of spiritual blessing to the world, and see what must be its boundless results.

Nothing more powerfully arrests the attention of *youth and children* than Missionary narratives. By these means they are

taught how much they differ from the Heathen, and how they ought to pray, and contribute, and labour for their salvation. We are struck with this new and promising feature in the Christian community as we pass through the Churches. In schools and private families we are greeted with the smiles of infancy, while little hands are stretched out to present their mite, saved for the benefit of the Heathen. Visit the Sabbath and infant schools throughout the country, and see the thousands of children, who, within a few years, have been awakened to new interests, and new modes of beneficence, by the progress of Missions. Hundreds of dollars are now annually raised through the gatherings and savings of children, who, a few years ago, never contributed to any object. I visited one school, containing one hundred and fifty scholars, in which three hundred dollars had been raised within the last year for foreign Missions. Is there no promise in this incipient and self-denying benevolence? Will not the Church, as well as the world, enjoy its inestimable advantages?

Much has been attributed to the re-action of Missions, as a means of producing our revivals, and improving all our home institutions. How much the Education, and Tract, and Bible societies owe to the strong appeals we furnish them, let the burden of their reports, and especially the eloquence of their agents, attest.

These are some of the channels through which the richest blessings are poured into the Churches from the Missionary stations. We know that every Missionary has not exerted an extensive and benign influence. We refer rather to office than its incumbent. But if the situation be so commanding, is it not credible that its occupants will labour with incomparably greater effect than in stations they would probably fill in the domestic department? If the beneficial tendency of their exertions upon Christendom was the only inducement to enter upon a Missionary life, we wonder how such crowds of young men dare refuse their agency.

II. Missionary operations not only increase the piety and energy of the Churches, but greatly assist in supplying their domestic destitution.

Our former position being admitted, this is its legitimate

consequence. If every Christian could be brought to employ all his talents, it would require but a small proportion of the present number, perhaps only the reduced proportion of Gideon's army, to accomplish a greater amount of good than is now effected. That ten thousand Ministers in the United States, and more than fifteen hundred thousand professing Christians should produce so little religious effect among only fourteen millions of souls, not the half of them adults, is almost incredible, especially when we measure the ability of all by the usefulness of a few. Let the spiritual torpor which now curses the Christian Church be removed, let universal life reanimate her Ministers and laymen, and converts would greatly multiply, and revivals spread; the young men would be sanctified, the ranks of the ministry replenished, and Zion would appear clothed in the beauty and majesty of the Lord.

We have referred to the influence of foreign Missions upon the young. Many a converted youth has had his attention directed to the ministry through the reading of Missionary journals. I have two instances in my mind, of the most promising men this country has ever produced. One occupies a distinguished position in the Churches; the other strikes his harp to a Saviour's love in regions of perfect delight. Those who remain in their native country are prepared by the same influence for every kind of trying service. Here again I could mention cases of peculiar usefulness, men who had devoted their lives to Missions, but were providentially detained at home. Witness the recent and growing interest manifested for the spiritual improvement of our slave-population and western citizens. The claims of these portions of our community are assigned by multitudes as their only reason for not engaging in foreign Missions. In the exact measure that young men are actuated by Missionary zeal, are they prepared for those stations at home which demand sacrifice and diligence, and which yield but little worldly compensation.

The reaction of Missions upon the domestic interests of individual denominations, is instructive. The Moravians began the noble effort for the conversion of the Heathen about a century ago. A congregation, consisting of six hundred individuals, principally exiles, organized themselves into a Mis-

sionary body at Hurnhut, and nobly resolved to aim at sending the Gospel through the world. The liberal soul has been made fat. Forty stations among the Heathen, more than two hundred Missionaries, and upwards of forty thousand converts, proclaim the blessing of God upon their efforts. The little band has multiplied itself into eighty congregations at home, and the small sum they could at first spare out of their penury, has increased to an annual collection of sixty thousand dollars.

Brethren, do you inquire why it is that we love to single out this example? I would ask you, in reply, why is it that you and your fellow-Christians furnish us with no other? If you would only make the experiment, we could give you all the illustrations you require. To the shame of Protestant Christendom, this is the only Church which could, with any propriety, be called a Missionary body. Other sects, as far as they have evinced anything like the same spirit, have reaped the same fruits.

The Churches are beginning to look upon the Missionary enterprise with an eye of favour, and no doubt that denomination will become the most popular and powerful which combines with the purity of its doctrines, the strongest zeal in their promulgation. It is to seminaries pervaded by this spirit that young men, and those of the greatest promise, will resort. It is under this banner that individuals and Churches, repelled by bigotry, wearied with bickerings, and emaciated by error, will range themselves and prosper.

When we speak of the vigour which Missionary exertions throw into our domestic institutions, we refer to a very natural operation. That man who has courage to attempt a great enterprise despises the difficulties of a small one. The energy produced by the one overlooks all the appalling trifles of the other. When have the Churches ever accomplished so much for America as since they have put forth special efforts for the Heathen?

III. The Church, through Missionary effort, places herself in the best, and indeed the only, position for receiving the most abundant spiritual blessings. In the first place, these efforts have a direct tendency to remove the most serious obstructions to piety and efficiency. Where the work of evangelizing the

world is carried on with energy, it indicates and produces self-denial and liberality. We need not stop to show that nothing is more repugnant to eminent holiness or usefulness than a selfish, parsimonious spirit. It is abhorrent in the eyes of a holy God. "For the iniquity of his covetousness," said Jehovah, "was I wroth, and smote him." However paradoxical it may appear, it is true, that they who give the most have the most to give. Their ability increases with the benevolence of their dispositions. There are those which scatter and yet increase. "But this I say," is the instructive lesson of inspiration on this point, "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." What terms more explicit and emphatic could be employed?

But Missionary zeal not only removes those encumbrances which enchain our energies, it not only increases our ability to receive and communicate spiritual blessings, but it secures to us those promises which are connected with enlarged exertions. "The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." "If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day: and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. And they that shall be of thee, shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in."

With promises so unrestricted, have we attributed too much to the influence of Missions upon their friends and supporters? And as these promises are made only to the benevolent, can they be realized to those who neglect the most prominent objects of mercy? Since none can hope to prosper who disobey an express command, then they who aim at the universal

triumph of Christianity, and none but they, can effect the blessings enumerated in these texts. "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea: thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the gravel thereof."

If, then, the re-action of Missionary labour be so salutary to the Church, if it tends to increase her piety and energy, if it aid in supplying her domestic destitution, and if it place her in the only position in which she can expect the greatest spiritual blessings, then,

IV. It must encourage and enable the Church still more to extend her limits, and thus to return to the Heathen world the full influence of her improved condition. This consequence is certain. It would be a dictate of selfish policy if it were only a secular interest. Missionary effort is its own reward.

We have seen that it not only demands large resources, but supplies the resources it demands. There is, however, a nobler principle for this enlarged policy than personal recompence. Confidence is gathered from success, and energy from action. Nothing so effectually convinces the Church of the impotence of her own might, and the necessity and adequacy of her Redeemer's promised aid, as the effort to restore a rebellious world to its God. It is the most stupendous enterprise in which mortals have an agency. It taxes the utmost strength, and then makes demands upon faith, which infinitude alone can meet. One reason why so little is accomplished by Christians is, they make such feeble and irresolute experiments. They measure their duty by their untasked ability and untried faith. What has not been accomplished by those who were "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might?" What would not be effected if we took the Lord at his word, and attempted what his commands enjoin? Just so far as the Church can be prompted to exertion, will she gather confidence for new and greater efforts; until, finding herself omnipotent in the strength of her Lord, she makes her final struggle, and lays a conquered world at the expectant Saviour's feet.

This subject teaches, that lengthening the cords of the Church is strengthening her stakes. The two are inseparable;

and they who confine themselves within their own limits, and labour first and exclusively to improve their domestic interests, without obeying the injunction and following the order of the text, will, probably, accomplish as little at home as they attempt abroad. The spirit itself is wrong. We have no right to make that distinction between the domestic and foreign field, between ministerial and Missionary obligation, which the Bible nowhere recognises, but everywhere rejects. How is it possible that we can learn the rule and object of the ministerial office from the Bible, and yet believe that our principal exertions should be limited to the one-seventieth part of the habitable world?

Our only authority for preaching the Gospel; the promises and predictions of the word of God; the purchase of the Saviour's death; the triumph of his oppressed Church; the highest glory of his mediatorial reign; all demand the universal diffusion and dominion of Christianity.

The Apostles, who received the commands of the Saviour from his divine lips, and who were inspired both to comprehend and fulfil them, have marked out the course of their successors. There was a peculiar alliance existing between the seed of Abraham and their covenant God, and it was for this reason, and not on account of mere private relationship, that the Apostles were instructed to begin at Jerusalem. But how did they interpret and obey this clause of their commission? One of them remained permanently at Jerusalem; the rest left their native land and kindred, and went everywhere preaching the Gospel of the kingdom. Paul has taught us his interest in his countrymen. His "heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel" was, "that they might be saved." He could "wish himself accursed from Christ for his brethren, his kinsmen, according to the flesh:" and yet, while multitudes of his countrymen were perishing, and he knew it, he went far hence, to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. Most evidently he must either have considered his obligations as connected more with the number to be saved, than with his personal relationship to them, or he must have believed that he was doing more for the benefit of his countrymen by foreign than domestic labour.

If, then, we have not mistaken the genius of the Gospel, the command of the Saviour, and the spirit and policy of his Apostles, we may learn how to promote the interests of the body to which we belong. If with the purity of her faith, the harmony of her measures, and the mutual confidence of her children, the Church of our fathers should arise, and in the strength of her Saviour's promise devote her main energies to the conversion of the benighted and neglected nations of the earth, we believe she would soon far exceed her present strength and limits; and, if her bright example was not followed, outgrow as well as outstrip every other Christian body in the land. We do not derogate from the importance which may attach to domestic interests; but we dissent totally from the opinion that they merit that priority and almost exclusiveness of attention which they have received. If what has been advanced in reference to the reaction of Missionary labour be true; if the corresponding sentiment of multitudes, the most judicious and devoted in the land, be correct; there can be no question, that our prosperity will be proportioned to our efforts in the cause. Shall we not, then, arise, and take a stand on this subject? Ought not the Church to equip herself for this warfare? Should not all her institutions and resources be brought to bear upon this most desirable object? We pray for her peace, and desire her prosperity; here are the means to obtain them both.

And even if there were no superior advantages resulting to our own country and kindred from foreign Missions, the command of Christ, and the necessity of its fulfilment, remain the same.

Christian brethren, we are debtors to our Saviour; we are debtors to the Heathen. The highest honour of the one, the greatest happiness of the other, alike demand the universal diffusion of Christianity. We are guilty of rebellion against the Saviour, we rob the ignorant and perishing of their due, if we refuse to preach the Gospel to every creature. With as much justice may we withhold the property of one to give to another, as monopolize the blessings of Christianity, or offer them only to our friends, when they are equally designed for the world. Christians have lost sight of their inviolable obli-

gations. They regard the salvation of the world as a work of gratuity; some fancy it a work even of supererogation. We all act as though we had the liberty to withhold the eternal life, and seal the eternal death, of those countless millions whom Christ has thrown upon our mercy for their all. Nay, brethren, we act as though we were resolved, in violation of all justice and mercy, to leave a prostrate, bleeding world to perish. As Christians, we must not exclude from our minds the truth that where there is one soul to be saved in America, scores are perishing in other countries. We are bound to remember that the number of Gospel Ministers in America and in Pagan countries, differs not in proportion to the multiplicity, but the paucity, of souls; not according to the necessities, but the supplies, of the places. Here there are comparatively few to be saved; there crowds are lying in hopeless, helpless wretchedness. None of these few are obliged to sink into hell; none of those crowds, we fear, can rise to heaven. They know of no Saviour.

Brethren, overlook the scanty limits which define your native land, and gaze upon the world,—the Gospel field. What an affecting, sickening spectacle! Covered with the dead and dying; crowded with the ignorant and miserable; the darkness that shrouds it, how deep and starless! O how few, how glimmering, how widely separated, are “the lamps of life,” borne hence by the Missionaries! Islands, kingdoms, and empires without a soul who can teach that there is a Saviour, and yet all totally unfit for heaven; in equal need of salvation with ourselves. If there be anything in present suffering, anything in spiritual ignorance, unrestrained depravity, irresistible temptation, and hopeless misery; anything in the eternal and irremediable destruction of millions of immortal beings; compassionate the majority of mankind. Who, that can leave a land where so few live to perish, and so many labour to save them, ought not to go? Would not the places now occupied be filled? Would not the souls now taught be instructed by others? And can we refuse to go where none will supply our places, and the souls we might rescue from hell cannot be delivered without us? If going reacts upon the best interests of the Church; if staying keeps millions out of their dues, out of heaven; what is wanting

but the spirit of our office to swell the numbers of Missionaries a hundred, nay, a thousand, fold? Who will go? Who that feels himself excluded from the privilege by some insuperable obstacle, will not interest others, and pray, and contribute, and plead for this object? We appeal to all. Centuries have rolled away unimproved. Unnumbered millions have passed into an awful eternity; legions are daily swelling the catalogue of the hopeless dead; not a moment remains to be lost. O! when will the redeemed of the Lord sympathize and co-operate with their Saviour in reclaiming a fallen world?

Church of the living God, awake! Thy slumbers, O, how guilty, how cruel! Thy Husband, thy Redeemer, bids thee awake: and what he says to all he says to each, "Awake!"

Here we would close, but we cannot. There are those present who have no interest in this discussion; some who have probably not listened to one-half of its sentiments. The reasons are obvious. They have no interest in the Heathen, and none in the Churches, because they have no interest in the Saviour, and none in themselves. What shall we say to such? Shall we call them blind, deaf, dead? This might delude them with the imagination that they are objects of misfortune, not subjects of guilt. "For this people's heart is waxed gross," is the language of the Saviour, "and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them." Fearful iniquity! after guilt had been contracted, and pardon most generously proffered, to double that guilt by despising the pardon! And O, wondrous mercy, that not only has received the sword of justice in its own bosom, but stays the uplifted arm that would bathe that glittering blade in the despiser's heart! My impenitent hearers, if there be guilt under heaven, it rests upon you; if there be compassion in heaven, it seems to have been well nigh expended upon you. What have you not deserved, for what have you not resisted? What could have been done for you and to you that God has not done? O let his goodness, at last, lead you to repentance!

DISCOURSE XVII.

MISSIONARIES PURIFIED BY AFFLICTION.*

BY THE REV. FREDERICK B. THOMSON,
AMERICAN MISSIONARY IN BORNEO.

ISAIAH xlvi. 10.

“Behold I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.”

“IN the world ye shall have tribulation.” Such is the heritage of the saints upon the earth. It applies to all God’s people, particularly to his dearest children, and pre-eminently to those designed to become instruments of great and extensive good. This principle is strikingly illustrated in the lives of the Patriarchs and Prophets. The most touching incidents in the history of Abraham and Joseph, of Moses and David, come directly in point. But the whole course of discipline through which the ancient Church was called to pass, both in the wilderness and in the promised land, may justly be adduced for the same purpose. Indeed, it is evidently to this that our text has more especial reference. Even God’s eternal Son was not excepted from the operation of the rule. “For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” True, the specific object may be, and doubtless often is, different, and sometimes widely different, as in the case of the Saviour, compared with believers. But in regard to the latter, with whom we are now chiefly concerned, the general reason is obvious. It is thus they are purified from the dross of sin. It is thus they are freed from the elements of earthliness. It is thus they are refined, and made not only

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susceptible of a warmer sympathy or fellow-feeling for the wretched, but actually made more holy, more harmless, more entirely and sincerely devoted to the service of God; in a word, more like their blessed Master. For it is only as they reflect his image that they can please God or benefit their fellow-men.

The process is often dreadfully severe, though always tempered to the weakness of our nature, and carried on gradually, so as not to overwhelm us at once by the suddenness and awfulness of the change it is to produce. This cannot be effected at a single stroke. Should He immediately "finish the work and cut it short in righteousness," the spirit would fail before him, and the souls which he has made. But "He knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust." Hence, he says, "Behold I have refined thee, but not with silver;" that is, not in the way in which silver is refined.

It is well known that the precious metals, and especially silver, require the most intense and searching power of fire to purge away their impurities; such devouring heat, in fact, as will infallibly consume all but the essential unadulterated mass. This is an emblem of the final test to be applied in the judgment. But happily our God and Saviour has a more penetrating eye, and a more exquisite discernment, than the most skilful artificer in gold and silver. He can perceive the faintest traces of his own likeness, not only before the process of refining is complete, but as soon as they are impressed upon the soul; so that he can try, approve, and choose in the furnace of affliction, and need not leave the decision either for himself or for us to the more fiery ordeal of the judgment. Then he will satisfy the universe: but he always satisfies himself before, and is willing to afford us all the benefit of his divine satisfaction.

To secure this result, however, those whom the hand of God has touched should "hear the rod and who hath appointed it." We must attend to the voice of God in our afflictions. Leaving out of view all second causes, we must see and acknowledge his sovereign right and power alone in these things; and then, with all humility, meekness, and docility, inquire wherefore he is thus contending with us? what is the cause of the chastisement? what is the design of our Father in its infliction? This is necessary, in order to view the dispensation

aright, and especially to turn it to his glory, and the profit of our own souls.

I. I need not say, dear brethren, that I have a special aim in bringing this subject to your consideration on the present occasion. It is no new reflection that the hand of God is upon us. From the commencement of our Mission to this very day, one wave of trouble has rolled quickly upon another, till it seems almost as if we were at last to be swallowed up, and no trace of our existence to be left but the sad and cheerless record of our blasted hopes and unrealized anticipations. The fair fields of labour we expected to enter have been shut and barred against us. Our forces have been scattered, and our energies enfeebled. After a lapse of five years, during which our original number has been almost doubled by new recruits, those remaining in the field are even less than the first company which arrived. Truly we have been sifted like wheat. Some have been forced away by unconquerable bodily disease, and one by the more inveterate maladies of the soul. Sickness has entered every house, and death has snatched a victim from almost every family. The infant has been taken from its mother's breast, and the mother has been called to leave her sucking child in the hand of strangers. The sweet home of the husband and father has been made desolate, and his heart-strings rent by the pangs of separation from the wife of his youth, and the object of his tenderest attachment; he has been doomed to sit and sigh in the weeds of his widowhood. Yes, "I am the man that hath" thus "seen affliction by the rod of his wrath." Even now, when we were beginning fondly to hope that the Lord would turn our captivity as the streams in the south, and to pray, with some confidence of expectation, "Save, now, we beseech, O Lord! O Lord, we beseech thee, now send prosperity," the knell of death has again reached our ears; and one on whom we calculated with the utmost assurance to come and cheer us on our way, and help us in our work, has been taken to another sphere, and called to the performance of other duties. Yes, Stryker, who panted to be with us, to see our faces in the flesh; to joy and sorrow, to labour and suffer, with us, has taken his flight from earth, and entered the world of spirits.

But we have not merely suffered among ourselves. The cause

to which we are devoted has, in the same period, experienced the saddest reverses. I do not refer now so particularly to the disappointment and disaster which has attended the most enlarged plans and the most vigorous endeavours to establish and sustain individual Missions, though these are by no means unworthy of consideration, but to the general barrenness of those results of Missionary labour which are most of all to be desired, together with the severe and repeated checks which have impeded the operations of the whole scheme, and the awful shocks to which the entire system of means and measures has, in consequence, been subjected.

I am well aware that great and distinguished mercies have been mingled with our cup of adversity. Our cause, while made to suffer so grievously in some respects, has been most abundantly favoured in others. While plans have been thwarted, operations trammelled, and Missions broken up in one quarter, in another the Spirit has been marvellously poured out, and souls in unwonted numbers have been gathered into the kingdom. Nor have we ourselves, though contending with an almost unremitted tide of afflictions, been deserted in the conflict, or left without marked tokens of divine regard. Many a wound which pierced to the quick has been graciously healed. The breach, which seemed heaven-wide, has been mysteriously closed. Apparent evil has been converted into certain good. And in a thousand ways the Lord has been declaring himself ready to "return and repent, and leave a blessing behind."

Yet who can look at all the various and continued chastisements of his hand without something more than a suspicion that he is still contending with us? that he sees much which is wrong in our principles, our feelings, or our conduct? and that he means to refine us in the furnace before he gives us the most divine success in our work?

Let us, then, endeavour to take these things deeply to heart, and to this end,

II. Humbly call to mind and contemplate, at least, some of the causes which we may suppose have induced those fatherly rebukes which we have experienced.

But the question we shall thus be called to answer embraces too many points of serious moment to be treated, at large, in a

single discourse. The most that can be expected of us will be to suggest topics of solemn reflection, rather than to discuss the merits of the case. Nor even, with this limitation in view, do we intend to survey the whole ground. It may easily be that the Church is as deeply interested as her messengers in the secret reasons of our common calamities. But while we consider ourselves, in a deeply interesting and holy sense, one with the Church, and would keep the chords of sympathy between us always vibrated, and always tender; yet, isolated as we are in situation, though not in heart, we are ill qualified to judge either of character or conduct at home, nor would the office of censors at all beseem us if ever so well qualified. We take it for granted the Church, in all her various tribes and sections, will devoutly ponder the same momentous question; but as it will behove all "to mourn apart," not only sectionally, but individually, so we consider it our especial province to examine, apply, and improve the subject as Missionaries.

Until we have thus cleared ourselves, we have no right even to think the difficulty is elsewhere. Indeed, notwithstanding it is a matter of common concern, and must be canvassed as such, each individual should be very sure it is not in himself before he imputes it to others, lest, at the very moment he condemns the offender, the Judge of all should thunder in his guilty soul, "Thou art the man!"

Such is the spirit in which I desire to present this topic to your solemn consideration; and while, with great diffidence, offering my reflections for common profit, I would fain have my own heart alive to every searching truth, and every awakening sentiment, which may be uttered.

At the same time it is not my design to be personal, and, therefore, I shall not confine myself to the more glaring faults of individuals, or to the inconsistencies and sins which have come to light in our own little community; but taking an enlarged and comprehensive view of facts, circumstances, and characters, within the field of observation just defined, endeavour to turn your thoughts to those hidden springs of action from which all our mistakes and follies proceed, and which we may consequently regard as those roots of bitterness which Infinite Wisdom means to extract by the instrumentality of

affliction, accompanied by the living energies of his own Spirit. And,

1. I would notice the want of holiness of heart. By holiness is meant universal purity. In God this is absolute; in his people here, at least, it is only comparative; though if they live the religion they profess, however it may sometimes fail in practice, it will be perfect in principle, in purpose, and in effort. It implies, then, the hearty renunciation of all sin; a sincere aversion to it in every perceptible form; and a living, active, and ardent desire to avoid it in ourselves, and discountenance and oppose it in all around us. It supposes our motives to be simple, disinterested, and spiritual, and all our conduct to be governed by a supreme regard for the glory of God, and the good of his creatures. Thus it raises the soul above the contagion of earthliness, and assimilates it to the atmosphere of heaven. But while it elevates the affections, it softens the feelings, and humbles the carriage. It exerts a mellowing influence on all the features of the character. Indeed, it draws out, heightens, and brightens every Christian grace and accomplishment. Hence, you will readily perceive it fits its subjects for every good word and work, and that without the savour of this salt we are actually good for nothing. How, then, does the state of our hearts, and the conduct of our lives, harmonize with this grand requisite of duty, devotion, and usefulness? If weighed in the balance, shall we not be found wanting? O, let us be honest with ourselves; let us look into our hearts; let us scrutinize our motives; let us bring our thoughts, our feelings, our words, our actions, to the test of truth, to the touchstone of spiritual purity, of genuine holiness. "Without holiness no man can see the Lord." Nor can we expect, without holiness, to lead others to the contemplation of his glory. The idea is as absurd as the end will be fruitless. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." This is the divine injunction. Be it, then, our constant care to perfect holiness in the fear of God. If we do not, there will remain nought but "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." Then He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and though we ourselves should be saved, all our works performed in worldliness, and stained with sin, will assuredly be burned up.

2. Out of this defect, supposing it to exist, will naturally spring a feeling of self-importance and self-complacency, than which nothing can be more displeasing to God, exert a more withering influence upon the soul, or more surely blight every prospect of spiritual usefulness. And, unhappily, if the needful safeguard is thus lacking, the very nature of our work is calculated to foster the developement and growth of this deadly poison.

The conversion of the world is the noblest enterprise which can engage the powers of man. Nor has its moral grandeur been hidden from the discerning mind, or left to spend its force upon the more wise and pious few who could be quickened by its heavenly glory without being dazzled by its unearthly splendour. It has been made the theme of the pious orator, and the effulgence of its praises has blazoned from the sacred desk. Placed in proud contrast with all that is magnificent in nature, and all that is sublime in sentiment, its high and commanding superiority has challenged the admiration of the good and great of every name. It is, in fact, so far as our knowledge extends, the great work of the great God. What an honour, then, for any mortal to co-operate in its execution! Whose bosom would not heave with conscious elevation at the thought of being associated with it even in the humblest way? This is natural; but, O, how dangerous! Great grace is needed to maintain our balance at such a giddy height. And to increase the peril, especially of the youthful Missionary, a quite needless, and altogether unwarranted, line of distinction has sometimes been drawn between him and the Pastors of the Churches at home; as if they were not really engaged in the same work, and, provided they are in their proper sphere, and perform their duties with humility, diligence, and zeal, occupying a post as honourable, and achieving results as glorious, as the most distinguished ambassadors of Christ to the Heathen. Hence, it becomes so easy to substitute our connexion with the Missionary enterprise for fidelity in its prosecution, and imagine it is enough to have enlisted under the banner of the cross, though we should never fight the battles of the Lord. Nay, we may even flatter ourselves with the idea that the zeal we have shown, and the sacrifices we have made, in giving ourselves to this work, cannot be more than compensated by any measure of

self-indulgence accessible in the field, or any degree of arrogance in our conduct towards our fellow-labourers. Thus a wide door is opened for the admission of anger, discord, dissension, and all uncharitableness. Only let one person think of himself more highly than he ought to think, and consequently love to have the pre-eminence, and what a fire may be kindled even amongst the least combustible materials!

Another no less baneful consequence of the same spirit, is a disposition to look more at the splendour of plans, and the grandeur of undertakings, than at the power of carrying them into execution, or the particular indications of Providence, and other circumstances which ought to govern our decisions and direct the employment of our energies. Am I venting suspicions without the bounds of probability? Alas, I have heard things in this connexion which make me blush for the motives of Missionaries.

It is well for us to do great things when God puts it in the power of our hands to do them; but woe to us if we vainly attempt great things simply because they are great, without regard to our peculiar situation and the calls of duty from other quarters. Far better were it for us to remain contented in an humbler sphere, than thus to provoke the wrath of heaven by seeking our own instead of the things which are Jesus Christ's. "Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not." Our real glory is to annihilate self. Our highest interest is to be willing to be anything, in order to glorify God, to honour Christ, and save immortal souls.

3. Closely allied to the preceding point is the entertainment of romantic notions of the Missionary work. The enterprise of converting this revolted world to God is a sober reality. It is no quixotic undertaking, inspired by a heated imagination, and urged forward by the day-dreams of a disordered fancy. Nor can it be carried on by any principle of a visionary enthusiasm, or a whimsical philosophy. There is far too much of stubborn fact in the difficulties, the dangers, and the discouragements to be encountered. It may be questioned whether the best impulses of such a motive are capable of conducting its subjects through the most distant outworks of the citadel we have to storm; through the woods and marshes, the bogs and quagmires,

which are often to be passed in order to see the enemy in his strongholds, and find out the most important points of assault. How, then, can it be expected to carry them through the long, tedious, spirit-trying warfare with all that is perverse and wicked in the human heart, and all that is wily and daring in the devices of Satan?

It is to be hoped, however, that the halo of romance is, at last, too much dissipated for any considerate person to enter the field merely on such unsubstantial grounds as these. Some correct idea of the work, some sense of its importance and difficulty, we may reasonably suppose is entertained by most, if not all, who now offer their services to God and the Church. Yet we greatly fear that not a few still allow their imaginations far more play, in contemplating this subject, than is consistent with truth, or conducive to usefulness. A sort of enchantment is spread over the Missionary field, which makes it appear, after all, something like a fairy-land. Difficulties, dangers, discouragements, present themselves in such a romantic air that they wane into insignificance, and are treated as unreal; or the charm of suffering and toiling in a good cause appears so fascinating in the distance, that the power of endurance is entirely overrated in anticipation. On the other hand, all that is beautiful, and all that is grand in high enterprise and noble daring; all that is good, and amiable, and praiseworthy in virtuous conduct and holy effort; shines out with such overpowering lustre as quite to entrance the soul which, lost in the glare of apparent results, forgets or disregards the toils and conflicts through which they have been gained.

These views and feelings most completely prepare the Missionary candidate for disappointment, and such disappointment as will be apt to overwhelm him with despondency, and unnerve his energies for any vigorous exertion. When he comes to stand upon the ground, all such airy fancies will be found to vanish; and unless he has something more substantial to support him, with broken spirits and a quailing heart, he will shrink from difficulty, and flee from danger, as if aught of this kind had never entered into his estimates of the Missionary life. Yea, he will be frightened at the rustling of a leaf, and "flee when no man pursueth." Thus, ere long, his own security and

his own comfort become the grand objects of his care, and he is so taken up with his health, his comfort, or his personal gratification, that his work, if ever he commenced it, is neglected; he is removed as far as possible from the sphere in which he could best discharge the duties of his commission, and wrapped up in the mantle of supreme selfishness. And will God, think you, smile upon such a Missionary, or bless the interest with which he is connected? No; should nature, all around him, thrive, and bid him, too, to flourish, that man will wither beneath the frown of heaven. Nor is it likely that he will perish alone in his iniquity: the cause in which he is engaged will assuredly suffer, and God alone can tell where the consequences of his folly will end.

For out of this, you will readily perceive, may—nay, I had almost said certainly will—grow another evil of the most fearful magnitude, that is to say,

4. Carelessness and unfaithfulness in using means of support. These are a most sacred trust, and we cannot possibly guard their employment with too jealous an eye. They come not unfrequently from the poor, the widow, and the fatherless, and are therefore the fruits of their self-denial and devotion. What unthankfulness to squander the gifts, the very living of the destitute! They are from the treasury of the Lord. What sacrilege to divert them from their appropriate channel, and employ them for luxurious gratification or needless profusion! I have no reference to the slander that Missionaries live in palaces, and live like princes. All who know the truth, know the contrary; and those who will not believe upon the most abundant testimony, probably “would not be persuaded though one rose from the dead.”

But there are other ways in which Missionaries may err in this matter. If, for instance, they choose a location more on account of its pleasantness, and the comforts with which it is surrounded, than for the sphere of usefulness it affords; or if they choose a more costly in preference to a more economical dwelling, merely because the site is more agreeable and fashionable, or the building more elegant and tasteful; though the difference may seem trifling, and the object allowable, and though they persuade themselves the time is not come for them to

build the Lord's house, may not God justly demand of them, "Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?" But this is only a single illustration of the point in hand, and one, perhaps, after all, not often likely to occur in fact. Yet it shows how easy it is to go astray; and when once astray, all know how difficult it is to return to the path of duty. Perhaps we have all something to lament in this respect. At any rate those providences which have most signally afflicted the cause to which we are devoted, seem significantly to point to a great evil of this kind in one quarter or another. If we have not done the deed, we may have winked at those who did it. It is an awful thing thus to "kick at the sacrifices of Jehovah, and make ourselves fat with the chiefest of the offerings of his people." For this sin the sons of Eli were cut off, and even their father brought the judgment of heaven upon his house for ever, for the iniquity he knew, "because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."

But there is a species of error, coming under this general description, to which Missionaries in certain situations are peculiarly liable, and which, therefore, deserves a separate and more particular consideration. I mean,

5. Turning aside from our great business to any other object of pursuit. This is certainly nothing less than unfaithfulness in the application of Missionary funds. These we know are given for one specific purpose; the support of Missionaries in the performance of Missionary labour; that is, labour bearing as directly as may be on the conversion of benighted souls, and the moral and spiritual illumination of this dark world. If, therefore, we allow ourselves to be diverted in any measure from this simple and definite end, it matters not how good or important the object which draws our attention, we are unfaithful to our trust, and cannot expect the blessing of our King and Saviour.

These remarks, of course, do not touch such subordinate work as is needful or important to the successful prosecution of our grand design. All literary labours and systems of instruction which bear directly on this point are not merely proper, but in a sense actually binding upon us.

It is easy to see, however, that this is a very perilous position. Especially if we have hard materials to work upon; men who have strong and unyielding prejudices, and these fortified by a show of science, falsely so called, it is extremely natural for our worldly minds to slip into the conclusion that these bulwarks of error and superstition must be swept away by the force of real learning, *before* we can expect to find an entrance for the truth as it is in Jesus. Thus literature comes to be substituted for the Bible, as if the word of God was not more quick and powerful than the word of man, and even sharper than any two-edged sword. But such a perversion of our high calling has still more hurtful consequences. It may produce much unhappy feeling, and many painful conflicts between brethren whose hearts ought to be knit together in love. A literary spirit is not the spirit of Missions, and the effects of the exchange will be seen in the bitterness and rancour always manifested when critical acumen is more cherished than the love of souls. Forgetting that, at the best, all the productions of foreigners in a strange tongue must needs be imperfect, and endeavouring to correct each other's faults in charity and meekness, such men as Missionaries may fall to biting and devouring one another, on account of mistakes in the grammar and idiom of languages, in which none have reason to boast of their proficiency. This is just as if the Apostles and Evangelists had set themselves up as disputants concerning the comparative purity of the Greek used in the Gospels and Epistles; while even the Holy Ghost, in infinite wisdom, left them all to employ that kind of Greek, intelligible, though not pure, with which they were most familiar, and could employ to the best advantage. What a comment upon our superior taste and discernment! But, in truth, it is all vain jangling of those who have swerved from the path of duty, and affect to be literary pedants, instead of humble ambassadors of the meek and lowly Jesus. Nor can any of us expect a better end if we do not stick unto his testimonies, and give ourselves wholly to the performance of his work.

After noticing so many other reasons for the divine displeasure, which it is supposed may be to a greater or less extent among Missionaries, it will not appear strange that I should add,

6. Inadequate concern for the salvation of souls. If men are to be found among us so deficient in principle, and so erratic in practice, as I have led you to imagine, then it cannot surprise you to intimate that the care of souls has not fired every bosom and weighed upon every spirit as it ought.

Indeed, independent of these things, there is much in the circumstances of the Missionary, and the situation of those for whom he labours, to damp the ardour and relax the energies of the best and most devoted. It is difficult in the extreme for our poor natures and our weak graces, when once familiar with the blindness, the insensibility, and the obstinacy of Heathen and Mohammedans, to maintain all the warmth of interest and tenderness of feeling for their spiritual welfare, which constitutes the Missionary spirit, and is essential to the Missionary character. If, therefore, we are not greatly on our guard, and especially if we do not habitually look up for assistance, we shall most assuredly become dead to the spirit of our work. And if our concern for souls once ceases, we immediately lose all the high and commanding motives of the Gospel for self-consecration and devotion. We become mere worldlings, even in the prosecution of our heavenly calling. The glories and terrors of the eternal world wax dim to our spiritual vision, or fade away entirely from our sight. Whatever we may think proper to do for the body and for time, the undying man and the unchanging state are coldly overlooked, or unfeelingly neglected; and whatever we may achieve, the end of our commission is not answered. Is this, then, the performance of Missionary work? What if we cry up schools, and devote ourselves to secular and scientific instruction? What if we clothe the naked, and feed the hungry? What if we train the mind and the body to all that is wholesome, refined, and elevating? If Christ is not faithfully, affectionately, and habitually preached; if the Gospel is not constantly inculcated, applied, and enforced; if the conscience is not enlightened, awakened, and warned; if everything in our power is not done to convert and sanctify the soul, our labour is lost: we cannot expect God to bless it; and without his blessing it may be worse than useless. The richest earthly blessing may be thus turned into a curse. And let us not flatter ourselves that the curse will fall only on the head of

these sheep. "Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves. Should not the shepherds feed the flock?" "Yea, woe is unto me, *if I preach not the Gospel!*"

But to sum up all these evils in one comprehensive description, or to point out the source from which they all flow, I must call your attention, lastly,

7. To a lack of the spirit of devotion. Prayer is as correctly as it is poetically called, "the Christian's vital breath." Just as far, therefore, as we lose the spirit of prayer, we cease to live the life of a Christian; all our graces languish, our souls verge to the shades of death, yea, our feet take hold on hell. Hence arises every species of spiritual decay. Our great enemy immediately gets the advantage over us. Our defence is departed. For the Lord will not protect those who shun his presence, or do not find delight in his communion, and love to walk beneath his shadow. Thus deserted of heaven, left to eat of the fruit of our own way, and exposed to the wiles of the adversary, the natural consequence is, that we wax worse and worse. There is no corruption in principle or practice to which we are not liable; and if not checked in our career, and restored by grace divine, there are no lengths to which we may not go in delusion and in sin. O, my brethren, into what an abyss may even the Missionary thus be allowed to fall! The thought is enough to make the stoutest tremble, as the event is sufficient to make the ears of every one that heareth it to tingle. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

But, brethren, I hope better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though I thus speak. Still, it becomes us all to beware of the danger as we would escape the catastrophe. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." This is our citadel. If we cling to the horns of the altar all will be well; but if we let go our hold, ruin is inevitable.

Here, therefore, you will allow me to appeal to your hearts, and ask, How does this matter stand? Can our closets, the places of our secret retirement, bear witness to the fervour of our devotions? Is the spirit of grace and supplication manifested at the family altar, in the social circle, and amid the hallowed exercises of the solemn assembly? Is its fragrance

breathed through all our daily avocations? Does it float over all the scenes in which we move? If it does, then how sweet will be our tempers, how lovely and winning our carriage, how heavenly and elevating our conversation, how meekly we shall bear correction and reproof, how tenderly we shall expostulate with the erring, how humbly and affectionately we shall strive to inform the ignorant and persuade the obstinate, how beautiful, consistent, and influential will be all the conduct of our lives! O, if we live in the Spirit let us walk in the Spirit. Then the Spirit shall take of the things of Christ, and show them unto us, and we shall know all that pertains to life and godliness, and become workmen that need not be ashamed.

Now, especially, we should abound in prayer, for the hand of God is upon us; and if we do not heed the stroke, he will punish us seven times more for our sins. As yet he seems to say, "Behold I have refined thee, but not with silver." Then he shall change his tone and declare, "I will come near to you in judgment." "But who may abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth?" "For our God is a consuming fire!"

That, therefore, we may not only avert his present displeasure, and be prepared for the more fiery ordeal, but realize all the blessings of the covenant ourselves, and become a blessing to all around us, let us strive to improve the afflictive dispensations with which he has visited us,

1. By deep humility and self-abasement. This is doubtless the posture into which he would bring us. "That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God." Nor can we maintain any other posture with safety. So surely as our hearts are lifted up, it will be to our peril, if not to our destruction. But will any wait to be coolly reasoned into this frame? Why, that one word of the Most High should break in pieces and melt the hardest heart: "All that thou hast done!" What piercing reflections must this sentence harrow up in the guilty soul. And who of us can plead entire innocence! We are verily guilty. And O how awful is the guilt implied in the slightest stain from the blood of souls! Think, for a moment, of the

fatal consequences. How far has the Missionary work been put back? How many hearts have been made to faint? How many hands have waxed feeble? How many souls have gone down to death unwarned? How many, for years to come, will have to tread in their steps? When you can answer these solemn inquiries with precision, you will have some adequate idea of this awfully awakening subject. Meanwhile our hearts must be hard indeed if the barest suggestion does not cover our faces with confusion, and make us wish to hide them in the dust.

But we should be equally on our guard against that spurious humility which lies in dark and melancholy views of the divine dispensations, and leads to cheerless, if not plaintive, musings on the present, and hopeless forebodings of the future. This is only pride under another name, and is as displeasing to our God and Saviour as it is fatal to our own peace and profit. True humility is one of the most engaging features of the gracious soul. While it melts down and removes every disposition to haughtiness and self-importance, it softens and smooths much, if not all, of the natural roughnesses and austerities of the character. It dispels the gloom of despondency, raises the drooping spirits, and lets in upon the feelings the genial light and warmth of heaven's eternal sun. Thus it quickens and invigorates every principle of activity and devotion.

This remark naturally leads us to notice another effect which should be produced by these humbling dispensations,

2. Renewed self-consecration. We are not our own, for we are bought with a price. But this we are sadly prone to forget. Hence those grievous wanderings we have just been lamenting, and which we have reason to suppose have drawn down the divine displeasure, not only upon ourselves, but upon the cause to which we are devoted. O, then, while we remember our past deficiencies, and return into the path of duty, with weeping and with supplications, come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord by a perpetual covenant, that *shall not* be forgotten! Yea, let us make a full surrender. Are we, indeed, so thoroughly emptied of self as true humility supposes? Then, surely, we ought to "glorify God in our bodies and our spirits, which are his." And is it not high time for us to be

absorbed in concern for the interests of his kingdom, and the salvation of precious souls, and to labour for the promotion of these objects, under the full realization of eternal things? In such circumstances it will be well, expressly and formally, to renew our covenant engagements. If done in a holy, spiritual manner, this will have a most reviving effect upon our hearts. At any rate, they should be solemnly recalled from day to day, and a deep impression of their reality and sacredness should be carried into all the avocations of life.

Thus we should "put on the Lord Jesus Christ," and in no respect whatever make "provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." But this will evidently require,

3. Increased and constant watchfulness. Let us not, for a moment, dream, as others are apt to dream for us, that Missionaries are not men, or certainly not men of like passions with themselves. I will not say that the Missionary work is not calculated to promote, what we all know it requires, pre-eminent piety. I believe it is. But how? As idle dreamers would suppose, by a sort of undefined spiritual enchantment? Is there any direct influence in the circumstances in which we are placed, to enwrap the soul in heavenly contemplations, to give it living and transforming views of eternal things, and to quicken its naturally sluggish pace in the life of godliness and the ways of usefulness? The very reverse of this will be found, by experience, to be the sad reality. But as it is the agitation of the waters which purifies them, so it is the exercise of the graces that stimulates and strengthens them. Yes, depend upon it, if the Missionary work tends to elevate the standard of piety, as it undoubtedly does when piety exists in life and vigour, it is by the severe, I had almost said desperate, trials and struggles to which it puts every principle of truth and fidelity in the soul. It requires the soldier to be not only fully armed, but ever wakeful and ever watchful, that he may stand always firm at his post, that he may press forward with ardour in his march, that he may not halt or falter on the way, and that he may not flee in the day of battle. Let us, therefore, "put on the whole armour of God," and habitually watch unto prayer. Thus shall we "be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

DISCOURSE XVIII.

RESOURCES OF THE ADVERSARY, AND MEANS
OF THEIR DESTRUCTION.*

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ISAIAH xlix. 25.—“Thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered.”

ISAIAH liii. 12.—“Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death.”

LUKE xi. 21, 22.—“When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.”

REV. xi. 15.—“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.”

REV. xix. 5, 6.—“And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”

THE Scriptures teach, that sin commenced its reign on earth under the auspices of a mighty fallen spirit; and that he, having seduced mankind from their allegiance to God, has been constantly employed to maintain his bad eminence over them. They also teach, that the Son of God has interposed to destroy the works of this spirit; and that he will accomplish the object; that the power of Satan shall be broken; and the whole world be restored to loyalty, and the favour of heaven.

The passages which have just been recited, allude to the success with which the enemy of God has fortified his cause; to its final overthrow; and to the exultation and joy with which the event will fill earth and heaven.

* Preached at New-York, before the American Board of Foreign Missions.

I am aware that with some the doctrine of fallen angels is but an eastern allegory; and the idea of a conflict between the creature and Creator, ridiculous, and unworthy of the divine supremacy. I can only say, that if there be not an order of sinful intelligences above men, the Bible is one of the most deceptive books ever written. The entire history of the world shows that human depravity, though operating in accordance with the laws of mind, is yet methodized and wielded with a comprehension of plan, wholly inexplicable upon the principle of accidental coincidence among men. That there should have been a system of well-constructed opposition to the Gospel, varying with circumstances, and comprehending the great amount of bad moral influence which has existed, without some presiding intellect, is as improbable as that all the particles of matter which compose the universe should have fallen into their existing method and order by mere accident, and without the presiding intellect of the Deity. And as to moral competition between the creature and the Creator, it exists, even if there be no fallen angels. It is a matter of fact before our eyes, a matter of experience too, that "the carnal mind is enmity against God;" and that "God, in Christ, is reconciling the world to himself."

It should be remembered also, that when God has formed moral beings, even he can govern them, as such, only by moral influence, and in accordance with the laws of mind; mere omnipotence being as irrelevant to the government of mind, as moral influence would be to the government of the material universe. Nor must it be forgotten that an alienated world requires more moral power for its restoration than that of simple law, which proved insufficient to maintain its allegiance. It requires a new moral influence, so introduced and applied as to corroborate law, and strengthen the loyalty of all the good, while rebels are reconciled and pardoned.

The reconciliation, through Christ, of such a world as this, in opposition to the rooted aversion of every heart, the concentrated power of social wickedness, and the ceaseless counteraction of mighty intelligences, principalities, and powers, does not seem to us an achievement unworthy of that Being who numbers the hairs of our head. By Prophets and Apostles it

is represented as exhibiting the height and depth, and length and breadth of the wisdom, and goodness, and power of God.

In this discourse it is proposed to consider, THE DEFENCES AND RESOURCES OF THE ENEMY, AND THE MEANS OF THEIR OVERTHROW.

We shall suppose, as the language of the text does, that the Christianity which is to prevail on the earth, is the Christianity of the heart, rising to high eminence, and extending its blessed influence through all the relations of society, until the kingdoms of this world shall become associations of holiness, the Gospel become the predominant spring of action, and its morality the governing rule of all mankind. The array of opposition to such a glorious change on earth, now demands our attention.

1. At the head of opposition to the Gospel, in numerical power, must be placed *idolatry*. To banish from the earth all knowledge of God and his government, and substitute a worship composed of lust and blood, seems most desirable to the great adversary, where circumstances allow it to be done; and this he has achieved in respect to about six hundred millions of the human family. In all that world of mind knowledge is in deep eclipse, intellect slumbers, conscience is paralysed, and all holy intercourse between earth and heaven is cut off; while passion and appetite, inflamed by sin, are suffered to prey uncontrolled.

2. The next form of opposition to the march of holiness is that of *imposture*. This was introduced by Mohammed. It was a system accommodated to the condition of a mingled population, composed of Pagans, Jews, and nominal Christians, all in a state of great ignorance, and deep moral debasement. By complimenting Abraham and Moses, he beguiled the Jew; by conceding to the Saviour the rank of a Prophet, he seduced the degenerate Christian; and by giving ample license to sensuality, in time and eternity, he secured the Pagan; and what persuasion failed to accomplish, was finished by the sword. Thus one hundred and forty millions have been grouped together under the most ferocious and horrid despotism that ever warred against heaven, or tormented man. Over all these the smoke from the bottomless pit has ascended, intercepting the light of heaven, and dooming them for centuries to "darkness visible."

3. Cotemporaneously with this system of imposture, and, like it, a subject of prophecy, arose the *Papal superstition*, in the form of a corrupted Christianity, and adapted to a state of intellectual improvement where the grossness of Mohammedan imposture might not be likely to prevail. This has been, and is still, the master-piece of that wisdom which is from beneath; concentrating the bad influence of all past systems; satisfactory to the Pagan, and not alarming to the degenerate Christian; dazzling through the medium of sense; and giving such a licence to sin, or such a cheap escape from its penalties, as allayed all fear, and gave a licence to boundless indulgence.

Until this horrid system arose, the resistance made to the Church of God had been planted without her walls. Now, the sacred citadel is assailed and entered. Her friends are driven out, subjected to obloquy and death. The perverted authority of heaven, and the sacred name of Christianity herself, and all the glorious and fearful sanctions of eternity, are arrayed against the pure Gospel. Instead of the fold of Christ, the Church became a ferocious beast, not sparing the flock; instead of a pure virgin, the mother of harlots, corrupting the nations. Instead of reflecting the light of the Sun of righteousness, every orb was eclipsed, every candlestick removed out of its place; while the night of ages settled down upon the earth. In this tremendous period, knowledge and virtue expired, and corruption and violence, as before the flood, filled the earth. The great merchandise was in the souls of men; the chief staples, indulgences in sin; and nothing but holiness of heart and life was absolutely unpardonable.

Here, around the standard of Christ, "the Kings of the earth took counsel against the Lord and his Anointed," to break his bands, and cast away his cords. And here the Atheist and the Jew, the Infidel and the libertine, could wear the sacred vestments, and make war upon the Saviour and his friends.

Popery is a system where science and ignorance, refinement and barbarism, wisdom and stupidity, taste and animalism, mistaken zeal and malignant enmity, may sanctimoniously pour out their virulence against the Gospel, and cry, "Hosanna!" while they go forth to shed the blood, and to wear out the patience,

of the saints. And though by revolutions it has been shaken, and compelled, by motives of policy, to cease a little from blood, not a principle of this system has been abandoned. All the wiles of ages past are put in requisition now to heal the fatal wounds which the Beast has received; and to render the system still more powerful and terrific. The heaven is in secret and in open operation in this country; and the quick action of the Beast to the touch of the spear, in Palestine, shows that he is neither dead nor asleep. And considering the civilization, and wealth, and science which the system comprehends, it is from Popery, no doubt, that the Gospel is destined to experience the last and most determined resistance.

4. Another form of resistance to the Gospel is to be anticipated from the *despotic governments of the earth*, so inconsistent in their influence with that illumination of mind, and melioration of heart, which, it is predicted, shall prevail, and which the blessed Gospel never fails to produce. Hence it may be expected that despots will "take counsel against the Lord," as the march of intellect, and piety, and civil liberty, shall minister alarm.

To what extent forcible resistance will be made to the Gospel, it is not our object now to inquire; or whether republican forms of government will supplant the ancient dynasties. It is enough to know that all the governments who yield to the intimations of that Providence which sends out religion and civil liberty upon the earth, will be safe and happy; and that all who make resistance will be agitated by revolutions, and destroyed by heavy judgments. "Be wise now, therefore, O ye Kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little."

5. Another source of resistance to Christianity is that of *crime in its varied forms*. A vast amount of capital is embarked in enterprises which directly or indirectly war against morality. All this, when the spirit of Christianity shall prevail, will be contraband, and be withdrawn. The power of steam shall not needlessly violate holy time; nor the sail, without cause, whiten in the Sabbath sun, and spread itself to pervert the breath of

heaven. Theatres, those "schools of morality," falsely so called, shall cease to beguile unstable souls, whose "feet go down to death," whose "steps take hold on hell." Christianity, as she prevails, will form a public sentiment that will make virtue blush at the thought of meeting within the same walls, and breathing the same polluted air, and applauding the same exhibitions, with the most debased and wretched portion of the community. All who thrive and grow rich amidst the desolations of inebriation, and all who desire to do wickedly without loss of reputation, or annoyance of conscience, will feel instinctively the approach of religion: and, as their craft shall be in danger, will raise a loud and bitter cry, "Great is Diana! great is Diana!"

Nor are the maxims of more reputable trade in such nice accordance with the "golden rule," as to need no revision, or to present no resistance to the Gospel, as she moves on to make it the universal actual law of commercial intercourse: while the entire world of honour must be expected to stand against that Gospel which forbids murder, and inculcates forgiveness, and arrays public sentiment against the guilty.

If the Gospel would prohibit only acknowledged immoralities, and wink at human weaknesses, the whole pleasure-loving world would consent to an armistice, and permit her to move on without much complaint. But the inexorable requisitions of purity of heart and self-denial, cannot fail to bring out against her a multitudinous and determined resistance. The haters of her uncharitableness, and the lovers of a more liberal way, and all classes of the openly wicked, will, it may be expected, as the light increases and enmity rises, be condensed into a firmer and firmer phalanx of opposition. And now will the alarm be sounded about Popery and Priestcraft, by just that class of men, who, in Papal countries, love darkness, and most cheerfully purchase indulgences to sin; and who, in this country, should the darkness of Popery be permitted to come upon us, would be first to hail it as a covert for their crimes, and a *quietus* for their consciences. And yet, panic-struck will many become about liberty of conscience, who long since have ceased to have any conscience; and suddenly will many fall in love with civil liberty, who, all their days, and with all their might, have, by

their pernicious influence, been employed in attempts to undermine her deep foundations.

6. To cover the nakedness of this forlorn hope of opposition to the Gospel, *a more liberal sort of religion* must be introduced, which shall keep them in countenance, and enable them to wield the name and institutions of Christianity against Christianity; including so much truth as may serve to beguile, but so little as cannot avail to save; sustained by such as live in pleasure, and will not bow the knee to Christ. The time will have come when the light of science and of Christianity will have rendered obsolete the grossness of idolatry, the imposture of Mohammed, the superstitions of Popery, and the impurity of Infidelity. A religion must rise, therefore, under the last touchings and finishings of art, where Infidels may be received without conversion; and where they may be converted with scarce a perceptible change in doctrine, heart, or life; and where, as in Papal countries, the thoughtless, and the gay, and the beautiful, and the dissipated, may float together down the stream, to the sounds of music, and drink the lethean cup, and wake not till their redemption has ceased for ever. All this abomination of desolation is predicted as attending the last triumphs of pure Christianity. "And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand."

7. One other source of opposition to the progress of vital Christianity remains to be mentioned. There may be an attempt to wield the Church against herself, by *corrupting the purity of revivals of religion*. Terrible, by the power of revivals, as an army with banners, her victory is secure, unless fanaticism can be substituted for pure religion, and her compact masses be broken and scattered by the commotion of unhallowed passions within. In this manner was the glory of the Reformation eclipsed, and vital religion, in the time of Cromwell, made a scoff and a by-word. The same attempt was made in New England early in the days of our fathers. It was repeated in the time of Whitefield and the immortal Edwards, with lamentable, though with but partial, success. As revivals shall become

more extensive, and the Spirit of God shall awaken larger portions of the community at once, opportunity will be afforded to the enemy (and, apprized of his devices, we ought not to think that the opportunity will be neglected) of mingling false fire with holy zeal, for the purpose of throwing discredit upon a work which threatens a speedy overthrow of his empire.

All these great divisions of systematic opposition to the Gospel have, where circumstances allowed, been defended by the sword. Christianity, in her first attempts to disenthral the world, met the storms of ten persecutions, protracted through a period of three hundred years.

The false Prophet established, and still maintains, his empire by force. It is death to turn from Mohammed to Jesus Christ. And as to Popery, in her dominions, all the wiles and corruptions of idolatry and imposture have been condensed and wielded with infernal wisdom and malignity against the Gospel, ever since the apocalyptic Kings gave their power to the Beast. And when Atheism, for a little moment, abolished Popery, its terrific power was, at the same moment, directed with indiscriminate fury against Christianity. The Bible was burnt; the Sabbath blotted out; the existence of God denied; and death proclaimed an eternal sleep.

The Arian heresy, protected by the sword, wielded against the truth a furious persecution; so that there was a period when the possession of truth was limited to a few, and it became almost a proverb, "*Athanasius against the world.*" At Geneva, the enemies of evangelical sentiment, as appears from recent events, do not rely on charity, and enlightened reason, and liberty of conscience, but upon the civil power, to protect them in their usurpations, and to keep back the truth.

And now, can such varied and mighty resistance be overcome? Can the earth be enlightened? Can the nations be disenthralled? Can the whole creation, which has groaned and travailed together in pain until now, be brought out of bondage into glorious liberty? Yes. All this can be done, and *will* be done. Our next inquiry then is,

BY WHAT MEANS SHALL EVENTS SO DESIRABLE BE ACCOMPLISHED?

First. By the judgments of heaven, in which the Son of

Man will come upon the strong man armed, and take away his armour.

Secondly. By the universal propagation of the Gospel; before the light of which, idolatry, imposture, and superstition will retreat abashed. And,

Thirdly. By frequent and, at last, general revivals of religion; giving resistless power to the Gospel, as it is preached to every creature.

Then will come to pass that which is written. "Great voices will be heard in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ." "As the voice of many waters, and of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

It is manifest from prophecy, and clearly to be anticipated from the existing state of the world, that *great commotions and distress of nations* will exist antecedent to the spiritual, universal reign of Christ on earth. Some have supposed that these calamities will fall alike upon the Church and the world; that as yet the witnesses are to be slain; and that for three years, at least, Christianity will seem to be blotted from the earth. Whereas, manifestly, the judgments which are to precede the glory of the latter day, are to fall almost exclusively upon anti-Christian nations. And if the witnesses are yet to be slain, they are to be slain in the street of that great city, which, spiritually, is called "Sodom and Egypt;" prophetic symbols, which have been understood to designate countries subject to the dominion of anti-Christ. The very struggle to suppress vital Christianity in Papal countries, called the slaying of the witnesses, may be, and probably will be, the result of moral causes now in powerful operation. Science, and commerce, and the progress of evangelical religion, are fast apprizing mankind of their rights, and awakening the desire of civil and religious liberty. And this slaying of the witnesses may be the last struggle of those despotisms to arrest the march of truth and freedom. It may be the collision between light and darkness, between despotism and liberty, which shall call out the Kings of the earth to the battle of the great day of God Almighty; when He, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, on whose head are many crowns, and whose vesture is dipped in blood, shall smite the nations with

the sword that goeth out of his mouth, and rule them with a rod of iron, and tread the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God; when the angel, standing in the sun, shall summon the fowls of the heavens to the supper of the great God; to eat the flesh of Kings, and of captains, and of mighty men. (Rev. xix. 17, 18.)

But, without attempting a minute exposition of prophecy, nothing is more plainly revealed than the visitation of the earth with unparalleled judgments and revolutions, preparatory to that state of light and peace which is to bless the world. So long as Satan can wield the power of despotic governments against the truth, he can hold his goods in peace. But these defences a stronger than he will take away, when, in awful judgments, he shall come upon him. He shall overturn, and overturn, until He, whose right it is, shall reign. "The day of vengeance is in his heart, because the day of his redeemed is come." "The foundations of the earth do shake; the earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro. And the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the Kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great."

One of these moral earthquakes has already shaken Europe to its centre; and the thunderings and heavings of the unquiet earth proclaim, that "one woe is past, and, behold, another woe cometh quickly."

When these systems of physical resistance are destroyed, then will the time have come to extend the institutions of the Gospel throughout the world. Benevolence, like the air, will move to fill up the vacuum. Like the light from its great fountain, it will fly to cheer the nations who sit in darkness. And having no resistance to encounter, but the simple power of

error, the conflict will be but momentary, and the victory complete. This, also, is in accordance with prophecy; for immediately after the downfall of Babylon is announced, all heaven breaks forth in ecstacy, saying, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." The Church of Christ is called his bride; and the conversion of the nations to Christianity and to God, the day of her espousals.

That this glorious victory is to be consummated by *the special influence of the Holy Ghost* is equally manifest. The simple presence of Christianity would no more convert the Heathen, than it converts those where it already exists. Were every family on earth now blessed with a Bible and a Pastor, these, without the effusion of the Spirit, would not maintain upon the earth an uncorrupt nominal Christianity for one hundred years. Revivals of religion are alone adequate to the moral reformation of the world. All other means,—science, legislation, philosophy, eloquence, and argument,—have been relied on in vain. The disease is of the heart, and they reach it not. But revivals touch the deep springs of human action, and give tone and energy to the moral government of God. They multiply families that call upon the name of the Lord, and train up children in his fear; and Churches, constrained by the love of Christ, to propagatè the Gospel. They elevate the standard of liberality, and augment the capital which is consecrated to the renovation of the world, and the importunity of prayer, which secures its application and efficacy. They multiply the host of evangelical Ministers and Missionaries. They repress crime, and purify the public morality; and breathe into legislation and the intercourse of nations that spirit of the Gospel which shall banish wars, and introduce peace upon earth and good-will towards men. They pour daylight upon darkness, and destroy, with a touch, the power of sophistry. Hence, nothing is so terrible to the enemies of evangelical truth as revivals of religion, because nothing is so irresistible. If they oppose them by violence, they move on. If they misrepresent them, they move on. If they ridicule them, they move on. If they imitate them, the imitation fails, and they move on. While, often, the chosen vessels of opposition fall under their power, sending

panic and rage through the ranks of the enemy. It is owing to this power of revivals, that they are everywhere, by the wicked, so much spoken against; and all the infirmities of humanity, which attend them, gathered up with such exultation, and urged, as confirmation strong, that they are the work of man, and not the work of God. It is reserved, therefore, for revivals of religion to follow in the train of the means of grace with increasing frequency and power, until a nation shall be born in a day. This, also, is predicted. "Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain." "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." "Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness." "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground." "It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh." "And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."

The judgments which are to shake down anti-Christian empires, and cast down high imaginations, and lay open the world to the entrance of truth, and the power of the Spirit, are to be closely associated with a new and unparalleled *vigour of Christian enterprise*. Until now, the Church will have been the assailed party, and stood upon the defensive; but henceforth the word of command will not be, "Stand," but "*March*." The gates of the holy city will be thrown open; the tide of war will be rolled upon the enemy; and "one shall chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight."

The means and efforts for evangelizing the world must correspond, however, with the magnitude of the result. The idea that God will convert the Heathen in his own good time, and that Christians have nothing to do but to pray and devoutly wait, is found in no canonical book. It is the maxim of covetousness, and sloth, and uncaring Infidelity. We have no authority for saying, what some, without due consideration, have said, that God, if he pleased, could, doubtless, in a moment convert the whole Heathen world without the Gospel. It might as well be said, that he can, if he please, burn without fire, or drown without water, or give breath without atmosphere,

as that he can instruct intellectual beings without the means of knowledge, and influence moral beings without law and motive, and thus reclaim an alienated world without the knowledge and moral power of the Gospel. It is no derogation from the power of God, that, to produce results, it must be exerted, by means adapted to the constitution of things which himself has established. God has no set time to favour the husbandman, but when he is diligent in business; and no set time to favour Zion, but when "her servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof." From the beginning, the cause of God on earth has been maintained and carried forward only by the most heroic exertion. Christianity, even in the age of miracles, was not propagated but by stupendous efforts. And it is only by a revival of primitive zeal and enterprise, that the glorious things spoken of the city of our God can be accomplished.

Nor need we be disheartened. We possess a thousand-fold the advantage of Apostles and primitive Christians, for the spread of the Gospel. And shall the whole Church on earth, shall the thousand thousands who now profess the pure religion, be dismayed and paralysed at an enterprise which had once been well-nigh accomplished by the energies of twelve men?

But what can be done? It would require ten discourses to answer this question in detail. We can only sketch the outlines of that moral array by which Jesus Christ is preparing to come upon the strong man, and overcome him, and take from him all his armour.

1. There must be *more faith* in the Church of God.

All the uncertainties and waverings of unbelief must be swept away by the power of that faith which "is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." Those "scenes surpassing fable," when Satan shall be bound, and an emancipated world shall sing, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" must rise up before us in all the freshness and inspiration of a glorious reality. Such faith, and only such, will achieve again the wonders it wrought in other days. It has lost none of its power. Again, it will "subdue kingdoms, work righteousness, obtain promises, stop the mouths of lions, quench the violence of fire, escape the edge of the sword, out of weakness become strong,

wax valiant in fight, and put to flight the armies of the aliens." For this is "the victory over the world, even your faith."

2. There must be *a more intense love for Christ* in his Church.

Such love as now burns dimly in the hearts of Christians,—a low, and languid, and wavering affection; halting between the opposing attractions of earth and heaven,—may answer for standing upon the defensive, but never for making that vigorous onset which shall subdue the world to Christ. Effort will never surpass desire. And as yet our hearts are not equal to those efforts needed for the achievement of victory. They linger, and look back upon the world. They hesitate, and slowly, and with a sigh, part with substance in a penurious measure. Weight hangs as yet on the wheels of the victor's chariot: and never, on earth, as in heaven, will it move

"Instinct with spirit,
Flashing thick flames,.....unless
Attended by ten thousand thousand saints."

3. There must come an era of *more decided action*, before the earth can be subdued to Christ.

Compared with the exigency, we have not, as yet, the semblance of an army in the field; and our munitions are yet to be collected. Two hundred souls constitute the entire force which twelve millions of freemen, cheered and blessed with the light of the Gospel, have sent forth to bring the world out of bondage. And yet one-half the nation is panic-struck at the drafts thus made upon her resources! What has been done, however, is but mere skirmishing before the shock of battle. Half the subjects of Satan's dark empire on earth have not heard, as yet, that we have a being. And were none but such feeble efforts to be put forth, he, instead of coming down in great wrath, would keep his temper, and leave the war to his subalterns.

Nothing great on earth, good or bad, was ever accomplished without decisive action. The cause in the moral world, as really as in the natural, must ever be proportioned to the effect to be produced. And what have we done, as yet, to justify the expectation that God, by such means, is about to "make all things

new?" Could our independence have been achieved by such indecisive action as we put forth for the emancipation of the world? Dear brethren, we must fix our eye earnestly on a world lying in wickedness: our hearts must be fully set upon its deliverance; our hands must be opened wide for its relief. Not only the Ministers of religion must give themselves wholly to this work; but all who prize civil and religious freedom, all who exult in these blessings, must come forth to the help of the Lord against the mighty. And when, to all who are now cheered by the light of revelation the deliverance of a world in bondage shall become the all-absorbing object, and the concentrating point of holy enterprise, then speedily will the angel descend from heaven, with a great chain, to bind, and cast into the bottomless pit, him who, through so many ages, has deceived the nations. But,

4. For this glorious achievement there is demanded *more courage* than has, in modern days, been manifested by the Church of God.

Wherever circumstances have precluded the application of force for the defence of his cause, there the god of this world has attempted to fortify it by a perverted public sentiment. This, while it predominates, is as terrific as the Inquisition; and if not as bloody, it is unquestionably as virulent, overbearing, and severe. Multitudes shrink before it who would not hesitate to storm the deadly breach; and one-half the power of the Christian Church is, doubtless, this very moment paralysed by it, if not even arrayed by its influence against the cause of Christ. Fashion is the Juggernaut of Christian lands; around whose ear pilgrims of all conditions gather and do homage.

Here, then, in communities civilized and nominally Christian, is to be fought one of the keenest battles. For after every stronghold is demolished, if Satan can but frame the laws of honour and fashion, he will not fail to govern by maxims which will shut out the Gospel, and perpetuate the dominion of sin. And Christians are the first to be emancipated. While they are in captivity the world will be in chains. Jesus Christ must have entire possession of his own soldiers before the armies of the living God can put to flight the armies of the aliens.

This conflict for dominion over public sentiment is coming

on: and by this generation, in city and in country, it is to be decided, whether an evangelical or a worldly influence shall prevail, whether the land-marks of Christian morality shall stand against the inundations of vice; or, with everything that is pure, and lovely, and of good report, be swept away. Emboldened by the pusillanimity of the friends of virtue, the enemy have become audacious, and scarcely covet the veil of darkness; but seem even to glory in their shame. And if no stand is made, we are undone. The Church in this land will go into captivity, and the nation is undone. Our prosperity and voluptuousness will be our ruin; and short and rapid will be our journey from the cradle to the grave. But if resistance is made, then will the waves rise, and foam, and roar, and dash furiously upon those who shall dare to make a stand: and birds of ill omen will flap their sooty wings, and croak, and scream, to intimidate and dishearten the fearful and the unbelieving: and all the engines of bad influence will be applied to prevent that coalition of patriotism and of virtue which would set bounds to the encroachments of evil, and shed daylight upon the works of darkness, and stamp with indelible and intolerable infamy wickedness in high places and in low places.

And now *custom*, with silver tongue, will plead *prescription*: "It always has been so, and always will be: and why should we attempt innovation?" And *interest*, too, will plead *necessity*: "How can I withdraw my capital, or alter my course? To refuse to do wrong a little, would be to take away my children's bread." And now *difficulty*, with good wishes and sorrowing face, will plead, "Spare thy servant in this thing: is it not a little one?" While *fear* will see the giants, the sons of Anak, and call out for care and prudence, lest we should act prematurely, or be righteous overmuch. *Petulance*, too, will lift her voice, with vexation at our presumptuous meddling, wondering that we cannot mind our own affairs, and let other people alone. And even *charity*, so called, will draw aside her veil, for the archers, with poisoned arrows, to hit us. While *liberality*, provoked beyond endurance, will hail upon our heads the hard names of "bigot, enthusiast, fanatic, and hypocrite."

All this, however, we could easily sustain were there no treachery within. But our hearts are yet in too close consult-

ation with flesh and blood. "What will the world think? What will the world say? How will it effect my reputation, my interest, my ambition, or even my usefulness? Suppose I step in as a kind of candid mediator between the world and my too zealous brethren, taking the prudent course, and not carrying matters too far?" O that prudent course! that middle ground!—so crowded, when the lines are drawing between Christ and the world! Satan desires no better troops than neutral Christians. And the Lord Jesus Christ abhors none more. He prefers Infidelity to lukewarm Christianity. "I would that thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art neither, I will spew thee out of my mouth."

As to cheating Satan out of his empire over men by a reserved course of warfare, he has no objection that Christians should dream about it, and try it. But we mistake if we suppose our wisdom a match for his wiles; or that we can so prudently drive him out of this world as that he will find no pretext for controversy. Whenever we do enough to give to religion a solemn reality upon the minds of men, and draw the cords of evangelical morality with such power as shall compel reformation or inflict disgrace, we must calculate to meet his resistance who reigns in the hearts of the children of disobedience. And the time will come when men must take sides. For as the conflict between virtue and vice waxes warm, neither side will tolerate neutrality: and he who plants his foot upon neutral ground will select just the hottest place in the battle, and receive the fire from both sides.

Two things are required of all who would be found on the side of liberty and evangelical morality. One is, that we will not do wrong in obedience to custom: the other is, that we will not be accessory to the wrong done by others; that we will give to the cause of virtue the testimony of correct opinions, the power of a correct example, and the influence of our inflexible patronage. There are piety and principle enough in the community to put down the usurpations of irreligion and crime, if the sound part of the community will only awake, and array itself on the side of purity and order. But we must come out, and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing. The entire capital in the hands of honest and moral men, which is employed

in establishments that corrupt society, must be withdrawn; and that patronage which has swelled the revenue of establishments that lend their aid to the cause of licentiousness, must be turned over to the side of purity and order. Until this is done we shall not cease to be partakers in other men's sins. The press, that mighty engine of good or evil, in a free country, must be enlisted decisively on the side of virtue; and its perverted influence, if it continue, must be sustained only by those whose guilty cause it espouses. We cannot, as Christians, we cannot, as patriots, give our patronage to that press which will not plead the cause of virtue, and which will prostitute its fearful energies to the cause of sin.

5. There must be *new and more vigorous efforts to increase the number and power of evangelical Churches in our land.*

In all countries the tone of piety and evangelical morality corresponds exactly with the number, and purity, and energy of the Churches of our Lord Jesus Christ. The want of this organized moral power in many parts of our land is appalling. Our population multiplies, and the ratio of good moral influence declines, and ignorance and crime are coming in like a flood. All that has been done by Tract Societies, by Sabbath-schools, by Education Societies, and by the National Society for Domestic Missions, is as the drop of the bucket to the ocean. A new and mighty effort is demanded to send light through the territories of darkness; to repress crime, and perpetuate our civil and religious institutions. In our large cities, especially, is the increase of ignorance and licentiousness lamentable and ominous. Here wealth and temptation concentrate their power upon masses of mind, whose influence cannot fail to affect deeply the destiny of the nation. If they send out a vigorous current of healthful life-blood, the whole nation will feel the renovating influence; but if, with every pulsation, they send out iniquity and death, no power on earth can avert our doom.

A *moral power* is the only influence that can save our cities. Mere coercion, in a land of freemen, will not avail. Nor will a lax nominal Christianity suffice; where offenders may find access to the table of Christ, and protection by the horns of the altar. The new Churches, to succeed, should be composed of persons of real piety, of kindred sentiment, and of decided

character; and, from the beginning, consist of so many members, and be blessed with such talent and devoted piety in the ministry, and be so countenanced and sustained by other Churches, as that their attraction shall not fail to bring under the sacred influence of the Gospel the surrounding community. Until our cities shall thus be made to feel, in every part, the purifying power of the Gospel, the whole land will continue to send to them, as it has done, hecatombs of youthful beings, to be repaid by disappointed hopes and moral contamination.

6. *Special effort is required to secure to the rising generation an education free from the influence of bad example, and more decidedly evangelical.*

The atmosphere which our children breathe, from the cradle upward, should be pure. Instead of this, it would not be difficult to find common schools in which ignorance and irreligion predominate. Even where the intellect is cultivated, the heart not unfrequently is corrupted, and the child made wise only to do evil. In a great proportion of the higher schools, to which Christians send their children, little exists of a decidedly religious tendency; while in some a powerful influence is exerted against evangelical sentiments and piety.

And though in many of our colleges there is a salutary religious influence, and repeated revivals of religion are enjoyed, in none is the influence of religion so decisive as it might be; while in some, to which pious parents send their children, the influence is directly and powerfully hostile to religion.

I am aware that not a few regard religious influence in our colleges as already too great, and that an effort is making to separate religion from science, during the progress of a collegiate education. And those who choose to rear colleges, and send their offspring where the power of the Gospel shall be excluded, have, doubtless, a right to do so; answerable for their conduct only to God. But no Christian can do this without violating the vows of God which are upon him, to train up his child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And, instead of a compromise in the evangelical colleges of our land, there should be, as easily there may be, a more decisive tone of religious influence. Our colleges should every one of them be blessed, not only with preaching, but with kind, discreet, and

assiduous pastoral instruction and care. Why should these precious communities of inexperienced youth, separated from parental inspection, and exposed to peculiar temptation, be deprived of the watchful eye and parental voice of pastoral exhortation and advice? What parent would not pray with more faith, and sleep more quietly, if he knew that some one, acquainted with the youthful heart, and appointed to watch over his child, had gained his confidence and affection, and was praying and labouring for his salvation?

There is no period in life when the heart may be more successfully assailed than that which is passed in a college. And there is no class of human beings among whom revivals may be promoted, by proper pastoral attention, with greater certainty, or with greater power and glory. Nor can it be expected that the Church will ever "look forth, fair as the moon," until effectual care is taken that in her higher schools and colleges, her children shall be induced to consecrate to God the dew of their youth.

7. *The vigour of charitable effort must be greatly increased.*

As long as rich men shall trust more "in uncertain riches" than "in the living God," and the covetous shall dare to heap up treasures to themselves, consecrating to God scarcely the crumbs that fall from their table; and the ambitious shall insist that they will roll in splendour, and give only the pittance which can be spared from the expense of a wanton ostentation; as long as professors shall consume, in extra gratification of sense, to the injury of health, sums that, if consecrated to Christ, might suffice to extend the word of life and the institutions of the Gospel all over the world; as long as avaricious Christians shall so extend their plans of business, with the increase of their capital, as always to be straitened in the midst of their gains; and as long as parents shall labour to amass wealth for their offspring, only to paralyse their enterprise, and corrupt their morals, and ensure their ruin; so long the cause of God on earth must move slowly. But the blame must rest on us. There is at this moment, in the hands of Christians, capital enough to evangelize the world in a short period of time, and without the retrenchment of a single comfort; and only by the consecration to Christ of substance, the possession of which

would be useless, and often injurious. It is not required of Christian nations to sustain the entire work of preaching the Gospel to all the unevangelized population of the earth. Nothing is needed but to erect the standard in Pagan lands, to plant the seed, to deposit the leaven, in schools and in Churches, until each nation shall support Gospel institutions. This is the work to which God, in his providence, is calling the Churches. Now, and for fifty years to come, the substance and enterprise of good men is imperiously demanded. Within that period, it is not improbable that every nation may be so far evangelized, as that the work may move onward to its consummation without extraneous aid.

8. *The jealousies of Christians*, who are united substantially in their views of evangelical doctrine and religion, and who are divided only by localities, and rites, and forms, must yield, and give place to the glorious exigencies of the present day. The amalgamation of denominations is not required. The division of labour may greatly augment the amount; and the provocation to love and good works may be real and salutary, and still be conducted without invidious collision. Like the tribes of Israel, we may all encamp about the tabernacle of God, each under his own standard; and when the ark advances may all move onward, terrible only to the powers of darkness. And if the enemies of righteousness are not sufficient to rebuke our selfishness, and force us into a coalition of love and good works, then, verily it may be expected, and even be hoped, that God, by the fire of persecution, will “purge away our dross, and take away our tin,” until we shall love him, and his cause, and one another, with a pure heart, fervently.

9. Let me add, that we must *guard against the dangers peculiar to a state of religious prosperity*.

There is no condition in which an individual, or the Church at large, can be exempted from temptations. And, especially, as the Church shall become formidable, and bring upon the great enemy of God the pressure of a desperate extremity, we are to expect that his rage will increase, and his wiles be multiplied. For he will leave the world only when forced; and will fight upon the retreat, giving many a desperate battle, when it shall seem as if the necessity was past for watching

against his devices. Never, therefore, has the necessity of vigilance and prayer been more imperious than now. Let all the Churches, then, with their Pastors, feel deeply their dependence on God; and when their alms come up before him, and his Spirit shall descend in new and glorious showers, let them watch and pray that they enter not into temptation, and experience an overthrow in the moment of victory.

To fear revivals because attended by some indications of human imperfection, would be weak and wicked; and far from the Church of God be the presumptuous confidence that nothing deeply injurious to the general interests of religion can be blended with a real work of the Spirit. But though I am not without solicitude on this head, I do trust and expect that God will preserve his Churches, and cause pure religion and undefiled to prosper; and not permit the adversary to turn our glory into shame. O, could he do it, how would his minions scream out their joy! And how would Zion be confounded, and in this day of rejoicing, be compelled to hang her harp upon the willow, and sit down to weep in sackcloth and ashes!

To conclude:—

Will any of you, my hearers, in this glorious day, take side against the cause of Christ? It will be a fearful experiment. What the mind and counsel of God have purposed to do for the melioration of man, is now hastening to its consummation, with the intenseness of infinite benevolence, under the guidance of unerring wisdom, and by the impulse of almighty power. And woe unto him who contendeth with his Maker. The lines are now drawing, and preparation is fast making for the battle of the great day of God Almighty. And who is on the Lord's side? Who! Will any of you, in this sublimely interesting moment, stand on neutral ground? Remember, neutrality is treason: and, if persisted in, is as fatal as the unpardonable sin. Jesus Christ will have the decided services of his people. Already has he denounced as enemies all who will not labour and suffer for him. "He that is not for me, is against me." "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth;" (that is, that the progress of truth will be without resistance and persecution;) "I came not to send peace,

but a sword. For I am come" (that is, the effect of my coming will be, as the Gospel prevails) "to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." These statutes are not repealed. And if the laws of Christian discipleship could bind men to give up every relative, and even life itself, for Christ and his Gospel, no excuse, surely, will screen from condemnation those who flinch and temporize, where the sacrifices required are comparatively trivial. If such as would not lay down their life for Christ cannot be accepted, what will become of those, in Christian lands, who will not lay down their substance, nor risk their reputation, nor lift a finger to advance his cause?

Is there a Christian here who cannot, for the year to come, double the amount of his charities? Is there one who will not now purpose in his heart to do it? Brethren, the time is short in which we here have opportunity to express our boundless obligations to the Saviour. The fashion of the world passeth away. Next year, our tongue may be employed in celestial praises; and our substance be in other hands. What remains, then, but that this day we dedicate ourselves, and our all, anew, to Him who washed us in his blood? The tone of feeling which we cherish to-day may, by a holy sympathy, and by the power of the Holy Ghost, be propagated through this great city, through this powerful nation, and through the world. The augmented religious enterprise, to which we pledge ourselves his day, may tell quickly in the very heart of Satan's empire; and cause light to spring up in retreats of deepest darkness.

If any man, however, is smitten with fear, let him retreat. If any man is faint-hearted, let him draw back. If any man tremble at his proportion of the charges for evangelizing the whole world, let him depart. If any man is alarmed at the noise which precedes the last conflict, let him hide himself, with his talent, in the earth. But let all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and wait for his appearing and glory,

give themselves anew to his service; and break the earthen vessel; and lift up their light; and shout, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon:" and the victory, and more than the victory, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High God. And a great voice out of heaven shall be heard, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."

DISCOURSE XIX.

CHRISTIANS TO EXEMPLIFY THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST IN EFFORTS TO CONVERT THE WORLD.

BY THE REV. DANIEL A. CLARK,
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1 CORINTHIANS X. 31.

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

THERE is one feature in the mind of God that none have ever been infidel enough to doubt,—his unlimited love of happiness. He delights to pour out blessedness into every heart that he finds prepared to receive it. When, at length, his kindness came in contact with a lost and ruined world, it contrived and developed a plan of redemption. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." He "was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich;" and the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ must be like him. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Hence, the first inquiry of every new-born soul will be, with him of Tarsus, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The

proper answer to this question will show, HOW THE CHRISTIAN IS TO ACT OUT THE SPIRIT OF HIS MASTER IN EFFORTS TO PROMOTE THE CONVERSION AND THE SALVATION OF THE WORLD.

I. Let me begin by saying that the Christian should devote to this work *his personal services*.

It is the work we see God doing, and both duty and interest require that we be working together with God. And the only measure there can possibly be applied to the service is the power we have to serve. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." By this rule God has limited his requisitions. "If there be first a willing mind it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." The hand is used in Scripture to mean our whole natural ability. It is even used in the same sense in reference to God. "The hand of the Lord is not shortened that it cannot save." Whatever faculty, then, of our nature there is, God has claimed it for himself.

If we can think and reason, we are to employ our understanding to save men. We can know their character and their danger, and expose their condition; and, by a thousand motives, urge their speedy escape from the wrath to come, and secure their emancipation from the power of sin and Satan, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. In this very work the infinite mind of God is occupied; nor can we say that he has any employment to which he plies his thoughts with more untiring industry than in the work of redemption. How does he propose to sinners that they let him reason with them, and what arguments, that none but God could invent, does he urge upon their consideration! "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." How mistaken, then, are the little beings in the shape of men, who suppose they have minds too dignified to be employed in the redemption of souls! They would not, perhaps, grudge to be occupied on the bench, or at the bar; but it would degrade them, it seems, to plead the cause of an insulted God with a rebellious world. They would spend life in studying out the laws of nature, or in defining the properties of a plant, a mineral, or an insect; but look down contemptuously upon the business of making men acquainted with God,

and winning them back to loyalty and duty. The work of counting money and appraising merchandise is not beneath them; but it would be quite a stoop to be employed in studying the word of God, and gathering arguments with which to thwart the gainsayings of an infidel and perverse generation. But if the human mind, as Infidels have contended, is a scintillation from the Infinite Mind, how can it have a nobler employment than in winning souls to him?

It is the legitimate work of every mind to hail the perishing within its reach, and shed upon them an enlightening and sanctifying influence. Not the authorized Ministers of the sanctuary alone should feel the pressure of this enterprise, but every intellect that bears the impress of its Maker, or wears a trace of his likeness. The power of reasoning was given to us to associate us with God in doing the same work, as far as may be, that he does; and the human mind should feel itself meanly occupied if, even from necessity, held away from its appropriate work, and compelled for a time to be devoted to the drudgeries of this life. If one has not the knowledge, or the talent, or the leisure, or authority to preach the everlasting Gospel, he must not be idle. There is some field open at his door to do good. He can learn and wield, with the hundreds that cross his track, the arguments that sustain the religion of the Gospel; can fling out his warnings upon the ear of the gay, and the worldly, and the dissipated, the drunken, and the profane. He can watch and wake the slumbering believer, and cheer and sustain the ministry; soothe the heart of the disconsolate, and plan the measures of benevolence; and put in successful motion a thousand other minds, mightier perhaps than his own, that shall push on the enterprise of redemption after his own has escaped to heaven, and his bones have been mouldering a thousand years. He may be a small man in his own esteem, and insignificant, too, in the sight of God; and still may give healthful impulse, and a right direction, to a moving world. "Worm Jacob" may take in his hand "a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth," by which he shall "thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and make the hills as chaff: and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them." Let the Christian be only willing to be in his place, and there will be presented soon

some nook for him to occupy, where he can strengthen and edify the spiritual temple.

And let it not be forgotten that there is no amount of other duty, in which we operate by proxy, that can possibly exonerate us from performing all that may be of this personal service for the Lord Jesus. No matter what the aggregate of duty done through other agencies, we must do this service too. If we could educate a thousand Ministers, and buy the services of ten thousand others, and freight the word of life to a score of nations, and thus, by proxy, evangelize half a world; if there was still a soul within our reach over whom we could, by the use of our own minds, exert a sanctifying control, we must answer to God for the proper use of that opportunity. Still it would remain incumbent, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Still must we be instant in season and out of season in warning, and rebuking, and admonishing the wayward and the perishing. The maxim would then apply, "These ought ye to have done, but not to have left the other undone." There is no proviso in the law of God freeing me from being a Preacher of the Gospel, in the sense now advocated, if I could send out among the lost an army of evangelists numerous enough to begirt the world.

Nor can any Moses plead that he is slow of speech, and throw the whole responsibility on Aaron. There is no mind so mean but there is some mind it can reach and instruct, some conscience or heart it can approach and rectify, and, by the Spirit's co-operation, mould into holy and heavenly form. Let men only become willing to be the Lord's servants, and he will find them a field of labour. And how can the good man be willing that there should be any heart about him unsanctified, or mind unenlightened? Can he rest in indolence when, if he would act, he could enlarge his Lord's empire? Can he see his Master dishonoured, and his law trampled upon, when his own exertions would produce obedience? And how, then, can he have hope that he loves his Master? Piety is a living principle, a power that can generate action and give impulse. The healthful state of the soul depends, I know, on the agency of the Holy Ghost; yet, as God will give his Spirit to them who ask him, his people can always put forth an energy that shall act on others. Hence,

if the man of God might, with a good conscience, withhold his personal services, he would not, but will place himself between the living and the dead, and stay the plague that is paralysing the energies of a world.

When the Church shall feel on this point with sufficient strength, every Christian will be virtually a Preacher, and God will ordain strength out of the mouths of babes and sucklings. Every profession of godliness will recruit the soldiership of Christ; the stammering tongue will speak plainly, and "many will run to and fro, and knowledge will be increased." Men who have purposed to reject Jesus Christ will feel unhappy till they give up the controversy; and, at length, no one shall have need to say to his brother, "Know the Lord; for all shall know him, from the least even unto the greatest."

It may be that God calls us to serve him with the *pen*. The man who has talents at this service may not withhold. The pen is that engine by which one mind may bear with energy upon other minds; and, associated with the press, is that lever that can move a world. And this weapon, which shook the world in the sixteenth century, will shake it yet more mightily as the millennial morning shall be seen projecting up the sky.

The world understand the worth and the might of the pen, and the Church might have learned, if she had not been slow to learn. The lowest scribbler can send his lying puffs abroad in behalf of the theatre; and the politician, who cannot spell his mother tongue, will write and print his electioneering paragraph: then why should not the Christian who can wield an able pen be occupied in this service, while the world is perishing? And if one cannot use this instrument of good himself, he can procure it used. And we may, some of us, yet live to see half a million of writers employing ten thousand presses in defending the truth, and sustaining the honour of the Lord Jesus.

And if our minds seem not to us our noblest part, then may we find something to do for God with our *hands*. We can toil instead of those who have better minds, and let them serve, in our behalf, the interest we love. Here something has been done, but not the thousandth part of what should be. Let the hours that are thrown away by the great mass of the Christian community, be employed in labouring for God, and the results of this holy em-

ployment would soon renovate the world. The labours done with such design would produce habits that would tell on the health, and plenty, and cheerfulness, and sanctification of the Church. By such a practice, when universal, how would crime disappear, and credit rise, and health increase, and life be prolonged, and the labouring community throughout Christendom stand, at length, on an elevation that would cover the whole territory with glorious light! Thus may the personal services of every man, woman, and child in the Church of God be put in requisition to redeem back an alienated world to its rightful Lord and Master. God of mercy, grant that the question may soon cease to be asked, either in or about the vineyard, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?"

II. I assert that the Christian must *use his influence* in honouring his Master. I refer now not solely to that direct effort that one man makes to control another, but to that ascendancy of moral principle which he acquires, and by which he leads other minds on in his own track. It consists in a good name, and implies a good example, and may have relation to family and blood, and place and opportunity. Every man has more or less influence, can exert control over some minds, and sway all who will suffer themselves to drop into his wake.

Wicked men have influence, and will seldom fail to use it to further the interests they love, and destroy the souls whose salvation their Sovereign and Saviour requires them to promote. Its baneful power is recorded in all the pages of human history! The influence of Jeroboam ruined ten of the tribes of Israel; and the house of Ahab, his descendant, bred mischief in his kingdom that never could be cured till the kingdom itself was extirpated; and the influence of Jezebel laid a train of mischief and guilt that even her own blood could not wash away. And all who are acquainted with history know how blighting has been the influence of Voltaire, spreading over a whole continent, and reaching down now through a century; destined, we fear, to mark its track with the blood of souls through the space of a thousand years. And the miserable Paine, who had all his baseness of principle, though wanting his greatness of mind, did mischief in his little day, and put moral machinery in motion that has been widening the sphere

of devastation, till thousands of souls will acknowledge him the father of their damnation.

Now the people of God can put forth the same kind of influence in a better cause. They can mould the manners of men, and shape their principles for heaven, and turn the eye of the multitude to truth, and duty, and God, by the use of their influence,—the agent by which others have spread through creation darkness and misery. Let them throw their whole hearts into this better interest, and be as prompt and indefatigable for God as were these sons of Belial for their master; and we see not why men may not reach the same gigantic influence in the ways of God, and make their life as conspicuous in the Church, as were these foes of God in the ranks of death.

There can surely be acquired more greatness of soul, and more fixedness of principle, and more steadfastness of purpose in the cause of God than in the service of the adversary. And there can be used as much industry, and courage, and perseverance, in making the world holy, as in degrading it. We can place against the polluted names we have rehearsed, a Baxter, a Brainerd, a Martyn, a Hale, a Luther, a Wesley, and a Whitefield, and a thousand other names; and what these holy men were, others can be, and we might have a whole generation on the stage at once. As the starry night has its galaxy, so the moral world will have, when the Lord's people shall try to shine in all the glory of their Master. They can easily make their influence be felt as it never has been; and as soon as they shall try, their exertions will tell on the character of the Church and the world.

On the Church an influence may be used with advantage, as there cannot be supposed any prejudice to counteract it. We can lead on the people of God to higher spiritual attainments, to a more devoted benevolence, to greater industry, to more prayer and Bible reading, to a closer covenant keeping, and to equipment and discipline in the whole round of heavenly soldiery. The men of the world exert constantly a deadening and adulterating influence upon the Church, which should be industriously counteracted by the servants of Jesus Christ. What does the covenant mean, if Christians are not to be putting forth an influence toward each other that shall tend to

their mutual sanctification? And how can the Church, as a community, throw out a sanctifying influence upon the wide world till this is done?

It is one of the first duties of the ministry, you know, to edify the body of Christ; and why should not each believer exert upon her, as far as possible, the same control? When we shall make the people of God feel that we love them, and our example shall testify that we are followers of Christ as dear children, we shall take a hold of their hearts, and exert over them an influence that shall mould them into holy and useful habits. We can help to form their creed, and rouse their courage, and correct their wanderings, and inspirit them to increased energy, and skill, and impetus, till the Church shall shine forth like the morning. And while we are thus blessing the Church, we shall be able to influence the world also. We sometimes mistake the amount of our influence with worldly men, and think it small; when more exertion would show it to be mighty. Let us bear with a steady and uniform pressure against their vices, and urge upon them the thoughts of death and the judgment, and the perdition that ensues, and we shall find that we have controlled them. We may rouse their impatience, however, at the moment when they are coming under the power of our influence. I know the world would lessen, and have always hated, the Church's influence, while yet they feel it and writhe under it, and have no shield to ward off its point and power. But when they have uttered all their calumnies, and flounced and bled for a time, still if the Church bear down against their deeds of darkness, they sin with heaviness. Virtually they ask leave of the Church, and wait her consent, at every step they take in sin. I know they would not own this subjection to a foreign influence, but this alters nothing. Every man must see that no vice can be current against the Church's loud, and steady, and prayerful testimony. They cannot even desert her sanctuary till professors do, nor pollute her ordinances, nor trample on her Sabbath, nor profane her Redeemer. When the Church rose upon the theatre, and joined with decency to scowl it out of use, it became from that moment a sinking concern; and the stock can never rise again in the market till she shall send up to its obscenities her proud, and gay, and

prayerless representatives. O! can she ever do this? "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon!" And the game of whist, and the dance, and every other licentious and ensnaring pastime, will go down when professors disuse them. The Sabbath is coming into more general repute, through the Church's use of her influence and example in sustaining it. Fast as any vice shall cease to have its abettors in the house of God, it must go down. A heathen virtue shall become dim in the presence of Christian holiness. Men are often obliged to admire what they feel themselves unable to practise. And when the Church shall use her whole influence, she will be able to control the manners of the world, and make and rectify the public conscience.

And when all this is done, the people of God can do more,—can render men awakened, and convicted, and regenerate. Not that they can do all this, or any part of it, without the agency of the Holy Ghost; but God has appointed the means that he will bless,—the presentation of his truth by the human voice, in that kindness of form which is applicable to the human affections. In this work his people can be employed. They know the truth, and can watch for the kind moment of presenting it, and pray the God of heaven to bless it and give it power. Thus have they the means of subjecting to the Lord Jesus Christ all the men about them, and are blameworthy if these souls quit the world unsanctified. We shall know at the last, and it would be well if we would know it now, how high a bearing our present deportment has upon the character and destiny of the ungodly. We shall see then, that the quiet of conscience, and the self-complacency, and the calmness, and content, that make the face of the unregenerate world so tranquil, is criminally associated with the Church's slumbers. Soon as she awakes, the world is anxious; and when the people of God shall sleep no more, but make their whole influence be felt, then may we safely predict that the world's slumbers are ended.

The revivals which, in America, marked eighteen hundred and thirty-one as the year of the right hand of the Lord, and which will probably distinguish it till the judgment as, of all the years that preceded it, the Church's holiest, happiest year, are but

the glorious result of the Church awake to God's interest, and God graciously attentive to hers. The Church has tried a little her influence, not to the extent she will hereafter, and she has seen the heavenly building rise at every push she gave, and every shout she uttered. Now let the Church, for once, throw off wholly her long-protracted paralysis, and she may urge on her conquests till earth's entire territory shall be redeemed to the Lord Jesus.

But there will be need that every child of God enlisted, fight under the banner of the Lord Jesus. As they must all be sanctified, they will all need the discipline of labouring for God; and can then all aid in the song that sings the conquest ended, and the victory won. And those whom God loves so little that he will permit them, in this age of action, to plod on in the rearmost rank of the sacramental host, may well doubt whether they shall have any part in the shout of victory.

Sectarianism will die out as the millennial year comes in. There will be union in this enterprise: "Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim." The watchmen shall see eye to eye; the grand benevolent institutions of the opening and glorious age shall be ably sustained; and men will be furnished, and money, and prayer, and faith, by means of which the Lord Jesus will honour his people, and reinstate himself in his own re-purchased empire. The bulwarks erected against the rising kingdom will be sapped, and the foe be disheartened, and the barley-cake will demolish the tents of Midian. The Church will have learned how to make her influence felt in the moral pulsation of the world, and the blessed results will continue down to the period of its dissolution. How happy will be the men who are to come after us, and how blessed the generation that shall watch the rising sun, and bask in the noon-rays of the moral world!

In the mean time, the people of God must consecrate to the conversion of the world their *money*. Hardly need this have been said. When men shall have devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ their personal services and their influence, they will not withhold their wealth. This gives them the means of reaching the hearts and consciences to which they cannot extend a per-

sonal control. We can here operate by proxy, and put in motion a moral machinery that may multiply our usefulness a thousand-fold. There is wealth enough in the Church, if the world should withhold its first and last penny, to buy back to its Master the government of the kingdom. Nor can men or angels conceive of any other reason why it is there, but that the Lord hath need of it. It rusts and cankers the piety that covets it, and the piety that keeps it. It is in every such case a millstone about the believer's neck, and will hold him from rising heavenward more than stripes, and chains, and dungeons. All experience agrees that absolute beggary befits better a heavenly mind than riches. The man of wealth, then, has but one question to ask,—How shall I employ my mammon? And here the field is wide. Let him furnish the world a ministry. There must go with the Bible the living Preacher. This is God's appointed means. By the foolishness of preaching he will save them that believe. The harvest may be so wide that one cannot personally explore its limits, and yet by his money he may fill the field with reapers. Here, as in some of the bloody conflicts, when life went out in a torrent, a single man can enlist and equip an army, and carry on a war long and desperate, till he shall shake the pillars of the opposing empire. This is a crisis when "one shall chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight." The Church has the means, and the world must not need a ministry; and the Gospel presents the motives that shall draw these means forth. If they remain in the Church, they but nurse idolatry; and thus corrupt her integrity, and mar her beauty. But riches, associated with benevolence, are like "apples of gold in pictures of silver." And they are occupied, and will be yet more extensively, in replenishing the ministry. The millennial year, if her star has risen, and her day has dawned, cannot roll up her sun to his zenith, till our rich men have discovered this use for their money. And when their wealth has made a ministry, it must sustain it. This is a sordid world. Men will feed their destroyers rather than their benefactors. Any profession can live better than the ministry of the reconciliation. We must furnish and feed a hundred thousand Missionaries. And it is a blessing, and not a curse, that the Church has this service to do, has this

outlet for her wealth. It had begun to stagnate and breed pestilence, like the river of Jordan, till a dead sea was furnished to drink up her waters. It is a blessing to the older Churches that they have all this to do; it is their honour and their salvation: and the wealthy Christians have only to learn how, and they will do it, or Christians have not the temper of Jesus Christ.

And we have not yet told the half they have to do. They must fill the world with Bibles, reading, in every language under heaven, the lessons of mercy to the tribes that sit in darkness; and the same wealth must sustain the Tract cause, and rain down the leaves of the tree of life upon the sickly and perishing nations. They must furnish to the ignorant and the poor, Sabbath-schools, and Bible-classes, and all the other means of making mind that the renovation of a world require. There is faith, and not Infidelity, in asserting that the millennium cannot come till the Church learns better how to use her money; and it will not tarry when this lesson is well learned. Ride on, blessed Lord Jesus, and assess thy Church to the full amount of all the promises, and buy thee a kingdom with it; and reign thou over us, and our house for ever!

And, then, beyond all this, the people of God must give him their children, and a title to their whole house. What right have we, in our offspring, vying with the right that the Saviour has? He did not give us children that we might worship and serve them, instead of him. He did not commit their souls to us that we might with them officer the hosts of his enemies, and furnish the Church her bitterest foes from the house of her friends. He did not send us children that we might absorb ourselves, and all that we have, in their rearing, and thus place their interest at war with the interests of his kingdom. He did not make them children of prayer that they should mingle with the world, and profane the privileges of his family to the furthering of their own undoing. He had designs of merey, and we should know it, and set our hearts to gather them into his kingdom early, and have them servants of his Son soon as they become intelligent. And then we can make them know that we have in our hearts, and on our knees, devoted them to Jesus Christ; that we are rearing them for his honour; that we have

nothing that we can do with them, and they nothing that they can do in the kingdom of God, if they will not devote their hearts to him, and their all to him. We must teach them to toil for him, and calculate for him, and live and die for him. Till this is done, as we have not yet been accustomed to see it in Christian families, the Lord Jesus will delay his coming. To see the father of a family praying for the millennium, and the mother labouring to evangelize the world, each eagerly grasping at intelligence of new victories achieved by the Captain of their salvation, here there is promise; but if in their house there is no prospect of a holy succession that can push on the enterprises of benevolence, when the parents are glorified, how dark it looks. And these children, too, are fed and clad with the Church's money; and destined, perhaps, to inherit a large estate, and alienate it for ever from God. To die the parent of such a family, is more to be deplored than to die childless. If we would faithfully devote our all to the Lord, it would not so happen with us; he would sanctify our seed, and build us up a sure house for ever.

And not the children merely, but the whole house should be the Lord's. There should be the fear of God in every department of domestic life. That religion that is confined to the parlour, and exhausts its last impulse while yet it has exerted no salutary control over the domestics of the family; which seems regardless of the soul that toils on the farm, or drudges in the services of the house, or waits at the door; a religion that leaves three-fourths of a family heathen, will never evangelize the world. If we do not pity the souls at our door, our philanthropy was never born in heaven, and will do nothing to save the Heathen who are sitting in the region and shadow of death. O! there is something fatally incongruous in such domestic arrangements, and it must be cured in the Church; or our example will make Heathens at home, faster than our charities and prayers will save them abroad. Here, every householder in Christendom has a noble field for labour. Let him carry the Bible into the apartment of his domestics, if any he has in his employ, and pray there, and read them the tidings of Zion's increase, till every spirit that serves him will wish to serve his Lord. Then let him look up the Heathen around him till

there is not one within the circle of his influence; and then let him become a Missionary, and spread the Gospel through the wide world.

DISCOURSE XX.

THE ASPECT OF THE TIMES, AND THE APPROPRIATE TRAINING OF YOUTH.

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ISAIAH liv. 13.

“And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.”

IN the preceding chapter there is brought into view the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the blessed effects of his death upon the beings whom he died to redeem. “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.” Under that new dispensation which his mission should introduce, the barren should sing, and the desolate become fruitful. The Church is directed to “enlarge the place of her tent, and stretch forth the curtains of her habitation;” with the assurance of a large increase of her spiritual offspring. She shall “break forth on the right hand, and on the left, shall inherit the Gentiles, shall forget the shame of her youth, and not remember the reproach of her widowhood. Her Maker, the Lord of Hosts, will be her husband; and the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth, her Redeemer. In a little wrath God hid his face from her for a moment, but will now, with everlasting kindness, have mercy on her.”

This language, though highly figurative, is yet easily understood. The Prophet ardently looked forward to Gospel

times, and sung of a period then very distant, but in its events more glorious than any that had gone by. We can easily believe that he had at length a distant but delightful view of the present period; and pleased his soul with the very scenes that are now transpiring before our eyes, when the children of the Church should become wise and happy. "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children."

That God has cast our lot in a favoured period of the Church, there can be no doubt; and the man who is not thankful to see opening before himself and his children a prospect so rich, must have a mind which none will covet, and a heart which is the seat of very sordid and grovelling affections. It is my wish to awake your attention to those objects which Isaiah saw, and in which he exulted, some twenty-five hundred years ago. I remark,

I. *The present is a period of great interest.* This is a truth which must impress the mind of every thinking man. In addition to what our fathers have told us, we have learned, by our own experience, that the world is undergoing a vast moral change. So rapid are the movements of Providence, that we can scarcely keep pace with its present history.

I. This is an age prominent in its *benevolent exertions*. Our fathers, with all their piety, made almost no exertion to better the condition of a miserable world. They held in their hands the charter of eternal life, but made few inquiries respecting the extent to which this blessing was enjoyed. They often read the command, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature;" but had no idea that it was a precept binding them to disseminate that Gospel on which they hung their own hopes of everlasting life. Few of us that have lived fifty years have received from our parents any lesson on this subject: they taught us those branches of duty with which they were acquainted, and put into our hands that book from which, through the teachings of the Holy Ghost, the present generation has learned one new lesson,—that those who have the Gospel must give it to the world.

Hence the Christian world has waked to the subject, and the benevolent heart has learned to expand, and spread its sym-

pathics over all the miseries of the apostasy. Nor have the advocates of that charity which regards only the body, and terminates its toils at the sepulchre, any cause to mourn at the change. Since the Bible has been making its way to the habitations of poverty, it has not diminished their wonted supply of bread. He that pities the body may have no compassion for the soul; but he who aims to save the soul from death, will feel for the miseries of the body. The charity of the Gospel is generous and impartial.

Nor yet have the advocates of that charity which begins at home, the least occasion to regret the exertions made in the more distant field. It was since we cast our eye upon India, and heard the moans of Africa, and saw and wept over the desolation of Palestine, that we have pitied strongly the wandering tribes of our own America, and have attempted to build up the waste places in our immediate vicinity. We had begun to translate the Scriptures into other languages, that we might export them to other nations, before we had made the inquiry whether there were not families, within ten minutes' walk of home, who had no Bible. The poor in our land, and under the caves of our sanctuaries, have reason to bless the day when the Christian world began to pity the distant Heathen.

I said, the Christian world had waked; I should have said, they had begun to wake: for many who eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord, are yet as profoundly asleep as though nothing new had transpired. Still, to some extent, exertions are made to carry into effect the system of the Gospel. The Bible is going into every language, and Missionaries into every country; and the hope and the promise is, that soon the angel, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, will publish it to every kindred, and nation, and tongue, and people. The rich are casting of their abundance, and the poor their mite, into the treasury of the Lord. More is done now in a single year, to lessen the miseries of the apostasy, than had been done, perhaps, in ages, previously to the commencement of the present era.

And no part of Christendom is yet impoverished. Too little has been done to be esteemed a sacrifice: we have distributed to the hungry nothing but the crumbs of our plenteous board;

we have done so little, that scarcely a conscience in Christendom is satisfied; so little, that if our children should hereafter learn the amount of our charities, they would burn the record that they might conceal our shame. Philanthropy must yet ten-fold its sacrifices, or the present generation of the Heathen must almost all share the destiny of their unpitied predecessors: but when all this is said, and said truly, the present is comparatively an age of charity. There begins to be opened an avenue to the conscience and the heart. There is some pity where there has been none, there is some interest felt where recently there was indifference the most profound.

2. The present age is distinguished by a *union of interest and effort* among the friends of the Gospel. Most that was done, till recently, was the effect of individual exertion. The pious heart was always benevolent. I should offend my readers and myself, if I should deny to our dear parents, who are resting in their graves, all the sympathy and the charity which they entailed to their offspring; but benevolent exertions during most of the ages that have gone by was personal and insulated. The Christian Church had not learned that union of effort would augment her strength, and multiply the resources of her charity. This discovery, under the aids of the Spirit, has produced those wondrous efforts that constitute the glory of the present era. Our Bible and Education Societies have contributed greatly to break down those barriers that have so long and so mischievously separated the followers of the Lord Jesus. How consoling to see Christians, while yet they are firm in advocating what they conceive to be the doctrines of truth, lay aside the rigidness of their sect, and unite their efforts to advance the interests of a common cause, and the honours of a common Master. The Foreign Missionary Society, which gives high promise of cultivating vast tracts of the moral wilderness, have set the Christian world an example, and are acting with a wisdom and an energy for which every believer in the Churches should give thanks. And that union which begins to exist at home, on Heathen ground is perfect. There, we are told, the communion of each Church is open to the fellowship of others. The concert of prayer, if no other existing fact could be named, is an instance of united effort which dis-

tinguishes the present era from all that have gone by. Here is united the whole Christian Church in offering to the God of grace, the same prayer, and the same intercessions. Dear brethren, whether you have or have not been happy on these occasions, you may rest assured that no feature of the present epoch yields a higher hope that the latter-day glory is nigh. God will hear the entreaty which is poured into his ear, at the same moment, from ten thousand lips. He will regard those petitions, which, as that sun encircles the earth, is sent into the court of heaven, from every isle and continent where dwells a heaven-born mind. The enemies of the Lord Jesus, and his Church, had never such just occasion to fear the total ruin of their cause as at the present moment. They have hitherto been able to divide, and have hoped by these means to destroy; but they now see formed against them an impenetrable phalanx, by whose firmness all their boasted prowess is covered with the utmost contempt. Hence Infidelity has quit the field; the Pope is palsied in his chair; Dagon is prostrate before the ark; the bands of Mohammed are beginning to be weakened; the Turk is perishing by the sword, and his slaves are demanding emancipation.

3. The present era is marked by that *general diffusion of knowledge* with which no former age has been blessed. I refer now to that kind of knowledge which moves the springs of action, a knowledge of the present state of the world. The groans of the wretched have been unheeded, because they have not been heard. We had no conception a few years ago, that six or seven hundred millions of our fellow-creatures had never heard of a Saviour. We had not explored the vast tracts of moral desolation, nor had taken the gauge and dimension of human misery, depression, and contempt. The prince of this world hid the extent of his dominions, and concealed the immensity of their unnumbered population, in the mists that issued from the bottomless pit. No encroachments were made upon his kingdom, because the great mass of the Christian community had never known the magnitude of his empire. Believers had long prayed, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as in heaven," but they had never conceived to what narrow limits that kingdom was confined, and of how little a portion of his

promised inheritance the Prince of peace had taken actual possession.

But on these subjects there is now poured in upon the Christian community a beam of light. The vehicles of religious intelligence visit now the humblest cottage, and awaken prayer and charity wherever the Bible, through the divine blessing, has produced a heavenly temper. We are becoming as familiar with India, and with the isles of the Pacific, as if they had floated into our vicinity, and were in the circle of our neighbourhood. The unread servant-boy peruses the records of Christian research; reads, learns the list of charity, and weeps at the funeral of the Missionary. Thus is beginning to be touched every spring of charity; thus is brought upon his knees every believer that has the smallest interest at the court of heaven. And the happy result is, that the Christian world is organizing. There is making a simultaneous attack upon the various outposts of the kingdom of darkness. The widow's mite mingles with the charities of the wealthy, and hastens to constitute that river which carries fertilization and life to the famishing population of a world.

4. The present is an era of *self-devotion*. In the ages past, if any section of the Church waked to their duty, and would have sent the bread of life to the hungry, they found it almost impossible to procure an agent who would go and dispense their charity. He must know, before he could be employed, that he should be well supported, and might soon return; that he should be under the protection of human law, and that his life should not be exposed to the paw of the lion, and the mouth of the crocodile. But God, at the juncture when they are needed, has raised up men for the service whose minds are subjected to none of these cowardly misgivings. They offer themselves, with all their wealth, and their children. They ask nothing but their raiment and their bread; wish never to return; have no anxiety for human protection; brave the terrors of a trackless wilderness; and can sleep sweetly in the society of beasts and savages. If thirty families, farmers and mechanics, are needed for some distant and hazardous Mission, one hundred are ready. It is true that there is a lack of able and well-educated Ministers even yet, but this arises from a distressing deficiency of the

number, and not from a want of a spirit of self-devotion. Thousands are wishing for a share in this work, if they can but be fitted for the service. They will pledge themselves to serve you in any country, to traverse any desert, or cross any sea, or surmount any dangers, if you will give them opportunities for preparation; and will refund your charities if their hearts faint at the service.

If the occasion would permit, I could mention, as distinguishing the present era, a number of other particulars equally interesting. God prospers remarkably the enterprises of his people. There is a vast increase of general knowledge, and general happiness. The bonds of slavery are breaking. The terrors of despotism are softening. The rights of conscience are beginning to be better understood. The art of war is slowly coming into disuse. The unhappy begin to know their condition. The ignorant invite instruction. The Heathen are contributing to furnish themselves the means of science and the bread of life. Infidelity is ashamed of its tenets. The governments of the earth are beginning to aid in raising the degraded and the lost to happiness and heaven. And much as the philanthropist may still find to weep over, he will desery in the present movements of the world many things that give promise of a happier age at hand, when he may wipe away his tears.

II. It is important that *our children be educated for the period in which they are to live*. If the text contains a promise, then it also points out a duty. "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord." That parent has forgotten the first dictate of affection, who does not wish that his children may be wise, useful, and happy; and who does not, by every means in his power, prepare them to act well their part in the generation with which they must mingle.

1. The rising generation should be *well instructed in science and religion*, that they may act well their part in the age that is opening. Else they can neither be useful, respectable, nor happy. The time has been when men could have been respectable without any knowledge of books or of science, but those dark ages have gone by. The Bible, and the tract, and the vehicle of religious intelligence, and even the voluminous commentary, are to be put into the hands of every child

throughout Christendom. And he must be able to read and understand their contents, or he will wish his father had been a Turk, or a Hindoo, and that his mother had borne him on the banks of the Caspian, or at the source of the Ganges. He will be interested in the excursions of the Missionary, and must be able to trace his track on the chart, and feels the perils of his station. He must lead in the operations of charity, and must know how to minute and express his thoughts. Perhaps he may become an ambassador of the Lord Jesus, and may have his mind enlarged in the pursuit of general science. I know you intend to select his employ; he must follow the track you have chosen. No. He will choose for himself; or rather, God will choose for him. When you are laid in your grave, he will hear the voice of the Lord, will be afraid to disobey, and will enter and labour in his vineyard. He will leave his plough, his trade, or his clerkship, and will go at the call of some benighted community, to carry them the book of the covenant, and the message of mercy. And when he shall wish to be useful, if he find himself ignorant and disqualified, he will blame that father whose memory he loves to revere, but who unkindly introduced him into an enlightened age with an uncultivated mind.

And our daughters, as well as our sons, must be equipped for the peculiar duties of the age. The Gospel has always raised the female sex to an importance which, in lands not blessed with its light, they cannot reach. It was to be expected that an age like the present would bring them into a still more important station. And they have shown their wisdom by their exertions to disseminate that Gospel which has rendered them free, enlightened, happy. And they will be hereafter the guardians of their sex. And they must then be equipped for the service to which they will assuredly be called; and will be ashamed of their parents, if, when we are in our graves, they shall find themselves too illiterate to take an interest and act a high and holy part in the scenes of this illustrious age.

A parent can hardly be more unkind to his children than to neglect their improvement at a period like the present. It would be cruel to leave them in the midst of enlightened society with minds suited to the taste of a Turk or a Tartar. I should

be afraid, in such a case, that they would hate my memory, and trample with contempt upon my ashes.

2. We must not merely attend to their mental improvement we must *teach them charity*. The suffrages of Christendom have been taken, and it is resolved that the miseries of the world must be relieved. But this relief will cost us something more than "Be ye warmed, and be ye filled." We are pained, and so will be our children, if we or they must know of miseries which we may not alleviate. While the eye is pouring forth its tears, the hand will distribute its bounty. But in this matter much will depend on habit. We could give you the names of men who have prayed, "Thy kingdom come!" with great fervency this half century, but have never, perhaps, given the price of a Bible to aid the increase of that kingdom; and now, when the claims of the perishing millions are understood, every such prayer they offer is their disgrace. Our children must be taught to be consistent: if they will need mental improvement, because they are to live in an enlightened age, they will no less need a spirit of Christian benevolence, because they are to live in a liberal age. Hence, while they are mere children, they should be taught to cast their little mites into the treasury of the Lord. When they read the pathetic story of a burning widow, or an immolated babe, or a suffering Missionary, tell them, while the tears are flowing, that they must send those Heathen a Bible, and contribute to the support of that Missionary. Carry them with you to the Missionary prayer-meeting, and enrol their little names upon the list of charity: thus will you prepare them to fill some distinguished station among their enlightened and liberal contemporaries. They will be pillars and polished stones in the house of the Lord, and will do you honour when the weeds shall be growing upon your sepulchres.

But if our children should carry into manhood the opposite character; should they be ignorant, and covetous, and infidel; should they set themselves to oppose the work of the Lord, and dam up the streams of charity, and exhibit a dark, and contracted, and illiberal spirit; as sure as God is true, there is nothing before them but disappointment and shame. They will cover our graves with reproach, and attach a stigma to our name which will adhere to it till it has perished. In the conduct of

the child the world will read the character of the parents, and the dead will be arraigned and condemned at the tribunal of the living.

The means of avoiding this doom are in our hands. Let us make our children acquainted with what God is doing; let us put into their hand, and pour into their ears, the weekly intelligence, and water the advice with prayer; and, then, whether we live to see the effects or not, our children will rise up and call us blessed. But,

3. They must have *the benefit of our example*. If we are found opposing the work of the Lord, are unwilling to be enlightened, and are vexed at every solicitation of charity, we shall have children in our own likeness, and they will live only to prolong our disgrace: but if we march up to the work of the Lord ourselves; if our children hear us pray earnestly for the devoted Missionary, and see us afflicted when we have missed any opportunity to give our substance to the Lord, and glad when opportunity presents, and generous in our contributions; they will naturally imbibe the same spirit, and we shall be honoured, and God will be served, in our offspring. If we are afraid that a course like this will render us poor, and injure our children, it is either because we lack the necessary information, or doubt the truth of the promise. It is plainly written, and easily understood, Give early of thy substance to the Lord; "so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses burst out with new wine." Now, what parent that believes this text to be the word of the Lord, would not rather, far rather, that his children could have a claim to this promise, than any possible human security for the stability and increase of their fortune? It affixes to every bond we hold the seal of heaven; secures the timely shower, the prosperous breeze, the wisdom necessary to plan our concerns, and the happy combination of circumstances in every hour when we shall need the interference of a heavenly Friend.

Let us, then, leave our children a well-selected library, a mind well cultivated, a conscience awake to duty, a heart habituated to feel the woes of another; and, depend upon it, our estates will be more secure, and our offspring better provided for, than if we should leave them, with the opposite habits, in the possession of a kingdom.

Do you say, none but God can do all this for our children? True: and all that is required of us is, that we wish it done, that we entreat him to do it, that we set the example, and use the means required. Then, if our children will not be obedient, we can have peace in death, and the curse of being their destroyer will be removed from our shoulders. But we have no such fears: the frequent and extensive revivals with which God is blessing the Churches, give encouraging promise, that from among the rising generation there is to be selected an army of combatants, who are to march under the Captain of their salvation to victory and glory. There is more hope that our children will be saved than there has been with respect to any generation that ever inhabited the globe. If this is the period predicted in the context, and there are many indications that it is, "Thy children shall *all* be taught of the Lord;" or if this prediction is not to receive its full accomplishment till the lapse of a century, still, its partial accomplishment may be the inheritance of our children.

III. *The course described will render them happy.* "Great shall be the peace of thy children." The evident indications of Providence are, that there has dawned a new era of the Church. If, then, we do our duty to our children, set the example, and enforce the precepts required, our hope may be that they will be among the ornaments of the risen and rising generation. They will go into life with habits suited to the sphere in which they are to act. They will associate with a benevolent community, will have a delightful employ, will witness the most glorious displays of the wisdom and power of God; and will, doubtless, have those communications of the Spirit which create the best possible enjoyments of a rational mind. If these hopes are not all a dream, what a blessing it now is to be a parent! When our hearts have ached for our children, how such a hope would have cheered us! If they may live and act worthily amid the scenes of such a period, it is quite enough. Amen.

DISCOURSE XXI.

SCRIPTURAL MEASURE OF BENEVOLENT
EFFORT.

BY THE REV. AUSTIN DICKINSON, A.M.,
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HEBREWS xiii. 16.

“To do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”

Who that expects to meet the Lord Jesus in the heavens, and to reign with him for ever, would not rejoice to be able to say, “I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do?” But the question is sometimes asked, How much are we required to do, that we may finish our course with joy? The best answer to this question is that touching eulogy of the Saviour, “She hath done what she could.” It is to be feared, however, that many, even of those who bear the name of Christ, and hope to share his eternal glory, have not yet come to any settled conviction *that they are bound TO DO ALL THEY CAN to advance his kingdom.* To such persons we would suggest a few thoughts on the DUTY, the PRIVILEGE, and the MANNER of contributing for this great object.

I. As it respects the DUTY.

Your relation to the great Redeemer and Judge, as *accountable stewards of his bounty*, makes it your duty to work for his glory, and for the advancement of his kingdom among men. “What hast thou that thou didst not receive?” Your talents, your property, all your opportunities of usefulness, are from God. He has given them, or rather loaned them, to you, for a few fleeting years, and expects you to give account of the purposes for which you improve or abuse them.

By the very *nature of your Christian profession* you are also

solemnly bound to devote yourself and your possessions for the advancement of Christ's kingdom. In entering into covenant with his Church, if you do it heartily, if you do it without gross hypocrisy, you make a voluntary surrender of yourself and of your all to Christ; you promise, before God, angels, and men, to be the Lord's. With the vows of God on your conscience, then, you are virtually pledged *to do what you can* for advancing his kingdom, not merely in your own soul, but in the souls of others to whom your influence may extend. The primitive Christians not only professed, but actually exemplified, this spirit of Christ. The Apostles "counted not their lives dear unto them, so that they might testify the Gospel of the grace of God." And their first converts did not hesitate to make great sacrifices to aid those intrepid Missionaries in rescuing others from the darkness of Heathenism, and from the damnation of hell. "As many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles' feet." How many a modern professor, though rich, would shrink with disgust from the suggestion of his selling lands for a like holy purpose! But the man who will let a sinner go down to the second death, rather than part with lands or money to save him, has not the spirit of Him who died for sinners. He does not love his neighbour as himself. He has not the spirit that reigns in heaven.

A proper regard for the honour of Christ and his Church, also, binds you to be conspicuous, according to your ability, in exertions and sacrifices to advance the Gospel. If, by wilfully withholding, you give the world occasion to say that you are as selfish, covetous, and worldly-minded, as they are, you thus bring reproach, not merely on yourself, but on the sacred name of Christ. You thereby cause many to "blaspheme that worthy name." But if, on the other hand, you show before an ungodly world that you really regard the honour of Christ, and the eternal interests of man, you thus compel others to admire the benevolent spirit of the Gospel, and perhaps lead many to unite in glorifying its Author.

You are bound, likewise, by *infinite obligations of gratitude to the Saviour* to do what you can to extend his Gospel. O think of the eternal height of that throne from which he descended;

think of the dreadful curse of God to which he submitted; think of those endless agonies from which he redeemed you; think of that eternal weight of glory to which he invites you; and estimate, if you can, your obligations to the Saviour; and then act worthy of him who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

The *value of immortal souls* should also stimulate and compel you to make great sacrifices, if by any means you may enlighten and save some. You know that many millions, now on the earth, are involved in gross idolatry and crime; ignorant of the only true God, and of the only Saviour. You know that every one of them has a soul that, like your own, must live and expand for ever. You know that every one of them, by being furnished with living bread, and growing for ever in the knowledge and likeness of God, is capable of inconceivably more happiness than has yet been enjoyed by all created beings in the universe; or, by sinking for ever in guilt, is capable of more misery than has yet been endured by all the millions that have lived on earth or in hell. All past enjoyments or sufferings of all creatures in heaven, earth, or hell, have been but temporary; they can, therefore, bear no comparison with the bliss or wo of one soul, measured by eternity. Every soul of every sinner on earth, then, is immeasurably precious. And you know that the New Testament in Christ's blood, if received in faith, can prepare idolaters, as well as you, to stand faultless before the throne, and to become partakers of that "exceeding and eternal weight of glory." But "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?"

Viewing yourself, then, as a steward of God's bounty; pledged by a Christian profession; inseparably connected with the honour of Christ; bound to him by infinite obligations; and surrounded by millions, each of them more precious than worlds; does not the duty of exertions to save them bear upon you with infinite weight? Under such responsibilities, must lands, or houses, or money, or family advancement, or ignoble ease, be your chief desire? Must your immortal soul, your heaven-born spirit, be here wrapt up in selfishness and local interest? Or shall it embrace the human family as a common brotherhood,

and do what it can to “present every man perfect in Christ Jesus?”

II. But to contribute for the advancement of Christ’s kingdom is not merely a duty: it is a glorious PRIVILEGE.

The habit of giving with a proper spirit tends continually to *widen and elevate the mind*. By employing our hearts and hands in works of charity, we become co-workers with God; we share in the honour of executing his benevolent plans; we become associates with those loftier “spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.” By such employment our character is elevated in the scale of intellectual and moral beings. We take a higher rank among the creatures of God; and are qualifying ourselves, by healthful exercise, for still more elevated and more honourable employment in his kingdom of glory,—qualifying to become “Kings and Priests unto God for ever and ever.”

The habit of contributing with a proper spirit is *a source of purest enjoyment* to the giver; and the more expansive his benevolence, the more does his felicity resemble that of the Supreme. He whose heart has glowed with benevolence from eternity, and who, in return, has received the homage and gratitude of uncounted millions; He who knows what of pleasure or of pain has dwelt in every bosom; He hath testified, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” And every man who, in the spirit of Christ, has eminently contributed to bless the world, will heartily respond to this testimony. If we look abroad among our acquaintance, we find, perhaps, one among a thousand who is evidently living not to himself; but whose mind is ever contriving, or whose hand is labouring to augment, the means of spiritual blessedness: and we involuntarily pronounce him the happiest man among the thousand. He is happy in life and in death. For while with one hand he scatters blessings on the world he is leaving, with the other he reaches forth to an unfading crown, and to imperishable riches at God’s right hand. But, O death! how terrible art thou to that man who is at ease in his possessions! who loveth them more than his neighbour, or his God. And, O eternity, eternity! how long and how dismal will be the period of thy revolutions to that man who “trusts in these uncertain riches,” and “is not rich towards God!”

III. To those who feel, in some measure, the duty and the privilege of contributing to advance the Gospel, we would say, as to the MANNER,

In the first place, as far as the nature of the case will admit, *have some settled plan or system* in regard to the amount and particular objects of your religious charities. Every man of common intelligence feels the importance of previous arrangement and order in the management of his temporal concerns. How then, without guilt, can he be content to have no system in this important work? It might be of incalculable use to the individual, as well as to the general cause of benevolence, if each Christian would, at the commencement of the year, sit down, and, with the map of the world and the realities of eternity before him, make a solemn consecration of such amount, or of such proportion of his income, as, in sober judgment, he can contribute during the year. In such a transaction he would not dare deliberately to put off God with a pittance. Or rather, I should say, in such holy intimacy with the God of benevolence, he would feel his heart new opened, he would have no disposition to stipulate in penurious measure. Such special acts of consecration are repeatedly recommended by scriptural precept and example. "Vow, and pay unto the Lord your God: let all that be round about him bring presents unto Him that ought to be feared." "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on; then shall the Lord be my God; and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee." It is impossible not to regard with unqualified respect the few instances of a similar character known at the present day. And were such examples common in the Churches, we should witness a much stronger and steadier flame of benevolent enterprise. Prone as God knows even good men are, to pervert his gifts for selfish purposes, he does very properly require of them a special bond, a solemn, irrevocable covenant, devoting a reasonable portion for his service and glory.

As preparatory to the foregoing, it would not be amiss, especially for those who complain of frequent calls, to make a little estimate of what they have given the year past, and

to compare the amount with what has been needlessly or wickedly expended. O shrink not from this estimate, however mortifying to spiritual pride! for a full reckoning must one day be made, under circumstances infinitely more solemn: and then wo unto him who now dealeth with himself deceitfully.

In contributing for the spread of the Gospel, it is likewise important, as far as possible, *to act in concert with others*, in regard to the time of giving and the particular objects to be accomplished. Union is strength. And human nature in all is so constituted as to be powerfully influenced by example. It is for this reason that we are commanded to “let our light so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father who is in heaven.” The well known example of “a certain poor widow,” who cast in two mites, has exerted an influence for eighteen hundred years throughout the Christian world; and will continue to do so till the consummation of all things. Let no individual, then, presume to say that his example is unimportant; for God, “who seeth not as man seeth,” can cause the humblest offering to give new impulse to the charities of a neighbourhood or nation.

It is important, likewise, to maintain *uniformity* in the practice of giving, whenever there is a reasonable expectation. For one individual, by withholding, may dampen the ardour of many. And the most generous benefactor may suffer materially in his character, and thus injure the general cause, if on some occasions he exhibits a total want of kindly feeling, and incur, whether justly or not, the charge of meanness.

In addition to pecuniary gifts, every person, however limited his influence may seem to be, should inquire seriously in what manner his peculiar circumstances or talents may enable him to advance the Gospel. Some may combine the industry of a neighbourhood, or an extensive circle of acquaintance, in works of charity. Some have the tongue of persuasion, or the pen of a ready writer, and may enkindle others

“With thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.”

Some, by a word fitly spoken, may, with the blessing of God, put it into the heart of a single family here and there to support a Missionary, or to educate a Christian Minister. Some, by

the extensive circulation of a tract, or other religious publication, may accomplish a thousand-fold more than by pecuniary gifts. In almost every village, there is, perhaps, some one individual, who, by a little self-denying effort, might bring all its families under the influence of periodical intelligence; and thus, indirectly, aid all our benevolent institutions. Every individual, male or female, by occupying the talent which God has given, may secure that best eulogium, "She hath done what she could." At present the impression is very general, that some five or ten years hence we shall look back with surprise on the little that is now doing. A plain confession that, with all our self-complacency, we are very far from doing what we could; and are therefore verily guilty. At the same time, according to the usual ratio of deaths, in less than ten years about THREE HUNDRED MILLIONS of our race must pass into eternity, most of them now ignorant of the "only Name given under heaven whereby men can be saved." Who, then, that knows these facts, can refrain from new and memorable efforts for spreading the knowledge of Jesus Christ?

Finally: "*What thou doest, do quickly;*" for time is on the wing. "This year thou shalt die." "This night thy soul may be required of thee." Thousands are dying every hour: and soon will the Judge descend with power and great glory to "reward every man according to his works." This will be the rule of evidence on that great day. And no other is needful for now settling the question, whether you "be in Christ, a new creature." Here is room for demonstration, what God you are serving, for what world you are preparing, what is your great object of pursuit, what your rule of action, what your heart. And here may be at once decided what shall be your transport or terror when the heavens and the earth are shaken "by the voice of the archangel, and by the trump of God."

DISCOURSE XXII.

THE DIVINE METHOD OF RAISING CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS.

BY THE REV. ELISHA YALE, D.D.,
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I CORINTHIANS xvi. 2.

“Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.”

LOVE gives a cup of cold water to a disciple. Love visits the needy and the afflicted. Love goes forth to seek and save the lost. In a distant country, under the burning sun, amid privations many and great, love cheers the weary, drooping stranger, while he pities, and instructs, and guides the returning wanderer. So God sent his Son into the world to save sinners. So the Son came, saying, “I delight to do thy will, O my God.” To build the tabernacle, the willing-hearted brought enough, and more than enough. Said the man after God’s own heart, “Because I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of my own proper good, of gold and silver, prepared with all my might three thousand talents of gold, and seven thousand talents of silver. Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?”

Love was the grace of God bestowed upon the Churches of Macedonia. Then, “in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty, abounded unto the riches of their liberality.” They “were willing of themselves beyond their power.” They prayed the Apostles “with much entreaty to receive the gift.” They first gave themselves to the Lord, and then were they ready to do his will in every good work. Love inspires the grateful recollection of the “grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich.”

We are “not our own, but are bought with a price;” and, in the exercise of love, we devote to Him that loved and bought us, all we are and have, and all that we can do, to carry into effect his designs of mercy to perishing men; and we ask, each one for himself,

“What can I do for Him that died
To save my wretched soul?”

Knowing, as we do, the languishing state of the Missionary enterprise in all its departments, we shall rejoice to find the DIVINE METHOD OF RAISING ALL THE FUNDS WE NEED.

Let us examine this DIVINE METHOD.

1. It is *to contribute frequently and stately*. “Upon the first day of the week.” This is frequently, for it is once in seven days. Nor shall we think that God calls too frequently, if he calls once a week, to make some appropriate acknowledgment of his right, by giving a portion of what he gives us, to carry on his peculiar work in the world, and to save the perishing; to save them, not from starvation, but from perdition. Can once a week be too frequently to lay by in store, to feed the hungry and clothe the naked? Was it not ordered in the Churches of Galatia, as well as in the Church of Corinth, that the same rule should be observed? And can we hesitate for a moment to adopt it in regard to the evangelizing of the world? Once a week; can this be too often to make a pecuniary contribution to send the word of life, or the messenger of mercy, announcing life to those who are dead in sins? Were our souls where theirs are, should we think once a week too often to be thought of, and prayed for, and laboured for, that we might live? Relief must be had. God has ordered it to be given by us, and given on “the first day of the week.” *Frequently*, so that we may never forget it.

Stately also. “Upon the first day of the week.” What day could be more appropriate? The Redeemer’s birth-day. As it is said, “This day have I begotten thee.” The day of the Church’s foundation: for on “the first day of the week,” “the stone which the builders rejected, became the head of the corner.” What precious associations. A rising Saviour! A Church founded! Now, on the same day, we “lay by in store” that which may honour the Saviour, add lively stones

to the building, send hope to the benighted world. It must be good, also, to begin the week with this labour of love. Let God have the first-fruits of all our time; let the noble object of saving lost men, as co-workers with God, preoccupy our thoughts and our plans, give tone to our spirit, and direction to all our movements. To commence the week in this manner assimilates earth to heaven, the employments of Christians to the employments of angels. The sanctity and the blessedness of the Sabbath are thus spread over all our time and all the work of our hands. Thus frequently and stately the divine method requires to "lay by in store."

2. It is to contribute *universally*. "Every one of you." Is it a duty to contribute frequently and stately for evangelizing the world? Whose duty is it? The duty of every Christian. Is it a privilege? Whose privilege? Does our Lord demand the service of every one? Does he not, at the same time, allow every one the privilege? Who is it, then, among all his friends, that is to be exempt from the duty? Who that is to be deprived of the privilege? Not one. Due allegiance is expected of all, and due favour is shown to all. It is ordained that "every one" shall "lay by him in store." How suitable and how beautiful is this arrangement! Here, the whole Church of Christ, the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the male and the female, appear before him on "the first day of the week." Nor does any one appear empty: every one "lays by him in store" an offering, as an acknowledgment of obligation and thanksgiving. This being done frequently and stately, and on that day of consecration and blessing, it is suited to produce the most happy results. Here all hearts beat in unison before the face of the Lord. This act is done by "every one" in his own dwelling, under the eye of the Lord, who "seeth not as man seeth, but looketh upon the heart." From a principle of obedience and love, every redeemed sinner gives an offering to the Lord. While this method cherishes the best feelings towards God our Saviour, and towards his people and cause, it does, at the same time, lie as the basis of all that is needful by way of contribution.

For a moment, think of the power which the mighty Saviour can call into action on this principle. Suppose a Church of

two hundred and fifty members. Let every one be poor, and every one lay by only the widow's two mites, which make a farthing. One cent a week from two hundred and fifty Christians will amount, in a year, to at least one hundred and twenty-five dollars! Is not the divine method one of great power? How vast the sum from a million of poor Christians! Not less than five hundred thousand dollars!

But this is by no means the divine standard of contribution. It is only the frequency and universality that we have yet considered. And far be it from us to intimate that the rich are to contribute no more than the poor. Such is by no means the divine method.

3. It is *to contribute in due proportion*. "As God hath prospered him." It is supposed that every Christian is engaged in business. It is needful, while in this world, that every one should have some honest and laudable mode of acquiring property, both to supply personal and domestic wants, and afford a surplus for the needy. Believers were generally poor in Apostolic times, and obtained the means of their support by their daily labour. At the end of the week, their work being done, they could be ready to observe the divine providence in regard to them, and to know how they had been prospered in their business. And this was the rule of proportion for their contribution. They might "lay by in store" a certain per cent., five, ten, twenty, or any other proportion, just as they were able, or as their love prompted them to do, either more or less. If, at any time, they had received more than common, then their proportion would be the same, while the amount would be greater. And so if they had received less. This would operate equally upon all the members; for the rich would give abundance from their abundant income, and the poor would give a little, just in the same proportion.

The Apostle does not say, however, how much each man should give, only that it should be proportionate to each one's prosperity. Every one is able to exercise his own judgment. God wishes not that we should feel as tributaries, but as friends and children, that he is Lord of all, the Father of mercies, and the Saviour of the lost; that we should understand the work he is engaged in, and that we are allowed and expected to co-

operate in it. And, that our views may be enlarged and our affections engaged, he allows us the unspeakable privilege of considering his kingdom as our kingdom, his work as our work, his glory as our glory, and the happiness and glory of all that is achieved and done, as his joy, in which we are permitted to share. With such a work before us, and such results as our ultimate reward and portion, he calls us to take part in the work, with the assurance that every one shall receive a reward according to his own labour. With our eye fixed on the future joy, he allows us to deny ourselves, to labour, to make sacrifices, and bear his cross, just in proportion to our faith and love; all proceeding spontaneously from our ardent affection for him, and his cause, and the souls of men. In this blessed enterprise he lays out before us, not only this world, which is the field in which he works and employs us, but heaven and hell, with their eternal realities. Heaven, the dwelling of all that become holy and happy, on the one hand; and hell, with the wicked and the lost, on the other, God reveals to us as the final destination of every soul of man. It is not, then, a mere estimate of our doing a certain amount of labour, or giving a certain amount of contribution, or bearing a certain weight of sorrow and affliction, that is to regulate our action or our suffering; but it is the worth of the soul, the bliss of heaven, the pains of hell, the example of God, angels, and good men, that are to be always before us. Such are the themes of thought, the expanding, ennobling, and invigorating realities, which are to move us. And, with these in view, God allows us to judge and determine how great shall be the amount we will consecrate to this noble, angelic, godlike enterprise. The purpose and the act are to be our own, in the sight of God, with the glory and joy that are set before us. Such is the divine method.

4. It is *such as requires order and care*. "Let every one of you lay by him in store." Labourers have storehouses. In them they preserve the fruits of their labour. They have also a place for their money; their iron chest, or some other place of safety. This is their treasury. In this they deposit the results of their industry and frugality. For what? For the double purpose of order and safe-keeping. On this place of deposit how much thought may be expended! It is the store,

perhaps, laid up for a day of trouble, or for the helplessness of old age, or as an inheritance for children. In view of this store, one may say to his soul, "Thou hast much goods laid up for many years." Another may calculate how much he may gain by the provident use of this store; or he may pride himself on the power he can exert with his wealth. Others may look towards their little store with an anxious eye, unable to tell how their wants shall be supplied amid the vicissitudes of an uncertain hereafter.

But where is the man who keeps a treasury for God? I mean a place of deposit in which he may "lay up in store, as God has prospered him," his contributions for the relief of the needy, especially the needy soul. It would be no great stretch of the imagination to suppose that a pious mind would find as much pleasure in thinking of the Lord's treasury as of his own. It is the testimonial of his heavenly Father's bounty. Every thought of it calls forth a new emotion of love, with a strong desire to do good to the needy. In this treasury the money is safe, and it is ready. This was one design of the Apostle in ordering this deposit,—“that there be no gatherings when I come.” He was making collections in Asia and Europe, among the Churches of the Gentiles, to relieve the poor saints at Jerusalem. He was the general agent in this concern. As he was passing from one Church to another to promote their spiritual interests, he was willing to take charge of their collections, and be the bearer of them for the relief of the poor. But he did not wish to do what they could do themselves; nor did he wish to be diverted or detained from his great work while their collections were being made. If they would follow his directions, all would be ready. He would receive their bounty, and rejoice with them in their readiness and liberality. Then God would be pleased with their cheerfulness, and honoured by the abundance of their contribution and their joy. So in all cases of charitable liberality, if the divine method were followed, how pleasant, how delightful, would be the aspect of the Church! Every member laying by him in store, upon the first day of the week, as God had prospered him, what an abundance would there be for every want! How promptly, how cheerfully, how satisfactorily, would every want be met!

Then would there be no complaint of hard times; for every one's bounty would be ready. Then would there be no complaint of too many calls; for on every Lord's day the store would be replenished. Let there be a call on one Lord's day for the Bible Society; on another, for the Tract Society; on a third, for the Foreign Missionary Society; on a fourth, for the Home Missionary Society; on a fifth, for the Education Society; on a sixth, for the Sabbath-School Society; and so on, till all the societies which deserve our aid have called; and then what? Let them call again; for again we shall be ready. Note, however, that the Apostle does not direct these supplies to be laid by in the house of God on the first day of the week; but every one in his own house. Then, at the call of the Lord, there may be brought forth, from every one's store, whatever has been laid by, or as much as may be needful and proper for that object.

Let these divine instructions be applied.

1. *Personal responsibility is an essential element of the divine method.* Our Lord does not intend that the individual shall be lost in the mass. His eye is upon the treasury. He observes every offering. The rich may cast in much. But his eye is upon every one. He orders every one of us, on the first day of the week, to lay by in store, as he has prospered us. And he looks as carefully at the gift of the poor as at the gift of the rich. He kindly takes notice of the love, the hard labour, the self-denial, of a poor disciple who presents a small oblation. The turtle-dove, the young pigeon, the two mites, the hard-earned shilling, given cheerfully, joyfully, with a heart overflowing with faith and love, attracts the notice of the "high and lofty One." But if there be among his professed followers one, or two, or any other number, who present no oblation, how do you think the Omniscient views them? They have no treasury for God; they lay by nothing in store; they have no present for him in their hand, nor in their house. He sees nothing in all they possess designed for him, unless connected with some self-interest. Do you think that Christ is pleased with such? They may think, indeed, that the Church to which they belong does much; and they may think that they shall pass along with the Church as being bountiful. But what

theology, what logic, is this? The Church is bountiful; therefore every member is bountiful! Do such expect to die with the mass, to be judged with the mass, to be admitted into heaven with the mass? Is it not written that "every one of us shall give account of himself to God?" And does not the same authority order that "upon the first day of the week every one shall lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him?" As certainly as every member of the Church is an individual being, just so certainly is every one ordered to "lay by in store, as God hath prospered him."

2. *The divine method is feasible.* In regard to many plans there is doubt whether they will operate well in practice, because it may be difficult to carry them out. But there is no difficulty in regard to this; for only one person is concerned in carrying it out. He is not dependent on any one but himself. None need inquire whether the whole Church, or any considerable number, or even any other one, will do it. It is a personal matter. Nor can any one say he is not able; for it is only to "lay by in store, as God hath prospered" you. It is the simplest of all methods, and can be easily carried into effect by every one that desires to do it. Let there be but a willing mind, and you will do as did the contributors to build the tabernacle or the temple; or, as did the Gentile Churches to relieve the poor saints at Jerusalem. A willing mind makes a cheerful giver, and "God loveth a cheerful giver."

3. *The divine method is for the best interest of the Church.* Let every member try it at once. It will give new views to many on this most practical subject; it will greatly enlarge the mind; it will put every one on a desire to arrange his affairs with system; it will tend to inspire every one with energy; it will dilate the heart with joy; it will open a new source of enjoyment. And it will give an unwonted impulse to all religious feeling and action, and to the common business of life; for, as you adopt this divine method, you will feel, more than ever before, that you live for God, for the Church, for the benefit of souls, and for a vast eternity. Your meditations, your prayers, your plans, your whole manner of life, will be improved. You will at once become more like Christ in your regard to the great work of evangelizing the world; and, in

many important respects, the aspect of the world, of time and eternity, will be changed. You will aim at higher, nobler, more enduring, and more glorious objects; for you will more readily understand the mind of Christ, and more justly estimate the superlative excellence of his kingdom and glory.

4. *The divine method carried out will furnish abundant supplies.* If one cent a week from a million will furnish five hundred thousand dollars, as the contribution of the poor, what an abundant supply will be furnished when the more able and the rich shall lay by in store, as God has prospered them! Fifty cents are but the tenth part of five dollars. If every one should adopt Jacob's vow, what an income would annually flow into the Lord's treasury! For every ten dollars, one; for every hundred dollars, ten; for every thousand, a hundred! But we are not to suppose that the more able will be content to give no larger proportion than the poor. Where much is forgiven, the love will be much. Where the Lord bestows bountifully, he expects to reap bountifully. And the pious soul that receives much from the Lord, delights to consecrate much to him in return. There can, therefore, be no doubt of abundant supplies if the divine method be carried out.

5. *The divine method affords a test of Christian love.* In some parts of the world a man becomes a Christian at the risk of his life. So it was generally during the first three hundred years after the Christian era. And thus were verified the words of Christ to his disciples: "Ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake." He added, "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life for my sake shall find it." But what is the test of love to Christ, at this time, and in this land? It is not the name of Christ. So many are called Christians, that the name is far from being a term of reproach. It requires no self-denial, no sacrifice, no cross, to assume the Christian name, at this time, and in this country. What, then, is a test of Christian love? Is it orthodox doctrine? Is it moral duty, or religious form? Is it penance or abstinence? Is it frequent or long-continued exercises of prayer, preaching, or effort to persuade sinners to become such sort of Christians as everywhere abounds? None of these, nor all of them together; for all these may be where there is nothing of the peculiarities

of that love which would die for Christ. But here is a test of Christian love. When one hears the command of Christ, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," and says, "Lord, here am I; send me," and goes forth. When another perceives that he is not qualified to go, but is willing to do as much at home, and deny himself as much, and suffer as much, to encourage and sustain him that goes. This is Christian love; and this is precisely what is needed in this country at this time. For the sake of illustration, suppose that you were to devote yourself and your all to the Missionary cause, just as the most devoted Missionary of whom you ever heard, and labour at home, instead of going abroad. You live in as good a house, and wear as good apparel, and spread as good a table, and regulate all your expenses, and improve all your time, and train your family, just as you think it becomes your brother, the Missionary, to do; at the same time you deny yourself as much, and do all in your power as much to promote the cause, as you expect him to do. In all these things you keep the Lord Jesus Christ in view, and seek to please him, and imitate his example, and bear his cross, and seek his kingdom. You also, as a true yoke-fellow, work shoulder to shoulder with them who toil abroad; pray as they pray, and feel as they feel, and hope as they hope. Tell me now, is not this Christian love? Tell me again, does not the divine method lead to this very course? Is it not, then, a test of Christian love? Is not this the very thing that is needed at this time, and in this country? It is not a bloody test, to be sure; but is it not as surely a test? Admit, indeed, if it be demanded, that all this might be without love to Christ. We contend, too, that a man might "give his body to be burned" without charity; but this alters not the nature of the test. It still stands good for this purpose; and by this must Christian love, at this day, and in this land, be tried.

6. Finally. *Shall the divine method be adopted and pursued?* For one, I answer in the affirmative. I will not preach to others what I will not do myself. I have weighed this matter; and I beg you to allow me to say, without being thought ostentatious, that I have practised this method, substantially, for about thirty years. I do not say that I have literally laid by on the

first day of the week, as God has prospered me; but that I have done the same as to the general amount. I do not say that I have loved Christ, or his cause, or the souls of men, or denied myself and suffered so much, as I might have done. But I do say that I have, during these years, devoted a certain proportion (a tenth, at least) of all that God has given me, to his treasury. Nor would I have said this publicly, were it not that consistency seemed to require it; for I wish to bear testimony that the divine method is good. It impresses upon the Christian a sense of personal responsibility; it is feasible; it is good to the one who follows it; it enables one to do his part in contributing to evangelize the world; it is a test of Christian love. And now I must urge every one to adopt and pursue this method. The single fact that it is of God, is sufficient to recommend it to every one that loves God. Then the fact that it is called for at the present time to sustain and carry forward the Missionary enterprise, should recommend it to every one who loves Christ and the souls of men. It proposes that something be done; that it be done now; that every Christian should do it, and continue to do it. It is no oppressive method; but one of equality. It is no partial method; but one to be adopted by every Christian. It is no fitful method; but one to be pursued steadily, as based on Christian principle. It is no unsuitable method; but one adapted to the exigency of the times, and adequate to all the demands of charity. It is no novel invention; but it has stood the test of ages. Nor is it just now discovered; for it is written in the ancient records. The author of "The Great Commission" urges it as appropriate to the present wants of the world, as well as of divine authority. We expect of our Missionaries as much at least as this divine method requires. And why should not every one of us do as they do, and bring all our love, and self-denial, and practical energy to bear upon this heavenly enterprise? "Who, then, is willing, this day to consecrate his services to the Lord," and to a perishing world? His God be with him, and make him a blessing to thousands of millions. Amen.

DISCOURSE XXIII.

 THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD THE BUILDER OF
 HIS SPIRITUAL TEMPLE.*

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ZECHARIAH iv. 6.

“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.”

THIS was spoken by the angel of the Lord, concerning the building of the second temple. It is the explanation of a vision which was seen by the Prophet Zechariah, the object of which was to show him, and through him to make known to the people, a truth, which it was of great importance that they should clearly understand, and deeply feel; namely, that while they must themselves make strenuous and persevering exertions to build the temple, their dependence for success must be placed, not upon themselves, or upon creatures, but upon the Spirit of the Lord. This is a truth of universal application, with regard to every good work; and of fundamental importance to all people. For this reason, God takes a variety of ways to make it known, and to impress it upon the hearts of men. And for this same reason, I invite your attention to it at this time.

The angel of the Lord came to the Prophet, and awaked him, “as a man is wakened out of his sleep,” and said unto him, “What seest thou?” He “looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and seven lamps thereon.” He saw also, “two olive-trees,” one on each side; and “two olive-branches,” one from each tree, hanging over the bowl. These branches were emptying oil out of themselves

* Delivered in Philadelphia, 1841, before the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

into the bowl. And from this bowl it was carried, by "seven pipes, to the seven lamps," which were burning, with distinguished lustre, upon the top of the candlestick. Here was an emblem of the reality, the necessity, and the consistency of divine and human agency, in the furnishing of the light of life to this dark and ruined world.

The Prophet, not understanding the meaning of the vision, was astonished; and said, "What are these, my lord?" The angel answered, "Knowest thou not what these be?" He said, "No, my lord." Then the angel answered and said, "This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel," who was at this time Prince of Judah, "saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

As these lamps, which you see, are supplied with oil, and kept constantly burning, not by the agency of man, but of God, so the temple shall be built, and the nation established, and made prosperous and happy, not by human might or power, but by the Spirit of the Lord. He shall operate on the heart of the King of Persia, and incline him to favour you; on the hearts of your enemies, and keep them at a distance; on the hearts of the people, and excite them to the work; to undertake it with resolution, and prosecute it with diligence, amidst all the difficulties which they may be called to encounter, until it shall be completed. All this shall be done, "not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord." Yet, in the accomplishment of this work, there must be might and power. Human might and power, with great skill and perseverance, must be exerted, or the work will not be done. Olive-trees will not grow, bear fruit, and produce oil, in such a manner as to give light, without human effort. Candlesticks and lamps, bowls to receive oil, and pipes to convey it to the proper places, are not made without hands; and hands under the guidance of sound heads and hearts; dependent, indeed, upon God, but voluntarily employed in the accomplishment of that which is represented in the Bible, and represented truly, as done by the Lord. This unfolds a principle of vast importance to all men. Notwithstanding their dependence upon God, which is real, entire, and universal, what their hands find to do they must do, and with their might. That might which God has given them,

and for this purpose, must be voluntarily and perseveringly exerted, in accordance with certain laws which he has established; or his almighty power will not be exerted in their behalf. It is true, and it ought deeply to be felt, that "except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." And it is equally true, and it ought as deeply to be felt, that except men labour, according to his appointment, vain are their expectations that he will ever build it; for he will not exert his power except in his way: and to experience the benefit of that power, men must take that way. His promised operations were not designed, and, when correctly understood, are not adapted, to supersede their efforts, but to awaken them; to give them new energy; and to crown them with glorious success. And this is an aspect of divine operations which should never be lost sight of; that which awakens attention, and which excites to effort, in dependence on Him "of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things."

This was the aspect in which the subject was presented to the mind of the Prophet, and this the aspect in which he presented it to the minds of the people; and so they understood it. No sooner were they told that the Spirit of the Lord was to be the builder of the temple, than they ascended the hills and the mountains, collected their materials, brought them on to the spot, and, according to laws by which God operates in such matters, fitted them for their places, and put them together. Had they not done this, they might in words have acknowledged their dependence, and waited and prayed, and prayed and waited for the Lord, or rather against him, all their lives, and not even the foundation of their temple have been laid. Why not? Was it not the temple of the Lord? and had he not promised that it should be built, and that he would be the builder? And had he not decreed that this should be done, and thus shown that it was certain? Yes, it was the temple of the Lord. He had declared that it should be built; and that he would be the builder. He had decreed this should be done, and made known this decree; and thus showed to the universe that its accomplishment was certain.

But it was not his house in any such sense, that he would build it without them. He had not promised or decreed any

such thing; but the contrary. He had indeed said, that it should be built; "not by might, nor by power, but by" his "Spirit;" and this was true. But it was not true in that sense which those men put upon his words who would not work, and gave his declarations as an excuse for their neglect: who said, that they had nothing to do, or that there was nothing which they could do; and, of course, did nothing. But it was true in that other sense in which God meant it; and in which those understood it who were awakened by it to inquire, each one for himself, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" and who, as God showed them their duty, were ready, in dependence on him, to do it; and who in this way caused their temple to rise, and who continued their exertions, without being weary, till they saw it complete: and then, as a confirmation of God's truth, and a public testimony of their faith in it, brought "forth the head-stone thereof, with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it."

Nor will the most deep and permanent conviction of entire dependence for every right view, thought, feeling, word, and action do such persons any hurt. It will always do them great good: it will arouse them to great effort, secure untiring perseverance, and prepare them for great success. Nor will it be difficult for such persons to see, or to feel, the perfect consistency between entire and absolute dependence on God, and perfect human freedom and accountability. That most difficult problem, which never has been, and never can be, rightly solved by those who stand "all the day idle," even though they say, "I go, Sir," and yet go not, these men will work out to a perfect demonstration. They will work out, instrumentally, not only their own salvation, but the salvation also of their fellow-men; while God works in them "both to will and to do, all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power;" that faith which comes by hearing, is the gift of God, of his own operation, purifies the heart; and by which, in every generation, such men have "wrought righteousness, obtained promises, out of weakness have been made strong, waxed valiant in fight;" overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil; and come off conquerors, and "more than conquerors, through Him that loved them, and gave himself for them."

And the history of their labours, conflicts, and triumphs is recorded, that we may be "followers of them who, through faith and patience," and often "through much tribulation," are now inheriting "the promises." Not that we should call any man master; or follow him farther than he follows Christ, who alone is our Master; and in the doing of whose will we may know for ourselves the truth of God.

And this knowledge, which is thus gained, by being wrought out, is heaven-wide in its influence, from that which is ever gained by being only thought out. The one may be done in the cloister, and the man remain there till he dies. The other will carry him who has it to the high places of the field, and engage him in conflicts, "not with flesh and blood only, but with principalities and powers, with the rulers of the darkness of this world, and with spiritual wickedness in high places." And it will not suffer him to put off his armour till he puts on his crown; and it will lead him to proclaim, what he feels, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name, be the glory;" and with the builders, who brought "forth the head-stone, with shoutings," to cry, "Grace, grace unto it."

That temple which was built at Jerusalem was a striking type of the spiritual temple which God has long been building; and which will be completed at the last day. Of this temple the Apostle speaks in his Epistle to the Ephesians. "In whom," speaking of Christ, he says, "all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord."

This temple is the Church; that holy spiritual building which is "founded upon the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." It is to be composed of all true believers who shall ever have lived, from the first morning of creation to the last moment of time. They may not belong to the same denomination; or spend life on the same side of the wall which they have set up; but if they believe on the Son of God, and are so joined to him as to be "one spirit," they shall form part of his spiritual temple. Europeans, Asiatics, Africans, Indians; all, of every age and colour, and kindred, and people, and nation, and tongue, who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, shall thus be "builded together for an eternal habitation of God through the Spirit."

The building of this temple is, "not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord." This appears from the greatness of the work which it was necessary to perform in order to lay the foundation; from the foundation itself; from the materials out of which the temple is to be made; and from the object for which it is to be erected.

I. *From the greatness of the work, which it was necessary to perform, in order to lay the foundation,* it appears that the Spirit of the Lord must be the builder of this spiritual temple. It was a work which none but God himself could perform: nor could even he do it, in the wisest and best way, though he was almighty, and had all creation at his disposal, in less than four thousand years. The physical creation he could complete, and in the wisest and best way, in a single week. He had only to speak, "and it was done;" to command, "and it stood fast." But to prepare the way, even to lay the foundation, of this eternal habitation for himself, he must operate through the kingdoms of nature, providence, and grace for thousands and thousands of years; and this not merely through the instrumentality of creatures, but he must make bare his own arm, and travel, for ages, in the greatness of his strength. Nor is this all; but He who "was in the beginning with God, and was God," must himself leave the glory which he had before the creation, take "upon him the form of a servant," and labour, "even unto death, the death of the cross."

And as under its awful, crushing weight, he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost, the sun turned away, the rocks broke asunder, and the dead started from their graves, to adore Him that liveth, but was dead, that they might live for evermore.

And must He who was "in the beginning with God," make bare his arm, and travel for ages in the greatness of his strength, and even give up life itself to lay the foundation? What other arm, and what other strength, but that which is divine, can rear the superstructure? Surely, it must be done, "not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts." This appears,

II. *From the foundation itself.* This foundation is the Son of God; "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express

image of his person ;” in whom “ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” “ By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers : all things were created by him, and for him : and he is before all things, and by him all things consist ;” “ and he is over all, God blessed for ever.” To him the Father saith, and knows, “ Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever : a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth : and the heavens are the works of thine hands. They shall perish ; but thou remainest : and they all shall wax old as doth a garment ; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed : but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.” He is the “ Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and was, and is to come, the Almighty.”

Such is the foundation of this temple, “ God manifest in the flesh.” “ Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation.” And “ other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ,” “ the true God, and eternal life.” The value of this foundation never can be known by any, except those who are builded and are building upon it. And it cannot be fully known even by them, unless they can know the greatness, extent, and duration of that misery into which this foundation keeps them from falling ; and also the greatness, extent, and duration of that glory to which they will be raised, in consequence of building upon it.

Redeemed sinners, you who are builded together on this foundation, for “ an habitation of God through the Spirit,” you know something of its worth ; but nothing to what you will know when you have tried it for eternity. It exceeds in value all the treasures of the creation ; in excellence, equals the glory of Jehovah ; and for stability, is like the pillars of the universe. That He must be the builder, is evident,

III. *From the materials out of which the temple is to be made.* These, as they are in their natural state, universally ; and as they would be, without the Spirit and grace of God, eternally ; are described by him as walking “ according to the course of this

world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. Among whom we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." Does any one say, This is not my condition? I ask him, Why? Had he been without the light of revelation, and without the Spirit and grace of God, would it not have been his condition? Look abroad upon the millions who are now in that condition; and is he naturally better than they? No; in nowise. It has been proved by the testimony of God, and by facts, concerning both Jews and Gentiles, that they are "all under sin;" and are even, naturally, "dead in trespasses and sins."

And who can take these materials, and make them alive, and fill them with "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance;" but He who "spake, and it was done;" who "commanded, and it stood fast?" Can you do it? Can any man do it? Let him make the experiment: and to make it under the most favourable circumstances, let him be a parent, and try it upon his own child. Let him renounce all dependence on God, and the influences of his Spirit; and then take that child, who is now an enemy to his Maker, and, if he can, create him "anew in Christ Jesus, unto good works," and cause him to glow like a seraph in the divine service. No, not an Infidel parent on earth can do this; and not a Christian parent will dare to attempt it. All the dedications of children to God in baptism, all the prayers and tears of pious parents while wrestling with God for their salvation, are a standing testimony that the work must be done, "not by might, nor by power," but by the Spirit of God. Even children, to be alive unto God, must be born again; "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Does any one still doubt? Let him try the experiment upon himself. Let him openly and heartily renounce all dependence on God and the influences of his Spirit; and, by his own unaided efforts, transform himself into the divine image; that as he has "borne the image of the earthly," he shall "bear the image of the heavenly;" that as he has yielded his "members

as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin," he shall yield them as "instruments of righteousness unto God;" having "put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;" become "renewed in the spirit of his mind, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness;" so that he shall "live, not unto himself, but unto Him who died for him and rose again."

Has any one ever done this, of himself merely, by his own unaided wisdom, righteousness, and strength, without the Spirit and grace of God? Who is he? When, or where? Go through creation, and ask every soul that has "passed from death unto life," Who made you to differ, and how were you saved? And they will all answer, "By grace were we saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves, it was the gift of God." "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ." "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works." And, "by the grace of God," each one would say, "I am what I am."

And if no one ever has been thus changed without the Spirit and grace of God, what evidence is there that any one ever will be? Do you say, the power, which, as a free moral agent, each man possesses; and the command of God to him, to make him a new heart? But has any one any more power than other men have had? And if their power did not avail them without the Spirit of God, what evidence is there, what evidence can there be, that yours, without this divine agent, will ever avail you; or the unaided power merely of any other man ever avail him? None: absolutely none. All the evidence of facts, and of the divine testimony, is on the other side.

To make power available to any good work, let it be remembered, there must be, not power merely, but also a disposition to use it for that end; and whatever be the power of man as a free moral agent,—and he has enough to sustain the responsibilities of endless retribution, and to make it his reasonable service to do all that God requires,—yet it is certain

that he will never, without the Spirit and grace of God, so use it as to make himself a new heart, to love God, hate sin, and delight in holiness; or be even instrumental in leading others to do this immediate and indispensable duty. Though God himself, from the throne of his excellent glory, calls after him, saying, "Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die?" and beseeches him, by the tears and blood of a Saviour, to turn and live; yet, with all his power, be it what it may, without the grace of God, he will never obey him.

And yet this must be done; and by multitudes "which no man can number, out of every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue." Who will ever cause them to do it, but He who said, "Let there be light; and there was light." He must shine into their hearts, and "give them the light of the knowledge of his glory, in the face of Jesus Christ;" or they will not "turn from darkness to light," or become "light in the Lord." He must write this law upon their hearts, and imprint it upon their inward parts, or they will never be fitted for that temple, from every part of which is to blaze, in living characters, "Holiness unto the Lord," for ever. That he must be the builder of this glorious edifice, is, if possible, still more plain,

IV. *From the object for which it is to be erected.* What that object is we are told by the Apostle, in his second and third chapters of his Epistle to the Ephesians: namely, "That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ; to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church," this spiritual temple, "the manifold wisdom of God."

Here, then, is the object for which this spiritual temple is to be erected. It is, in ages to come, to show angels, "principalities, and powers, in heavenly places, the manifold wisdom of God;" and "the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward men through Christ Jesus:" an object which is infinite; and which, as it unfolds with ever-increasing brightness, will call forth, from multitudes which no man can

number, in louder and louder strains, "Hallelujah to God and the Lamb, for ever and ever!" Who can accomplish this but God himself? Can an angel do it? Can a superangelic creature? Can any creature, however exalted, show, by his productions, "the manifold wisdom of God?" Can he, in ages to come, show to angels, and "principalities, and powers, in heavenly places, the exceeding riches of God's grace, in kindness toward men, through Christ Jesus?" It is higher than heaven, what can he know? deeper than hell, what can he do? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea. No man, or angel, or superangelic creature can conceive a thousandth part of the riches of that grace which, at such a sacrifice, has opened an eternity of bliss to a world infinitely undeserving: but suppose he could conceive, and could display all the riches of that grace, he could not be the builder of this temple; for Jehovah will not give his glory to another. And the object of this temple is, not that any creature may display, but that God may display the exceeding riches of his grace, and his manifold wisdom. Of course, no creature can build it: for no creature can display wisdom which he does not possess; and no building can display more wisdom than is possessed by the builder: but this building is to display more, infinitely more, than is possessed by all creatures in the universe. It is to display not merely the wisdom, but the *manifold* wisdom of God; wisdom as much greater than the wisdom of all creatures, as he is greater than they. Let them all collect all which they possess, or ever will to eternal ages, and put it into one common stock, and it is still as much less than his, as the thing made is less than God who made it; and as this temple is, in ages to come, to display to angels, and "principalities, and powers, in heavenly places, the manifold wisdom of God, and the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward men through Christ Jesus," it is settled for ever that no creature can build it. From the greatness of the work which it was necessary to perform to lay the foundation; from the foundation itself; from the materials, out of which the temple is to be made; and from the object for which it is to be erected; it is perfectly evident that it must be built, "not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts."

Some remarks will close this discourse.

1. If the Spirit of the Lord is the builder of this temple, no one will ever become part of it without being prepared for it by him. Let the best human soul that ever existed in apostate man be cultivated and improved, if it could be, for ages, without experiencing that change which the Bible calls, being "born of the Spirit," it would never be prepared for this spiritual temple. It would have no moral likeness to the foundation; nor would it be resting upon it. It would not coalesce with the other parts of the temple, nor would it have any fitness to be a habitation of God. On this point, there is a great difference of opinion among men. Some suppose that they have no need to be "born of the Spirit," to be "created anew," or to "pass from death unto life." They do not believe that, when Jesus died for all, all were dead; or that they must be made alive by the power of God. Not feeling that they have destroyed themselves, they do not feel that in God alone is their help; nor do they look to him, as "the Lord their righteousness;" nor does he become "the end of the law for righteousness," to them, as he is to those that believe; nor have they that hope in him which purifies them, even as he is pure; nor is he unto them "wisdom, and righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." "Being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own, they do not submit to the righteousness of God:" nor do they "live by faith in Him that loved them, and gave himself for them." They never glory in his cross, nor are they by it crucified to the world, or the world to them.

Other persons there are, who, by an unction from the Holy One, know that they must be born of God; that "that which is born of the flesh is flesh;" and that except they be "born of the Spirit," they "cannot see the kingdom of God."

These two kinds of materials may appear to men, in this distant world, and while looking "through a glass darkly," to be somewhat alike: but when brought to the place where the temple is to stand, and viewed by the great Master-Builder, in the blazing light of eternity, they will be found to be altogether different. The very best which have been prepared by men, or creatures merely, instead of being found in the image of

God, and fitted, with the rest of the temple, to reflect the lustre of his glory to every part of the universe, will be fitted only to be cast away from his presence, and from the glory of his power: and as all time for preparation will then be ended, they that are filthy will be filthy still; and all hope of their ever becoming a part of this glorious temple, will vanish “as a dream when one awaketh.”

2. As the Spirit of the Lord is the builder of his temple, his materials will all be perfectly prepared. However unsightly, or dark, or distant, and totally unfit to form a part of such an edifice, He “who commanded the light to shine out of darkness,” will shine down, not only upon them, and around them, but *into* them, and will so give them the light of the knowledge of his glory; and they shall not only see light, but themselves become “light in the Lord.” However defective, or even opposite, they were before to all that is requisite for such a building, on such a foundation, and for such a purpose, He who made them will so have mercy upon them, and He who formed them show them such favour, as to transform them into his own image, and cause them to shine in the beauty of holiness: and having begun this good work in them he will carry it onward, till he shall present them spotless and faultless before the throne of his glory, with exceeding and everlasting joy: and though of every age and nation, He will have them made, in his providence and by his grace, so perfectly like the foundation, and like the rest of the temple, and so perfectly fitted each one for his place, that when brought to the spot where the temple is to stand, no sound of any instrument will be heard in building; but all the materials, from all parts of the earth, will come together, as by their own attraction, and their union will be perfect and eternal.

3. As the Spirit of the Lord is the builder of this temple, any individual to whom he is made known, and who is in a state of probation, may himself become a part of it. Wherever he may live, and under whatever circumstances he may be placed; however long he may have been in rebellion against God, and however deeply he may have sunk in degradation and in guilt; he may, nevertheless, be transformed into the divine image, and live. Though his sins were as scarlet, they may become white

as snow; though they were red like crimson, they may become as wool. From all his filthiness and his idols God may cleanse him; a new heart he may give him, and a new spirit put within him; he may take away the heart of stone, and give him a heart of flesh. He has done this for thousands; he is now doing it for thousands more; and he will do it for ten thousand time ten thousand, multitudes which no man can number. The time cometh, and "now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; the lame man shall leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing." And they shall return, and come home to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the city and temple of God; the "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

4. As the Spirit of the Lord is the builder of this temple, we see what each one must do, in order to be prepared for it. He must become acquainted with the Holy Spirit, and must look to him for what he needs: he must attend to his communications, must understand, believe, and obey them; they will thus be spirit and life to his soul. He will be begotten again, "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." To this word each soul must himself give heed, as to "a light shining in a dark place," till the day dawn, and the day-star arise in his heart: he must treat this word, in his feelings and conduct, not as the word of man, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which is able to save his soul: and he must be not "a hearer only, but a doer of the word;" and he will then find it to be "perfect, converting the soul; and sure, making wise the simple; right, rejoicing the heart; pure, enlightening the eyes; clean, enduring for ever; true and righteous altogether; more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold;" and in obeying it, will experience "great reward."

Nor does the fact that men are dependent on God, and that he is almighty, lessen the necessity or the benefit of thus hearkening to his voice, believing his declarations, or obeying his commands. Dependent on God they indeed are; but that, instead of being a reason why they should not immediately hearken to his voice, believe his declarations, and obey his commands, is the very reason why they should.

5. As the Spirit of the Lord is the builder of this temple, and he operates by the truth, we see a reason why a knowledge of the Spirit, and of his truth, should be communicated, in the least possible time, to all people. All people need this knowledge: they are in imminent danger of perishing eternally without it. It is suited to their condition; and adapted to meet their wants.

Nothing else will do it: we have this remedy. Freely we have received, and freely we are bound to give. God commands, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." "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?" And by whom shall they be sent, if not by us, who know that there is a Holy Ghost; who know the truth which he has revealed, and through the belief and practice of which he sanctifies and saves the souls of men; and who are commanded by the Holy Ghost, in the least possible time, to make known his truth to all people? The grand business of every one should be to embrace the Gospel himself, and thus, in his own experience, find it to be the power of God to salvation; and to exert his influence to have this done by every man, woman, and child in Christendom, and throughout the world. He is bound by high and sacred obligations not only to embrace the Gospel himself, but to exert his influence to cause it, in the least possible time, to be proclaimed to every creature. And from the discharge of this duty no man can be excused: let him be a merchant, a manufacturer, a mechanic, or a farmer; a professional man; a man of leisure, or a man of business; whoever, wherever, whatever he may be, he is bound, by obligations which he can never throw off, to go himself, or assist others to go, and preach the Gospel to all people; and to use his influence to induce all people to embrace it. To this he is bound to devote his time, his talents, his influence, his property. Here is an object for which it is glorious to labour; glorious to acquire property, learning, talents, influence, everything which can be made subsidiary to the diffusion of the knowledge of God and his salvation. And here is an object for which men

may live not only safely, and blissfully for themselves, but for their children, and children's children; in which the accumulated treasures of wisdom, and knowledge, and wealth, which any and all may be enabled to accumulate, instead of drowning in destruction and perdition those who come after them, may be so used as to work out for them "an exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Parents, do you wish to be rich, and to have your children rich? to live rich, to die rich, and to be rich to all eternity? Be "rich in good works; ready to distribute; willing to communicate;" and thus "lay up" for yourselves and them "a good foundation against the time to come;" an "inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Do you wish for glory? Inscribe your names, and those of your children, on a monument where they will shine, in living characters, an eternity after all the monuments of earth shall have crumbled into ruins; inscribe them on those living stones of that living temple, whose foundation is the Prince of life; and where they shall "shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars, for ever and ever." Though it is to be built by the Spirit of the Lord, yet he has need of you, and of your children: and forget not, O, I beseech you, forget not that you and they have need of him, and will continue to have need of him to all eternity! His "favour is life," and his "loving-kindness is better than life."

6. We see, in view of this subject, that the Missionary of the cross is engaged in a great and glorious work. Men may, if they will, view him with pity or contempt; as a wild enthusiast, or blind fanatic. God views him as a co-worker with himself; in preparing his own eternal habitation. They are "workers together with God." Though he "dwelleth not in temples made with hands," as he saith, "Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool;" yet, he dwelleth also with the humble, and taketh up his abode with the contrite in heart. As it is written, "Ye are the temple of the living God." And God hath said, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." "If any man love me, my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." He shall dwell in them, and they

in him; and they shall be filled eternally with the fulness of God. "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."

7. As the Spirit of the Lord is the author and finisher of this work, all are bound to be instant, sincere, fervent, and persevering, not only in labours, but in supplications to him, that their efforts, and the efforts of others, may "not be in vain in the Lord." Without his influence, though you put a Bible into every family, and preach the Gospel to every creature, not a blind eye will be opened, nor a deaf ear be unstopped; not a hard heart will be softened, nor a distant soul be brought nigh by the blood of Jesus. Not a living stone will ever shine in that living temple; but all will be cold, motionless, and dead. Even the glorious Gospel, that word of life, will be, through its perversion, a savour only of death unto death; but let the voice of the "Resurrection and the Life,"—"Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light,"—be proclaimed, even by the feeble tongue of mortals, and attended (as in answer to humble affectionate supplications) it will be by the power of Him who "quickeneth the dead, and calleth things that are not as though they were;" and there shall be a shaking among the dry bones; and bones shall come together, bone to his bone; and flesh and sinews shall come upon them; and they shall stand up for God, an exceeding great army. Nations shall be born in a day. "I, Jehovah, have spoken, and I will do it: I will hasten it;" for "my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," saith Jehovah. "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud,—so shall my word be: 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. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree." "The glory of Lebanon shall come, the fir-tree and the box-tree, to beautify the place of my sanctuary. And I will make

it glorious." "Thy walls shall be Salvation, and thy gates Praise."

8. As the Spirit of the Lord is the builder of this temple, it will be completed. For four thousand years he was preparing to lay the foundation; and that is now done. For six thousand he has been preparing the materials, and taking them on to the spot. Not a few, whom I once saw here, and some who took part with us in these deliberations, I now see there, shining like the sun. Multitudes, partakers of the same boundless grace, are now on their way: and He who hath begun this good work is able, and he has resolved, to finish it; to carry them onward, and all who shall follow them, and present them spotless and faultless before the Eternal. And has He begun, and will He not make an end? Shall any of his enemies ever taunt him, and say, He "began to build, and was not able to finish?" No. Let difficulties accumulate till they fill the whole earth, and rise up to heaven. "Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the head-stone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it."

Let all the enemies of Christ in our world unite to oppose it, and let all who people the world of darkness come forth to assist them; let them be aided by every enemy of God in the universe, and the rising of this temple will laugh at opposition, and mock every effort to resist. Disappointment will be written upon every exertion, and all opposers held up to the view of the universe, as everlasting monuments of their own weakness and folly. They will soon feel that they are contending not with might, nor with power, but with the Spirit of the Lord; who looketh on the mountains, and they tumble; on the hills, and they melt: from whose face the heavens and the earth flee away.

Opposer of Christ, you may, if you will, prevent yourself from ever becoming a part of this temple; and carry yourself to a spot, from which, should you ever behold it, it will be at an amazing distance; and on the other side of an impassable gulf. Its glory may exceed a thousand suns, and cast its brightness even on you; but it will only show you, in ten-fold horrors, the gloomy darkness of that dreadful abyss into which

you will for ever be descending. To that abyss you are going; to continue there for ever,

“ Unless born from above, created anew,
 And wash'd in the fountain, now open for you ;
 A Saviour is offer'd, he calls you to-day ;
 Why hazard your souls by a longer delay ?
 Embrace his kind offers, O taste of his love !
 And then rise in joy to that temple above.”

And the glory shall be given all to Him to whom it is due ;
 the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the God of salvation, for
 ever. Amen.

DISCOURSE XXIV.

THE PROMISED ADVENT OF THE SPIRIT.

BY THE REV. RUFUS ANDERSON, D.D.,

ONE OF THE SECRETARIES OF THE AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR
 FOREIGN MISSIONS.

JOEL ii. 28—32.

“ And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh ;
 and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream
 dreams, your young men shall see visions : and also upon the servants and upon the
 handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit. And I will show wonders in
 the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall
 be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible
 day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the
 name of the Lord shall be delivered.”

How evident it is that more is wanting than we now have to
 bring about the conversion of the world ; both to multiply the
 means, and to give them success. Not that the Churches of
 Christ are unable to publish the Gospel everywhere ; not that

there is a lack of opportunity; not that the experiments already made have been without ample encouragement; not, in short, that a sufficient motive is wanting to "go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature;" but who does not know that the Churches are slow to engage in this work? that the work itself is regarded in the light of a charity, which one is at liberty to perform or not, as he pleases; instead of being the great thing for which the Church exists, and for which the Christian lives? and that it is hard to obtain the men to go as Missionaries to Heathen nations, and still harder the means of supporting the few that go; while the results of Missionary labour, though equal, nay, superior, to those of pastoral labour at home, and greater than is generally supposed, are still such as would require ages upon ages to complete the earth's spiritual renovation?

Does it follow that the conversion of the world, by means of human instrumentality, is a hopeless or even doubtful work? By no means: on the contrary, the enterprise is full of hope, full of certainty: and it is so, for a reason which is gloriously set forth in the Scriptures. The piety of the professed people of God is not always to remain in its present low condition. The Church is to have a transforming visitation from on high; and the world is to have a similar visitation. The Spirit is to be poured out upon all flesh: there is to be an advent of the Spirit, so to speak; a grand putting forth of his influence, a mighty effort of his power, that shall ensure both the publication and triumph of the Gospel over all the world.

The delightful theme, then, on which we are to dwell, is this,—That a time is coming when divine power is to be exerted, in connexion with the preached Gospel, at home and abroad, to an extent far greater than it ever has been, so as to render the Gospel everywhere triumphant, beyond all former experience.

My first object, of course, will be to ESTABLISH THIS GREAT TRUTH.

As a first step in the argument I assert the fact, *that such an exercise of divine power is necessary, if the world is to be converted.*

Look at the greatness of the work to be done. The field is the world, with scarcely less than a thousand millions of inhabitants. Three-fourths of these are beyond the pale of

Christendom,—Mohammedans, or else Pagans. Estimating the population of China at three hundred and fifty millions, which is believed to be its true population, at least eight hundred millions are yet to be made acquainted with the Gospel. Whether we regard this part of the great field numerically or geographically, its magnitude is truly overwhelming: and all the Missions which we discover in our survey of it, seem only a few bright points on a boundless region of darkness. We may contemplate the magnitude of the work in a two-fold aspect; first, as so many hundred millions of minds, to be approached in all the extent of their wide dispersion, and then interested, enlightened, and won over to the kingdom of Jesus Christ, involving the overthrow of numerous ancient systems of philosophy and superstition, and an almost entire revolution in the social state of mankind. And, secondly, as an endeavour to enlist the whole Christian community in the work, and for a long course of years, and to an extent of self-consecration and devotedness very far beyond anything yet seen in any portion of that community. How many thousands of the best and ablest members of the Church must engage personally as Missionaries; and how many millions of money must be contributed annually, to furnish them and their native helpers with the means of living and usefulness.

Now who does not see, in this view, the necessity of such an agency of the Spirit? In vain shall we expect so universal a movement, so vast a spiritual revolution, without it, either in the Church or the world. Indeed, it must be confessed that the zeal and enterprise of the Church are almost as much behind this result, as is the spiritual condition of Pagan nations. There is even more difficulty, as I believe, in perceiving how we are to obtain the means for the great moral conflict, than how, if we had them, they could be successfully employed. I feel more inclined to despair, when looking on the worldliness and apathy of the Church, than by all I can see of opposition and difficulty elsewhere. Wo to the world, if the Church is not to be blessed with such an outpouring of the Spirit! And, alas! for mankind, if that almighty agent does not soon wing the rays of his truth everywhere, with far more of his power divine!

2. Proceeding another step in the argument, I assert, *that*

such a result is not only necessary, but highly probable, irrespective of all direct prophecy or promise on the subject.

Who can believe that a world embraced within the range of the influence of Christ's atoning blood, is always to remain covered with the ruins of the fall? Who, after learning that the Son of God made a sacrifice of his own life in order to destroy the works and power of the devil, can believe that the god of this world is always to hold his usurped dominions? Who, that has reflected on the object, and plan, and history of redemption does not expect that work to proceed onward till its influence embraces the whole earth? It is not prophecy and promise alone that awakens expectations of this sort: such expectations arise also from just views of the Gospel as a system of mercy; they are the spontaneous breathings of every heart that is filled with the love of Christ. The true follower of Christ rejoices to anticipate the triumphs of his King, the universal extension of his reign, and the clearing off from the face of the whole earth of the ruins of the fall: and though this result be connected with ever so great an amount of human instrumentality, he spontaneously refers it to divine power as the only effective cause; and the more pains you take to make him acquainted with the greatness of the enterprise, the more does he feel the necessity of divine interposition for its accomplishment; and the more probable does it seem to him that his almighty and gracious King will grant such an interposition. Yes, it is an animating truth, that what the world needs there is the highest probability, under the government of God, that it will sooner or later have: and what does it need so much, let me ask, as such a gracious visitation of the Holy Spirit as is predicted and promised in the Scriptures?

3. This brings me to my third topic, in which, after all, lies the main strength of the argument, namely, *the direct scriptural evidence of a great and general outpouring of the Spirit in the latter days.*

The following is, perhaps, the most remarkable passage bearing on this subject in the word of God:—"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see

visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered." The Apostle Peter, in his sermon on the day of Pentecost, declares this passage to be a prediction of events which were to happen under the Christian dispensation. Referring his hearers to the outpouring of the Spirit, and the wonderful events they then saw, he says, "This is that which was spoken by the Prophet Joel;" and then he quotes the whole passage above-cited. He means that the time on which they were then entering was the time referred to by the Prophet; that the events they then saw were the kind of events foretold, and that this remarkable prophecy began then to receive its fulfilment. Then commenced the dispensation of the Spirit. It was, however, only the commencement of that dispensation. The grand progress, the glorious consummation, was reserved for other days. The pouring out of the Spirit upon all flesh, with that universal, overwhelming influence described by the inspired bard in figurative language, drawn from prophetic raptures and oriental warfare, is a blessing the world is yet waiting for. It is to be an all-subduing agency of the Almighty Spirit. When coming in its power and fulness, it will be to the whole Church, with the exception of miraculous gifts, what it was to the small company of disciples assembled in the upper room on that memorable day; and it will be to the whole world what it was to the three thousand that wept and repented under the preaching of Peter. Then was seen, though on a small scale, what is yet to be seen on the broad scale of the universal Church and the entire earth. Then was seen the beginning of the fulfilment of a prediction that looks mainly at that last great shock in the mighty conflict, which is to be followed by voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever!"

But there is another source of proof, still more convincing,

in the results foretold, as to follow from the reign of the Messiah and the publication of his Gospel, every one of which presupposes an extraordinary putting forth of divine power. I can quote only a very few of the many predictions. "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion." "And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." "The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim." "In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth." "For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream." "The kingdoms of this world [shall] become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob."

Now these results are to happen on earth, under the reign of the Messiah; and who does not perceive that they are what has never yet been? Yet, making due allowance for figurative language, they are what would certainly follow from such an outpouring of the Spirit as is foretold by the Prophet Joel. But in vain shall we look for them, either in the Church or in the world, without such a visitation. All that we now see, and all that we read of, down from the Apostolic times, whether in the Church or out of it, are scarcely the dawn of the glorious day predicted in the passages just quoted. In the Church,

Ephraim is then no more to vex Judah, nor is Judah to vex Ephraim; because the spirit of sect will then cease to exist, if not its very form and reality, under the almighty influence of the Spirit of truth and love. The world, too, is to become thoroughly pacific, and to be filled with the knowledge of the Lord. On the most moderate supposition, its inhabitants will then be blessed with a religious education, and with a general prevalence of piety. Now there are said to be as many as ninety-five thousand teachers of schools in the United States, and not less than fifteen thousand Preachers of the Gospel. To supply the world, therefore, with means of instruction no better than our own country possesses, would require, to say nothing of books, that in some way a million of Preachers be furnished, every twenty years, for the pulpit; and more than six millions of teachers every five years for the school-room. And to bring the world under such a holy and blessed influence as the word of God predicts, even within the space of a century, the Church must hear of not less than twenty millions of souls brought into the kingdom of Christ every year, or what on an average shall be equivalent to that. All this, and far more, would take place if the Spirit were to be poured out upon all flesh; for the great body of these teachers, both for the school-room and the pulpit, are not to be sent from Christian lands, but raised up on the spot; they are to be of native growth. But without such an outpouring, the greatest possible array of means could be regarded with no feeling of hope. Nor must we for one moment forget the lamentable truth, that the very same outpouring of the Spirit is as necessary to procure the means, as it is to make them effectual.

With the same unwavering confidence, therefore, with which we do actually look forward to the universal triumph of the Gospel on the earth, do we anticipate this universal outpouring of the Spirit. This certainly is yet to come. All that has been seen of his agency in the world hitherto, has been in the first instance to plant, and then to preserve a Church upon the earth, rather than to make that Church universal. His presence has been as it were local and occasional, rather than general and constant. The Church has looked to this grandly decisive outpouring as yet to come, rather than rejoiced in it as already

happened. As, under the old dispensation, the Church waited, and waited long, for the promised Messiah to make redemption for the world; so now, under the new dispensation, the Church waits, and has waited long too, for the promised Spirit to come, and appropriate to the world the blessings of that redemption. Yes, we now stand in the interesting attitude of waiting for the coming of the Spirit, just as the saints of old did for the coming of the Saviour. And let us wait with prayer, with hope, with joyful expectation: for He will surely come. We are disposed to believe He will come suddenly: it may be not everywhere at once, but wherever there are the due preparations for his operating on the minds of men. It may be that He will come first into his Church, his spiritual temple, and cast out thence the spirit of the world, and fill it—blessed day!—with the beauty and glory of his celestial influence.

4. We now proceed another step, and show *how this advent of the Spirit is even now indicated by certain remarkable preparatory measures.*

Some of these preparatory measures result from direct efforts of the Church, and others, and those the most important, from great providential movements in human society.

The unprecedented efforts made by the Church to multiply the number of Preachers of the Gospel in Christian lands, to plant new Churches, and to extend the benefits of a Christian education, are all so many preparations for the divine Spirit to exert his power. The Spirit operates on the minds of men by means of the truth; and therefore whatever is done to increase the amount of religious knowledge, prepares the way for his coming and agency. This is the object of the Christian ministry; and, I need not say, this is the object of Christian Missions to the Heathen. Missionaries go as the forerunners of the Spirit, as pioneers, as heralds. Their whole prescribed duty is to make proclamation of the truth. They are answerable only for making this proclamation faithfully. He who sends them forth says to each of them, as he does, indeed, to every Preacher of the Gospel, "Son of man, if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul." Christian Missionaries have executed their commission when they have

made all possible efforts to bring the Gospel in contact with the minds of men. They can do no more. The hearing ear, the awakened conscience, the understanding heart, the willing obedience, are all the appropriate work of the Holy Spirit. Paul plants, Apollos waters, but God gives the increase.

Now there has been a commencement of preparations of this sort in very many of the benighted nations and tribes of men. In hundreds of dark places the truth begins to shine; in most very feebly; nevertheless it shines, and there is a gradual and constant increase of the light of life. Some millions of immortal minds are no longer in the total darkness they once were; and all that is necessary to make full preparation for the Spirit among the Heathen is to have these lights multiplied, and increased in brightness, so as to throw the rays of truth over all nations.

The other preparations, resulting from providential movements in society, are on a far more extended scale. God, by means of a thousand causes, is fast throwing the world open to his people, and is even bringing large portions of it either under the government or the controlling influence of Christian nations. He is furnishing his people with means for making the Gospel bear on the minds of men, far more powerful than he saw fit to bestow on his people in former ages; and He is taking away the impediments to travelling, and making access easy to almost all parts of the world. In a word, who can look over the earth, and not believe that providential preparations are in progress, on a vast scale, for the coming of the Spirit? While the preparatory agency of good men is beheld only here and there, providential preparations are going on, at this moment, throughout the habitable earth: and, doubtless, there are, too, preparatory influences of the Spirit himself on the minds of men, even where the Gospel is not known, and where there is no truth except a few rays of the light of nature: but on this I shall not now dwell.

To do justice to this part of the subject, I must call attention to one other cheering indication, namely,

5. *In some recent events in Heathen lands which seem like fore-runners of this advent of the Spirit.*

Perhaps the most remarkable of these events is the recent

outpouring of the Spirit at the Sandwich Islands. Such an outpouring as that was in connexion with all the other Protestant Missions now in the Heathen world, would bring millions of souls into the visible Church in a single year: and it is well known that many of the islands in the South Pacific ocean, where English Missionaries are labouring, have been blessed with similar gracious visitations. In Tinnevelly, a district in southern India, there was an awakening, a few years since, which, had it extended with like power over all India, would have subverted the great Brahminic system of idolatry, and made Christianity the nominal religion at least of a hundred millions. Even the recent awakening at Krishnagur, in Bengal, with only a very small amount of the light of truth, needed only to become general to overturn the superstitions of that populous province. There have also been outpourings of the Spirit in South Africa, which, if they had been more diffused, would have Christianized the entire Hottentot and Caffre races. The same remark may be made respecting the Karens of Burmah, the Greenlanders, and the North American Indians. Among some small portions of the Oriental Churches also, there are, at present, operations of the Spirit, which, were they extended to all portions of those Churches, would raise them from their spiritual death.

Now these several agencies of the Spirit, viewed in connexion with the preparatory measures already mentioned, seem like forerunners of that universal outpouring which is to change the moral aspect of the world. They encourage the hope of such a blessing, and they may, perhaps, be regarded as the first-fruits of it.

And it is interesting to observe how, in these events, there are diversities of operations, but the same God working all in all; how the agency of the Spirit presents itself to our view in different aspects, but all tending to the same result. The several operations that have been referred to as forerunning events, have each their distinctive traits; from the "great and strong wind," rending the mountains, and breaking in pieces the rocks, as at the Sandwich Islands, to the "still small voice," as among the Oriental Churches.

I have gone through with the argument, which seems to me

fully to establish the fact, that there is yet to be a great and universal outpouring of the Spirit upon the Church and the world: and can there be any reasonable doubt on the subject? May we not yield our faith to the delightful anticipation? Believing that we may, let us now take a brief survey of the EFFECTS OF THIS OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT.

And, first, in the *Church*. The real people of God will be induced to enlist fully in the work of preparing the way of the Lord, in every part of the habitable earth. There will be no longer any reserve, any holding back. A mighty result! but it is one which the Holy Spirit can perform with infinite ease. He has only to exert an influence upon the spiritual discernment of the soul, and upon its powers of feeling, and the work is done. Then the spiritual world opens and spreads out in glorious prospect, as Canaan did to Moses on the top of Pisgah. The whole heart, the whole man, yields, voluntarily, joyfully. Where now is the fascinating, bewildering power of riches, or of the honours and pleasures of the world? Gone! Fled before the presence of Him, whose prerogative it is to proclaim liberty to spiritual captives. Ambition, pride, vanity, and the love of the world, disappearing, let go their avaricious hold upon millions of wealth. God's people are "made willing in the day of his power," and there is a liberal hand and a full treasury: men come up to their duty, and feel it to be a privilege. What the amount will be of individual prayer and labour, and what the proportion will be of individual contribution, to help onward the cause of Christ in that day, I pretend not to determine: but who believes that the men and the women now constituting the visible Church are doing all they would rejoice to do, if the Spirit were to make them this visitation? Ye who dwell in your ceiled houses, who recline on your couches of ease, whose tables are loaded with the bounties of Providence, and have all that heart can desire, may you feel this melting, all-subduing influence: and may all be anointed with this holy anointing, baptized with this heavenly baptism, created anew in Christ Jesus by this spiritual regeneration. Even so I believe it will yet be throughout the Church. The low state of benevolence, now scarcely anywhere above the lowest standard of Christian self-denial, is not always to continue

thus. The true members of Christ's Church are to become the subjects of a wonder-working divine energy: they are to feel the powerful influence of "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich." The abundance of their joy, in their unreserved consecration of themselves to their Lord and Master, will abound in the riches of their liberality; yea, and abound too in prayer, flowing out of a full spirit that will not cease its importunities for this very blessing from on high.

What an admirable object will the Christian then be, and what an admirable object the Christian Church! Zion will arise and shine, her light being come, and the glory of the Lord being risen upon her. The Church will exist for the good of the world: no talents will be deemed too great for the Missionary work, no learning too profound, no eloquence too fervid, no standing too elevated. What armies will be sent by the Church into the empire of darkness, and what means will it put in requisition for the holy warfare!

I must here guard, however, against a serious misapprehension. Nothing in the leading sentiment of this discourse can excuse the Church for delaying to enter fully upon the prosecution of this work. I have indeed stated my belief, that, in point of fact, the Church will not enter upon this work as it ought to do, until the Holy Spirit is poured out upon it in a more copious measure; but this belief is founded only on the fact, that the love and zeal of the Church are at present wholly inadequate. Let no one urge this as forming any excuse for the Church to delay the work. It can be no reason why the work should not be prosecuted to its full extent. How can the Church be excusable in waiting for the grand advent of the Spirit, when the very thing it is required to do is to go before the Spirit, and prepare the way for his advent?—and when, too, it now has all the learning, all the wealth, all the power of speech, all the facilities for travelling, that it would have if the Spirit were thus poured out?—and when it has the most abundant favouring indications of Providence, and all that it ever will have that is imperative in the command of its Saviour, and all that it ever can have that is affecting, that is overpowering, in motive? How can this be a valid excuse, when

all that the Church needs, more than it now has, to cause it speedily to publish the Gospel through the world, is more willingness, more disposition, more inclination to do what is confessedly its duty? In view of this lamentable indisposition and backwardness, we do indeed rejoice in the promised great outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Christian Church; but then, ye people of God, ye surely can have no right to wait till ye are thus visited. If really converted men and women, how can ye have the face to demand more grace, before performing the very work for which ye were called into the kingdom?

I must also make one other remark, before proceeding to illustrate the effects of this visitation upon the world at large. In speaking of this great outpouring of the Spirit, I would by no means deny that it will be attended, for a time, by such divisions and heresies in the Church, and by such fearful convulsions in and among the nations,—owing to the vastly excited, and as yet unsubdued, state of 'men's minds,—as almost to realize the Prophet's figurative description of "wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke, the sun turned into darkness, and the moon into blood." Such a thing is not improbable: it may even be an indirect consequence of the first onset of the mighty agent for the overthrow of iniquity; and what observing, thoughtful mind does not now perceive indications of a future war of opinion, in which religion shall be a predominant element; a war of religions, as it were, more extended and more terrible than anything of the kind yet seen; and which may at length fearfully threaten even the very existence of the true Church? And it may be, and the Scriptures give countenance to the idea, that just in this emergency, God, the Holy Spirit, will come forth in the transcendent power and majesty of his grace, as he came forth at the formation of the earth, with his creative power, upon the dark, tumultuous waters of the great deep.

And then will the *world* feel a renovating spiritual influence throughout the vast extent of its population. Far more than we have seen on any of the more favoured spots that have been mentioned, will then be witnessed wherever the Gospel is proclaimed. The progress of the heralds of the cross will be one of light, and everywhere the rays of truth will be winged with

power. At the sound of the Gospel trumpet every Jericho shall fall down; and at the call of the Minister of Christ, the sun shall stay his progress in the heavens: and then, as we believe, will Satan be bound, that he deceive the nations no more, and satanic power and influence be withdrawn from the earth. What a change will there be in the policy of the nations, when he, who, with iron grasp, has swayed his wicked sceptre over them for ages, is hurled from his impious and bloody throne! What a change in the civil and social relations and condition of mankind! What rapid, what wonderful, changes will there be daily all over the world! Men will yield themselves to the divine influence in masses. Nations will be born in a day. Idols, and idol-worship, and superstition in its thousand forms, will come to an end. How glorious the prospect! See the multitude assembled before yonder idol on the plain of Juggernaut, and in the midst, that Christian Preacher. The tumult of the people around him is like the sound of many waters: but soon it is hushed: every ear attends, every heart is touched, every eye melts, and thousands bow to the reign of Jesus. Lo! the day of mercy for the world is come. The Almighty Spirit is going forth conquering and to conquer. Brahma, and Vishnu, and Buddha, and the False Prophet, and the Man of Sin, and every other spiritual abomination in high places flies before him, as the shades of night flee before the rising sun; and the messengers of the Gospel have free course throughout the earth, till, at length, every island and every continent is subdued. Then the rapt visions and prophetic paintings of the latter day are realized; and Jesus reigns over a redeemed, sanctified, and happy world.

In conclusion, I would ask, What hinders this work from advancing among Heathen nations far more rapidly than it does at present? What is the insuperable obstacle? Alas! what can it be except the worldliness and apathy of the Christian Church? The real difficulty exists nowhere else. To the Church is given the work of preparing the way for the Spirit to bless the Heathen world with its influences, and the Church has not done it. The Gospel has not been everywhere preached, and comparatively few minds among the Heathen have yet been trained by culture to take the oversight of converts, should they be greatly mul-

tiplied in every land. Should the harvest wave over the field of the world it would perish—yes, it would perish—for want of reapers. Why has the Church so long neglected this work? Why does she neglect it now? The cry of spiritual death that is heard over the earth, bears witness to an amazing disregard of obligation on the part of members of the Church, and to a corresponding accumulation of guilt.

And who of us can plead guiltless? Are we interested as we ought to be in the progress of Christ's kingdom? Have we prayed as we should have done? Are we doing all that we can to awaken songs of praise to the Saviour in every nation and tribe of mankind? The indifference of Christians to this great work is amazing. Who would believe that a child of God, an heir of glory, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and commanded to publish abroad the tidings of his love, could think and care so little whether these tidings were thus proclaimed? And if it be so with us, how can we believe that we have the spirit of Christ? and how look forward with hope to the time when we shall stand before him in yonder heaven, and see him face to face? Verily the Church has neglected this work too long, and so have we, its members. Let us arise, every one, in the strength of the Lord God. He calls us from on high, and commands that, so far as in us lies, we prepare his way to every family, and to every human heart. No more let us take counsel of our love of the world, no more of selfishness, no more of unbelief. In the fear and love of God let us do our duty in this matter; that our own souls, in holy fellowship with the Spirit, may rejoice with self-satisfying and with everlasting joy.

DISCOURSE XXV.

 PROGRESS, THE LAW OF THE MISSIONARY
 WORK.*

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PHILIPPIANS iii. 13.

“ Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.”

WHEN this service, by another's relinquishing it, was unexpectedly devolved on me, I, too, should most gladly have declined it, on account of the imperfect state of my health, had there been any one to whom I was at liberty to transfer it. And there was another reason which might well have led me to shrink from the duty of this hour, were it not that providential calls are designed for those to whom they come. I regard the present occasion as of very great sacredness, and as imposing on me one of the gravest responsibilities of my life. The representatives of three thousand Churches are assembled to consult together upon the work of giving the Gospel to the world. They have appointed me to speak to them in the name of Christ, concerning the business of their meeting. Surely I may ask, without disparaging myself or any other person, who is sufficient for the just performance of such an office? It calls for so unusual an unction from above, for so peculiar and uncommon a baptism of the Holy Spirit, not to mention other high qualifications, that I suppose no one living, duly aware of its demands, could undertake it without fear and trembling.

When I began to cast about my thought to find an appropriate subject of discourse, this Missionary institution presented itself

* Delivered in Rochester, New-York, September, 1843, before the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

before me in two aspects. At first, I beheld it as having already a vast and most weighty charge on its hands: eighty-six stations among the distant Heathen, with five hundred labourers; sixty-two Churches, with twenty-three thousand members; and more than six hundred schools, with twenty-seven thousand pupils; besides numerous printing establishments, with their foundries and presses for the use of the Missions: a trust demanding so large a measure of liberality, and of devoted and patient care, and being in itself of so unrestrainable a tendency to growth, that the fear would obtrude itself, of its becoming a burden which would be not long endured, without retrenchment and reduction. And this apprehension was strengthened by the monthly returns of deficiency to meet the expenses, which, until lately, was becoming larger and larger; and also by the following remarks in the last Annual Report:—"While the Heathen world never presented such openings as now for Missionary labours, there are, all over Christendom, indications as if the work would not be conducted on a much broader scale without a new impulse from on high." "We are now only where it was needful we should have been four years ago." "This great and favoured community has been virtually at a stand for a series of years in the work of Foreign Missions:" and there was yet further confirmation to this foreboding, in certain intimations, here and there given, that the Board has advanced about as far as it is expedient it should go in this work. These things almost seemed decisive in favour of my making a discourse against retrogression; of undertaking to demonstrate that the apprehension adverted to is groundless; that no station need be surrendered, no Missionary recalled, no Church left in its infancy, as sheep in the wilderness without a shepherd; no school dissolved; no pupil dismissed; that the business of the Society is in no danger of becoming unmanageable; that this noble work of modern evangelism need not commence so soon a backward movement. In this decision, however, I could not rest; for, while I mused, this association assumed another appearance. I regarded it as sustaining other relations and responsibilities. It appeared in my view as a company of the followers of Christ, banded together by his command and Spirit, and also by mutual covenants and pledges

to attempt the evangelization of the world. Instantly the large and numerous Missionary associations already existing, with the extreme difficulty of sustaining them, passed from notice. They could no longer be thought of. For now the whole earth, with its corruption, guilt, and ruin, presented itself as the field of action; and the perfect occupation of it with Christian Churches and institutions was the labour to be done, the burden to be borne. To this enterprise, in its world-wide extent, and with its demand for resources existing only in God, every member of this Board stood committed, by virtue of his holy calling; so that it had been a violation of their Christian compact to disavow the accomplishment of this, as what they distinctly designed, and what they assuredly expected, along with others, and with help from God, to be instrumental in achieving. With this apprehension of their character and undertaking, such a strain of address as the first view suggested could have no reconciliation. It was dismissed at once: and, instead thereof, the point which it seemed most needful for me to enlarge upon before my Fathers and Brethren of this sacred association was, that they go forward with their undertaking, on the principle which governed the Apostle in his personal religion; namely, that of “forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.” Accordingly, I determined to speak to you, with whatever measure of grace and strength God might give me, ON THE REASONS FOR PROGRESS IN THE MISSIONARY WORK; THE WORK OF EVANGELIZING THE WORLD.

1. A great and fundamental reason lies *in the very nature of Christianity*. In the Christian scheme the following facts are essential,—that mankind are in a state of sin, and dying in this state are utterly lost; that their recovery can be effected only by their being Christianized, or brought under the power of the Gospel; that the Gospel can do nothing where it has not been propagated or is unknown; that Christian Missions are the necessary means of its propagation, and that, under the divine blessing, these means are adequate, and their end certain. These facts, which are, we may say, the groundwork of Missions; their plea, their justification, their praise, are also an argument, which no one can answer, for their most thorough and vigorous

prosecution. They make an appeal to the hearts of Christians, which, if it were justly responded to, would at once constitute the universal Church a Missionary Society, and would keep Missions advancing with increasing speed and power, until no man would be left beneath the wide vault of heaven without the knowledge of the Gospel. These great primary truths of Christianity render all degrees of Missionary apathy in the Church, her unspeakable dishonour and reproach, implying unparalleled hardness of heart, if not downright insincerity in her confession of Christ. We propound it, therefore, as a matter self-evident and unquestionable, that Christianity should either be renounced as an imposture, or else be propagated through the world with all possible diligence; that there is no middle way, which reason does not instantly repudiate, between denying the Gospel altogether, and going forward with the work of spreading it among the nations of the earth, until the universal human race is brought under its influence.

2. The next reason is that *the great Missionary commandment has not passed away*. The charge of Christ to his first disciples was meant for us who are here this day, as absolutely and perfectly as it was for them. If our divine Lord were at this meeting in bodily presence, and, standing up visibly before us, should address to us the words, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth: go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature;" we should be under no obligation to obey him which is not now upon us. The proof of this is found in whatever demonstrates that Christianity was meant to be a permanent institute. The command to Christianize mankind is a part of Christianity, as much so as the law of brotherly love, or the ordinance requiring the celebration of the death of Christ. To submit to the Gospel is to make this command a rule of conduct. It is in the Christian's code, and why is he not as firmly bound by it, as by the precept, "Let brotherly love continue;" or by any other statute which the Gospel enjoins? Indeed, there is proof special and peculiar that this command was not given to the first disciples, except as including their successors. This proof exists in the annexed promise of our Lord, that he himself would be with them through successive generations till the end of the world; a promise which

admitted of no fulfilment, and was unintelligible, on the supposition that the first disciples alone were in his intention.

Now, why is not this a reason for advancing in the Missionary work which, with every Christian, should be as determinative and controlling as the forces which keep the orbs of heaven in their eternal circuit round the sun. It surely should have had this influence on the first Christians; and why on them only? We cannot all be foreign Missionaries; but we all can either go, or send, or aid in sending others; and what we are now solemnly insisting upon is, that whatever can be done herein, by every member of the Church, is required to be done, under the sanction of law, by the almighty Sovereign himself. It is our testimony, in the name of Christ, that no disciple of his is left at liberty in this matter; that he is bound by his oath of allegiance; that necessity is laid upon him; that he may no more cease from doing what he can in the work of Missions than from his daily prayers, or from revering the name of Christ, or believing in him as the Saviour of the world.

3. It should be a motive to increased progress that hitherto, almost from the beginning, *the Missionary law has been, in respect of actual observance by the Church, so nearly reduced to an obsolete and dead letter.* It has not been expunged; but, with exceptions, serving only to render the general fact more astonishing, it has had no exemplification as a part of commanded and scriptural piety. It has not been so with the other laws of Christianity. Imperfectly as they have been kept, they have none of them, as by the general, and allowed, and unlamented disregard of the Church, been deposed from their rank and authority as laws, binding on the conscience under the sanction of divine majesty and power. No; this has been the peculiar fate of the one command to evangelize the world. The first disciples were almost impatient to obey this command. They were for a time laid under a restraint, but as soon as that restraint was removed, they devoted themselves and their substance to the propagation of Christianity, and their subsequent life was in blessed harmony with this noble beginning. They ceased not to look upon their Master's last great charge as embodying his sovereign will, and his eternal majesty. They never consulted together as to whether it was expedient to undertake to

fulfil it; they never inquired whether its fulfilment was practicable; but implicitly bowed before it, as revealing the pleasure and pledging the supporting grace of their Lord. But how few have, in this respect, imitated these loyal disciples? During all the following centuries the Church at large lay almost as in the sleep of death, as to a sense of obligation to carry the message of redeeming love to the nations of the world. Individuals there were, great and singular spirits, who felt themselves bound by this precept. At different times, also, organized exertions were made, more or less extensively, to spread nominal Christianity in some countries; but let the page of history be turned to which records of the general Church, at any period after the first, the merging of her will into that of her King and Head, in regard to this one matter of Christianizing mankind, or any just acknowledgment of his prerogative as Lawgiver and Ruler herein. It might be edifying, if there were time, to give the evidence on this point, directly and at length, from the annals of Christian Missions, so called; but the fact is no less certain than the Church's continued existence. Never, since the primitive era, has she given indication that she felt herself under the sanction of any authority to evangelize the nations of the earth; while, by twenty millions a year, during eighteen centuries, they have been passing to their eternal destiny, strangers to the influence of God's recovering grace. And shall not the faithlessness of so many ages, with the countless and endless enormities which it has entailed, admonish us not to pause quite yet in our begun career of evangelism; but rather do what in us lies to retrieve the past by augmented haste in our movements?

4. We should think only of quickening our progress, when we consider *how slow has been our course since we began, and what little advance we have made*. When for the time, now about half a century, the energies of the whole Church should have been enlisted on the largest scale of operation, and the work nearly or quite done, O how partial and languid have been our movements! We have done but little beyond lanching forth in this enterprise: we have hardly spread our sails to the wind.

Slow and inconsiderable, however, as has been our advance, compared to what it should have been, we would not speak

disparagingly of that which has been done. The difference in itself is not small between the present and forty years ago, in regard to Missionary operations. It deserves our fervent thanksgivings that evangelism—not worldly policy and martial power, under the cloak of religion, aiming chiefly at temporal aggrandisement and nominal submission; but the pure and primitive Missionary spirit, seeking simply to save the souls of men—is now employing fifteen hundred Missionaries at twelve hundred central stations, assisted by five thousand native and other salaried agents, at an expense of two and a half millions of dollars a year.* The Missions of the Protestant Church, in its various branches, during the last forty or fifty years, are doubtless more considerable, in their direct and indirect relations to the world's salvation, than those of the foregoing ten or fifteen centuries. It is only, however, a contrast with the past that excites our joy. When we look again upon the vast field of human shame and woe that lies outspread in every direction, to the remotest bounds of the earth, and think of our obligations and privileges, and of the Church's thousand years' sleep over the very concern of her existence, no feelings seem appropriate but those of astonishment and grief that the scale of our Missionary proceedings should be so small. If we compare it with that of our home operations, inadequate as that is, the inequality appears enormous. What the Protestant Church gives for the evangelization of the world is less than a tenth—yea, if we do not misreckon, than the fifth of a tenth—of what she expends on herself. Out of her eighty thousand Ministers, but fifteen hundred are foreign Missionaries. Without determining precisely the proportion of resources which should be employed abroad, the following considerations throw light enough on this subject, to stir the whole Church to her centre with the spirit of reform. First, that she is not more under law to care for her own well-being, than she is to evangelize the world. Secondly, that the unevangelized portion of mankind is at least five times as large as the other portion. And, thirdly, that, in propagating Christianity, the Apostle's rule should be followed as essentially equitable and Christian,—“To whom he was not spoken of they

* These statistics are from Dr. Harris, who appears to have taken much care to make them correct.

shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand." We do not undertake to give with precision the results of a just application of these facts; but we do affirm, with heaviness and sorrow of heart, that it is not charitable—no, it is neither merciful nor just—on the part of the Church, that of a race all equally and infinitely needing the Gospel, and equally entitled to it by the grace and commandment of God, they should allow one-fifth the privilege of hearing the joyful sound all their lifetime, while the rest, through sixty generations, should be left in total ignorance of the fact that a Saviour has visited the world. There is in this inequality, a guilt which should fill the Church with the profoundest grief. It tramples upon the great foundation-law of God's empire; it makes void the almighty Redeemer's last and most impressive charge; it shows indifference to his honour: and what wonder that, while the consequence to the world has been its continued and progressive ruin, the Church should have been enduring an incessant struggle for existence, and should be compelled to acknowledge the survival of her exposure and conflicts as the greatest of wonders?

But the whole truth has not been told. It is not the disproportionate allotment of the Church's actual expenditures and ministry, that measures her indebtedness. She would be incalculably at fault, even if of these she divided to the Heathen all that would fall to them. For these collectively are immensely deficient. Then would she be found as a faithful steward in this matter, if the expenditures for all purposes were as generous, and the ministry as able and as large, as the interest and honour of Christ demand; and, further, if her individual members, as such, were all duly engaged in the work of human salvation; and if now the Heathen should have their full share. Here is the standard by which the Church should judge herself as to her arrears to the world. Who can estimate the amount? Shall we discharge it? Shall we not be adding to it incalculably and continually, if we do not proceed upon a broader scale of operations than that with which we have been heretofore content?

5. *The tokens of the divine complacency in the Missions of these times* are most inspiring motives to progress in them. These are embraced in the condition in which the Church has been advancing since our Missions began, in the success of these

Missions, and in the signs of the times, as promising greater success.

(1.) From the time we began our Missionary work, the state of our Churches has, on the whole, been one of progressive prosperity. The entrance on that work was the dawn of a good day which has been growing brighter and brighter; and which, if we falter not in our undertaking, will, doubtless, continue to shine more and more, until its light shall have become "seven-fold, as the light of seven days." This favourable and advancing change is the result of no hidden instrumentality; but, manifestly, of the blessing of God on the Missionary undertaking. This movement originated other kindred and subservient ones, as the necessary means of its accomplishment; and while all have been conspiring together to forward the general design, they have been as life to the dead to those who have been under their influence. The connexion of good agencies here is easily traced. The resolution being once seriously taken to give mankind the Gospel, the necessity was soon felt for the translation and diffusion of the Scriptures; for the increase and improvement of the ministry; for the multiplication and distribution of religious books: and as its accomplishment advanced, particular evils called for their own means of reform; and while the vast foreign sphere opened more and more to view, with all its crying demands for the Gospel, the conviction became deeper and deeper as to the necessity of giving increased attention to the interests of home, the source, under God, of supplies to the Heathen. In the mean time, everything tended to impart a sense of dependence on God, and to cherish the spirit of prayer, for the effusion of the divine influence. The result was, that a system of benevolent agencies arose, which has distinguished the age above all that have preceded it, since the primitive triumphs of Christianity.

Various incidental benefits have followed. Christians of different sects meeting often together for prayer and consultation, in reference to plans and measures connected with the cause of human salvation, have, under the power of that paramount and common object, forgotten, for the time, their party names and interests; and thus, the evils of sectarianism have been gradually disappearing, and Christian union has been advancing, insomuch

that the time seems rapidly approaching when denominational peculiarities among the evangelical sects will be, indeed, but as the differences among members of the same family, or regiments of the same loyal and united army. Again, there has been a remarkable revival of biblical study and learning, as it might have been expected there would be, when the enterprise was undertaken of publishing the Scriptures in the various languages of the earth. There has also been an improvement in the science of theology, the result of its being pursued under practical influences, and in relation to practical effect. In the same way the general pulpit has been improved; and, likewise, by regular consequence, the general piety of the Church. And, to crown all, outpourings of the Holy Spirit have been granted in increasing power, and also with increasing frequency, until revivals of religion, scarcely inferior to those of the Apostolic period, have become, especially in our land, ordinary and every day occurrences, to which scoffers and gainsayers have almost become weary of making opposition.

It is difficult to appreciate the change which has taken place. There is, we know, a great difference of impression in regard to it. That there are some things in it to be deplored, perhaps no one will deny; but viewing it in all its aspects, it appears to us, both in itself, and especially in its promise, entitled to our grateful and adoring admiration. We doubt if any one has an adequate sense of its importance, or can have, until the existing state of things shall become historical, and be surveyed as lying in the past, connected with antecedent times, and with the just results of its own influences and events. If by pausing in the work of Missions we should ultimately throw the Church back to where she was before, then it would be seen whether an advance had been made or not. Who can think we should not sustain a mighty and irreparable loss, and deserve for our inconstancy the indignation of God and man.

(2.) But we note the divine pleasure in our work in the success which has attended it, as well as in the prosperity of the Church. Our success is disparaged by comparing it with that of the primitive days; but this comparison should not be made without also comparing the primitive times and the present, in regard both to their respective measures of the

Missionary spirit, and to their means and facilities of evangelization. If in Christ's first little flock there was a greater amount of the proper kind of power than can now be collected out of the one hundred and fifty millions of Protestant Christendom, why should it be thought that our success will bear no proportion to theirs, unless its absolute quantity be equal? What, if among the early disciples the proportion of those having the Missionary spirit were as it is in our Churches; and, what if these few had possessed no more of that spirit than the generality of the modern friends of Missions; then had their scale of labours been nearer to ours; and would they have so far transcended us in success? If the Church now were made up of Missionaries, devoted in life and substance to the spread of the Gospel, then might we wonder if there was much more tardiness in the work of evangelization under our agency, than there was under that of the first Christians; but when it is considered, that out of eighty thousand Protestant Ministers, only fifteen hundred are employed in foreign Missions, and that of these there is not, perhaps, one Brainerd, not to say a Paul, in the spirit of evangelism; and, also, that, while among the private members of the first Church, no man said "ought that he had was his own," among us there is almost no man who does not practically say just the reverse; giving for the spread of the Gospel out of his abundance, and living as self-indulgently as though he gave nothing; when it is kept in mind that such is our comparative measure of the Missionary spirit, notwithstanding that this is termed the Missionary age, must not the intelligent and sound conclusion be, that the disproportion in our success is not that so little, but that so much, beyond all ground of anticipation, has resulted from our Missions?

But account, we said, should also be taken of the difference of means and advantages. The first propagators of the Gospel had a supernatural use of speech, and other miraculous powers, which almost superseded the necessity of preparative and indirect modes of influence. They were perfectly equipped for preaching wherever they went, without the study of tongues, and without scientific research and arrangement. Our circumstances are widely different: all forms of miraculous agency are now unknown. We have surprising inventions of

science and art, and other great natural powers, but these do not qualify our foreign Missionaries for going to work among the Heathen, as our domestic ones can do among their own countrymen. They have multifarious labours to perform, which could have had no place among the primitive Christians. They are required, by the great difference of their means and circumstances, (who can think otherwise?) to give themselves to the study of languages, the translation of the Scriptures, the reducing of barbarous tongues to writing, the gathering and teaching primary and other schools, the preparing of books, the providing, in short, a complete apparatus for introducing and perpetuating a state of Christian civilization; and thus laying such foundations for permanence and growth in the Churches planted by them, as could not have been laid in the Apostolic days. It may be, that they have not occupied themselves as much in preaching as Paul and Barnabas, in their circumstances, would have done; but we do not forget that other great and arduous works have been on their hands, which they have well discharged; and that they were bound to pursue, on the whole, as they have nobly done, a system of operations demanding, for the production of its results, much time and patience; and now, if no such sudden and overwhelming success come at once, as that which followed Apostolic ministrations, shall we yield ourselves to the paralysing influence of disappointment?

The actual measure of our success has not been small. It has far transcended our expectations. What early friend of the cause was sanguine enough to hope that there would be at this day one hundred and eighty thousand converts from Heathenism in Christian communion, and two hundred thousand Heathen minds under training in Christian schools,* or that such scenes of divine grace, as those at the Sandwich Islands, would be so soon realized; that the greatest revival, scarcely excepting those of the Apostolic period, and the largest Churches in the world would be there; that of those, but as yesterday most barbarous people, a larger portion would be spiritual Christians, than of the inhabitants of any other portion of Christendom of equal extent; and that civilized life, on

* See "Great Commission," p. 190.

firm supports, would be rapidly advancing among them to maturity? The Missions in the South Sea Islands, after wrestling hard, like Jacob, against great seeming discouragements, have had results not less surprisingly prosperous. "From that time to this," says their martyr Williams, "one rapid series of successes has attended our labours; so that island after island, and group after group, have, in rapid succession, been brought under the influence of the Gospel; so much so, indeed, that, at the present time, we do not know of any group, or any single island of importance, within two thousand miles of Tahiti, in any direction, to which the glad tidings of salvation have not been conveyed." But our success is not limited by the number of our converts, or the size and prosperity of our Churches and schools, or by our progress in the work of civilization, or by the extent to which the Gospel message has been published. If, in the Apostolic times, nations had offered themselves to be taken under Christian training; if the praises of evangelization had been pronounced in those days, by bodies of scientific and learned men, on account of its influence on the civil, political, commercial, and literary interests of mankind; and if public sentiment, almost throughout the civilized world, had changed from scorn or pity into earnest and warm approbation, would not these facts have been counted amongst the proofs and the items of Apostolic success? But by such facts as these doth the Providence of God most benignly and graciously smile on the Missions in which we are engaged. Surely, if any persons have been waiting for success to move them to take part with us, they need wait no longer.

We have had to encounter afflictions. Lives of the highest promise have been sacrificed; and some of our plans have been thwarted; but there were such things in the days of Christ and his Apostles, and we have no cause to regard them in any other light than as trials of our faith. Our only real discouragement has been the great difficulty of meeting the demands for the Church's liberality, arising from the unlooked-for, and wonderful prosperity of our Missions.

(5.) But it is not only by smiling on our Churches and Missions, that God hath expressed his high delight in our work; but, likewise, by his providential agency in arranging and

ordering things in the state of the world. If any one has doubt on this point, he must, we think, be of an unspiritual or uninformed mind. The signs of the times, the condition and circumstances in which the world has been placed, and in which it has been continued, have been, from the commencement of the work, such as to invite and allure us on to its most diligent prosecution. How has the world been, and how is it yet standing before us, in those relations which most concern us as engaged in its evangelization? If we survey it in a religious point of view,—of the three comprehensive divisions to which it may be reduced, the Brahminic, the Mohammedan, and the Christian; the two former present themselves as enfeebled, decrepit, in-aggressive, decaying, ready, and almost willing, to perish; while the latter, after the conflicts of eighteen hundred years, hath renewed its vigour, and is bearing down upon the others with triumphant force. If we look at it in its political circumstances, where do we behold the ascendancy of strength, greatness, and empire, but in those nations which are the seats of our Missionary associations, and the sources of the piety, liberality, and self-sacrificing zeal by which the work is carried on? If we contemplate in regard to the trade, the arts, the intellect, the literature, the enterprise, the wealth, the happiness of the people, still the advantages, in a pre-eminent degree, are with those portions of it which, in more senses than one, may be termed the Missionary countries of the globe; and then, what does it mean that, for the last eight and twenty years, the great powers of the earth have remained in so profound a peace among themselves; and that where hostilities have had place, they have been so uniformly overruled for the advancement of our design? This form of encouragement, we may remark, has been almost constantly cumulative. If the last year the Heathen world presented openings for Missionary labour which it had never done before, the openings this year are wider, more numerous, and more attractive. Since our last annual meeting, the great and insurmountable wall of China has fallen; and thus hath been thrown open at once, by a gracious and high-working Providence, which should flood the universal Church with joy, a new, and almost boundless, field of Missions,—a world in itself,—containing nearly four hundred millions of

people, before regarded as almost inaccessible by any other than miraculous power: and how signal, and how deserving of lofty praise, have been the recent interpositions and steps of divine power, with reference to the preservation and establishment of peace between the nations embracing our Missionary Boards? When we consider the disastrous influence of a war between those nations, especially on the work of evangelization, the eminent peril to which peace was exposed, and the very remarkable measures and arrangements, both in this country and in England, by which the peril was removed, and the bands of peace rendered stronger than before, can we avoid recognising, with thankful and rejoicing hearts, the hand of God displayed to show us the profound interest which he takes in our enterprise, and to encourage us to go on with it, to the uttermost of our ability?

In short, we are bold to say, without the least hesitation, that if ever the light of the divine countenance was lifted up upon any human undertaking, it is shining, at this moment, in the fulness of its expanding, vitalizing, and cheering influence, on the Missionary work in which the English and American Christians are engaged. By his blessing on our Churches, and on our Missions, and by his providential disposals and movements among mankind, God so discovers his great pleasure in this work, that he might well upbraid us, with utter indifference to his favour, if we are not steadfast, immovable, and always abounding in the use of every appropriate means of its advancement.

6. The sixth motive to progress is *the ground we have to hope that the future advances of the Gospel are to be exceedingly more rapid than the past.* We can only touch upon a topic on which we should rejoice to enlarge. The destined dominion of Christianity is universal: its first victories, however glorious, will have no glory, comparatively, amid the splendours of those which it is yet to achieve. All nations are to be evangelized; the world is to be renewed. Heathenism, Mohammedanism, all false systems, are to pass away; "the kingdoms of the world are [to] become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ;" and the knowledge of God, and his truth, is to "cover the earth as the waters cover the sea." And it is in the highest degree

probable, if not wholly beyond doubt, that the time for effecting this mighty triumph is short. If it were to commence immediately, nay, if it have already commenced, as it probably has done, its course must be incomparably swift, in order to reach its termination within the longest period to which, by the general belief of the Church, it can be extended. The conviction seems warranted and demanded, not only by the sound interpretation of the prophecies, but by the entire panorama of providence, that the promised predominance of the Gospel is almost at the doors. The long duration of the limited and depressed condition of the Church; the world's ripeness and readiness for a change; the facilities for an almost winged intercourse with the most distant parts, making, in effect, one end of the earth neighbour of another; the ubiquity of British and American influence; and the rapid extension of the English language and literature through Europe and Asia; the honours paid to the work of evangelization by the most enlightened persons and societies; the unlimited plans and enterprises of Christian philanthropy; and, above all, the vast increase of the spirit of prayer; have conduced to the wide-spread impression, among the more spiritual part of the Church, that the future march of Christianity to universal empire, will be more like an already victorious army hastening to the spoil, than, as it hath hitherto been, like one, slowly, laboriously, and painfully making its way over alpine heights, to the field where the decisive battle remains to be fought and won.

It is freely admitted that we see not in operation any sufficient causes for the production of the great result. But our reliance is not limited to natural or visible agencies. The work of evangelism is a work of faith. We look for sudden and surprising interventions of the divine power, to render favourable influences effectual, and to overrule unfavourable ones. We do this under warrant both of Scripture and the analogy of the past. And we do it with the more confidence, when we consider the influence of prayer on the mind of God. That influence hath been accumulating, day and night, through all the ages of the past; but in our times, as it hath been very eloquently said, "a chain of prayer, beginning in the farthest east, is carried round with the sun to the farthest west, in the islands of the Pacific,

through all the hours of time." When we remember this, are we presumptuous in the hope that as the patience of God bears long with the wicked, until they have perfectly filled their measure of iniquity, and then gives free place to the full visitations of his reluctant wrath, so, after God hath kept his elect crying to him incessantly from the beginning, and hath in our day so mightily augmented their number and their importunity, he will at length vouchsafe, as in a moment of time, such unparalleled and immeasurable effusions of his Spirit, as will make the remaining course of the Gospel almost like "the lightning, which lighteneth out of one part under heaven, and shineth unto the other part under heaven."

But let it be observed, that we are pressing this high hope as a motive to Missionary zeal. If God is about to work swiftly and mightily for the peaceful extension of his kingdom, his people will be set to working for this purpose, also swiftly and mightily: it is only in and through their agency that God exerteth his own. If he stretch forth his hand, as in the beginning, the Church will be quickened, and moved, and engaged, as she was at first: she will again feel, as it has well been said, the presence of her invisible King and eternal Lord; the souls of Christians will again overflow with the plenitude of spiritual and heavenly life; and they will again cease to value earthly existence, and be willing to sacrifice it in the struggle against the powers of darkness: for, as the "Church is the body of Christ, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all," when she makes no revelation of saving power, none will be made. We are looking, therefore, for a change in the Church, of which the anticipated change in the state of mankind shall be but the just result and full development. Indeed, the latter change will be nothing other than the former, extended by the process of assimilation, even as the leaven, by the same process, leaveneth the mass in which it hath been hidden. So that, as Paul told his shipwrecked fellow-voyagers, to whom he had promised safety in the name of the Lord, that unless the shipmen abode in the ship, they could not be saved, may it be said to the Church, with all the pledges and promises of the world's conversion before her, that the world will not be converted unless she stir up herself to the requisite and appropriate exertions for its

recovery: and, further, as Christ said concerning Judas, "The Son of Man goeth, as it is written of him: but wo to that man by whom he is betrayed!" may we not say to the Christians of this generation that, although the world will be evangelized according to the sure word of God, yet wo unto them, if, with all their advantages and encouragement for going forward in the work of Missions, they falter in that work, ere its end is fully reached.

7. A seventh reason for advancement, therefore, exists in the fact, *that there is no guarantee against the consequences of our halting.* No prophecies, no signs, no facilities and preparations, no vivid anticipations of the latter glory as about to break forth like the lightning's flash, can prevent the occurrence of these consequences. The eternal principles of the divine government, the perfections of the divine nature, require that the great and effectual door, which divine grace and providence have opened to the Heathen world, should not be closed by our own neglect. Close it, and either the penalty of the highest disobedience, and the displays of God's punitive displeasure against sin, must all disappear, or our sin against the Lord must assuredly find us out. To suppose the contrary would be to suppose that the bonds of the divine empire would be relaxed; nay, that the divine benevolence and compassion would cease to exist. Let us, then, glance at the consequences of not advancing. We shall not remain long at a stand, when we have once decided against progress. Well did our Report of last year declare, that it is the law of heaven that in the Christian race we should press onward, never content with present attainments, present doings, present sacrifices. There is the certainty of decline, in ceasing to be aggressive and onward: that halt is virtually a backward step, and it may prove to be an irrecoverable fall. It shows inherent instability and weakness, and it inspires distrust and discouragement. It has been justly, and very seasonably, remarked,* that the souls of men are not likely to be stirred to support adequately a work, even in its present state, unless it give signs of continued advancement. If we come to a stand, it will not

* By the Rev. Dr. Williams, of New-York.

be long before the Churches will begin to abate their interest, their prayers, their confidence, their support. The results hasten one after another; our Missionary operations come to an end; our schools are dispersed; our Missionaries recalled; our stations abandoned; and, at length, our holy enterprise given over as impracticable, or to be accomplished in other days, and by other hands: and then how much better had it been for the cause of evangelization if the idea of modern Missions had not been conceived. At what immense disadvantages will the Christians of a future day enter on the work; and how will Antichrist, whom our successes have enlisted in active opposition, glory over us and the cause, while occupying our deserted positions; and either numbering our Churches as his own, or persecuting them to death, or scattering them again among the Heathen! And by what strange and terrible judgments upon our domestic Churches may we expect to be visited? How long will our revivals and annual jubilees of benevolence remain, when the spirit of Missions has departed? What else were to be anticipated, but that a general and unparalleled blight would overspread the fair heritage of God, and that all forms of error and corruption would infest it, until it became a scene of utter desolation? And with such appalling degeneracy in the Church, what would be the state of civil society? Unless the loudest admonitions both of Scripture and of history be as empty noise, there will be commotions, revolutions, tribulations; "signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and upon earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." Fathers and brethren, it is truly an awful responsibility which we and our cotemporary fellow-Christians are under. O, with what interest does heaven look down upon this anniversary meeting! Methinks the holy angels would fain appear amongst us, if that might be, to animate us in our work. Nor are the powers of darkness less interested in this occasion. In such circumstances, were it not easier to give up our self-indulgences, our possessions, our lives, than to entertain, for one moment, the thought of standing still in this work? Were not those, then, alarming words, which were cited near the beginning of this discourse, as it were out of

our own mouths:—"This great and favoured community has been virtually at a stand, for a series of years, in the work of Foreign Missions." Should we not tremble at this fact as portending danger, and announce it again and again, with still deepening awe on our minds, and continue the announcement until our breath fail us, or until the danger is seen, and, if possible, averted by a new onward movement? May it not be, that we ourselves are not deeply enough impressed with the reality and fearfulness of the danger? May there not be a lurking presumption in our minds that the tree in this case will not be suffered to yield its fruits; that there will be some interference with the stated connexion and sequence of things; that the divine purposes and the prophecies cannot otherwise be fulfilled; that the great providential preparations and arrangements of the times will otherwise be without an end? Let us not be taken in this snare. If such a presumption would induce security in our minds, let us resist it by recalling the dreadful facts of history, which show how unsafe is such a reliance; by remembering that the relation of cause and effect is surer than our presentiments respecting the unfulfilled counsels of God, or our interpretation of prophecies and signs; and by considering the temerity and guilt of so limiting the Holy One, as to make him incapable of accomplishing his purposes, except by violating the order of nature, and the laws of his government. "The acceptable year of the Lord" has not seldom been, also, "the day of vengeance of our God." If the time is at hand for giving Christianity the empire of the world, judgments may also be at hand, to do, in the way of wrath and destruction, that which might have been done in the joyful and glorious way of converting and saving grace, by the due prosecution of the work of propagating the Gospel.

8. The last reason which we shall urge for going on with this work as vigorously and expeditiously as possible, is *that this is demanded, in order to meet contrary movements occasioned by the Missionary proceedings of these times.* The great adversary hath not been an indifferent observer of these proceedings. His plan of opposition has begun to reveal itself: it has a four-fold developement. A philosophical Atheism is displaying itself amongst us, in seductive and audacious forms. Rationalism,

professing no unfriendly purpose against Christianity, while renouncing its divinity, its peculiar claims to inspiration, and its miracles, is labouring to undermine its deep foundations. Anti-Protestantism has sprung up, in a new and dishonourable shape, and in the midst of Protestant Churches and institutions, and by persons holding membership in them, is freely reproaching the great leaders and martyrs of the Reformation as schismatics, and the Reformation itself as a deplorable event; and though it avows no intention of enthroning over us the Man of Sin himself, is contending for the enormous delusions and heresies of his system; and making justification by faith, as held forth by Luther, with such overwhelming force against the empire of darkness, as the chief and firstborn of errors, worse than Heathenism itself.* And, finally, Papal propagandism, with its well-planned and well-sustained Missions, is resolutely disputing the day with us, both at home and abroad, employing against us its jesuitical calumnies and deceits, its lying wonders and miracles, its imposing pomp of ceremonies, its ample treasures wherever they can be availably applied; and ready and waiting, should there be occasion and ability, to renew its deadly anathemas and persecutions. The powers of darkness were never more disturbed since the death of Christ; never more profoundly moved with hostile feelings and designs "against the Lord and his Anointed." There are indications, not a few, of the coming on of a spiritual conflict among men, such as the world has not hitherto seen; perhaps, as some confidently think, "the battle of the great day of God Almighty." It is to Christians the most momentous problem that ever claimed their attention, what should be their plan of action in these eventful times. The problem is not difficult of solution; the path of wisdom is plain. Two things are certain: first, that if we suffer ourselves to be hindered in our Missionary work, by any means whatever, the enemy will obtain his purpose, his plan will succeed. He will not be much disconcerted, though we attack and put to rout, one after another, or all at once, the hosts he hath arrayed against us at home, if he can but divert us from our foreign campaign. It was our entrance on that

* British Critic, for October, 1812, pp. 390, 391.

which originated his newly displayed wiles. His great trouble is that we have undertaken, in the name of Christ, to evangelize the world: his plan has for its main purpose the putting an end to this work. All our domestic occurrences are intended to effect this result: success here will pacify and content him. Even his defeats he will count for victories, if they contribute, in any way, to oppose the Missionary enterprise. The second certainty is, that the most effectual way of overcoming the adversary, within our domestic and neighbourhood precincts, is vigorous, and ceaseless, and insatiable aggression on his great foreign dominions. Let us achieve large and brilliant victories there; let us go forth from conquering to conquer among the unevangelized nations of the earth; and we shall be full of life and strength, and victory, and peace within all our borders; and our home antagonists will be down-hearted and discouraged, and will soon give way before us, having enough to do, unless they repent, to bear their own confusion; while we sing our psalms of praise, at the spreading triumphs of the kingdom of Christ.

The enemy's own example may be adverted to for our instruction. When he found himself so deplorably at fault at the Reformation in his Papal kingdom, his scheme for raising up that kingdom again, and giving it honour in the eyes of men, was, by the society of the Jesuits, to give it enlargement among his Heathen territories; a scheme wisely laid, most faithfully prosecuted, and crowned with astonishing success. It is lawful for us to learn from him. Long enough has the Church been kept out of her just sovereignty over the world, by suffering herself to be embroiled, through the artifice of Satan, in intestine controversies and border conflicts. Let her at last escape from this infatuation. If she must contend at home, let her do this; remembering that, in so far as this contention shall interfere with the work of evangelization, it is, as to the main purpose for which she has her earthly existence, the adversary's triumph, and her own defeat and overthrow. Gain what she may, in particular victories, her gain is the loss of the world; her petty victories she takes in exchange for the empire of the universe. Let the conquest of the globe, then, be the object of her great ambition, her steadfast and eager pursuit. Especially

let it be so now; since it was her recent undertaking of this which has placed her into her present circumstances of overwhelming interest. These strange manifestations, these surprising and astonishing movements against evangelical religion all the world over, these signs of an approaching crisis in the destiny of the human race, what are they but the appropriate evolutions of an infernal system of resistance to that work of evangelization in which we are engaged? Are the gates of hell at the extremity of their zeal and wisdom to put a stop to that work? and is this the time for us to think of desisting from it? Whatever of Christian manhood there is in us, is revolted at the suggestion. The hour of decision is at hand: the victory at home, and in all the earth, is ours, if the sacramental host do but prove themselves good soldiers of Jesus Christ in the foreign warfare.

We have endeavoured to plead earnestly for progress in the Missionary work. OBJECTIONS have not been adverted to; and we have almost doubted if, in this case, they should be noticed. Objections, however gravely and forcibly adduced, are sometimes to be disregarded in proportion to their probability of prevailing. It was a law in Israel that if a man, however venerable by character or office, should undertake to show that idolatry was not wrong, so far from being listened to for a moment, he was to be put to death, even though he should give a sign or wonder against steadfastness in God's service, and the sign or wonder should come to pass. (Dent. xiii. 1—5.) If there were temporal penalties now in the kingdom of God, who would be amenable to them, if not objectors against giving the Gospel to a world perishing in sin?

But what are the chief objections? A mere glance at them will be sufficient to convince us that to stumble at objections here is but part of an uncautious or sadly misguided mind. No objections to progress in Missions are weightier than those which are derived from the following sources:—A certain interpretation of prophecy; the expensiveness of enlarging our Missionary operations; and the wants of home. The view of prophecy in question is that which, postponing the triumph of Christianity to the personal return of Christ, and making unprecedented corruption in the Church and in the world the occasion

of that return, renders all previous attempts at evangelization a wasteful and vain expenditure. But can there be a reasonable doubt as to the unsoundness of an exposition or use of prophecy which makes the Bible at variance with itself; which sets the prophecies against the commandments, the plans and purposes of God against obedience to his revealed will; and which makes void his gracious promises. With whatever ingenuity and power such teaching may be maintained, is it to be received as the true sense of Scripture; is it to be believed in, or regarded for one moment with the least allowance? It is the charge of Christ to us, that we give ourselves to the evangelizing of the world: this we certainly know. Shall we now hearken to expounders who would discourage us from obeying our divine Master? It is not for any man to know, with certainty, the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power: these are the "secret things" which belong to the Lord our God. Among the things which are revealed, and which "belong to us and to our children," none is plainer, none more imperative, none more important, than that we go forward, as fast as possible, with the work of propagating the Gospel; and to cease from, or to be at all hindered in, this work, because a prophetic theory is against it, is to hearken unto man more than unto God.

The objections from expense are not less repulsive. They imply either that the silver and gold of the earth do not belong to God; or that when he created the precious metals he did not know how much of them he should need for the accomplishment of his ends, or else could not create enough; or that when he made us his stewards he put himself out of ownership, so that we were no longer to regard his interest in the use of property; or that he has given us particular instruction against liberal appropriations for the spread of the Gospel, and against self-denial and sacrifices of ease and pleasure for Christ's sake; or, finally, that all these great and shameless impieties are facts.

There is in these objections an effrontery which entitles them to indignant resentment. They are made in the face of existing facts, by which they are reprov'd of glaring hypocrisy. While it is alleged that our Missions are too expensive to admit of further advancement, there are not a few members in our

Churches with more wealth already in possession than can well belong to any one without danger to his soul, who are yet proceeding on to lay up treasures upon treasures to themselves; adding house to house, and field to field, and investment to investment, and the passion for accumulation enlarged and strengthened by every new accession. And of the rest, there is only here one and there another who restrict themselves of any indulgence for the Gospel's sake. What respect should be paid to objections on the score of expense, while self-denial is so great a stranger amongst the professed disciples of the cross?

And, after all, what is the truth as to the cost of Missions? As a very remarkable illustration on this point, a statement shall be repeated from the "Day-Spring," with a few verbal changes, concerning the Mission at the Sandwich Islands. The pecuniary expense of that Mission during twenty-three years has but a little exceeded half a million of dollars. And what has been the result? The language has been reduced to writing; a variety of religious works, with the entire Bible, have been translated and printed in it, and circulated in great numbers; forty-two thousand persons have been taught to read them; twenty-two Churches have been organized, to which twenty-five thousand natives have been admitted; seminaries for training teachers have been established; Christian marriage has been introduced in places of former unspeakable licentiousness; intemperance has been nearly banished; and morality and social improvement have been advanced among the rulers and people; a written constitution and laws have been introduced; and the nation, as it were a new-created people, has recently taken rank among the great nations of the civilized world:—all for half a million! The result not only great, but good, and only good to all concerned. There is no painful drawback.

What is the cost of other things, and such as wise men approve? The small army of the United States cost last year four millions, nearly eight times as much as this Mission from the beginning; and what better results are there to be shown for it? The original cost of every one of our ships of the line, with one year's expense in service, exceeds what has been spent on this Mission. France has expended one hundred and twenty millions, and twenty thousand lives, in conquering and holding

Algiers; almost two hundred and forty times as much in money, beside the lives, as the entire cost of this Mission; and yet what good, to the conquerors or the conquered, has come of it? Christian Missions cannot be carried on without pecuniary means. Progress in them will increase the demand for money as well as men; but they are gainful, beyond calculation, on the whole. Their reflex influences, to say nothing of their direct results, are more than a hundred-fold recompense; and to object to them, because of what they cost, is the madness not only of a rebellion against God, but of sinning against our own richest mercies.

Nor can the objections from domestic exigency better endure examination. They are wholly without force, unless they assume, either that the world has no claim while home has any want unsupplied; or that the wants of home and the world cannot both be met at once; or, at least, that they cannot be as well met by receiving simultaneous attention; and if they do involve these assumptions, or either of them, they proclaim their own falsity, and confute themselves; for what is more contrary to truth than that the Church is not a debtor to the world till all within her own pale and neighbourhood is as the garden of God, or needs no improvement? And not less erroneous are the other positions, that either the world or home must be neglected; that their interests are conflicting; and that if foreign Missions advance, it must be by exhausting or limiting the resources needed for domestic wants. The work of human salvation is one—the work of God; on whose resources, not ours, it depends; and its parts are so related that it can be neglected nowhere without injury to the whole; and advanced nowhere without giving an impulse of new life and strength to the whole: so that contributions to Missions, wisely made, are, in effect, contributions to our own Churches; nor is it to be questioned that these Churches are, at this moment, more benefited and blessed by means of what they have given for evangelizing the Heathen, than they would have been by appropriating it directly to themselves. So preposterous is it to set the claims of home in collision with those of the world, or to imagine that the former will be interfered with by discharging the latter.

It is, indeed, wise, and requisite, and conformable to Scripture precedent, to give present attention to certain portions of the great field rather than others; and among the different localities taken under culture, to prefer some one or more far before the rest; and, accordingly, it cannot well be questioned that this country, at the present time, should have a very uncommon measure of regard, especially from the American branch of the Church. The importance of its thorough evangelization is probably overrated by no one. To the soundness of the views which have been expressed on this subject, with so much earnestness and force, by men of great perspicacity on both sides of the ocean, there can scarcely be a dissenting judgment. So far as can now be seen, all probability and likelihood will fail, or the moral condition of these United States is to decide that of the world. But it is not a logical consequence from this, that we should come to a pause, or retard our movements in the work of foreign Missions. Our people, whatever they are destined to become, do not yet amount to a fiftieth part of mankind; and it is neither love to the souls of men, nor love to Christ, nor a wise economy, that, on a calculation of what a small fraction of the race may grow to in a century or more, will leave the great mass, till then, to proceed on to destruction through the third and fourth generations, while the means of evangelizing the whole are at hand; and while, too, the fraction itself would be better attended to, if the whole were in no way or measure neglected. Never let it be overlooked that the spirit of evangelism is essentially the spirit of foreign Missions. In its very nature it is spontaneously and illimitably egressive; it cannot endure confinement: its irrepressible tendency is to be abroad in all the earth to its utmost bounds, and in all the isles of the sea, wherever man, the redeemed sinner, dwells. To restrain is to enervate and oppress it. It will not, cannot neglect home if it be sent away; but if it go not away it will be as an invalid within-doors, rather to be nursed than to diffuse life and strength. What powerful teaching did our Lord employ to enforce this truth; and what is better corroborated by reflection, observation, and experience? While, therefore, we institute comparisons between our land and others, our people and others; and while

America, in its perspective greatness and power, rises in our thought above all the rest of the globe, let us take heed lest a selfish nationality, or pride, or carnal reasoning, so blind us to the true genius of evangelism, that we be found opposing ourselves to the plans and counsels of Infinite Love.

Nor should we think it needless to qualify our confidence as to the coming fortunes of this or any other nation. We do not certainly know that the world's end will not come ere our anticipated importance as a people can be realized. Or, if that should not be, and if our national advancement and influence be not impeded, we are not sure that God judges as we do, in respect of our eligibility, as the people by whom the world is to be saved. As he has often done before, may he not in this matter again disappoint human expectation; and may not the world's enlargement and deliverance arise from another place, which, by its comparative obscurity, may render the hand of God more conspicuous.

In conclusion, then, it remaineth, fathers, brethren, and friends, that we gird up the loins of our mind, and strengthen ourselves in God for the fulfilment of that glorious work, in reference to which we have now come together. Better were it for us to die, than to be at a stand in our undertaking. That must not be until God repent of having determined to save the world. He hath prescribed and commanded our race: let us hold on in it, till he himself arrest us, even to the end; "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before." The race to an unbelieving heart cannot but seem impracticable and preposterous; but it hath been set before us by Him who calleth for things that are not, and they come; and who has also guaranteed our success, by his promise, oath, death, resurrection, and enthronement in heaven. By these we know that we are not running in vain. Let increasing progress, then, be our law; as demanded by those great principles and truths of the Gospel on which Missions rest their plea and warrant; by the great precept, "Go ye into all the world;" by the long ages of neglect, which this high behest of heaven hath hitherto received; by the slowness of our own past movements; by the strong

encouragement we have in the divine blessing on our Churches and Missions, and in the existing state of the world; by the cause we have to hope that the future course of Christianity on earth is to be wonderfully accelerated; by the unspeakable dangers, in such circumstances as ours, of any other than this onward way; and by those relations of profound and awful interest, in which our Missionary operations have placed us with the hosts of darkness. Let us turn objections into arguments. Let us demand of those who would dishearten us by their prophetic expositions, if they would, by their theories, make void the grace and command of God. Let us tell them who would make Missions too expensive, of the resources of their almighty Author, and of their own bad stewardship, and of the cost of other things, and of the countless gains of Missions, both to the world and the Church. Let us reply to those who plead against us, as opposing domestic interests, that our heavenly Father can take care of the world and home at once; and that it is home's honour and happiness, as well as duty, not to confine its influences of "saving health" within its own narrow limits, but to expand and spread them out to the ends of the earth. Let all straitness and restraint be insufferable to us. If required to enlarge our plans, let us praise God for this, and wrestle with him, by prayer, and with his people, by doctrine, and remonstrance, and entreaty, for the means of enlargement, until they come. If new openings present themselves every time we survey the field, let us praise God for this; yea, if a new world suddenly open itself to us, for this also let us praise God; and, farther, if the Spirit be poured out at all our stations so as to demand a universal movement on the part of the Church, equal to that of the primitive times, still let us praise God with all our strength, and cry to him day and night, and give him no rest, until the demand be met, and the Church look forth again, as in the day of her espousals, "beautiful as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners," and become "an eternal excellency," the joy of the whole earth; having, by the divine blessing on her influence, recovered the human race from the curse of the evil, and united it through Christ to the society of the holy and the blessed.

DISCOURSE XXVI.

MESSIAH'S THRONE.*

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HEBREWS i. 8.

“But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.”

IN the all-important argument which occupies this epistle, Paul assumes, what the believing Hebrews had already professed, that Jesus of Nazareth is the true Messiah. To prepare them for the consequences of their own principle,—a principle involving nothing less than the abolition of their law, the subversion of their state, the ruin of their city, the final extinction of their carnal hopes,—he leads them to the doctrine of their Redeemer's person, in order to explain the nature of his offices, to evince the value of his spiritual salvation, and to show, in both, the accomplishment of their economy, which was “now ready to vanish away.” Under no apprehension of betraying the unwary into idolatrous homage, by giving to the Lord Jesus greater glory than is “due unto his name,” the Apostle sets out with ascribing to him excellence and attributes which belong to no creature. Creatures of most elevated rank are introduced, but it is to display, by contrast, the pre-eminence of Him who is “the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person.” Angels are great in might and in dignity, but “unto them hath he not put in subjection the world to come.” Unto which of them “said he, at any time, Thou art my Son?” To which of them, “Sit thou at my right hand?” He saith, they are spirits, “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto them who shall be heirs of salvation;” but unto the Son,—in a style which annihilates competition and

* Delivered in New-York, and before the London Missionary Society, 1802.

comparison,—unto the Son he saith, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.”

Brethren, if the majesty of Jesus is the subject which the Holy Ghost selected for the encouragement and consolation of his people, when he was shaking the earth and the heavens, and diffusing his Gospel among the nations; can it be otherwise than suitable and precious to us on this occasion? Shall it not expand our views, and warm our hearts, and nerve our arm in our efforts to exalt his fame? Let me implore, then, the aid of your prayers; but far more importunately the aids of his own Spirit, while I speak of “the things which concern the King; those great things contained in the text,—HIS PERSONAL GLORY—HIS SOVEREIGN RULE.

I. HIS PERSONAL GLORY, which shines forth in the name by which he is revealed; a name above every name,—“Thy throne, O God!”

1. To the single eye nothing can be more evident than that *the Holy Ghost here asserts the essential Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Of his enemies, whom he will “make his footstool,” some have indeed controverted this position, and endeavoured to blot out the text from the catalogue of his witnesses. Instead of, “Thy throne, O God,” they would compel us, by a perversion of phraseology, of figure, and of sense, to read, “God is thy throne;” converting the great and dreadful God into a symbol of authority in one of his own creatures. The Scriptures, it seems, may utter contradictions or impiety, but the divinity of the Son they shall not attest. The crown, however, which “flourishes on his head” is not to be torn away, nor the anchor of our hope to be wrested from us, by the rude hand of licentious criticism.

I cannot find in the lively oracles a single distinctive mark of Deity which is not applied, without reserve or limitation, to the “only begotten Son.” “All things, whatsoever the Father hath, are his.” Who is that mysterious Word, that was “in the beginning with God?” Who is the “Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last, the Almighty?” Who is He that “knows what is in man,” because he searches the deep and dark recesses of the heart? Who is the Omnipresent, that has promised, “Wherever two

or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them;" the light of whose countenance is, at the same moment, the joy of heaven and the salvation of earth; who is encircled by the seraphim on high, and "walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks;" who is in the assemblies, in all the assemblies of his people, in every worshipping family, in every closet of prayer, in every holy heart? "Whose hands have stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth?" Who hath replenished them with inhabitants, and garnished them with beauty; having created all things that are in both, "visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers?" By whom do "all things consist?" Who is "the Governor among the nations," "having on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS?" Whom is it the Father's will that all men should honour, even as they honour himself? Whom has he commanded his angels to worship? Whom to obey? Before whom do the devils tremble? Who is qualified to redeem millions of sinners "from the wrath to come," and preserve them by his grace to his everlasting kingdom? Who raiseth the dead, "having life in himself to quicken whom he will," so that, at his voice, all who are in their graves shall come forth; and death and hell surrender their numerous and forgotten captives? Who shall weigh, in the balance of judgment, the destinies of angels and men; dispose of the thrones of paradise; and bestow eternal life? Shall I submit to the decision of reason? Shall I ask a response from heaven? Shall I summon the devils from their chains of darkness? The response from heaven sounds in my ears, reason approves, and the devils confess,—This, O Christians, is none other than the "great God our Saviour!"

Indeed, my brethren, the doctrine of our Lord's divinity is not, as a fact, more interesting to our faith than, as a principle, it is essential to our hope. If he were not "the true God," he could not be "eternal life." When pressed down by guilt, and languishing for happiness, I look around for a deliverer, such as my conscience, and my heart, and the word of God assure me I need, insult not my agony by directing me to a creature; to a man, a mere man like myself,—a creature,—a man! My

Redeemer owns my person; my immortal spirit is his property; when I come to die I must commit it into his hands. My soul, my infinitely precious soul, committed to a mere man!—become the property of a mere man! I would not thus entrust my body to the highest angel who burns in the temple above. It is only “the Father of spirits” that can have property in spirits, and be their refuge in the hour of transition from the present to the approaching world. In short, my brethren, the divinity of Jesus is, in the system of grace, the sun to which all its parts are subordinate, and all their stations refer; which binds them in sacred concord, and imparts to them their radiance, and life, and vigour. Take from it this central luminary, and the glory is departed; its holy harmonies are broken; the elements rush to chaos;—the light of salvation is extinguished for ever!

But it is not the Deity of the Son, simply considered, to which the text confines our attention. We are,

2. To contemplate it *as subsisting in a personal union with the human nature.* Long before this epistle was written had He, “by himself, purged our sins, and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” It is, therefore, as “God manifested in the flesh;” as my own brother, while he is “the express image” of the Father’s “person;” as the Mediator of the new covenant, that he is seated on the throne. Of this throne, to which the pretensions of a creature were madness and blasphemous, the majesty is indeed maintained by his divine power, but the foundation is laid in his mediatorial character. I need not prove to this audience that all his gracious offices, and all his redeeming work, originated in the love and the election of his Father. Obedient to that will, which fully accorded with his own, he came down from heaven, tabernacled in our clay, was “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,” submitted to to the “contradiction of sinners,” the temptations of the old serpent, and the wrath of an avenging God. In the merit of his obedience, which threw a lustre around the divine law; and in the atonement of his death, by which he “offered himself” a sacrifice “without spot unto God;” repairing the injuries of man’s rebellion, expiating sin through the blood of his cross, and conciliating its pardon with infinite purity, and unalterable truth; summarily, in his performing those conditions, out which

was suspended all God's mercy to man, and all man's enjoyment of God: in these stupendous "works of righteousness" are we to look for the cause of his present glory. "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." "Exalted" thus "to be a Prince and a Saviour," he fills heaven with his beauty, and obtains from its blessed inhabitants the purest and most reverential praise. "Worthy," cry the mingled voices of his angels and his redeemed, "worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." "Worthy," again, cry his redeemed, in a song which belongs not to the angels, but in which, with holy ecstasy, we will join, "Worthy art thou, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

Delightful, brethren, transcendently delightful, were it to dwell upon this theme; but we must refrain: and, having taken a transient glance at our Redeemer's personal glory, let us turn to the other view which the text exhibits,—

II. The view of HIS SOVEREIGN RULE.

The mediatorial kingdom of Christ Jesus, directed and upheld by his divinity, is now an object of our contemplation. To advance Jehovah's glory, in the salvation of men, is the purpose of its erection. Though earth is the scene, and human life the limit, of those great operations by which they are interested in its mercies, and prepared for its consummation; its principles, its provisions, its issues, are eternal. When it rises up before us in all its grandeur of design, collecting and conducting to the heavens of God millions of immortals, in comparison with the least of whom the destruction of the material universe were a thing of nought; whatever the carnal mind calls vast and magnificent shrinks away into nothing.

But it is not so much the nature of Messiah's kingdom on which I am to insist, as its stability, its administration, and the prospects which they open to the Church of God.

I. Messiah's throne is not one of those airy fabrics which are

reared by vanity and overthrown by time, it is fixed of old: it is *stable*, and cannot be shaken, for it is the throne of God. He who sitteth on it is omnipotent. Universal being is in his hand. Revolution, force, fear, as applied to his kingdom, are words without meaning. Rise up in rebellion, if thou hast courage. Associate with thee the whole mass of infernal power. Begin with the ruin of whatever is fair and good in this little globe. Pass from hence to pluck the sun out of his place, and roll the volume of desolation through the starry world. What hast thou done unto Him? It is the puny menace of a worm against Him whose frown is perdition. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh."

2. With the stability which Messiah's Godhead communicates to his throne, let us connect the stability resulting from his Father's covenant. His throne is founded not merely in strength, but in right. God hath laid the government upon the shoulder of his holy child Jesus, and set him upon Mount Zion as his King for ever. He has promised and sworn to "build up his throne to all generations;" to "make it endure as the days of heaven;" to "beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. But my faithfulness," adds he, "and my mercy shall be with him, and in my name shall his horn be exalted." Hath he said it, and will he not do it? Hath he spoken it, and shall it not come to pass? Whatever disappointments rebuke the visionary projects of men, or the more crafty schemes of Satan, "the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand." The blood of sprinkling, which sealed all the promises made to Messiah, and binds down his Father's faithfulness to their accomplishment, witnesses continually in the heavenly sanctuary. "He must," therefore "reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet." And although the dispensation of his authority shall, upon this event, be changed; and he shall deliver it up, in its present form, to the Father, he shall still remain, in his substantial glory, "a Priest upon his throne," to be the eternal bond of our union, and the eternal medium of our fellowship, with the living God.

Seeing that the throne of our King is as immovable as it is exalted, let us with joy draw water out of that well of salvation which is opened to us in the *administration of his kingdom*.

Here we must consider its general characters, and the means by which it operates.

The general characters which I shall illustrate, are the following :—

1. *Mystery.* He is the unsearchable God, and his government must be like himself. Facts concerning both he has graciously revealed. These we must admit upon the credit of his own testimony ; with these we must satisfy our wishes, and limit our inquiry. To “intrude into those things which he hath not seen ” because God has not disclosed them, whether they relate to his arrangements for this world or the next, is the arrogance of one “vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.” There are secrets in our Lord’s procedure which he will not explain to us in this life, and which may not, perhaps, be explained in the life to come. We cannot tell how he makes evil the minister of good : how he combines physical and moral agencies, of different kinds and orders, in the production of blessings. We cannot so much as conjecture what bearings the system of redemption, in every part of its process, may have upon the relations of the universe ; not even what may be all the connexions of Providence in the occurrences of this moment, or of the last. “Such knowledge is too wonderful for us : it is high, we cannot attain unto it.” Our Sovereign’s “way is in the sea, and his path in the deep waters : and his footsteps are not known.” When, therefore, we are surrounded with difficulty, when we cannot unriddle his conduct in particular dispensations, we must remember that he is God ; that we are to “walk by faith ;” and to trust him as implicitly when we are in “the valley of the shadow of death,” as when his candle shines upon our heads. We must remember that it is not for us to be admitted into the cabinet of the King of Kings ; that creatures constituted as we are could not sustain the view of his unveiled agency ; that it would confound, and scatter, and annihilate our little intellects. As often, then, as he retires from our observation, blending goodness with majesty, let us lay our hands upon our mouths, and worship. This stateliness of our King can afford us no just ground of uneasiness. On the contrary, it contributes to our tranquillity : for we know,

2. That if his administration is mysterious, it is also *wise*. “Great is our Lord, and of great power ; his understanding is

infinite." That infinite understanding watches over, and arranges, and directs all the affairs of his Church and of the world. We are perplexed at every step; embarrassed by opposition; lost in confusion; fretted by disappointment; and ready to conclude, in our haste, that all things are against our own good, and our Master's honour. "But this is our infirmity;" it is the dictate of impatience and indiscretion. We forget the "years of the right hand of the Most High." We are slow of heart in learning a lesson which would soothe our spirits at the expense of our pride. We turn away from the consolation to be derived from believing that, though we know not the connexions and result of holy providence, our Lord Jesus knows them perfectly. With him there is no irregularity, no chance, no conjecture. Disposed before his eye, in the most luminous and exquisite order, the whole series of events occupy the very place and crisis where they are most effectually to subserve the purposes of his love. Not a moment of time is wasted, nor a fragment of action misapplied. What he does, we do not, indeed, know at present; but, as far as we shall be permitted to know hereafter, we shall see that his most inscrutable procedure was guided by consummate wisdom; that our choice was often as foolish as our petulance was provoking; that the success of our own wishes would have been our most painful chastisement; would have diminished our happiness, and detracted from his praise. Let us study, therefore, brethren, to subject our ignorance to his knowledge: instead of prescribing, to obey; instead of questioning, to believe: to perform our part without that despondency which betrays a fear that our Lord may neglect his; and tacitly accuses him of a less concern than we feel for the glory of his own name. Let us not shrink from this duty as imposing too rigorous a condition upon our obedience; for,

3. A third character of Messiah's administration is, *righteousness*. "The sceptre of his kingdom is a right sceptre." If "clouds and darkness are round about him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne." In the times of old his redeemed "wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way;" but, nevertheless, "he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation." He loves his Church and the members of it too tenderly to lay upon them

any burdens, or expose them to any trials, which are not indispensable to their good. It is right for them to "go through fire and through water," that he may "bring them out into a wealthy place;" right "to endure chastening," that they may "be partakers of his holiness;" right to have "the sentence of death in themselves," that they may trust in the living God, and that his "strength may be made perfect in" their "weakness." It is right that he should "endure with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction;" that he should permit "iniquity to abound, and the love of many to wax cold," and the dangers of his Church to accumulate, till the interposition of his arm be necessary and decisive. In the day of final retribution, not one mouth shall be opened to complain of injustice. It will be seen that the Judge of all the earth has done right; that the works of his hands have been "verity and judgment, and done," every one of them, in "truth and uprightness." Let us, then, think not only respectfully, but reverently, of his dispensations; repress the voice of murmur, and rebuke the spirit of discontent; wait, in faith and patience, till he become his own interpreter, when "the heavens shall declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory."

You will anticipate me in enumerating the means which Messiah employs in the administration of his kingdom.

1. *The Gospel*; of which himself, as an all-sufficient and condescending Saviour, is the great and affecting theme. Derided by the world, it is, nevertheless, effectual to the salvation of them that believe. "We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but to them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." The doctrine of the cross, connected with evangelical ordinances,—the ministry of reconciliation, the holy Sabbath, the sacraments of his covenant; briefly, the whole system of instituted worship,—is the "rod of the Redeemer's strength," by which he subdues sinners to himself, rules even "in the midst of his enemies," exercises his glorious authority in his Church, and exhibits a visible proof to men and angels that he is King in Zion.

2. The efficient means to which the Gospel owes its success, and the name of Jesus its praise, is *the agency of the Holy*

Ghost. Christianity is "the ministration of the Spirit." All real and sanctifying knowledge of the truth and love of God is from his inspiration. It was the last and best promise which the Saviour made to his afflicted disciples at the moment of parting, "I will send the Comforter, the Spirit of truth: he shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." It is he who convinces "the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment;" who infuses resistless vigour into means otherwise weak and useless. "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God," God the Spirit, "to the pulling down of strong-holds." Without his benediction, the ministry of an archangel would never convert one "sinner from the error of his way." But when he descends, with his life-giving influence, from God out of heaven, then "foolish things of the world confound the wise; and weak things of the world confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, yea, and things which are not, bring to nought the things which are." It is this ministration of the Spirit which renders the preaching of the Gospel to men "dead in trespasses and sins" a reasonable service. When I am set down in the valley of vision, and view the bones, "very many and very dry," and am desired to try the effect of my own ability in recalling them to life, I will fold my hands, and stand mute in astonishment and despair. But when the Lord God commands me to speak in his name, my closed lips shall be opened; when he calls upon the breath from the four winds to "breathe upon the slain that they may live," I will prophesy without fear, "O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord;" and, obedient to his voice, they shall "come together, bone to his bone; shall be covered with sinews and flesh;" shall receive new life; "and stand up upon their feet, an exceeding great army." In this manner, with the dry bones of natural men, does the Holy Spirit recruit the "armies of the living God;" and make them, collectively and individually, "a name, and a praise, and a glory," to the "Captain of their salvation."

3. Among the instruments which the Lord Jesus employs in the administration of his government, are *the resources of the physical and moral world*. Supreme in heaven and in earth,

“upholding all things by the word of his power,” the universe is his magazine of means. Nothing which acts or exists is exempted from promoting, in its own place, the purposes of his kingdom. Beings, rational and irrational, animate and inanimate; the heavens above, and the earth below; the obedience of sanctified, and the disobedience of unsanctified, men; all holy spirits; all damned spirits; in one word, every agency, every element, every atom, are but the ministers of his will, and concur in the execution of his designs. And this he will demonstrate, to the confusion of his enemies, and the joy of his people, in that “great and terrible day” when he “shall sit upon the throne of his glory,” and dispense ultimate judgment to the quick and the dead.

Upon these hills of holiness—the stability of Messiah’s throne, and the perfect administration of his kingdom—let us take our station, and survey *the prospects which rise up before the Church of God*. And when I look upon this magnificent scene, I cannot repress the salutation, “Hail, thou that art highly favoured!”

She has the prospect of *preservation*, of *increase*, and of *triumph*.

1. The prospect of *preservation*. The long existence of the Christian Church would be pronounced, upon common principles of reasoning, impossible. She finds in every man a natural and inveterate enemy. To encounter and overcome the unanimous hostility of the world, she boasts no political stratagem, no disciplined legions, no outward coercion of any kind. Yet her expectation is that she shall live for ever. To mock this hope, and blot out her memorial from under heaven, the most furious efforts of fanaticism, the most ingenious arts of statesmen, the concentrated strength of empires, have been frequently and perseveringly applied. The blood of her sons and her daughters has streamed like water; the smoke of the scaffold and the stake, where they won the crown of martyrdom in the cause of Jesus, has ascended in thick volumes to the skies. The tribes of persecution have sported over her woes, and erected monuments, as they imagined, of her perpetual ruin. But where are her tyrants, and where their empires? The tyrants have long since gone to their own place; their names have descended upon the roll of infamy; their empires

have passed, like shadows, over the rock; they have successively disappeared, and left not a trace behind!

But what became of the Church? She rose from her ashes, fresh in beauty and in might. Celestial glory beamed around her; she dashed down the monumental marble of her foes; and they who hated her fled before her. She has celebrated the funeral of Kings and kingdoms that plotted her destruction; and, with the inscriptions of their pride, has transmitted to posterity the record of their shame. How shall this phenomenon be explained? We are, at the present moment, witnesses of the fact: but who can unfold the mystery? This blessed book, the book of truth and life, has made our wonder to cease. The Lord her God in the midst of her is mighty. His presence is a fountain of health, and his protection a "wall of fire." He has betrothed her, in eternal covenant, to himself. Her living Head, in whom she lives, is above; and his quickening Spirit shall never depart from her. Armed with divine virtue, his Gospel, secret, silent, unobserved, enters the hearts of men, and sets up an everlasting kingdom. It eludes all the vigilance, and baffles all the power, of the adversary. Bars, and bolts, and dungeons, are no obstacle to its approach; bonds, and tortures, and death, cannot extinguish its influence. Let no man's heart tremble, then, because of fear. Let no man despair, in these days of rebuke and blasphemy, of the Christian cause. The ark is lanced, indeed, upon the floods; the tempest sweeps along the deep; the billows break over her on every side. But Jehovah-Jesus has promised to conduct her in safety to the haven of peace. She cannot be lost unless the Pilot perish. Why, then, "do the Heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" Hear, O Zion, the word of thy God, and rejoice for the consolation. "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."

Mere preservation, however, though a most comfortable, is not the only, hope of the Church: she has,—

2. The prospect of *increase*. Increase—from an effectual blessing upon the means of grace in places where they are

already enjoyed. For thus saith the Lord, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses."

Increase—from the diffusion of evangelical truth through Pagan lands. "For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and Kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee."

Increase—from the recovery of the rejected Jews to the faith and privileges of God's dear children. "Blindness, in part, has happened unto Israel;" they have been cut off, for their unbelief, from the olive-tree. Age has followed age, and they remain, to this hour, spread over the face of the earth, a fearful and affecting testimony to the truth of God's word. They are without their sanctuary, without their Messiah, without the hope of their believing ancestors. But it shall not be always thus. They are still "beloved for the Father's sake." When the "fulness of the Gentiles shall come in," they too shall be gathered. They shall discover in our Jesus the marks of the promised Messiah; and with tenderness, proportioned to their former insensibility, shall cling to his cross. Grafted again into their own olive-tree, "all Israel shall be saved." It was "through their fall that salvation came unto us Gentiles." And "if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" What ecstacy, my brethren! The Gentile and the Jew taking sweet counsel together, and going to the house of God in company! The path of the swift messenger of grace marked in every direction by the "fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ;" a nation born at once; the children of Zion exclaiming,

“The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell.” The knowledge of Jehovah overspreading the earth, “as the waters cover the sea;” and all flesh enjoying the salvation of God!

3. This faith ushers in a third prospect of the Church,—the prospect of *triumph*. Though often desolate and afflicted, “tossed with tempest, and not comforted,” the Lord her God will then make her “an eternal excellency,” and repay her sorrows with triumph. Triumph—in complete victory over the enemies who sought her hurt. “The nation and kingdom,” saith the Lord, “that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.” That great enemy of her purity and her peace, who shed the blood of her saints and her Prophets, “the Man of Sin, who exalteth himself above all that is called God,” shall appear, in the whole horror of his doom, as the “son of perdition, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.” The terrible but joyous event shall be announced by an angel from heaven “crying mightily with a strong voice, Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen!” “Hallelujah!” shall be the response of the Church universal, “Salvation and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.” Then, too, “the accuser of the brethren,” “that old serpent, which is the devil,” shall be cast down, “and bound a thousand years that he shall deceive the nations no more.”

This will introduce the Church’s triumph, in the prevalence of righteousness and peace throughout the world. “Her people shall be all righteous.” The voice of the blasphemer shall no longer insult her ear. Iniquity, as ashamed, shall stop its mouth, and hide its head. All her “officers” shall be “peace,” and all her “exactors, righteousness.” The Kings of the earth bringing their glory and honour unto her, shall accomplish the gracious

promise, "The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness." Her Prince, whose throne is for ever and ever, "shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Every man shall meet, in every other man, a brother without dissimulation. Fear and the sword shall be far away; "they shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid." For thus saith the Lord, "Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise."

Triumph—in the presence of God, in the communion of his love, and the signal manifestation of his glory. "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them; and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." Then shall be seen "the holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God," which shall have "no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God shall lighten it, and the Lamb shall be the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it; and they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Such, according to the sure word of prophecy, will be the triumphs of Christianity: and to this issue all scriptural efforts to evangelize the Heathen contribute their share. That mind is profane, indeed, which repels the sentiments of awe; and hard is the heart which feels no bland emotion! But let us pause. You exult, perhaps, in the view of that happiness which is reserved for the human race; you long for its arrival; and are eager, in your place, to help on the gracious work. It is well. But are there no Heathen in this assembly? Are there none who, in the midst of their zeal for foreign Missions, forget their own souls; nor consider that they themselves neglect the "great salvation?" Remember, my brethren, that a man may

be active in measures which shall subserve the conversion of others, and yet perish in his own iniquity. That very Gospel which you desire to send to the Heathen must be the Gospel of *your* salvation; it must turn you “from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God;” it must make you “meet for the inheritance of the saints;” or it shall fearfully aggravate your condemnation at last. You pray, “Thy kingdom come:” but is the “kingdom of God within you?” Is the Lord Jesus “in you, the hope of glory?” Be not deceived; the name of Christian will not save you. Better had it been for you not to have known “the way of righteousness,”—better to have been the most idolatrous Pagan,—better, infinitely better, not to have been born, than to die strangers to the pardon of the Redeemer’s blood, and the sanctifying virtue of his Spirit. From his throne on high he calls; calls, my brethren, to you, “Look unto me, and be ye saved: for I am God, and there is none else.” “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”

On the other hand, such as have “fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before” them, are commanded to be “joyful in their King.” He reigns, O believer, for thee! The stability of his throne is thy safety; the administration of his government is for thy good; and the precious pledge that he will perfect that which concerneth thee. In all thy troubles, and in all thy joy, commit thy way unto him: he will guard the sacred deposit. Fear not that thou shalt “lack any good thing,”—fear not that thou shalt be forsaken,—fear not that thou shalt fall beneath the “arm of the oppressor.” He went through the fires of the pit to save thee; and he will stake all the glories of crown to keep thee. Sing, then, thou beloved, “Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust, and be not afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song, he also is become my salvation.”

And if we have “tasted that He is gracious;” if we look back with horror and transport upon the wretchedness and the wrath which we have escaped; with what anxiety shall we not hasten

to the aid of our fellow-men who are "sitting in the region and shadow of death." What zeal will be too ardent; what labour too persevering; what sacrifice too costly, if, by any means, we may tell them of Jesus, and the resurrection, and the life eternal? Who shall be daunted by difficulties, or deterred by discouragement? If but one Pagan should be brought, savingly, by your instrumentality, to the knowledge of God, and the kingdom of heaven, will you not, my brethren, have an ample recompence? Is there here a man who would give up all for lost because some favourite hope has been disappointed? or who regrets the worldly substance which he has expended on so divine an enterprise? Shame on thy coward spirit and thine avaricious heart! Do the holy Scriptures, does the experience of ages, does the nature of things, justify the expectation that we shall carry war into the central regions of delusion and crime without opposition, without trial? Show me a plan which encounters not fierce resistance from the Prince of darkness and his allies in the human heart, and I will show you a plan which never came from the inspiration of God. If Missionary effort suffer occasional embarrassment; if impressions on the Heathen be less speedy, and powerful, and extensive than fond wishes have anticipated; if particular parts of the great system of operation be, at times, disconcerted; if any of the "Ministers of grace" fall a sacrifice to the violence of those whom they go to bless "in the name of the Lord;" these are events which ought to exercise our faith and patience; to wean us from self-sufficiency; to teach us wherein our strength lies, and where our dependence must be fixed; but not to enfeeble hope, nor relax diligence. Let us not "despise the day of small things;" let us not overlook, as an unimportant matter, the very existence of that Missionary spirit which has already awakened Christians in different countries from their long and dishonourable slumbers, and bids fair to produce, in due season, a general movement of the Church upon earth; let us not, for one instant, harbour the ungracious thought that the prayers, and tears, and wrestlings of those who "make mention of the Lord," form no link in that vast chain of events by which he "will establish, and will make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." That dispensation which of all others is most repulsive to flesh and blood,—the violent death

of faithful Missionaries, should animate Christians with new resolution. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." The cry of martyred blood ascends the heavens, it enters into the ears of "the Lord of Sabaoth:" it will give him no rest till he "rain down righteousness" upon the land where it has been shed, and which it has sealed as a future conquest for Him who "in his majesty rides prosperously because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness."

For the world, indeed, and, perhaps, for the Church, many calamities and trials are in store, before the glory of the Lord shall be so revealed, that "all flesh shall see it together." "I will shake all nations," is the divine declaration,—"I will shake all nations; and the Desire of all nations shall come." The vials of wrath, which are now running, and others which remain to be poured out, must be exhausted. The "supper of the great God" must be prepared, and his "strange work" have its course. Yet the Missionary cause must ultimately succeed. It is the cause of God, and shall prevail. The days, O brethren, roll rapidly on, when the shout of the isles shall swell the thunder of the Continent; when the Thames and the Danube, when the Tiber and the Rhine, shall call upon Euphrates, the Ganges, and the Nile; and the loud concert shall be joined by the Hudson, the Mississippi, and the Amazon, singing with one heart and one voice, "HALLELUJAH! SALVATION! THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH!"

Comfort one another with this faith, and with these words.

Now, "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let THE WHOLE EARTH BE FILLED WITH HIS GLORY. Amen and amen!"

DISCOURSE XXVII.

THE DAY APPROACHING.*

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MARK xvi. 15.—“ And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.”

HEB. x. 25.—“ And so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

REV. xiv. 6.—“ And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.”

THE time is to come when the world will be filled with the knowledge, the fear, and the praise of God. Not always will war deluge the earth with fire and blood. Not always will idolatry offend the heavens with its abominations. Not always will despotism, political and spiritual, national and domestic, degrade and corrupt the masses of mankind. Not always will superstition, on the one hand, and Infidelity, on the other, reject and despise the blessed revelation of forgiveness for sinners through Jesus the Lamb of God. Not always will cold philosophy, and erratic enthusiasm, and fanaticism fierce and malignant, conspire to corrupt and pervert the Gospel itself, turning even the streams from the fountain of life into waters of bitterness and poison. No, no; the time will come when the sun, in his daily journey round the renovated world, shall waken with his morning beam in every human dwelling the voice of joyful, thankful, spiritual worship. Then shall the boundless soul of Immanuel, who once travailed in the agony of the world's redemption, “be satisfied” with his victories over death and sin. “The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, and” with garlands of “everlasting joy;” and from the earth, no longer accursed for the sake of man, “sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

* Preached to the General Association of Connecticut, at Wethersfield, 1842.

This is to be held as one of the grand doctrines of Christianity. After those truths which relate directly to the reconciliation of the individual sinner to his God, no doctrine is more important than this. It is a doctrine which stands out in the foreground of the Christian revelation, whether in the Old Testament or in the New. It is a doctrine not for a speculative belief merely, but revealed to fire the soul with that spirit of beneficent enterprise and action which is one of the chief elements of Christian character. He who reads the Bible in a docile and obedient spirit, finds this doctrine filling his soul with vast conceptions and the loftiest hopes; giving a dignity to his humblest labours for the cause of Christ; throwing a new light upon the world and its history; and teaching him to see in all changes the progress of that mighty providence which, brooding over the chaos of this ruined world, now in silence and now amid the roar of warring elements, is slowly but infallibly accomplishing its own great purposes. The believer, truly enlightened, keeps his eye fixed in faith and hope upon the "angel flying in the midst of heaven, and having the everlasting Gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth," even "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

The text, "So much the more, as ye see the day approaching," has been chosen, not because it speaks of this doctrine of the universal triumph of the Gospel, but rather because it involves a principle which bears upon the application of this doctrine to ourselves as an incentive to hope and to effort. It may be most reasonably expected that as the day approaches for the universal extension of Christ's kingdom, there will be signs of its approach, which faith may discern; and in the discovery of which faith will be strengthened, and zeal incited to new energy and greater self-denial. It is most reasonable to expect that, as the day approaches, exigencies will arise, demanding of the people of God more faith, more diligence, more of the exercise of that spirit which renounces all for Christ.

Let us dwell upon this thought for a few moments, and upon its application to our times and to our duty. *In proportion as the day of the universal triumphs of the Gospel is seen to be approaching, the people of Christ, in all the world, will be called*

to greater and greater efforts for the accomplishment of that result.

The nature of the case, and the general course of prophetic Scripture, lead us to expect that, as the time approaches for the universal triumph of the Gospel, great and rapid changes will take place in the condition of the nations. The providence of God, arranging all things for so great a result, will prepare the way. The power of anti-Christian governments must be broken; the structure of society, which dooms vast masses of mankind to helpless degradation, must be changed, wherever it exists; the means of communication between the most distant regions of the globe must become adequate to so great an achievement as the illumination of every tribe and people under heaven. When we see such changes rapidly going forward; when we see God in his providence making all things ready for the setting up of the kingdom of Christ everywhere; then, in such signs of the times, we may see the day approaching. Such a preparation there was, in God's providence, before the incarnation of the Saviour and the consequent promulgation of the Gospel. The then known world, after having been for ages shaken with incessant wars, was at peace. One strong government extended its authority over nations the most distant from each other, and the most diverse in speech and lineage, in manners and religion. Long lines of constant communication were drawn out in every direction from the imperial city to the boundaries of universal empire, upon which the traveller passed in safety, and found himself everywhere under the protection of the same laws, administered by the same authority. Everywhere one language was the chief language of commerce, of learning, and of the arts. Everywhere there were found, in the cities, some fragments of the dispersion of that one peculiar people, who alone, of all kindreds of the earth, worshipped the one living God. From this peculiar people, who in all their dispersions looked for the Hope of Israel, there had gone out everywhere the expectation, more or less distinct, of some new order of things soon to be set up, and of a great Deliverer soon to appear. He who in that age had seen and considered the full preparation which God had made for a mighty change, would have been persuaded, beyond all doubt, that such a change was impending. So if at any time

we see the God of nations making rapid preparation, on the widest scale, for that great moral revolution which the Scriptures teach us to expect, then we may be sure that we “see the day approaching.

Yet there is no reason to expect that these changes will be such as to supersede the necessity of human effort in the propagation of the Gospel. Why should such a thing be thought of? From the beginning of Christ’s personal ministry to this hour, where has the Gospel been propagated or made known among men, otherwise than by human efforts? No mountain, like Sinai of old, has quaked and trembled under the footsteps of God manifesting himself visibly, and proclaiming his will with voice of words to an assembled nation. No angel voices tell on earth the story of redeeming love, since that night in which the shepherds of Bethlehem heard the song of “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will towards men.” The Gospel, from the date of its first promulgation, has ever been propagated among men by the instrumentality of men,—by the one simple process of preaching and teaching; and nowhere do we find reason to expect its propagation through the world by any more miraculous process. The changes, then, which God, in his providence, may make among the nations, preparatory to the final conquests of the cross, instead of being such as to supersede the necessity of human co-operation in the work, will, on the contrary, be such as to open the way for effort, and throw upon the friends of Christ everywhere the responsibility of going right forward to complete the work of teaching all nations. They may be expected to be analogous to those changes which prepared the way for the propagation of the Gospel by the first disciples of the Saviour. The Apostles and their associates did not find that what God had done, providentially or miraculously, had released them at all from the necessity of effort. If God had opened the door before them in every direction, it was only that *they* might enter in to do their work. If he gave them the gift of tongues, it was only that *they* might speak to every man in his own language. If he equipped them with miraculous powers to heal the sick, to raise the dead, to cast out devils in his name, it was only that *they* might speak with more authority as Preachers and teachers of the word. So, in regard to the

changes which may prepare the way for the triumph of the Gospel, no more is to be expected than that the world is to be brought into such a state, as that the word of the Lord, published and spread abroad, may have free course and be glorified. Simultaneously with political and social changes taking place in the progress of God's providence, there may be also a work of God's Spirit upon the minds of men, and there must be, or the Gospel will not triumph; but neither will this take away the necessity of human co-operation. The Spirit of God may move upon the minds of Heathen nations, teaching them to regard their base superstitions with disgust and contempt, exciting them to look with eyes of expectation towards Christian countries, and even predisposing them to receive the Gospel as soon as it is made known to them; but even then, when all this has been done, there will remain the necessity of effort on the part of God's people to publish the Gospel to a world made ready to receive it. Not only so, but every such indication of the approach of that latter day, every change in the condition of the world which facilitates the propagation and the progress of the Gospel, will call the Churches to so much the more of diligence and self-denial.

Suppose, now, that among the indications of the approach of that expected day, there should be new and remarkable effusions of reviving grace upon the Churches; the awakening of a spirit of enterprise and prayer for the conversion of the world; the ingathering of increasing multitudes into the fold of Christ in Christian lands; and success hardly inferior to that of the Apostles, crowning the efforts of Missionaries abroad;—what would be the natural and just inference from such indications of the progress of God's redeeming work in this world? Would it be that the Churches, having done so much, and with so great a blessing, might be satisfied with their attainments, and attempt nothing beyond the mark of the earnestness in prayer, the liberality in contribution, and the self-denial in action, which they had already exhibited? Would it not rather be, Forsake not your holy enterprises and endeavours; be courageous, be self-denying, quit yourselves like men, and be strong; enlarge your plans and expectations; increase, by continual exercise, the spirit of self-consecration to

the Saviour; and “so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

The outline of the argument which I have so hastily and imperfectly presented, is this:—

1. It is reasonable to expect that as the day of Christ’s universal triumph approaches, its approach will be indicated by great and rapid changes in the condition of the nations.

2. There is no reason to presume that these changes will supersede at all God’s established order of making the Gospel known by human instrumentality; but, on the contrary, it may be expected that the changes will be such as to open the way for effort in the propagation of the Gospel, and to call forth the energies of all the people of God.

3. The analogies of God’s providence and grace in times past, lead us to believe that the effusions of the Holy Spirit, to be expected in connexion with those necessary changes in the political and social condition of mankind, will be nothing else than the Spirit of God moving the Churches to faith, and zeal, and love, and giving greater and greater success to the published word of God. This effusion of the Spirit, then, both upon the Church and upon the world at large, while it indicates the approach of the day of Christ’s triumph, will call out the followers of Christ everywhere to greater efforts; efforts still increasing as the day approaches.

We now proceed to the inquiry, How far does all this concern us as living in these times? And,

First, Are there any signs of the times which indicate that the day *is* approaching? Are there any changes taking place, any revolutions going on, in the world, which, either in themselves, or in connexion with the light of prophecy, lead us to expect the universal spread and triumph of the Gospel as drawing near?

I will not attempt in this place any exposition of those prophetic Scriptures which are so commonly regarded as designed to make known to the curious the times and the seasons. And, to speak plainly, I could not argue with confidence from any of those schemes of prophetic chronology which ingenious men have built upon a few passages of Daniel and of John, either misunderstood and misapplied, or else obscure and cabalistic

beyond all other passages of inspiration. Yet we may say, with perfect confidence, that in whatever form the opposition of hell to the kingdom which is "righteousness, and peace, and joy" in the Holy Spirit may array itself, that opposition will surely be defeated. This is the one great lesson of prophecy. Under whatever image Antichrist appears, persecuting the saints, and triumphing for a season, his destiny is the same;—he must perish. See you that great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, with God's last witnesses, as it were, lying slain in its streets? Those witnesses rise again; a voice from heaven summons them upward: as they go, the earthquake shakes the guilty city; and, hark! the seventh angel sounds, and the victory is the Lord's. See you the dragon drawing after him the stars, and casting them to the earth, and ready to devour the feeble and fleeing Church? The dragon is cast down from heaven, and Michael and his angels triumph. See you the Beast rising out of the sea, to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and his helper, the false Prophet, deceiving by lying wonders them that dwell on the earth? Lo! the Beast is taken, and the false Prophet that wrought miracles before him; and both are cast into a lake of fire. See you Babylon the Great upon her seven hills, drunken with the blood of the saints? Great Babylon comes into remembrance before God, to give her the cup of wine of the fierceness of his wrath; and, lo! another angel comes, and the earth is lightened with his glory, and he cries mightily, saying, "Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen!" See you Satan going forth once more to deceive the nations, and to assemble them for yet another conflict, bringing Gog and Magog from the four quarters of the earth to encompass the camp of the saints and the beloved city? Lo! fire comes down from God out of heaven, and destroys them. Thus it is with all the enterprises of the gates of hell; they may seem prosperous for a season, but soon they perish. There are many Antichrists, but every one of them shall be defeated. This cheers the "little flock" when the forces of evil seem everywhere triumphant; for they know that the profoundest darkness can be only for a season. This gives strength and certainty to their hopes when the darkness begins to abate; for in the earliest streak of dawn they see "the day approaching."

What, then, are the signs which we behold as we look around us? What are the recent changes, and the changes now in progress, which indicate a crisis near at hand? Popery as a political power,—Popery as a power to oppress and persecute the Gospel,—has long been waning and decaying; and who would be surprised if, within five years, the Bishop of Rome should even cease to have a place among the sovereignties of Europe, and should become as powerless in respect to persecution as the Bishop of New-York? Mohammedism, too, considered in the same light, as a political persecuting power, is failing and passing away. The old empire, founded by Mohammed himself more than twelve hundred years ago, which threatened for ages to extinguish the very name of Christianity,—the old empire, perpetuated so long under the sway of Caliph and Sultan,—is held together, as it were for an hour, by external force, and at some early opportunity must fall for ever. The providence of God is causing revolutions everywhere; and the great tide of revolution, dashing upon every shore, is everywhere tending manifestly in one direction. There is not a revolution that does not cast down some obstacle to the progress of the Gospel. There is not a revolution that does not open the way somewhere for the word of God to run and have “free course and be glorified.” Almost every region of the globe is now open, in a greater or less extent, to the access of the Gospel.

Less than two hundred years ago, it happened, in free and Protestant England, that nearly two thousand devoted and skilful Preachers of the Gospel were in one day not only turned out of their pulpits, but silenced by an act of Government, and forbidden to preach the Gospel, even at their own charges. One of those silenced Ministers was Richard Baxter. And as he, growing old in that enforced cessation from his work, reviewed his life, and chronicled his experience, he said, “My soul is much more afflicted with the thoughts of this miserable world, and more drawn out in desire of its conversion than heretofore. I was wont to look but little further than England in my prayers, not considering the state of the rest of the world; or if I prayed for the conversion of the Jews, that was almost all. But now, as I better understand the case of the

world, and the method of the Lord's prayer, there is nothing in the world that lieth so heavy upon my heart as the thought of the miserable nations of the earth. I cannot be affected so much with the calamities of my own relations, or the land of my nativity, as with the case of the Heathen, Mohammedan, and ignorant nations of the earth. No part of my prayers is so deeply serious as that for the conversion of the infidel and ungodly world, that God's name may be sanctified, and his "kingdom come," and his "will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Nor was I ever before so sensible what a great sin tyranny is, which keepeth out the Gospel from most of the nations of the world. Could we but go among Tartars, Turks, and Heathens, and speak their language, I should be but little troubled for the silencing of eighteen hundred Ministers at once in England, nor for all the rest that were cast out here and in Scotland and Ireland; there being no employment in the world so desirable in my eyes as to labour for the winning of such miserable souls; which maketh me greatly honour Mr. John Eliot, the Apostle of the Indians in New England, and whoever else have laboured in the work."

Suppose, now, that while Baxter, in sadness, and perhaps in prison, breathed out these holy aspirations, he had been suddenly transferred from those times to these. Suppose that, waking as from a troubled dream, he had found that in his own loved England, tyranny (at least such tyranny) was at an end, and the Gospel was free;—suppose he had been told, France is open, and Spain is open for evangelical effort;—suppose he had been told, Turkey is open, Greece is free; all Asia Minor is open from Troas to Ephesus; Syria and the Holy Land are open; and, still further east, the wide realms of Chaldea and old Assyria and Persia are open; and, still beyond, upon the Indus, where Alexander's march of conquest spent itself, and upon the Ganges, where millions upon millions crowd the broad provinces, from the mountains of Thibet to the spice groves of Ceylon, the Gospel may be preached in freedom and peace under the shelter of an English government; and, still beyond, Burmah and Siam are open to the Gospel; China, too, is shaking with the roar of the revolution that is to break down her old barriers;—suppose he had been told, Africa too, at a

thousand points, from Egypt and Abyssinia to her southern Cape, is open to the Christian teacher;—suppose he had been told, America, where the good Eliot first made a barbarous tongue musical with the Gospel, is a vast free Christian empire, and there, where willing exiles from every crowded kingdom of Europe meet to learn new principles, and to transmit to their posterity the English language, and more than English freedom, there is one great hope for the ignorant and dying world; thence light and truth go forth, east, west, north, south, to all the nations;—how would the holy man have lifted up his hands in wonder, in delight, in praise! “Behold!” methinks I hear him say, “behold the day approaching!”

We are living, then, amid great and rapid changes, which indicate that the day of the world’s renovation is drawing near. But,

In the second place, these changes, thus crowding upon each other in this eventful age, are none of them of such a nature as to supersede the necessity of effort for the propagation of the Gospel. They only make such efforts practicable and hopeful. They only prepare the way of the Lord; they are not his actual coming. They cast down the mountains, they exalt the valleys; they make the crooked places straight, and the rough places plain, that the King may come in his glory; and the appearance of such changes is the summons to his people, “Go ye out to meet him.” The Lord himself is not in the whirlwind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire; but these things, striking the world with awe, are the heralds of his coming; and when the still small voice of his Gospel is heard among all nations,—still and small indeed amid the crash of ruin, while thrones and temples, powers and systems, are falling, and the roar of unchained nations is like the sound of many waters,—when once that still small voice, the simple story of the Gospel told by humble, praying tongues, is heard in all the dwellings of mankind; then let God’s witnesses everywhere wrap their faces in their mantles to adore. But while these changes are in progress, and there yet remains work to be done, let us who are of God’s host be up and doing; “and so much the more, as” we “see the day approaching.”

Look at another aspect of the condition of the world. Not

only is the way open or opening everywhere for the evangelist to enter; but everywhere God is predisposing and preparing men to give to those who preach his Gospel an attentive hearing. By one influence and another, under the arrangements of Almighty Providence, it has come to pass that all the world, so to speak, is in expectation of a change. A deep conviction of the superiority of Christian nations, and with it the inference that their superiority is in some way connected with the religion which they profess, is everywhere impressed upon the Heathen, and even upon the proud Mohammedan. The Jew, too, wearied with waiting, and long disappointed, while cycle after cycle of his hopes has been fulfilled in vain, is at the point of abandoning his expectation of a Messiah yet to come, and is even now beginning to look back and inquire whether that great Deliverer has not come and been rejected. Who shall tell us that the Spirit of God is not even now, amid the darkness that covers the nations, moving upon the chaotic elements; and, by an influence beyond and above all second causes, preparing for the access of light and life? How rarely, in these days, does the teacher of Christianity begin his labours among the benighted without finding, at least in the willingness of men to hear him, the effect of some mysterious preparation. And how often has one benighted tribe and another, one nation and another, unexpectedly, and, to human view, spontaneously, sent forth its petition for Christian teachers. What signs of the times are these? how do they cheer the followers of Christ in their attempts to teach all nations! And, instead of superseding the necessity for human instrumentality, they summon the Churches everywhere to increased prayer, and toil, and self-denial; as if angels were shouting to us, from their unseen sphere, "So much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

It is also to be remarked, in the *third* place, that, simultaneously with these changes in the condition of the world at large, there has been a gradual reviving of the spirit of Apostolic piety, and of religious action and enterprise in all Christendom. The Churches, delivered from the power of persecution, and from that hardly less disastrous alliance with the civil power, which is founded on the principle of persecution, have been refreshed and enlarged. The spirit of prayer for the

conversion of the world has been awakened. Millions of voices are daily uttering that petition, "Thy kingdom come!" with a new fervour of desire and of faith. The actual enterprise of converting the world has been commenced with a calm and resolute zeal, a confidence of ultimate success, a spontaneous yet systematized combination of efforts, a liberality in contribution, and an energy in action, which, in their steady progress, make it more and more manifest that the finger of God is in the movement. Thus, while God, in his mysterious workings, has been preparing the world at large for a great and universal moral revolution, he has also been training and furnishing the Churches of Protestant Christendom to take advantage of the crisis, and to carry the story of Christ and redemption to all mankind. Look at what he is doing for the Churches and in the Churches; see how he is setting them free from old encumbrances; see how he is multiplying their numbers; see how he is augmenting their resources and means of action; see how he is pouring out his Spirit upon them, and bidding them arise and shine; see the multitudes of young men endowed with gifts of nature and of education, whom his Spirit converts, and calls to serve him in the Gospel, and whom the Churches may equip and send forth to fill the world with light! Say, what do these things mean in respect to what is just before us? Do these signs show that God will dispense with the instrumentality of human efforts in completing that great moral revolution which seems everywhere impending? Or do they rather show that he intends to have the Gospel preached by human voices in every land, and in every language, and that he would have his servants "go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," and "so much the more, as" they "see the day approaching?"

And what success has thus far attended the enterprise of converting the world by the foolishness of preaching? I may not occupy your time with the statistics of the Missionary enterprise at large, nor even with the details of the success which has crowned those efforts in which it has been our privilege to participate. But I may direct your attention, for a moment, to those familiar facts in this one point of view. In the work of evangelizing the Heathen and Mohammedan nations, every success is an expansion of the work, and every expansion

creates an imperious necessity for new exertions. When the Missionary in some dark land finds the tokens of an approaching revolution manifesting themselves around him; when inquirers begin to come around him by day and by night, one by one, or in companies; when his schools are thronged, in consequence of an awakened thirst for knowledge in a barbarous people; when a clamour for Bibles, and for Christian tracts and books, breaks forth on his right hand and on his left, from a people who have learned the use of letters; when converts begin to be multiplied under his teaching, and need, because they are converts, the more instruction and the more watchfulness; what are all these indications of success but the rapid expansion of his work? And as his work grows under his hand, he must have larger means and new helpers, or else he dies exhausted and broken down amid his triumphs. Thus, while God, in his providence, gives us free and safe access to the nations, and is at the same time giving us peace and prosperity at home, and abundant instrumentalities and resources for the prosecution of the work, he is all the while leading us on in a way in which it is impossible to retreat, and impossible to stand still, without dishonour, not to ourselves only, but to Him whose name we bear and to whose cause we are devoted. Thus, the wonderful and increasing success of our Missionary work, continually betokening the approach of that bright day when Christ shall reign over all the earth, is continually laying upon the Churches a necessity, inevitable, except by the most dishonourable retreat from the most glorious of enterprises,—a necessity not only to go on, but to go on with so much the more earnestness, and faith, and self-denial.

Fathers and brethren in the ministry of the Gospel, the application of all this to us, in our public employment and relations, is too obvious to require an argument. We live, we are entrusted with this sacred ministry, in the twilight, as it were, of that day which faith has so long seen approaching. We are called to instruct and animate the Churches, to guard them from danger, and to lead them on to every holy enterprise, at this peculiar crisis in the history of redemption. Our commission is like that once given to Moses, “Speak to the children of Israel that they go forward.” We are to understand, we are

to make the Churches understand, that God calls us not to rest satisfied with past achievements, or with present success, but to attempt greater and greater things, and to expect in each attempt greater and still greater results. O! what have we done—what have our Churches done—that any of us should speak or feel as if we had already reached the limit of enterprise or of achievement?

Assembled as we are, “to consult the duties of our office, and the common interest of the Churches,” it becomes us to remember and to remind each other how much is depending on the fidelity and the skill with which our work is done. Our position as Ministers of the word, and as Pastors of these favoured Churches, has an importance ever increasing, as the progress of events brings us nearer to the expected triumph of our Redeemer over all the earth. Whether these Churches will do their part in the work of making the Gospel known to every creature, must depend, under God, on the intelligence, the earnestness, and the diligence, with which they are taught and guided by their Pastors. Let them have a cold-hearted, secularized, easy, slothful ministry; let them have a ministry holding the form of godliness and orthodoxy, but denying its power; let them have a ministry uninstructed in the things of the kingdom of God, unable to divide the word of truth, or to discern the wheat from the chaff; let them have an unsound, enthusiastic, revolutionary ministry, seizing upon every novelty, turned about by every wind of doctrine, rushing headlong into every ill-considered project; let them have any ministry not qualified by gifts and graces to produce a sound, enlightened, manly, self-denying piety; and how soon would the disaster be felt, not here only, but everywhere! Let the Spirit of God descend with his reviving grace upon their souls; let the number of them that worship in spirit and in truth, presenting themselves to God a living sacrifice, be multiplied in these parishes; and instantly a new energy is manifested in every department of the divine enterprise of evangelizing the world.

By what motives, then, are we urged to fidelity in our work, as Pastors and leaders of the flock of God? Our success in this work is to save the souls of those who hear us, and is to leave the light of pure Christianity still radiant on these hills after we

shall have been gathered to our fathers. Nor is this all. Our success in this work, or our failure, has, in these days, an obvious and immediate connexion with the advancement of God's designs of mercy for all nations. In such times as these, the zeal, the purity, the spiritual prosperity and progress of these Churches; or their languor and sloth, their declension and decay; is felt at once, far and near, in its effects on the progress of Christ's universal kingdom. It is felt, far west, beyond the Mississippi, where, in that confluence of emigration, the home Missionary, sustained by our Churches, gathers around him the children of our fathers, in some log-hut, or under some spreading shade, and waking in their hearts kind memories of the homes, the sanctuaries, and the graves of "old Connecticut," bids them not forget their fathers' God. It is felt in those distant isles where the Missionary from our shores sees a regenerated nation, and hears from glen, and vale, and rugged cliff, sweet songs of praise, mingled with the everlasting anthem of the ocean. It is felt in all the tropic climes of eastern Asia, where Apostolic men, in our behalf, and depending on our fidelity to the cause, are establishing Churches and Christian schools, and the mighty enginery of the press, for the illumination of those countless millions. It is felt in the old haunts of Grecian genius, where Athens and Corinth receive once more the simple doctrine of Jesus and the resurrection, from those whom God has sent by our instrumentality, and where the men of Macedonia are calling for our help. It is felt under the waning crescent of the Turk, where the Armenian trafficker, to whom the pearl of great price is sent from these occidental shores, rises up to demand of his priestly oppressors freedom, and the keys of heaven. Lebanon feels it, "that goodly mountain," where the untamed Arab and the wilder Druse listen to our brethren, and weep over the sod that covers precious dust which we have loved. The Nestorian feels it, as, from his "misty mountain-tops," and from the mouth of each old cavern sanctuary, he looks with hope, too long deferred, to catch the day-spring strangely dawning in the west. Thus it is, brethren, that, in such a time as this, when the redemption of all nations is drawing nigh, our position, as Pastors of these favoured Churches, involves a responsibility continually increasing. Lowly and narrow as each one of us

may feel to be the sphere of his immediate agency, the influence of what we do, or fail to do, in our humble places; the influence of God's blessing on our faithfulness, or of his frown on our slothfulness and cowardice, goes out from where we stand, as if on some electric chain, reaching from station to station, till it encircles the world.

With such thoughts as these, enlarging our views and glowing in our hearts, let us "consult the duties of our office, and the common interest of the Churches." With such thoughts, let us gird ourselves anew for labour. Remembering that "the field is the world," and that Christ's followers are to "preach the Gospel to every creature;" and watching with holy sympathy the progress of the angel flying in the midst of heaven; let us pray and labour, and "so much the more, as we see the day approaching."

O, that approaching day! What though its full splendour may not shine upon these mortal eyes! We will do our part, God helping us; and then its light shall be the brighter on our graves: and when we look down on the new earth from the new heaven, we will sing the louder in the chorus of the morning stars, and our voices shall mingle with a more triumphant gladness in the acclamations of the sons of God.

DISCOURSE XXVIII.

 THE EARTH FILLED WITH THE GLORY
 OF THE LORD.*

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“And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word: but as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.”

THE practice of confirming a declaration with an oath is of very early origin. And although the multiplication of oaths is a great evil, and the act of taking or administering them with lightness an aggravated sin, yet they are undoubtedly in great error who maintain that all swearing, even on the most solemn occasions, and on the call of judicial officers, is unlawful. “An oath for confirmation,” says an inspired Apostle, “is an end of all strife.” Accordingly, in the sacred history, we find many examples of holy men, on various occasions, employing this form of asseveration. But, what is much more decisive still, we find the High and Holy One himself repeatedly adopting it, to confirm both his promises and his threatenings. Thus we read, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that, there being “no greater,” Jehovah “sware by himself;” and again, in the same Epistle, it is said, that “God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it with an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, they might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us.” And in the passage before us, the Lord said, “As I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.”

These words were spoken on a very distressing, and, to the

* Delivered at Baltimore, before the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1835.

eye of man, a very discouraging, occasion. When the twelve men who had been sent from the wilderness of Paran to spy out the land of promise brought back their report, the mass of the people were almost overwhelmed with alarm and discouragement. Nay, overcome by apprehension, and infatuated with a spirit of unbelief and rebellion, they proposed to make choice of another leader, and return back to Egypt. With this ungrateful and daring revolt the Lord was greatly displeased, and threatened to give them up to his destroying judgments, and to disinherit them for ever. Moses, however, interceded for the people in a most touching strain of importunate prayer; and he prevailed. The Lord said, "I have pardoned them according to thy word: but as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." As if he had said, "Unbelieving and rebellious as this people now appear, and utterly desperate as their prospects may seem, neither my plans nor my promises, in regard to them or the world, shall be frustrated. My cause shall finally triumph over all the infatuation and rebellion of man. The whole earth shall, in due time, be filled with my glory."

I shall not stop here to inquire whether the original word, here translated "the earth," is intended to designate the whole earth, in the largest sense of the expression, or only that land (namely, the whole land of Palestine) to which the people were going. However this may be decided, we know that examples occur in other parts of Scripture in which the term "earth" is applied in the largest sense, and also connected with a promise that the whole inhabited globe shall one day be filled with the knowledge and glory of the Lord. In giving the most ample interpretation, then, to the language of our text, we are certain that we do not go beyond the spirit of holy Scripture.

There are three things in the passage before us which demand our notice:—THE IMPORT OF THE PROMISE WHICH IT CONTAINS;—THE REASONS WHICH WE HAVE FOR BELIEVING THAT THIS PROMISE WILL, IN DUE TIME, BE REALIZED;—AND THE DUTY DEVOLVING ON US IN RELATION TO THE PROMISE.

I. Let us attend to THE IMPORT OF THE PROMISE BEFORE US. This import, expressed with so much solemnity of asseveration, is large and precious. "As I live," saith the Lord, "all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord."

Glory is the manifestation of excellence. The glory of God is that display of his most blessed character and will which opens the way for his intelligent creatures to know, to love, and to obey him. This glory is exhibited in various ways. It shines in all the works of creation. All the works of God, we are told, praise him. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy-work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." Again: the glory of God is manifested by the works of his providence. Here his wisdom, his power, and his benevolence gloriously shine. "The Lord," we are told, "is known" (that is, is made known) "by the judgment which he executeth." But, above all, is the glory of God displayed in the work of redemption; in that great plan of love and mercy by a Redeemer which was first revealed to the parents of our race immediately after the fall; which was more and more unfolded in the ceremonial economy; and which reached its meridian brightness when the Saviour, the blessed "Sun of Righteousness," rose upon a dark world. In this wonderful plan of salvation, the glory of God shines with its brightest lustre. Here all his perfections unite and harmonize, and shine with transcendent glory. Now when the Gospel, which proclaims this plan of mercy, shall be preached and received throughout the world; when every kindred, and people, and nation, and tongue shall not only be instructed in its sublime doctrines, but also brought under its benign and sanctifying power; then, with emphatic propriety, may it be said that the earth is "filled with the glory of the Lord." As the highest glory of which an individual creature is capable is to bear the image of his Maker, so the highest glory of which our world at large is capable, is to be filled with the holy and benevolent Spirit of Him "who is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person;" is to have the knowledge and love of the Saviour reigning over all the population of our globe, "from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same."

It is this universal prevalence of the true religion;—that

religion which alone can enlighten, sanctify, and save; that religion which imparts the highest physical and moral glory, wherever it reigns, and in proportion as it reigns;—it is the universal prevalence of this glory which is promised in our text. When this holy and benevolent religion shall fill the world, then shall be brought to pass the promise which is here recorded. Yes; when the benign power of the Gospel, and all the graces and virtues which it inspires, shall reign over all the family of man; when the highest intellectual and moral culture shall be everywhere enjoyed; when the voice of prayer and praise shall be heard in every tabernacle; when the Sabbath shall be universally kept holy to God; when the Christian law of marriage, that noblest and most precious bond of social purity and happiness, shall be universally and sacredly obeyed; when the temperance reformation, without any unscriptural extremes, or fanatical perversions, shall pervade the world; when “wars shall cease to the ends of the earth;” when fraud and violence shall be banished from the abodes of men; when the voice of profaneness shall no more pollute the lips or the ears of creatures claiming to be rational; when tyranny and oppression, in every form, shall come to an end; when sectarian feuds and jealousies shall be unknown, save only in the pages of history; when all heresy and error shall give place to the power of truth, and all vice and profligacy to the reign of Christian purity; when the mosque and the pagoda shall be transformed into temples of the Christian’s God; when the habitations of savage cruelty shall become the abodes of holiness and peace; when the activity of a greatly extended commerce shall be directed chiefly to the intellectual and moral culture of society; when justice, order, industry, brotherly-kindness, and charity shall universally reign; in a word, when the Church of God, with all its choicest influences, shall fill the earth, then shall the promise before us be gloriously realized. This will be emphatically “the glory of the Lord;” the glory of his power; the glory of his holiness; the glory of his love. It will be, in its measure, the same glory which forms the blessedness of the heavenly world; the same glory in which those whose robes have been washed in the blood of the Lamb walk in white raiment before the throne of God. O how glorious shall this

fallen world be when all the nations which compose it shall be "just, fearing God;" when those who are nominally "the people of God, shall be all righteous;" when every family shall be the abode of purity, order, and love; when every individual shall be a "temple of the Holy Ghost;" and when, from pole to pole, the song of jubilee shall be heard, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever!" "Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!"

Such appears to be the import of the promise before us. Let us next inquire,

II. WHAT REASON HAVE WE FOR BELIEVING THAT THESE SCENES OF GLORY WILL ONE DAY BE REALIZED? This is, to the Christian's heart, a most interesting inquiry. Let us ponder it with a seriousness corresponding to its unspeakable importance.

And here it is obvious to remark that there will be no need of miracles (in the ordinary sense of that word) to bring about the accomplishment of the promise before us. Only suppose the genuine power of the Gospel, which we see to reign in thousands of individuals and families now, actually to reign in all hearts, and to pervade the world, and the work is done. But how can we hope for this? I answer,

1. First of all, and above all, our hope is founded on *Jehovah's faithful and unerring promise*. This is, undoubtedly, the chief ground of confidence. For that a religion which has been preached for eighteen centuries, and which has been as yet received, even nominally by less than a fourth part of mankind, will one day, and, at most, in a century or two from this hour, pervade and govern the world, we can expect with confidence only on the promise of Him who is almighty, and who cannot lie. But this promise is surely enough for the most unwavering confidence. "Hath he said, and shall he not do it? hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Jehovah is "not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent." Heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot or tittle of all that has gone out of the mouth of Jehovah shall not pass away, until all be fulfilled.

Let us attend, then, to some of the promises on this subject

with which the word of God abounds. Take the following as a small specimen of the "exceeding great and precious" catalogue found in the inspired volume. "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ." "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the Heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee." "From the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the Heathen, saith the Lord of hosts." "And I will gather all rations, and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory." "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." "His name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed." "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God." "And the kingdom, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; and all dominions shall serve and obey him." "I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth." "That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations." "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." "The isles shall wait for his law." "His dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth." "All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." "We see not yet all things put under him." "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under

his feet." "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

Such is a specimen of Jehovah's promises respecting the future prevalence and power of the Gospel. Read them, Christians, with joy and confidence. Ponder them daily and well in your hearts, as a source of continual encouragement; and remember that they shall all, without failure, be gloriously accomplished. I cannot tell you precisely when this happy period shall arrive; but I can tell you, on authority not to be questioned, that, at the appointed time, this earth, so long the abode of sin and sorrow, shall be restored from its desolations, and made to bloom like "the garden of the Lord." I can tell you that her almighty King will yet, notwithstanding every unfavourable appearance, make Zion beautiful through his own comeliness upon her; that he will yet cause her "righteousness to go forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burneth." These promises may not, indeed, be all fully accomplished, until we, who now listen to their recital, shall be all sleeping in the dust; or, rather, if, by the grace of God, we be made meet for it, rejoicing before the throne, in possession of still brighter glory. But, "though we die, God shall surely visit his people" in mercy. Though neither we, nor even the next generation shall be permitted to witness on earth the complete developement of "the latter-day glory;" yet let us rejoice in the assurance that it will come in due time, and in all its promised blessedness. "The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."

2. But, further, our confidence that the religion of Christ will, one day, fill the whole earth with its glory, is confirmed by the consideration that *this religion is, in its nature, adapted above all others to be a universal religion.*

In all the forms of false religion with which our world is filled, there is something which renders them unfit or impracticable for universal adoption. Some are adapted to particular climates only; others to particular states of society; a third

class to particular orders of men; so that, in their very nature, they cannot be universal. Indeed, none of the Pagans seem ever to have thought of a universal religion, as either to be expected or desired. Nay, even the true religion, as it appeared in its infant and ceremonial form, under the old economy, was not, in its external method of dispensation, adapted to be universal. For, not to mention many other circumstances, it required all its professors to go up "three times a year" to the same temple to worship; and, accordingly, long before the Messiah came in the flesh, it was made perfectly apparent, from so many of the descendants of Abraham being scattered abroad in different and distant parts of the world, that it was becoming to the Jewish people, as such, an impracticable system. Suppose all the four quarters of our globe to be filled with zealous, devoted Jews. Every one sees that a rigid compliance with their ritual would be physically impossible: and, therefore, when the time for Shiloh's appearance drew near, it became, every year, more and more plain—however slow some of that "peculiar people" were in learning the lesson—that the ceremonial economy must come to an end; must, of course, yield to a system less restrictive in its character, and more fitted for "every kindred, and people, and nation, and tongue."

Accordingly, when we examine the religion of Jesus Christ, in its New Testament form, we find it divested of every feature and circumstance adapted to confine it to any particular territory or people. Its doctrines, its worship, and its system of moral duty are all equally adapted to universality. It teaches that God has "made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth;" that he "is no respecter of persons, but that in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him;" that he is alike related to all the children of men, as their Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor; and that the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the monarch and the slave, all stand upon a level in his sight, and have all equal access, if penitent and believing, to the throne of his heavenly grace. It proclaims one method of justification for all classes of men; one kind of preparation for heaven; and that not ceremonial, but moral and spiritual; and

one great code of moral duty, equally applicable to the learned and the ignorant; the polished and the rude, the civilized and the savage. And as all the great doctrines and principles of the religion of Christ are equally adapted to the whole human family; so the rational and benevolent laws, the unostentatious rites, the simple worship, and the whole spirit and requirements of this religion, are no less adapted to be universally received as the religion of the whole race of man. It has nothing local; nothing national; nothing exclusive, except its uncompromising holiness; no burdensome ritual; no tedious or expensive pilgrimages; no blazing altars; no bloody sacrifices; no intricate genealogies; no special adaptedness to any particular form of civil government, or occupation in life. In short, everything in this blessed religion—the simple costume which it wears; the heavenly spirit which it breathes; its law of marriage; its holy Sabbath; its meekness, forgiveness, humility, and benevolence; applying alike to all classes of men, and to all states of society—proclaims that it is suited to the condition of man, in all nations and ages; to meet the exigencies of all; to supply their wants; to refine and invigorate their talents; to elevate their character; and to unite all who receive it into one sanctified and happy brotherhood. Surely, this character of our holy religion is adapted to confirm our confidence that it will, one day, as Jehovah has promised, gloriously fill the world; and that, literally, in Christ, “all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

3. I have only to add, under this head, *that the present aspect of the world furnishes much reason to hope that the accomplishment of this promise is drawing nigh.*

It cannot be denied, indeed, that, on the principles of worldly calculation, there is much in the present condition of mankind to distress and dishearten. More than seven parts out of eight of the whole population of our globe are still sunk in deplorable darkness and corruption. Of the eight hundred millions of immortal souls which the earth is supposed to contain, only about sixty, or, at most, seventy, millions are nominally Protestants. The great mass of the remaining seven hundred and forty millions are either Pagans or Mohammedans, or nearly as destitute as either of saving, evangelical light. Of these sixty

or seventy millions of nominal Protestants, only a third part, or a little more than twenty millions, can be said to have the real Gospel of Christ, in anything like its purity, so much as preached among them. Of those which, in a large sense of the word, we may call evangelical congregations, probably not more than one-half, or twelve millions, are so much as professors of religion, in any distinct or intelligent import of the term. That is, of the eight hundred millions of the world's population, but little more than an *eightieth part are even professors of religion*, in any scriptural form, or claim to know anything of its sanctifying power. How many of these professors of religion may we calculate upon as probably real Christians? Ah! that is a question on which the humble, enlightened believer, though he may hesitate and weep, will forbear to attempt an estimate!

Such is, confessedly, at present, the dark and distressing state of the great mass of our world's population. To what a lamentably small extent is that "glory" of which our text speaks, found to reign among our fellow-men! What a little remnant, among all the multiplied millions of mankind, have any adequate or saving knowledge of the religion of Christ! O, what a moral charnel-house does our world appear! What a valley of "dry-bones!—exceeding dry!" "Can these dry bones live?" Yes, they shall live! "The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." And even now, amidst the darkness and misery which brood over the greater part of the earth, there are appearances everywhere which promise the approach of better days. It is but a short time since a large part of the inhabited globe was absolutely closed against the Missionaries of the cross. Ten or fifteen years ago, Egypt, Arabia, Persia, China, the Burman empire, and a large part of Africa and her islands; in short, by far the greater portion of the Pagan and Mohammedan world, were rigorously shut against the Gospel. Missionaries could not so much as enter those countries, without incurring either certain death, or the most immediate risk of it: but now it may be said, without exaggeration, that the whole world is opened wide to the bearers of the Gospel message. I know not that there is, at this hour, a single portion of the globe to which the enlightened and prudent Missionary may not attain some degree of access, unless it be some portions which bear the Christian

name, but are under the spiritual despotism of "the man of sin, the son of perdition, who exalteth himself against all that is called God." He who "sits as Governor among the nations," seems to be spreading a natural preparation, if I may so express it, around the world, for the preaching of the Gospel among all nations. He seems to be slowly and silently laying a train for mighty movements in time to come. He seems to be showing us how easy it is for him to incline the hearts even of his enemies,—from worldly motives,—not merely to permit the Gospel to enter their territories, but to invite its Ministers to come in and proclaim their message. Never before was so large a portion of mankind accessible to the evangelical labourer. Never before was there so much evidence that the most massive fabrics of superstition are crumbling to the dust, and ready to give place to a more pure and rational system. Never before were there so many appearances which promise the fulfilment of that prediction that "a nation shall be born in a day." It is believed by some that there are, at this moment, in the city of Calcutta, several thousands of young Hindoos who are disposed seriously to inquire on the subject of salvation, and by no means indisposed to exchange their miserable superstition for a better form of religion. Only suppose such a body of young men prepared by the grace of God, and going forth in the Spirit and power of Christ into every part of Hindostan, and how might that deplorable moral wilderness be transformed into a fertile and delightful "garden of the Lord!" How might a thousand Asiatic deserts be made speedily to "rejoice and blossom as the rose!" What say you, my Christian friends, to appearances and opportunities such as these? O ye who profess to know something of the sweetness of redeeming love, and the preciousness of Christian hopes, shall we be blind to these wonderful openings of Providence? Shall we be deaf to these importunate invitations to enlighten and save perishing men?

Contemplate, further, the singular progress of various forms of improvement throughout the civilized world; all of which may be considered as bearing on the great promise contained in our text. Behold the intercourse between distant portions of the globe increasing every day with a rapidity, and to an

extent, beyond all former precedent! Think of the endless improvements in the means of conveyance from one part of the world to another; thereby investing Missionary enterprises with facilities for carrying on their operations unknown to our fathers. Consider the wonderful improvements in the art of printing, and, indeed, in all the mechanical arts, rendering the multiplication of Bibles and other pious writings, for the benefit of the world, practicable and easy, to an extent formerly thought incredible. Contemplate the extension of commercial enterprise, which late years have produced, presenting the means of benefiting mankind to an amount altogether new and extraordinary. Think of the enlargement of our acquaintance with the different languages of the globe; it being probable that ten persons, if not twenty, now understand other living languages than their own, where one had this knowledge fifty years ago. Think of the Bible having been translated into more than one hundred and fifty languages at this hour spoken among men; and of the process of preparing the Scriptures for circulation in every part of the globe, still going on with increasing rapidity. And dwell, for a moment, on what is no less remarkable,—the progress of public sentiment in regard to the conversion of the world to God. What, ten years ago, would have been thought the extravagance of visionary dreaming, in regard to this great enterprise, is now looked at, and talked about, with a grave familiarity and confidence which it is delightful to contemplate. It is less than ten years since a proposal from a warm-hearted Christian, in the State of New-York, to supply the destitute of one populous county with Bibles, was regarded as a bold attempt, and received with thrilling interest. Not many months afterwards, the young men of the college at Princeton resolved, with a moral daring, which was then almost ridiculed as presumptuous, to attempt to supply the destitute of the whole State of New-Jersey with Bibles in two years. Yet, bold, and almost hopeless, as this pledge appeared at the time of its adoption, it was substantially, and with wonderfully apparent ease, redeemed. Hardly was this accomplished, before a resolution was adopted, to attempt the supply of the destitute in the whole United States with Bibles, within a specified time. For this resolution, when adopted, many, even of the warmest friends of the Bible

cause, were not prepared; but feared it would prove a presumptuous and abortive undertaking. Yet, as far as anything of the kind is practicable, in such a country as this, it was faithfully and happily accomplished: but scarcely was this done, when the enlarged spirit of public benevolence, still augmenting in a geometrical ratio, called for a still wider and nobler field of pious effort. To supply all the accessible portions of the whole world with the word of life, within a specified time, was the sublime enterprise proposed to the American Bible Society, and to other Bible Societies, in our own and foreign lands. A like rapid increase has been observable in the means furnished by public liberality, for carrying on the great enterprises of Christian benevolence which distinguish and adorn our age. They are, in all, from thirty to fifty fold, and in some more than a hundred fold, beyond what they were a quarter of a century ago. Now, in regard to all these, and other striking analogous facts, I ask, my friends, how shall we account for this astonishing progress of public sentiment, in regard to plans for the conversion of the world to God? Can we possibly consider it as merely accidental, and without meaning? Surely, such a conclusion would be as much opposed to reason as to piety. May we not rather consider it as a precious omen, that the great work which it contemplates is happily drawing near, and will, before long, be gloriously realized?

And, to me, it appears worthy of special notice, that there are so many indications that the English language,—the language of those parts of the world which are most favoured with Gospel light,—will, probably, ere long, become the prevailing language of the whole world. The extensive and rapid progress of this language on the American continent; in all the British possessions and dependencies in the eastern world; in the continent of New-Holland; in many of the islands of the sea; and, in short, in every part of the earth where American or British Missionaries are permitted to lift up their voice for Christ, is, truly, one of the most striking and interesting spectacles now passing before the contemplative mind. If the time should ever again recur, when the “whole earth shall be of one language, and one speech,” the English, I am persuaded, is more likely to be that language than any other. And may we

not consider its gradual and remarkable extension as one of the means by which the "earth is to be filled with the glory of the Lord?"

While we contemplate some of those prominent features in the aspect of the present day, which seem to portend an unexampled spread of the Gospel, we ought not to overlook some shades in the picture which certainly wear a very different appearance. Infidelity and heresy were, probably, never more busy in circulating their virulent poison, than at the present hour. Principles at war with all social stability and order were, perhaps, never more widely extended in civilized society; and, in both the civil and religious community, the ebullitions of morbid excitement have never been more threatening in their appearance. That there is a great battle yet to be fought with these opposing powers no reflecting mind can for a moment doubt. How violent or long-continued the conflict may be, I presume not to calculate: but let no man's heart fail him on account of these approaching struggles. A little before the advent of the Messiah, it was said, "I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts." And, in like manner, may we not hope that all the corruption in principle, and all the morbid feverishness in practice, which exhibit so revolting an aspect at the present time, may result, like many a process in the natural world, in which the animal body is renovated and strengthened by the consequences of a subdued fever; and in which the gradual and complete subsidence of feculent matter is hastened even by the violent agitation of an impure fluid? It is no new thing either for Infidelity or fanaticism to furnish an antidote to its own poison, by disclosing the malignity of its virus, in the deadliness of its effects; and thus creating an extensive and permanent loathing of those moral potions which allure but to destroy. Many are "running to and fro;" but my hope is, that "knowledge will be thereby increased;" and that the present febrile state of the social body will soon terminate, under the control of Him who is able to bring good out of evil, in more firm and established moral health; and in more widely extended, and in better directed, efforts than ever, for promoting the universal reign of

knowledge, religion, and happiness among men. It remains that we inquire,

III. WHAT IS OUR PRESENT DUTY IN RELATION TO THE PROMISE BEFORE US?

1. And here, undoubtedly, our first duty is *to believe the promise*. This is the very least that can be demanded. Unbelief makes God a liar; poisons the very fountain of Christian confidence; cuts the nerves of all spiritual exertion; and tends to discouragement and despondency. To what purpose has Jehovah promised, if even his own people will not hear and believe? We may say now, I fear, to the great majority of those who bear the Christian name, as the Master himself said to the desponding disciples on their way to Emmaus, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken!" Ah! my friends, the lack of faith is the great, crying sin, not of an ungodly world only, but eminently of Christians! It is the littleness of our faith which makes us dwarfs in spiritual stature; cowards in conflict and in enterprise; narrow-minded in our views and plans of duty; and niggards in sacrifice and in contribution to the cause of Christ. Yes, it is the sin and misery, even of the sincere disciples of Christ, that the promises of God have so little daily influence on their practical habits. Christians! be afraid of unbelief; be ashamed of unbelief; only believe, and act as if you believed; and you shall see the salvation of God.

2. Another duty incumbent upon us, in relation to this promise, is *to labour and pray without ceasing for its accomplishment*. They are undoubtedly guilty of an unwise and criminal perversion of God's word, who infer, because he has promised a specific and rich blessing, and will certainly bring it to pass, that therefore they may repose in a state of entire inaction and unconcern respecting the event. There is no piety, my friends, in that confidence which neglects prayer, and which does not add prayer to diligent effort to attain that for which it prays. "Show me thy faith by thy works," is a maxim equally of reason and revelation. God's kingdom is a kingdom of means. He never did, and, probably, never will, convey the light of the Gospel to any people by direct miracle, but by the agency of man. He "will be inquired of," he declares, by us,

to accomplish even that which he hath promised, and which he fully intends to bring about : and although he is able to effect all his purposes of mercy and salvation without the instrumentality of man's labours, yet he condescends, in all cases, to employ them. And is it not a mercy that he does require and employ them ? Does not every reflecting man perceive that it is a wise and benign arrangement of Providence which renders constant activity of body and mind indispensable to the highest physical, intellectual, and moral enjoyment ? And can any one doubt that it is an equally wise and merciful arrangement which makes it our duty to pray, and exert ourselves, without ceasing, to promote the reign of salvation throughout the world ? Not only is it certain that the great King of Zion has commanded us to send "the Gospel to every creature;" not only is it manifest that we may properly estimate our Christian character by the degree in which we take an active interest in the conversion of the world ; but it is equally plain, that every fervent prayer we offer, and every sincere effort we make, for hastening this great consummation, has a tendency to benefit our own souls, as well as the souls of others ; to increase our faith ; to influence our love ; to enlarge our vision ; in a word, to make us more like Christ, and to impart a richer preparation for the holy joys of his presence. In short, we may say of him who is much employed in fervent prayer, and in diligent labour, and sacrifice for the conversion of the world to God, that he is twice blessed ; blessed as a benefactor of his fellow-men, and as the receiver of a blessing, by the very act of conferring benefits on others.

3. A third duty, in relation to the promise in our text, is, that, in labouring for the spread of the Gospel, *no adverse occurrence, however painful, ought ever to discourage us, or at all to weaken either our confidence or our efforts.* What could be more discouraging than the state of the visible Church, when the promise before us was given ? Yet the promise itself really prohibited all despondency. If, indeed, we had anything short of Jehovah's promise to rely upon when difficulties or disappointments arose, we might despond ; but with that promise, we may meet the most distressing difficulties without fear. What though some of our fondest hopes and plans are frus-

trated? What though some of those instruments on which the highest confidence was placed, unexpectedly fail? What though the lamented Evarts, and Cornelius, and Wisner, follow each other, in quick succession, to their eternal reward, and leave us to mourn over the sore bereavement of the Missionary cause? What though one beloved brother and sister after another falls, in the flower of life, and on the fields whitening to the harvest? What though even the hand of savage violence be permitted to cut down young, zealous, and promising heralds of salvation, when just about to present the glorious Gospel to their merciless murderers? Our tears may flow over bereavements such as these: they ought to flow; but let no thought of discouragement arise. Frail instruments may die; but the "Captain of salvation" lives. Is the military commander disheartened when, in the shock of battle, some of his choicest subalterns fall around him? Not if he has the heart of a soldier. And shall the "good soldier of Jesus Christ" have less courage? In fact, every adverse occurrence ought only to constrain us to turn our confidence from the creature, and to place it more firmly, and entirely, on the Lord of all creatures. Tell us not, then, of the difficulties which beset our enterprise for the conversion of the world. Tell us not, that, going on as the Christian Church has done for eighteen centuries, it will take thousands of ages completely to evangelize all nations; or, rather, that, at that rate of progress, there is little hope that the work can ever be accomplished. We know it all. And if our dependence were on the wisdom and power of man, we might abandon all hope; but in the name and strength of Jehovah, our covenant God, who can never fail or grow weary, we may go forward with confidence, in the face of every difficulty; intimidated by no danger; disheartened by no disappointment, or adverse occurrence. Nay, how often has it happened that those events which we considered as deeply calamitous, and over which we mourned, as greatly hindering the Gospel, have resulted in its signal and extensive furtherance? When Stephen, the first martyr, was stoned to death by an infuriated mob, to whom he came with a message of love, "devout men," we are told, "carried him to his burial, and made great lamentation over him." But, mark the event! That persecution, though not so intended by the perse-

cutors, became the means of sending many Ministers of the Gospel away from Jerusalem, in various directions, and thus of extending and building up the Church of God, instead of effecting its destruction, as the malignant adversary had confidently expected.

4. A further duty, in reference to the promise before us is, that we *pray without ceasing for the power of the Holy Spirit*, to render all the means which are employed for its accomplishment effectual. When we recollect the extent and difficulty of the work to be done; how many millions are yet in darkness and misery; how hard and full of enmity the human heart; and how obstinately the warnings and entreaties of mercy have been resisted; we may well despair of human wisdom and strength, and look to almighty power alone for success. It is "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit," saith Jehovah, that means are attended with a saving energy. Had we millions of the most learned, eloquent, and holy Preachers in Christendom to send forth, and all the funds that could be asked or desired for this enterprise, all would be in vain, unless the power of the Almighty Spirit went along with the labourers. While, therefore, we labour with unwearied perseverance for the conversion of the world; while we raise funds with growing liberality; while we select, instruct, and send forth the most able and devoted Missionaries that we can find; and while we employ all the means in our power for imparting the Gospel to every creature; let us remember that all will be unavailing, unless the Holy Spirit accompany and give efficacy to the means employed. Let everything pertaining to the spread of the Gospel be done under the deep impression that in our own strength we can effect nothing; that the promise is Jehovah's word; that the accomplishment of it is Jehovah's work; that to him, of course, for bringing to pass what he has promised, every eye and every heart ought to be directed. And allow me, my beloved friends, to say, we are never likely to be either so happy or so successful in any enterprise for extending the Redeemer's kingdom, as when we lie in the dust of abasement, sensible of our utter inability to command, by our own power, the least portion of the blessing which we seek; and placing all our dependence for success, at every step, on the Holy Spirit's life-giving energy. And I must also be allowed to say, that, in

my own view, this doctrine, (namely, that success is all of God,) instead of being a legitimate source of discouragement, is, while it humbles, at the same time, one of the most comforting and animating of all doctrines. For though it be most true that he who planteth is nothing, and he who watereth is nothing, but God that giveth the increase; it is also equally true that all hearts are in his hands, and that he is able to turn the most blind and hardened to himself, "as the rivers of water are turned." O, it is sweet to the believing heart to lean on God; to plead his promises; and to rejoice in the assurance that though man cannot do it, by reason of weakness, He "with whom all things are possible," and who "cannot lie," hath promised that the whole "earth shall be filled with his glory," and that he is at once able and faithful to bring it to pass.

5. Finally, if so great a work as evangelizing the whole world is promised, and is certainly to be accomplished, *then our plans and efforts for promoting this object ought to bear a corresponding character*; that is, they ought to be *large, liberal, and ever expanding*. We ought to consider it as our duty to devote to this object our utmost resources, and to engage the co-operation of all over whom we can exert an influence.

The promise of God to his people is, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." It is spoken of in various passages of Scripture as an excellence in Christian character, that the heart be enlarged; that is, filled with large affections, large desires, large hopes, and large confidence. Never were scriptures more applicable than these to the case before us. When we direct our attention to the spread of the Gospel, our views, our prayers, our efforts are all too stinted and narrow. We scarcely ever lift our eyes to the real grandeur and claims of the enterprise in which we profess to be engaged. We are too apt to be satisfied with small and occasional contributions of service to this greatest of all causes, instead of devoting to it hearts truly enlarged; instead of desiring great things, expecting great things, praying for great things; and nurturing in our spirits that holy elevation of sentiment and affection which embraces in its desires and prayers the entire kingdom of God, and which can be satisfied with nothing short of the whole "earth" being "filled with the glory of the Lord."

We now and then meet with a professing Christian who really does seem to regard the kingdom of Christ—its enlargement and glory—as the greatest interest in the universe; and who does seem to desire unfeignedly to consecrate all that he has and is to promote its progress. But, O, how small is the number of those who manifest this spirit! My dear friends, the number of such must greatly increase before the Church at large can be expected to rise from the dust, and put on her beautiful garments. The whole style of Christian character, if I may be allowed the expression, must become, generally, more decided; more active; more unreservedly devoted; more abundant and fervent in prayer; more enlarged and liberal in the system of giving;—far more, before the spread of the Gospel can correspond with the divine promises; before it is possible that our raised expectations with respect to the conversion of the world can ever be realized. Yes, life and power must be greatly increased within the Church before her power on the world can be widely extended, and triumphantly glorious. Professing Christians must be seen to be really in earnest in their faith and hope, before they can be expected to make a deep impression on the impenitent around them. We often come to you, Christian brethren, soliciting your pecuniary aid in bearing the Gospel and its heralds to the ends of the earth. And, truly, without this aid, we cannot carry on our benevolent operations for a single day. But, after all, we are much more anxious to see your souls swelling with holy love, and holy zeal, and holy activity; because we know that this indicates more deep and enlarged spiritual advancement; and because it is a pledge, not of a mere fitful gush of liberality, but of a perennial stream of Christian bounty, flowing from love to the infinitely precious cause.

This character was once much more common than it is at the present day. How ought we at once to be humbled and animated when we read the history of the primitive Christians! Many of them, literally and cheerfully, gave up all for Christ. Contemplate, my beloved friends, contemplate the affecting narrative. Ah! how they laboured, and denied themselves, and made sacrifices, and gave their substance, sometimes to the last farthing, for the cause of Christ! See them “counting all

things but loss," and even cheerfully going to the stake, when the Saviour's honour required it. Read this narrative, professing Christians; and then say, whether those who feel reluctant to give the price even of a few luxurious dinners for promoting the Redeemer's kingdom, can seriously believe that they are animated by the same spirit with those devoted disciples?

But how ought we to be still more deeply humbled and animated when we call to mind what our blessed Saviour has done for us! I have sometimes heard professing Christians talk of doing and giving as much toward the spread of the glorious Gospel "as they conveniently could." Surely this is wonderful language for the professed followers of a crucified Redeemer! Did our blessed Master do no more for us than he "conveniently could?" Did he not give his life for our redemption? Did he not, in offering up himself a sacrifice, that we might not die, yield himself to sufferings unparalleled and indescribable? Shall not every one, then, who calls himself by the name of Christ, make the language of Paul, in all its force and tenderness, his own? "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

Lift up your eyes, Christian brethren, on the unnumbered millions of our globe, sunk in ignorance, pollution, and misery. Think of their condition; a condition in which you must have been at this hour, had it not been for the wonderful grace of God. Contrast with that condition your own mercies and privileges; and then ask, whether you ought not to feel for those who are thus miserable, and try to help them. Christians, can you enjoy your Bibles, your Sabbaths, your sanctuaries, your sacramental tables, and all your precious privileges and hopes, alone? Can you enjoy these hallowed scenes, and heavenly gifts, and know their value, and yet slumber in ignoble indolence over the moral desolations of those who are perishing for lack of them? Can you calmly sit by, and see million after million of treasure cheerfully expended for amusement, luxury, and sin; and only a few stunted thousands devoted to the

greatest, best work of enlightening and saving the world? O! whither has the spirit of the Bible fled? May He who gave the Bible, and the promise before us, restore it in his time!

Let us, then, with one accord, rouse ourselves, and endeavour to rouse others, to new zeal and larger enterprise in spreading the knowledge and glory of the Lord. Every heart, every tongue, and every hand that can be stirred up to engage in this great work, from infancy to old age, is needed. And remember that the more thoroughly any of the children of men can be excited and consecrated to this work, the richer the benefit they gain for themselves. Christian brother, Christian sister, whoever you are, in this large assembly, you have each, respectively, a duty to perform in reference to this mighty work. It is incumbent upon you to do all in your power for sending the light of life to the benighted and the perishing. Nay; upon every human being, whether in the Church, or out of it, there lies an obligation to aid, as far as God gives the opportunity, in sending to "every creature" that Gospel which is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." We invite you all, my hearers, not merely to the duty, but to the precious privilege, of co-operating in this holy and blessed enterprise. And we can venture to assure you that, if the day should ever come in which your hearts shall be thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Missions, it will be the happiest period of your lives, as well as the pledge and the dawn of that wide-spread glory which our text proclaims as certain and approaching. We can point you to no higher honour, no richer pleasure, on this side of heaven, than that which is found in enlightened, zealous, active, absorbing zeal for spreading the holy, life-giving religion of Jesus Christ from the rising to the setting sun.

For the promotion of this work, my friends, the "American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions" has convened in this place. Our hope in coming together is that we may be enabled, by the grace of God, to excite each other to more lively sensibility, and more ardent zeal, in the great Missionary cause which we have associated to carry on; and also that we may be instrumental in adding something to the Missionary spirit which, we hope, already exists in the enlightened and

favoured population of this city. We are now celebrating the twenty-sixth anniversary of our Board; and, instead of being weary of our work, we can sincerely declare that, in looking back on our past course, our only regret is that we have not laboured with far more diligence and sanctified ardour in the cause of the world's conversion: that our plans have not been more enlarged; and that we have not prayed more, and done more, in this greatest of all causes in which Christians can engage. Yes, brethren, beloved of the Lord, we come to mingle our vows with yours; to proclaim, with deeper conviction than ever, that we consider the cause of Missions as the most precious cause in the world; and to bind ourselves by new resolutions that we will, by the help of God, with greater zeal than heretofore, "spend and be spent" in this most blessed service. What more worthy object can we seek, than contributing to fill the earth with the glory of the Lord? Brethren, pray for us, that we may be faithful to our sacred trust. Pray for yourselves, that you may not be found wanting in the payment of that mighty debt you owe to your divine Master, and to a perishing world. And let us all, more and more, aspire to the honour of being "workers together with God" in hastening the triumphs of Immanuel's universal reign. "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly;" and "let the whole earth be filled with thy glory." Amen and amen.

DISCOURSE XXIX.

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY.*

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1 TIMOTHY iv. 16.

“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”

“**BOTH** save thyself, and them that hear thee!” Such is the work committed, of God, to the Minister of his word. One would think it were enough for a sinful man, with such corruption within, and such a world around him, to take heed to the saving of his own soul. But when to this is added the saving of them that hear him, well may the bearer of such an office be filled with fear and trembling: for “who is sufficient for these things?” What it is for a soul to be lost, to go down to hell under the anger of Almighty God, and from under all the privileges of the Gospel; having to answer, amidst innumerable other sins, for that one most awful sin of receiving the grace of God in vain, of rejecting the precious blood of Christ; we cannot approach the conception of such a destiny,—a lost immortal soul,—eternity without God, without hope,—everlasting wo!

But we turn away to think of the salvation of the soul, through Christ, for ever. What it is for a sinner to be confessed of Christ in the great day, as one of his ransomed and beloved brethren; to be received of the Father to his own right hand as one of his adopted, beloved children; then to enter upon the incorruptible inheritance as “joint-heir with Christ,”

* Delivered before the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, in general convention, at the consecration of the Rev. Alfred Lee, D.D., to the Episcopate of the Diocese of Delaware, in St. Paul's Chapel, New-York, October 12th, 1841.

like Christ in his glory, with Christ in his kingdom, seeing him as he is, changed more and more, ever and ever, into the same image: O such salvation! What an alarming consideration for us, Ministers of the Gospel, that whether the sinners that hear us shall attain that blessedness, or go down to that wo, is to so great an extent committed to us, by our faithfulness, or unfaithfulness, to decide!

Two questions arise out of these meditations, and stand before a Minister of the Gospel in an aspect of magnitude and solemnity, before which all other questions must needs stand aside and keep silence. *What must I do to save my own soul under such responsibility? What must I do to save them that hear me?*

To put in diligent practice the right answer to these questions is the one great business of him whose high dignity it is to have been put in trust with the Gospel, as a Preacher of the same. How ought we to "covet earnestly the best gifts" for such a work; and how anxious should we be to mark, learn, and inwardly digest whatever will give us more knowledge, more spiritual discernment, more practical wisdom, more seriousness, singleness and constancy of purpose, more diligence of mind, and heart, and life, in regard to the infinite interests which this stewardship involves! It is that, under the good blessing of the Lord, I may contribute something to the furtherance of my brethren in the ministry, and especially of that brother who is now to be invested with the chief stewardship of our ministry, in discharging the duties of so high a dignity and so weighty an office, that I have selected the words of the text. They are part of the charge of St. Paul to Timothy, Bishop of the Church of Ephesus, as to how he should behave himself in the house of God, as a "messenger, watchman, and steward of the Lord." Two distinct *injunctions* are contained in them: "TAKE HEED UNTO THYSELF,"—"TAKE HEED UNTO THE DOCTRINE." On the faithful keeping of these injunctions ensues an *assurance*,—"THOU SHALT BOTH SAVE THYSELF, AND THEM THAT HEAR THEE."

The most natural order of discourse is often the reversed order of nature. We take up the second of the above injunctions.

I. "TAKE HEED UNTO THE DOCTRINE."

And here let me begin with directing your attention to the evidence that the hearing of the word, by the preaching of the same, is that special means of grace by which, under the ordinance of God, the Minister of Christ is to seek the salvation of men. By taking heed to our doctrine, as well as to ourselves, it is promised we shall be instrumental in saving them that hear us; whence it follows that doctrine heard, and therefore doctrine preached, and consequently the preaching of the Gospel, as distinct, though not separated, from all other means, is the one great ordinance for the bringing of sinners to repentance, and for the building up of penitent believers in their most holy faith; according as it is written, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." "And how shall they hear without a Preacher?"

As to the relative importance of the preaching of the Gospel, and the public worship of the house of God, taking into view the whole object, interest, and structure of the Church, it is impossible to make any comparison. You might as well compare the head and heart of man, in reference to his life. The one is the great means for one set of objects, the other equally essential for another.

The ministry of the word, and the ministry of worship are parts of the same body, equally vital, but of different use. To represent the duty of preaching and hearing God's message in his Gospel, as if it were of subordinate importance, as regards the highest interests of the Church and of souls, is as erroneous as to assign the like place to the duty of maintaining, and attending upon, God's worship in the sanctuary. Carefully should both extremes be avoided. We are all, as Christians, "a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ;" but the distinguishing and leading charge of the Head of that one and only catholic priesthood, to the Ministers of the same, is, "Go, preach the Gospel;" go, give light, that there may be love; go, make disciples, that there may be worshippers; go, and gather the living stones for the temple, and build them up together, by the line and plummet of the word, upon the one corner-stone, "elect and precious," and erect therein an altar composed of hearts renewed and sanctified

“through the truth;” then will follow the sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise unto God, for the unsearchable riches of his grace as made known in his Gospel. If the Church, in reference to her communion with God, is called his temple, because therein is the daily oblation of his people’s praise and prayer; so, also, in reference to her influence in enlightening the world, through the preaching of the truth, is she represented as the “golden candlestick;” and her Ministers as shining stars, held in the right hand, and made luminous by the light from the face of the Lord, her sun and glory.

In the holy place of the tabernacle, which was a type of the Church in its earthly state, there was the golden candlestick with its seven burning lamps, as well as the altar of incense with its golden censer. These stood equidistant from the entrance to within the veil. While the way into the holiest would have been unhallowed without the one, it could not have been seen without the other. Incense was burned on that altar morning and evening of every day; but let it be marked, it was always at the time when the Priest, evening and morning, trimmed and replenished those ever-shining lights. Thus intimately was the symbol of a worshipping Church connected with that of a preaching ministry; and thus we are taught, by these divinely-appointed types, to understand that the worship of the sanctuary will be maintained in spirit and in truth, only so long as the Gospel shall be preached in purity and faithfulness; and, moreover, that the best evidence of faithful preaching is, when it promotes the offering of the incense of fervent prayer. But hence comes, with the greater impressiveness, the injunction, “Take heed unto the doctrine.”

In speaking further on this portion of our text, we will confine our attention to two points of care, on the part of a Minister; namely, that his every doctrine be according to the only divine rule of faith, and that all his doctrines be exhibited, in their several relations, “according to the proportion of faith.”

Take heed unto the doctrine that it *be according to the only divine rule of faith,—the holy Scriptures.* “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God:” any man, anywhere; but how much more should we who speak as “ambassadors for

Christ, as though God did beseech men by us." "Preach the word," is the inspired charge, through Timothy, to all generations of Preachers. He who magnifies his office as God's messenger, and knows the worth of his own soul, and seeks earnestly the souls of his hearers, and would preach "as one having authority, and not as the Scribes," not as the schools, "not as man's wisdom teacheth," will not venture one step beyond what he is "persuaded may be concluded and proved by the Scripture;" knowing that he "cannot by any other means compass the doing of so great a work; but with doctrine and exhortation taken out of the holy Scriptures." The seed he is now to sow in his field has been given to him of the "Father, who is the husbandman." To that only is it true that "God giveth the increase." By that only are we ordained to go and bring forth fruit; fruit that will remain. To sow any other, and expect from it righteousness, is no wiser than to look for "grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles." Even an unrighteous Prophet was so afraid of not speaking the oracles of God, that he said, "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord: what the Lord saith, that will I speak." "What the Lord saith;" that is our lively oracle. And since we have no evidence that the Lord hath so spoken to his Church as to furnish her with any other oracles than those of his holy Scriptures; and since of them we have the evidence of divers miracles and prophecies, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, that they are "given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine;" we are left to conclude that in them is the only final rule of faith to the Church; the only final authority to which the Minister is to go for the words of eternal life. And hence the introduction of the Scriptures so conspicuously, so singly, into the offices of our Church, for the ordination and consecration of those who are to feed her flocks; the candidate being required to declare himself "persuaded that the holy Scriptures contain all doctrine required as necessary to salvation, and that he is determined, out of the Scriptures, to instruct the people committed to his charge; and to teach nothing, as necessary to eternal salvation, but that which he shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the Scripture."

Till recently, it was not supposed possible that, under such solemn pledges, the single authority of the Scriptures, as alone the oracles of God, could be drawn into question; but strange and mortifying it is, to say, that the Protestant Church is at this day molested with attempts, within, to introduce for co-ordinate authority that which we had hoped had long since been finally rejected and protested against, with all other like devices of the Man of Sin, for overthrowing the reign of Christ.

Into a consideration of what is now taught on the subject of tradition, as the "authoritative interpreter" of the Scriptures; as constituting with them "a joint rule of faith;" as proceeding originally from the same fount of inspiration, and so meriting, in this the eighteenth century of its course, an equally reverential regard, we have no intention of entering. The existence of such an apparition, in the present age of our Protestant Church, has been alluded to for the sake of the strong contrast by which it enables us to show the doctrine of our ordination vows, as above-cited, concerning the Scriptures as alone the oracles of God; and also that I may urge upon my brethren in the ministry, that whatever evil may come to others from the gathering up of the traditions, by the draught of a drag-net, which embraces the rubbish of even seven centuries, for an infallible interpretation of the Scriptures; they, for themselves, will take heed that the affliction may be so sanctified to them, that, by showing them how easily the wisdom of man may be deceived by a false "angel of light," and how prone it is, under an idea of doing God service, to pervert his plain truth by complex inventions of men, they may be led, by the present evil, only to search more diligently, follow more simply, and preach more exclusively and fondly, the plain text of the Bible. Be assured, we escape no controversies, but multiply all, by associating with the Bible, for final authority, the judgments of men, however numerous, learned, holy, or ancient. It is not because the Scriptures are not plain enough that divisions in doctrine abound; but because the hearts of men are not honest enough. The same cause would darken any counsel, and pervert any rule; and the easier, in proportion as the rule was strict, and the counsel holy. It is no more to be supposed that God, in providing a revelation for man, would have furnished such

means of understanding it, that none could help knowing the doctrine, than that he should have so displayed its evidences, that none could help believing its truth. It is as really our probation whether we will so read the Scriptures as to understand their doctrine, as whether we will so read the same as to obey their precept. To seek a rule, in tradition, or in anything else, by which to prevent the possibility of errors, and divisions, and heresies, concerning the faith, no matter what the jaundice of the eye, or enmity of the heart, is to seek what would be wholly inconsistent with that probation under which we are held, as well for the unbiassed use of our understanding, as for the obedient submission of our will. If, notwithstanding all his mighty works, our Lord, in the days of his ministry on earth, did not so reveal himself as that none who saw his miracles could help believing his word; we may be sure, now that miracles have ceased, that he has not so committed the treasure of his truth to earthen vessels, as that none who read can avoid an erroneous or heretical interpretation. The existence of divers opinions as to what is truth, is no more the evidence that the written word, as a rule of faith, is defective, than the multiplied forms of ungodliness, in a Christian land, are proof of defect in the motives for holy obedience to the moral law. The remedy against error is not in mending the rule by which we measure our doctrines, but in taking the beam out of the eye that judges of their truth; not by making the Scripture "profitable for doctrine," by dividing its authority with the traditions of many centuries, but by humbling the reader into a more implicit submission to, and a more entire contentment with, whatever it teaches. "The wayfaring man," who cannot choose his course by taking observations of the sun as it shines in the broad daylight of the Scriptures, will little help his accuracy by resorting to the dead reckoning of tradition.

Then let the Bible be our only final appeal; the Bible in all its parts; the Bible in its unutterable mysteries; the Bible in its every subordinate statement; the Bible meekly received, as "the engrafted word, which is able to save our souls," and those that hear us, "through faith in Christ Jesus." But this leads us to the second particular, under the injunction of taking heed unto doctrine.

Take heed unto the doctrine; not only that every part be according to the rule, but all parts, in their several relations, so held and exhibited as to be "*according to the proportion of faith.*"

There is a proportion of faith, because there is a body of faith,—a system of faith, with a beauty of symmetry in the whole, as well as in the parts; a harmony of relation, without a discernment of which the full value of no one member can be understood. In one sense, it is right to say that all parts of revealed truth are essential. Essential to the complete integrity of the system they certainly are. In another sense, it is right to say that all parts are not essential. Essential to the vitality of religion they certainly are not. There are truths, without the confession of which the soul can live unto God, though it may suffer loss; and there are others, without which it cannot; just as there are members of our bodies without which we can survive, and others without which life must be extinct; all essential to integrity,—not all to vitality. The pattern of the tabernacle, which was shown to Moses in the mount, had its various parts, from the net-work of the outer court, to the most fine gold of the inner sanctuary; and every cord of that net-work was as essential to the perfect integrity of the pattern, as any crowning of gold about the mercy-seat. But who can say that the ark of the covenant and the mercy-seat within the veil were not more vitally important than the whole framework around them? So, in the doctrine of the Gospel, there is a proportion of importance; some parts more prominent, more necessary; while none can say to any, "I have no need of thee;" all "compacted together by that which every joint supplieth," all nourished by the same central fountain, animated by one pulse, depending on one head, even Jesus Christ, "from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." To preach the truth, in this its right shape and proportion, is a great duty. All we say may be scriptural; we may keep back no single feature of the whole body of revealed truth; and yet our representations may be so confused, disjointed, unshapen; the greater points so hid in the undue prominence of the less; means so confounded with ends, the

stream of life with its channels, the symptoms of health with its properties, outward motion with inward life, the mode of professing with the mode of obtaining grace; no separate statement untrue, but each, in its relative bearing, so confused, as to leave an impression scarcely better than that of positive error.

Three main objects we must ever seek, if we would save them that hear us, namely, to convince men of their depraved, guilty, lost condition; to show, and lead them to embrace, the sure refuge in Christ, as well that their condemnation may be removed, as their sinfulness purged; and then, when they are "in Christ Jesus," to promote their continual growth in grace, "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." We are to estimate the relative prominence of each doctrine by its connexion, more or less intimate, with these great objects. The position of various doctrines in our ministry must be adjusted by our having these objects always foremost; but when it is considered, that in almost every congregation are all grades of hearers, from those who have yet to see their ruined estate, to him who is inquiring the way to the remedy, and then to those who have found Christ, and are "found in him;" that to each class is to be spoken the word in season, and this not once, or twice, but continually; so that every case may be met, every weapon of our warfare used, every snare of the devil encountered, every difficulty of the weak removed, every false hope of the presumptuous exposed; when it is considered how the great variety of circumstances under which we preach must needs control the manner and the proportion in which we are to bring out the several parts of the "whole counsel of God," it must be manifest that what St. Paul calls, "rightly dividing the word of truth," can be no work for an indolent, heedless, formal labourer. A skill is needed which none can possess whose own personal experience of the power and preciousness of divine truth, in its application to the various wants of the sinner, is not deep and abiding. The guidance of books can take us but a short way in this duty. Wisdom from above is the only sufficient counsel. Prayer, and devout study of the Scriptures, with reference continually to the state of our own hearts, are the great means of growing in such wisdom. The

way to speak skilfully from God is often to hear him speak. "The Lord hath given me the tongue of the learned," saith the Prophet, giving the language of the Messiah, "that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." Yes, brethren, the tongue of such learning, infinitely more precious than any other learning for a Minister of the Gospel, must be given of the Lord, or we have it not. No wisdom of man can furnish it. It is a learning in which we may advance without end; and the more we realize of the greatness and difficulty of our work, and the better we are fitted, in point of spirit, for its duties, the more humbly shall we feel our need of that learning, and the more constantly be found at the feet of Jesus, that we may learn of him.

It must be obvious, brethren, that the limits of this discourse do not allow me to take any more than a glance at the wide range of important topics to which the injunction of the text, "Take heed unto the doctrine," directly leads.

Had I more time I would speak earnestly upon the prominence to be given in our ministry, at all times, to that great topic which St. Paul considered of such overmastering claims, that he desired to preach and live, as if knowing nothing else among men,—“Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” The person and offices of Christ; what he has done to save sinners; what he is now doing, at the right hand of God, for all that come unto God by him; the universal embrace of his atonement; the full, free; and complete salvation provided, in his death and intercession, for the chief of sinners; the boundless love which that death displays; the precious invitations and promises which proceed therefrom; the nature of that godly sorrow, that spiritual repentance, that true turning to God, by which alone the sinner can seek for the precious faith of God's elect; the nature and agency of that living faith, by which alone the penitent heart embraces the atonement, and is justified freely and perfectly, through its infinite merit, as soon as with the heart he believes unto righteousness, and is thus “accepted in the Beloved” as completely as if he had never sinned: the prominence, the constancy, the devotedness, the earnestness with which a Minister of Christ should preach these chief doctrines, with the several truths directly and

necessarily connected therewith; then, the great importance of scriptural simplicity in the mode of presenting them, so that their aim may not be hindered by confusion of purpose, nor their point blunted by fear of offence, nor their force weakened by combination with "words of man's wisdom," but that the truth, "as it is Jesus," may be delivered in the spirit of Jesus, according to "the mind of Christ," so that the blind may see, and the feeblest mind may understand, and sleeping consciences may be aroused; then, the great importance of making all our preaching doctrinal, and yet all our doctrine practical; never severing the truth from the duty which results from it, nor ever preaching the duty without the doctrinal principle on which it depends; never representing Gospel doctrine as if it could have any vital interest with us or real faith, only as it is embraced in the heart, and carried out in the life; nor ever, any more, exhibiting Gospel practice as if it were possible that it should exist, in any degree, only upon the single basis of distinctive Gospel doctrine: all these are most important matters indeed, but at which we can do no more than thus briefly glance. I trust the very imperfect view which has now been given, may, under the divine blessing, be the means of impressing more deeply upon my brethren in the ministry, "how studious they ought to be in reading and learning the Scriptures; and, for this self-same cause, how they ought to forsake and set aside, as much as they may, all worldly cares and studies; giving themselves wholly to this office, whereunto it hath pleased God to call them; so that, as much as lieth in them, they may apply themselves wholly to this one thing, and draw all their cares and studies this way, and continually pray for the heavenly assistance of the Holy Ghost, that, by daily reading and weighing the Scriptures, they may wax ripper and stronger in their ministry." Thus, with increasing wisdom, will they learn to preach the truth, the truth only and entirely; the truth as it leads all to Christ, testifies of Christ, derives its power and preciousness from Christ; and the truth seasonably, rightly divided and appropriated, according to the various wants and conditions of the hearers. But we must proceed to the second injunction of the text,

II. "TAKE HEED UNTO THYSELF."

With great wisdom, indeed, does the Apostle enjoin the

Minister to take heed to his doctrine, by first taking heed to himself; the clearness of our perceptions of truth depending so greatly on the purity of our affections towards it; the vigour and simplicity of our study of Christian doctrine depending so essentially upon the submissiveness of our hearts to the will of God, and our abiding sense of the infinite value of his every word. "There is," says Bishop Taylor, "in the things of God, to them which practise them, a deliciousness that makes us love them; and that love admits us into God's cabinet, and strangely clarifies the understanding by the purification of the heart. So long as we know God only in the ways of man, by contentious learning, by arguing and dispute, we see nothing but the shadow of him. But when we know him with the eye of holiness, and the intuition of gracious experiences, with a quiet spirit and the peace of enjoyment; then we shall hear what we never heard, and see what our eyes never saw; then the mysteries of godliness shall be opened unto us, and clear as the windows of the morning: for though the Scriptures themselves are written by the Spirit of God, yet they are written within and without; and besides the light that shines upon the face of them, unless there be a light shining within our hearts, unfolding the leaves, and interpreting the mysterious sense of the Spirit, convincing our consciences and preaching to our hearts, to look for Christ in the leaves of the Gospel, is to look for the living among the dead."

How much reason have we to suppose, as we read the history of the Church, that it is to a heart inexperienced in divine things, insensible to its own corruptions, and its need of the sanctification of the Spirit, having never "tasted that the Lord is gracious," and therefore having never desired, "as a new-born babe, the sincere milk of the word;" or if essentially given to God, living in a perpetual winter of spiritual life, with all its spiritual appetites and discernment in bondage to a spirit of self-indulgence and worldliness, so that pride, and ease, and the fear of man, and the easily besetting sin have had much to say on every question of doctrine and duty; how much reason to suppose that to such an unheeded self are to be ascribed the most lamentable errors of doctrine which have plagued the Church, as well as much of the confusedness and feebleness with which the truth has been often held and preached!

“Keep thy heart with all diligence,” saith the wise man, “for out of it are the issues of life.” Yea, Minister of Christ, “with all diligence;” for on the state of thy heart depend all the issues of life in thy ministry. The Minister, in his public work, is in a great degree what, as a Christian, he is in his secret exercises of heart with God. Out of his praying and watching comes his effectual preaching. As he takes heed to his own soul, will he see carefully, faithfully, to the souls of others.

But let us bring the injunction of the text within more definite bounds. Our first application of it, then, is,

“Take heed to thyself” that thou be *a genuine disciple of Christ, truly converted unto God*. What an awful thing for a man to say that he trusts he is “inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost” to this office and ministration, if he have no reason to trust that he has ever so far received the Holy Ghost as to have repented of his sins, and become, except in sacramental profession, a child of God! But that such cases do occur, it were not charity, but blindness, to question. Alas! to preach to others, and even be instrumental in bringing some of them to Christ for ever, and then ourselves be cast away! Did even St. Paul feel the need of the greatest care lest such should be his case? How much more should we take heed that it be not ours! “Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith.” There are circumstances which render a Minister peculiarly liable to put a favourable estimate on his state. That busy employment and familiar contact with spiritual things which, if we are alive towards God, promotes our growth in grace, will, if we are living in a merely formal state, but confirm our formality. That which one may be doing only as a Minister, he may easily be persuaded is done only as a Christian; mere professional consistency may easily appear as if it were pious obedience; a certain degree of interest in the ministry and love for the Church, for her dignified order and venerable forms of worship, which may arise from no higher source than our being personally identified therewith, or their being associated with a long retrospect of centuries, and the history of a noble army of martyrs; this, joined to a reverential familiarity with the Scriptures, a blameless life before men, a ready sympathy in

the cause of humanity, a zeal for what we think true doctrine, and to bring others to its adoption, and then its being taken for granted by those around us that we are truly Christian men, because Christian Ministers,—all this may easily persuade us that all is well within; while, in the sight of God, there may be no spiritual life in us. O let us fear lest, while distributing bread to the poor, we perish with want; lest, while inviting sinners to put on the righteousness of Christ, by faith, we should not touch so much as the hem of his garment. To worship an unknown God, preach an unknown Saviour, and yet be answerable for the whole work of an ambassador of Christ, what a fearful state! Our Lord has warned us that in the great day there will be many who will be found in this condemnation; men who, when the door is shut, and they shall be standing without, dreadfully dismayed, will plead their ministry: “Have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?” but to whom will issue the irrevocable sentence, “Depart, all ye workers of iniquity.” Their fall will be from “the pinnacle of the temple;” their plunge the deeper into everlasting fire. God grant unto us, not only that we may always preach the whole Gospel, but, in doing so, may speak what we do personally know, and testify what we have seen, and felt, and followed.

But the Minister of Christ must take heed unto himself that he be not only a man of true piety, but of eminent piety; not only in grace, but growing in grace;—*a lively and flourishing Christian*. I would, therefore, urge the unspeakable importance that men of God, standing in the holy place of his temple, and charged with all his messages to mankind, should aim at exalted attainments in grace. And in doing this, I would confine my remarks to the necessity of high attainments in piety, for the faithful, persevering, successful prosecution of the various duties of the ministry.

The tide of our faithfulness, in the main channel, and in all the minor branches and inlets of duty, will ebb and flow precisely as the well of living water which is in us, from Christ, shall spring up, feebly or vigorously, unto everlasting life. Is the heart of our piety beating strongly for God? Every sermon,

every pastoral duty, will feel its bounding pulse. Baxter said, "I publish to my flock the distempers of my own soul. When I let my heart grow cold, my preaching is cold; and when it is confused, my preaching is confused. We are the nurses of Christ's little ones. If we forbear taking food ourselves, we shall famish them; if we let our love decline, we are not likely to raise theirs."* It requires but little reflection to perceive not only that all the parts of divine truth must be greatly affected in our conceptions, and representations, and applications of them by the state of religion in our hearts, but that a very large and most interesting portion of the subject matter of our preaching must be presented so formally and artificially, except our religious affections be in a tender, earnest, growing state; that for the most part it will be left out, and other matter, more easily treated by a cold heart, will be substituted. To exhibit the commandments and penalties of the law, with the great outlines of the way of salvation by the Gospel; to depict, in general terms, the wisdom, excellence, and benefit of a religious life; to warn the impenitent by the terrors of the Lord; to vindicate Christian doctrine, exhort to diligence in all duty, speak of the shortness and uncertainty of human life, and describe the awfulness of an unforgiven sinner; to do all this, and much more of the same kind, with force, feeling, plainness, usefulness, is comparatively easy where there is a real piety, though it be not a piety of much life. But when we come to the more secret ways and dealings of the Lord with his people; when the object is to lead the Christian believer within the inner veil, and show him that interior sanctuary of the grace of God into which the natural man cannot look; when the promises of God, in all their fulness of love and consolation, and the privileges of the sons of God in all their glory, are to be displayed; when, not in the thunder, nor the earthquake, nor the blast of trumpet, the Christian is to be made to hear the words of his covenant God, but in the "still, small voice" of divine compassion and tenderness; when the duty is to encourage the timid, revive the desponding, strengthen the weak, persuade the unwilling, by such arguments as spring from the amazing

* "Reformed Pastor."

love of Christ to sinners, and his being "able to do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us," then to speak "the truth as it is in Jesus" requires a kind of intimacy therewith which nothing but close, habitual, affectionate intercourse of heart can give. These are notes which only the higher strings of our harp, and those fresh tuned and high strung to the praise of God, can reach. These are the secrets of the Lord, of which words can only reveal the types and shadows; and of which we can only speak as the Lord would have us speak; in proportion as, like the angels, we are constantly desiring to look into them, and for this purpose are much "with God in the mount," and so become "filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." Hence it is that we have not a larger proportion of such preaching; that the tenderness of God's compassion and love to draw the hearts of sinners is not oftener used, instead of the awfulness of his wrath; that Christian duties are not oftener set out in the company of the Christian's privileges; that divine commandments are not more enforced by divine promises; the barrenness of the wilderness of our pilgrimage displayed as connected with the fulness of that Rock that follows us, and which makes streams in the desert; the duty of implicit obedience and daily self-denial, associated with the equal duty of rejoicing "in hope of the glory of God;" the shepherd often ascending with his flock to some mount of blessing, and contemplating with them "the rest that remaineth for the people of God." A heart in spiritual dulness and languor has no skill for the handling of such themes, and is afraid of them. There may remain all our wonted powers of reasoning, force of description, liveliness of imagination, readiness in exposition; but all lacking the only wing that can float in that higher element of spiritual truth. Many a popular and awakening Preacher never attains that height. But what a large part of the whole counsel of God must needs be kept back, or delivered most defectively; how much of the glory of God, which it is his people's privilege, "with open face," to behold in the Gospel, must be held in reserve; how much of the bread provided of God, for the daily feeding of his people, must be kept under the hand of the Priest within the veil, if

there be not an unction, an aptness of heart, for the treatment of these themes, arising out of a near intimacy of experience with them.

What is most required for such views, and their appropriate exhibition, and cordial enforcement, is a deep experience of the power of divine things upon our own affections, hopes, and spiritual enjoyment; a deep sense of the preciousness of the several parts of Gospel truth, as they all centre in Christ. Eminently is it true of such views that "they are spiritually discerned." According to St. Paul, we must be "rooted and grounded in love," that we "may be able to comprehend what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." The deep places of contrition and of humility are most needful aids in such contemplations. We see the stars in the daytime by going down into a pit. How full of instruction, concerning the preparation of spirit for the bearing of the message of the Gospel, is that chapter wherein Isaiah speaks of his seeing the Lord, with the seraphim standing before him. The Lord had a message to be delivered to his people Israel; but, before the Prophet could be prepared to be the bearer thereof, he must be cast down in self-abasement as a sinner, unworthy of any such honour. The way to this was a view of God in his infinite majesty and holiness. He saw the Lord, "high and lifted up," his train filling the temple, and before him the winged and veiled seraphim, crying one to another, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts." The Prophet could not bear the view. Self-abasement at once appeared. "Wo is me!" he cried, "because I am a man of unclean lips." His next preparation for the message was hope and peace with God, through the sacrifice of atonement. One of the seraphim came down and took a live coal from the altar of sacrifice, and touched his lips, and his sin was purged. Then was he ready to say, "Here am I; send me." O! my brethren, the more we see of the holiness of God, and the more we are led by the view to humble ourselves before him, as miserable sinners, and continually to find consolation in the sacrifice of Christ alone, through the coming down of the Holy Spirit, taking of the things of Christ, and showing and applying them to our hearts,

the more we shall be prepared for the work of the Lord, and be ready, with alacrity of spirit, to say, in view of any duty, "Here am I; send me."

But this part of our subject is too wide, and I am enlarging too far. Were there time, it would be profitable to consider how an earnest state of pious affections will contribute to furnish endless variety to our discourses, filling the mouth with arguments which otherwise would not be thought of; causing us to see passages of Scripture in various aspects and applications, in a beauty and richness of interest which otherwise would not appear; making old views to return with fresh interest, by being seen through a growing engagedness of heart, and from ever changing and higher positions in the way of our pilgrimage.

Then, again, opportunities of usefulness, how do they multiply; how ingenious we become in discovering and making them, when once we are all alive to their value and improvement! Trials and discouragements, such as we have constantly to meet in carrying our messages to a world lying in wickedness; all those frosts and mists under which we are so tempted to complain and despond, to seek little and expect less, how is their evil changed to good, by the alchemy of a truly spiritual mind; how will a heart animated and buoyant with faith and love, mount over all waves of opposition or affliction, as a life-boat in a storm! What lightness and alacrity will it have in all duty! "I will run the way of thy commandments," saith David, "when thou hast enlarged my heart." Yes, verily, the secret of all diligence, energy, pleasure, success in duty, is a heart enlarged by the love of God. Then are the crooked ways made straight, and the rough ways plain, "the lame man leaps as the hart," "the tongue of the dumb sings." "For the love of Christ constraineth us." O! that golden chain of perfect freedom; that binding yoke of most sweet and willing bondage! See St. Paul, the bondman of Christ, going out to his daily service of labours and perils, chanting his morning song, and saying, "Most gladly will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Yea, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." "Strong in the Lord and in the power of his might,"

was St. Paul. But his strength was the strength of faith; and his strong faith worked by constraining, overcoming love, and thus he was "fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to God's glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." What a poor thing, in the ministry of the Gospel, is the man of great learning, and eloquence, and force of argument, whose preaching wants the vital warmth and spiritual earnestness of a single zeal for Christ, and love for the souls of men. Weigh him in the balance of the sanctuary! Estimate him in view of the judgment-day! Think of him as he will appear when he and all are receiving the fruits of embracing or rejecting the Gospel! Compare him, before God, with the man of far inferior gifts, who to the Master's work unites the Master's spirit, and does, with all his heart, as though God did beseech men by him, pray them to be reconciled to God. With how many tongues does the latter preach! If any forget his words, none can forget his evident sincerity and solemn earnestness. The sermon from the lips may not be retained. The sermon preached by the whole spirit of the man, as of one realizing the weight of his message and the worth of souls, cannot pass away.

Think, moreover, of the power of the daily example of one who thus lives under the impression of the word he preaches, feeding upon the bread, relying upon the hopes, maintaining the daily walk with God which he entreats others to adopt. His sermons are only occasional. His example is always. His sermons are only in the Church. His example is wherever he goes. His sermons all may not fully understand. His example is a universal language. The child, the man, the gainsayer, and the believer, alike understand it, and must read it, and take impressions from it, concerning the soul, and eternity, and Christ, and holiness.

Think, moreover, of the unseen influence, added to the public ministry of such a man of God, from his nearness to the throne of grace, and his greater faith and constancy in prayers for those that hear him. He has them, as St. Paul had the Philip-pians,—in his "heart;" so that they all are "partakers of" his "grace," and he "longs after them all in the bowels of Jesus

Christ." Thus the weapons of his warfare become "mighty through God," and many are added to the Lord.

But I must conclude, not, however, without a few words upon the precious *assurance* of the text,—“IN DOING THIS THOU SHALT BOTH SAVE THYSELF, AND THEM THAT HEAR THEE.”

“*Thou shalt save thyself!*” What a motive to diligence, faithfulness, earnestness, constancy, till death! Think, dear brethren, of the blessedness of that day, when the Lord and Head of the Church shall say to each of us, if found faithful, “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” Let us animate our hearts with thoughts of such bliss; especially when the burden is great, and the trials of patience are many, and the temptation is strong to yield to the current of worldliness around us, and do our Master’s work coldly, negligently, living unto ourselves, seeking our own ease, then let us think of our own souls, and look forward to what God hath prepared in his kingdom for faithful servants, till our hearts burn within us for “the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

But, “*them that hear thee,*” shalt thou also save. Thou shalt be the instrument, under God, of saving them from eternal anguish, and making them the partakers of everlasting joy. O! the flood of joy that will come over the soul of the faithful Minister of Christ when, after having found his own election sure, he shall see the many blessed, glorified saints in the same inheritance, whom his ministry, through grace, did bring there; and when, next to the honour they render unto Him who washed them in his blood, they shall come about him, to call him blessed, and acknowledge the sweet fruits of his labours to their souls! Ah! we know not what we shall be. Little can we conceive of such bliss. We know something now of the joy of beholding a sinner turned unto God through our ministry; but our love to the souls of men, our estimate of their value, our benevolence, is so feeble. How little we know what is done when a soul is saved; but then, when we shall have gone to Christ, “we shall be like him;” like him, in the tenderness of his compassion, and the fulness of his love; like him, in the joy with which he will behold the multitudes, without number, of his redeemed and glorified Church. Then shall we

know the blessedness of having been instrumental in saving them that heard us. We shall meet them for ever and ever, for eternity, in their glory, and every new sight of them will be to us fresh fulness of joy. Such the motive of faithfulness in our work! Such the argument for taking heed to ourselves and our doctrine! The Lord help us! The Lord bless his word at our lips! The Lord look down from heaven upon his servant, now to be made a shepherd of his shepherds and his flocks, under Him the chief "Shepherd and Bishop of souls," and grant him grace for all his work; so that, in spite of all the opposition of the devil, the flesh, and the world, he may both save his own soul, and the souls of them that hear him, through the in-working Spirit, and the interceding righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ!

To whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

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