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THE WORLD'S SALVATION.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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“Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet.”—*Psalm 119: 105.*

THE

WORLD'S SALVATION.

BY ENOCH POND,

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Written for the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, and
revised by the Committee of Publication.

BOSTON:

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ADVERTISEMENT.

IN the year 1824, the author published a volume, entitled "Short Missionary Discourses, or Monthly Concert Lectures." The most of these Lectures had been delivered at the Monthly Concert, among his own people; and they were given to the public, in hope that they might be read at the Monthly Concert, and other social religious meetings, in places where the assistance of a clergyman could not be had. The volume was favorably received, and was, in some instances (as the author has the happiness to know) a means of good. In an extended Review of it, in the Missionary Herald for 1824, the lamented Jeremiah Evarts, at that time Editor, sums up his estimate of the work as follows; "In conclusion, we cannot but remark, that among the multitude of arguments and topics which this book contains, we have not found an argument destitute of real force, or a mis-

statement of facts ; and we hope the respected author will prosecute a service which he has so ably commenced, and which is worthy of the best talents that can be brought to its aid." (p. 300.)

This volume has long been out of market, and inquiries have often been made for it, which could not be answered. Meanwhile, the mode of conducting the Monthly Concert has considerably changed. The amount of religious intelligence is much greater now, and more widely diffused, than it was twenty years ago ; so that in nearly every place where the Concert is observed, interest may be imparted to it by the communication of intelligence. On this account, it was thought not desirable to republish the Concert Lectures, in the same form, and with the same title, as before. It should be stated, however, that about *half* the Chapters, in the following work are substantially the same as in the Concert Lectures. Several of those Lectures are here omitted ; those that are retained have all been re-written and considerably modified ; and several new Chapters have been added. This work can hardly be considered, therefore, as a

new edition of the former one. It is more properly a *new work*; and consequently, a new title has been given to it.

The great object aimed at is, however, the same. To unfold the principles and obligations of the vast missionary enterprise; to set forth the teaching of the Bible in regard to it; to present it in various attitudes and lights; to remove hinderances and objections out of the way; to press it home upon the hearts and consciences of the present generation of Christians; to urge it forward by all proper motives; in a word, to promote the cause of missions, and thereby *the salvation of the world*;—this is the one great end and aim which I have kept constantly in view.

It is obvious to every friend of missions, that much now depends on the rising generation. If they can be properly instructed and disciplined; if their minds can become interested, and they be early and warmly enlisted in the glorious cause; it *will* go forward, and *may be* speedily consummated. But if *they* falter and shrink back—*all is lost*. I have felt a strong desire, therefore, to put something into the hands of *the youth*

of this generation, which should be calculated to imbue them with right principles on the subject, and to prepare and strengthen them for that great conflict between light and darkness, holiness and sin, for which the moral world seems evidently ripening, and on the issue of which its destiny must, for a long period, depend. I only regret that I have not been able to present to my young readers a *better book*—one more worthy of the subject, and better adapted to promote the great end in view. But such as it is, I commit it to the candor of Christian friends, and more especially to the favor of Almighty God; humbly imploring that he will deign to accept the offering, and make it instrumental—at least in some degree—in ushering in that blessed day, when “the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ,” and the whole earth shall be filled with his glory.

Theological Seminary, Bangor, June, 1845.

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THE

WORLD'S SALVATION.

CHAPTER I.

*What done, and what to be done for the World's
Salvation.*

THE Scriptures authorize the belief, and evangelical Christians almost universally indulge the expectation, that this world is yet to be converted to Christ. He created the world; he died to redeem it; and he is yet to reign over it, the spiritual Sovereign of the nations, as he is King of all the saints. "All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord, and all the kingdoms of the nations shall worship before him." "The kingdoms of this

world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

The full accomplishment of these and similar assurances involves the necessity of great moral and spiritual changes. The long night of ignorance and darkness must be dissipated; idolatry, oppression, and war must cease; delusion and error of every kind must be done away; and the holy religion of the gospel, with its high hopes and consolations, its benign influences and effects, must become the religion of the world.

The magnitude and grandeur of this moral revolution have led some good people to doubt whether it ever can be realized. They have desired that it should be; they have prayed that it might be; but it seems almost too much for them to believe. The greatness of the consummation staggers and well nigh overcomes their faith. I have thought that it might be a relief to such persons to consider, briefly, the two following inquiries: First, *what has been done already towards the world's salvation?* And, secondly, *what still remains to be done?*

It will appear, I think, as the result of these inquiries, that the principal *difficulties* of the enterprise have been already overcome; and that by far the greater part of the work has been accomplished.

In examining the first of the inquiries proposed, it will be necessary to consider, not only what has been done by *man* for the conversion of the nations, but more especially what has been done by *God himself*. And in this view, I remark, first of all, that an eternal plan of redemption has been adopted, by Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, embracing, in its details all that has ever been done, or ever will be, for the recovery of our lost race. This mighty subject, we have reason to know, occupied the councils of eternity. It was *then*—"ere sin was born, or Adam's dust was fashioned to a man"—that the glorious covenant of redemption was formed, and the part which each person in the adorable Trinity was to sustain in it was assigned. As a reward for his voluntary sufferings and death, Christ had the promise of a seed to serve him. He had the promise of a kingdom that, in its progress, should extend

over all the earth, and endure forever. "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and *the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.*" "He shall have dominion *from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth*; men shall be blessed in him; *all nations shall call him blessed.*"

In fulfillment of this covenant—after long ages of preparation—the great Son of God actually made his appearance in our world. He came to perform the painful part which he had undertaken in the work of our redemption. He came to make his soul an offering for sin—to lay a foundation in his blood sufficient for the pardon and salvation of our lost race. And this work of suffering and death he has accomplished. The bitter cup which his Father gave him he has drunk to the very dregs. And had nothing but this been done towards the world's salvation, it might truly be said that the grand *difficulty* in the way had been removed. The great obstacle, which shut out all hope, and precluded all effort, had been overcome. For, without an atonement, God could do nothing for a world of sinners, except to destroy it. Or

if its destruction were delayed for a season, it could have nothing in prospect, but "a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation." Without an atonement, God could make no proposals of mercy to sinful men; he could exert no special influence upon them to bring them to repentance; he could not forgive them, even if they did repent. The curse of the law would lie against them, and preclude all hope. Its terrible penalty would hang suspended over them, and shut them up in everlasting despair. But this dreadful barrier between us and heaven—itsself as high as heaven—has now been removed. Christ "hath delivered us from the curse of the law, having been made a curse for us." He hath opened a way of salvation through his blood; so that none can now say that they are without a Saviour. None who hear of him, and embrace him, can ever perish.

This work of making expiation for sin—of laying a foundation of hope for the world, was a painful, dreadful work. It was a mighty, glorious achievement. It was a work which no being in the universe could perform, but the incarnate Son of God. When our Saviour

said, *It is finished*, bowed his head, and gave up the ghost; by far the greater part of all that was requisite, in order to the world's redemption, was in a moment accomplished.

But more has been done on the part of God for this great object, than simply to make an atonement for sin. A foundation having been laid in the blood of Jesus, our gracious Sovereign has proceeded to build upon it all the rich and ample provisions of his gospel. He has proposed to a world of sinners, and to all alike, his most kind and reasonable offers of pardon. "Return to me, and I will return to you." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "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."

God has more than *proposed* these gracious offers, he has condescended to call upon his sinful creatures to consider and embrace them. He has condescended to urge them upon the hearts of men, by invitations, warnings, and entreaties—by the most persuasive and power-

ful motives. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price." "Whosoever will, let him come, and partake the waters of life freely." "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that he turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" God has sent out his ambassadors, to state and urge the proposals of his love, and to do all in their power to persuade men to a compliance. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ; as though *God did beseech you by us*, we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

These provisions of God's grace are based entirely upon the atonement of Christ, and, with it, constitute a series of stupendous efforts and works, all looking to the salvation of the world. Nor do these include every thing that God has done for this purpose. Knowing the natural blindness of the human mind, and the hardness of the human heart, and the inveterate power of sin—too great to be overcome by mere

motives and persuasions—God has sent down his Holy Spirit to accompany the dispensation of his truth, and make it effectual to the conversion and salvation of sinful men. On this mission of mercy, the Holy Spirit has entered, and is carrying forward his work in the earth. He has come to bless—not those who feel no need of his cöoperation, and do not desire it, but those who *seek it in humble prayer*; not to make efficacious another system of doctrine, or a cold and heartless ministration of the truth, but *the earnest and faithful preaching of the gospel of Christ*. Such preaching, accompanied by fervent desires and prayers, the Holy Spirit has always blessed, and he always will. It is by such an instrumentality, and such a power, that the gospel is to break through all barriers, to overcome all opposition, and ultimately to fill the world.

I might speak of other things which have been done, on the part of God and heaven, tending to the conversion of the nations. He has not only employed means and influences with a view to bring lost men to Christ, but he has made ample provision, *after* their conver-

sion, for their spiritual sustenance and growth in grace. He has gathered them into his church; given them his word and ordinances; blessed them with the salutary discipline of his providence; granted them his Spirit to be their sanctifier, comforter, and guide; and commissioned his very angels to be their ministering servants. Nor has the Son of God ceased to be interested for them, now that he has personally left the earth, and gone into the heavens. He is carrying forward the work of their redemption there. "He ever liveth to make intercession for them." And as they are called, one after another, to leave this world, they are received up to meet their Saviour in the skies; thus testing, in their own persons, the perfect security of the gospel foundation; pointing out, in their example, the way of life to others; and crying in the ears of all who remain behind, "Be ye followers of those who, through faith and patience, now inherit the promised rest."

We see, in these remarks, how much has been done, on the part of God, and heavenly beings, to provide for the universal spread of the gospel. God has done enough, surely, to evince

that his *heart* is set upon this great enterprise. He has laid a foundation for it, at an infinite expense; he has made ample provision for its complete accomplishment; all heaven is engaged to carry it forward; and it will not be abandoned, till every thing that God has promised respecting it shall be fulfilled.

And while so much has been doing, on God's part, for the conversion of the nations, something has been effected on the part of man. A bright *example* has been set, in the first place, of what man, with the blessing of God, *can do*; and of the manner in which his instrumentality should be exerted. When the Saviour ascended, he committed his cause on earth to the charge of a little band of followers, commanding them to go forth and "disciple all nations"—to "preach his gospel to every creature." Though few and feeble, they understood their master's injunction, and had faith to act upon it. They "tarried in Jerusalem till they were endued with power from on high;" and then they went forth everywhere, preaching "that men should repent, and turn to God, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance." They expected to encoun-

ter difficulties, opposition, persecution; and they were not disappointed. They expected to be called to sacrifice every thing dear to them on earth, not excepting even their lives; and so it came to pass. But when one fell, others were raised up to take his place. "The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church." Persecutions and afflictions served only to scatter the disciples abroad, to extend their influence, to make them farther and better known. And thus the cause in which they were engaged went forward, from year to year, and from age to age, till in the course of a few generations, they saw fulfilled, well nigh to the letter, the great commission of the Saviour. They had almost literally filled the world with their doctrine. Now this *example* of the primitive triumphs of the gospel is of great value to the church and the world. It shows what *men*, with the divine blessing, can accomplish. It shows what faith, zeal, patience and perseverance, sustained and accompanied with earnest prayer, can do. This example of the primitive church has always been appealed to, and always *will be*, to enforce the last command of the Sav-

iour, and encourage effort for the conversion of men, till the last of the idolatrous nations has been evangelized, and all that Christ has enjoined, or God has promised, shall be fulfilled.

Succeeding the labors and triumphs of the primitive church, there followed a long period of declension and darkness. Still, the cause of Christ was maintained in the earth, and at different periods made considerable progress. The holy fire was never extinct. And at the present day, Christ's name is honored, and his religion is professed, with greater or less degrees of purity, by about one fourth of the human race. Vast numbers of these are, indeed, but nominal Christians, who, instead of aiding in the conversion of others, need to be evangelized themselves; but other numbers, and we trust great numbers, are *truly, spiritually* enlightened. They have the fear of God before their eyes. They have his love shed abroad in their hearts. They pray for the prosperity of Zion, and prefer Jerusalem above their chief joy. In the possession of these Christians, there are gifts and endowments of various kinds—learning, talents, wealth, influ-

ence, power—all which should be devoutly consecrated to the cause of Christ, and be made to bear, with united energy, upon the work of the world's conversion. Perhaps there never was a period since the gospel was first preached, when the number of true Christians on the earth was greater than at present, or when they had greater resources and means of influence at their command. When we compare their advantages for propagating Christianity, with those possessed by the hundred and twenty on the day of Pentecost, we are amazed at the disparity. And if Christ might reasonably require of *them* to publish the gospel among all nations, with how much greater propriety may he expect and demand the same of us?

In considering what has been done by man, tending to the universal spread of the gospel, it would be unjust to omit the vast *preparatory* work which, either directly or indirectly, has been accomplished within the last half century. The ancient Christians labored under many disadvantages. To them, the size and figure of the earth were unknown, the greater part of it having never been explored; and between

those parts that were known, the means of communication were slow and uncertain, and the progress of truth was hereby retarded. But now, nearly every portion of the earth's surface has been often visited, and can be visited with facility, and with comparative safety. Formerly, the spirit of persecution raged everywhere. To disturb the religion of a country, however false and detestable such religion might be, was considered as a crime against the State, which might be punished with the utmost rigor. But sentiments more enlightened and liberal now prevail, in face of which palpable persecution rarely shows itself; and whenever it does appear, it is sure to meet with the rebuke of the whole civilized world. Formerly, copies of the Scriptures and of other books were multiplied, only by the slow and tedious process of the transcriber. But now the press pours forth its treasures of Bibles and tracts, with a profusion and a rapidity of which the ancients never dreamed, and which, had it been told them, would have been regarded as the greatest of miracles. A check has also been put upon many of those vices and criminal practices—

such as intemperance, slavery, and war—which formerly prevailed, without let or control, and proved such a mighty hindrance to the gospel; encouraging the hope, that ere long every thing that opposes itself shall be taken out of the way, and the truth shall have free course, run, and be glorified. It should be remembered, too, that within the last fifty or sixty years, the design has been formed among Christians, and openly and frequently expressed, of attempting *to convert the world to Christ*; and that much has been done towards its accomplishment. Barbarous languages have been studied and reduced to writing; the Scriptures and other useful books have been translated, and in vast numbers circulated; missionaries have been raised up, and sent forth into nearly every part of the heathen world; and much success has attended their labors. Whole nations have, in some instances, been converted, and many a desert place is beginning to bud and blossom as the rose.

I need not dwell longer on what has been already accomplished, with a view to the universal spread of the gospel. We have seen

that a vast preparatory work has been performed by *God*; reaching back into the early ages of eternity—involving, in its course through time, the death and sufferings of the Son of God, the mission of the Holy Spirit, and all the rich provisions of his grace. We have seen, too, that much has been done through the instrumentality of *men*, all tending, directly or indirectly, towards the same glorious consummation.

It only remains that we show what is still *left to be done*. And as this is but a little, in comparison with what has been already accomplished, the consideration of it need not detain us long.

We have already, it appears, a foundation of hope, sufficient for a ruined world. We have a gospel provided, easy and reasonable in its offers, powerful in its motives, and adapted alike to the wants of all. We have an influence proffered, to attend the faithful dispensation of the truth, and make it effectual to the conversion of those who hear it. What remains then, but for those who already have the gospel—amounting nominally to one fourth of the race, and really to a very great multitude—just

to go forth and *publish the news of salvation to the rest*? Let them go with faith, with earnestness, with a fixed and prayerful reliance on the accompanying aids of the Holy Spirit, and proclaim the glad tidings which they have themselves received, in the ears of those who have never heard them,—and *the work is done*. And is this an impossible thing? Is it a hard, an unreasonable thing? When Christ has done so much to lay a foundation for the salvation of men, is it hard that he requires us to *tell what he has done*—to proclaim abroad the story of his sufferings and death? When he has furnished us with such a precious gospel, so full of hope and comfort to the world, is it hard that we are required to *publish it*? If the little band of disciples at the resurrection of Christ were commanded to “go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;” shall *we*—with all our facilities and advantages, and when so much of the work is already accomplished—shall we think it hard to undertake the rest?”

It is a shame to the church of Christ, that the gospel has not long ago been diffused over all

the earth. It should humble Christians of this day in the dust, that such multitudes of their perishing fellow men have never yet seen a Bible, or heard of a Saviour, being shrouded in the blackness of heathenish darkness. It argues much weakness of faith and want of earnestness, on the part of these Christians—when they clearly see the work to be performed, and the obligations resting upon them to perform it—that they are so backward to engage in the holy enterprise—so ready to admit excuses and indulge delay. Are they deterred by *difficulties* from entering upon this work? And were there no difficulties in the way of the Saviour's mission, when he said, "Lo, I come—in the volume of the book it is written of me—to do thy will, O God?" And were there no difficulties in the way of those early followers of Christ, who went forth with the gospel, single-handed, to conflict against a world in arms? Are Christians at this day afraid of *sacrifices* and *persecutions*? Let them think again of the infinite sacrifice of Christ, and of the terrible persecutions to which he voluntarily submitted. Let them think of the privations and sufferings

of those ancient believers, who “had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings; who were stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword.”

It is not pretended that there are at present no difficulties in the way of the world's conversion; but it is perfectly obvious that they are as nothing, in comparison with those which, in other days, have been encountered and overcome? It is obvious, too, that existing difficulties lie chiefly, not in the state of the heathen world, but in the pride, the worldliness, the unbelief and carnal indulgence of those who profess to have received the truth. Let these *internal* difficulties be taken out of the way—let Christians of the present generation awake as one man, and engage as they ought in the work of the world's conversion, possessing and exemplifying the spirit of the primitive disciples and martyrs; and hindrances external would soon disappear; the darkness of an hundred ages would be dissipated; the light of the glorious gospel would speedily shine on all lands; and the rapturous song would begin to be sung in heaven, “The kingdoms of this world have

become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

The Lord in mercy hasten a consummation so glorious! And may his churches be awakened to *labor* for it, as they would be prepared to meet it! May they be willing, if need be, to *suffer* for it, as they would hope to participate its blessings and its joys!

CHAPTER II.

The Spirit of the Gospel a Missionary Spirit.

AMONG the first who were called to be the disciples of Christ, "was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus." "The day following, Jesus findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. And Philip findeth Nathaniel, and saith unto him, We have found him of

whom Moses and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." (Jn. 1:40—45.)

We have, in these verses, a most interesting and instructive exemplification of the true Spirit of the gospel. It is not a spirit of monopoly, but rather of diffusion. It seeks, not to hoard the blessing it has received, but to spread it abroad—to pour it out upon the heads of others. As soon as Andrew had found the Saviour, he must go and tell Peter. And as soon as Philip had received the gospel, he must persuade Nathaniel to be a partaker of the same blessing.

The spirit of the gospel is, in all periods, the same. It is everywhere and always a *missionary spirit*. It prompts those who possess it—I might almost say *impels* them—to *go out and publish the message of salvation*. Of this important truth, the history of the church furnishes us with many illustrations.

We have the first of these in the example of the apostles and primitive Christians. After the great revival on the day of Pentecost, when the disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost, it cannot be doubted that they possessed, in large measure, the genuine spirit of the gospel. And

we all know how this spirit was exemplified. "They went forth everywhere, preaching the Word." In face of an infuriated mob—who were "cut to the heart" by his reproofs, and "gnashed on him with their teeth"—Stephen delivers his last sermon. After having been apprehended, and threatened, and commanded to speak no more in the name of Jesus, Peter and John thus reply to their persecutors: "Whether it be right, in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things that we have seen and heard." The latter part of this memorable reply evinces the spirit by which the apostles and their early coadjutors were actuated. "*We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.*" The spirit within them *forbade* them to keep silence. "A *necessity* is laid upon me: yea, wo is me if I preach not the gospel." We have here the genuine *spirit* of the gospel; and we see that it is præeminently, uncontrollably, diffusive. It is a missionary spirit. And from those times to the present, just in proportion as religion has been revived, and the spirit of the gospel has

been enkindled, we find it exhibiting itself after the same manner. It excites those in whose breasts it burns to *exertion*; to do what they can for the salvation of others.

The next eminent example of this—after those which occurred in the primitive age—is that of *the early Scottish missionaries*, commonly known by the name of Culdees. It is an interesting fact that, during the greater part of the sixth century, while in England the lights of learning and religion were suffering an almost total eclipse, in Ireland they shone forth with distinguished splendor. The clergy of Ireland were among the most learned and efficient in the world. Their country was an asylum for the oppressed and persecuted of other lands, and its churches increased and prospered greatly. So true was this, that Ireland, at that period, was proverbially denominated an *island of saints*. Among other evidence of the existence and power of religion in Ireland, during the sixth century, we have that of the *missionary spirit*. Their missionaries went forth into all the surrounding countries. It would be interesting to contemplate several

instances of missionary zeal, emanating from the Irish churches; but I will direct attention to but one.

Columba was born in Ireland, A. D., 521. After laboring several years, and with signal success, for the advancement of religion in his own country, he set sail for the neighboring shores of Scotland. His attention was directed mainly to the Picts, many of whom were converted through his instrumentality. To reward him for his disinterested exertions, the king of the Picts gave him the little island of Iona, one of the Hebrides, or Western Islands. Here, in connection with others who came from Ireland, he established what was called a Convent, but what was in reality a Theological and missionary school. The course of study at Iona was eminently Scriptural. It is recorded of Columba, that "he was much devoted to the study of the Holy Scriptures. He taught his pupils to confirm their doctrines by the Scriptures, and to regard nothing as of divine authority which was not so established." The consequence was, that the missionaries from Iona were *simple, Bible Christians*, uncontaminated with the

superstitions which issued forth from Rome, and were then prevailing extensively in other parts of the Christian world. These indefatigable men penetrated into every part of Scotland, so that before the close of the sixth century the great mass of its inhabitants were nominally converted. They preached also in Ireland, in Wales, in different parts of the Belgic provinces, and in Germany. They entered England, also, where Christianity had been well nigh extirpated by the Saxons, and published the gospel in all the northern and central counties, and as far southward as the Thames. Other establishments in time grew up, after the model of that at Iona, and the preachers issuing from them (usually denominated Culdees) continued their labors, in the northern and western parts of Europe, for several hundred years. We see, in their history, the same development of the christian spirit which had been so signally manifested by the apostles. Theirs was truly a *missionary spirit*. Their lives, their aims, their endeavors, their successes, were all of a missionary character.

The same spirit was manifested by the *Wal-*

denses, in the twelfth century. Waldo was a rich merchant of Lyons, who, after his conversion, consecrated his wealth to the service of God in the propagation of the gospel. He preached the gospel himself, caused the Scriptures to be translated into the language of the people, and circulated many copies. These efforts were signally owned and blessed of God, and great numbers were brought to the knowledge of the truth. Thus strengthened, Waldo speedily organized a band of missionaries, and sent them forth to carry the gospel into France, Germany, Poland, Bohemia, Austria, and Hungary. These humble propagators of the truth went out two by two, supported at first by the contributions of their brethren at Lyons, but relying mainly on what they might obtain from those for whom they labored. On account of their poverty, they were everywhere called "the poor men of Lyons." Some traveled as pedlars, carrying with them, concealed among their merchandize, select portions of the Word of Life, which they engaged those whom they found favorably disposed, to receive and to read. By these means, the truth gained, in a few

years, such an extension, that no efforts of its embittered enemies could afterwards suppress it.

There was a great revival of religion, under Wickliffe and his followers, in the fourteenth century; and this was followed by the same results with those we have already noticed. While much has been said and written respecting Wickliffe—the harbinger of Luther, and the morning star of the reformation, one important feature of his character has been comparatively overlooked. I refer to his *missionary spirit and labors*. He was not only the bold champion of religious freedom and holy truth, against popes and princes, bishops and friars, but he was the indefatigable preacher of the gospel; the translator of the Scriptures; the publisher of books and tracts in great numbers; and the diligent instructor of *others* in the truths of religion, who were soon prepared to cooperate with him, in laboring for the conversion and salvation of souls. Some of these were clergymen regularly ordained; others were noblemen, or gentlemen of wealth and rank; but more were individuals of the laboring classes, who, having become savingly acquainted with the gospel, and felt its

quickenings power on their hearts, were prepared to go forth as itinerant exhorters, much like the colporteurs of our own times, scattering Wickliffe's Bibles and copies of his tracts, and diffusing, as they were able, the blessings of salvation. These were the Wickliffites, or Lollards, of the fifteenth century, who were everywhere hunted by the minions of Popery, and many of whom suffered nobly at the stake; but whom no flames, which their enemies had it in their power to kindle, could destroy. They continued to spread the truth and to multiply converts in the different countries of England, Scotland, and Wales, also in Bohemia and Germany, till they were met by the Reformers of the sixteenth century, and merged themselves in the greater, nobler movement which was then exhibited.

We come next to look at this greater movement—the reformation of the sixteenth century—and see how the missionary spirit was developed there. The reformation from Popery originated in the breasts of a few individuals—among whom was Martin Luther. Their minds were spiritually enlightened, their hearts

renewed, and their souls enflamed with love to God, and zeal for the salvation of their fellow men; and then they felt much as the apostles did, when they said, "We cannot but speak the things that we have seen and heard." "Wo be unto us, if we preach not the gospel." They saw almost the whole Christian world given over to Popish idolatry and superstition, and their spirits were so stirred within them that they could not hold their peace. They commenced preaching, discussing, writing, publishing; and the press, now just put in motion, threw abroad their tracts to the four winds of heaven. They did not, indeed, go to the literal heathen; for they had no time. The world around them was filled with idols, no better than those of the ancient Pagans. The religion of Europe, in general, was as wide of the gospel, as was that which, a thousand years before, it had supplanted. The vocation of the early reformers was to enlighten benighted, besotted Europe, and to infuse the spirit and power of Christianity, where now there was little more than the name. And to this work they addressed themselves with a zeal, a boldness, an energy

and success, which have never been surpassed. In less than half a century, they had spread the light of evangelical religion, not only through the greater part of Germany and Switzerland, but into France, England, Scotland, Holland, Poland, Denmark, Sweden, and even into Italy and Spain. It was doubtful whether the gospel was more rapidly propagated even in the apostolic age, than it was among the Catholics of Europe, during the first fifty years after the commencement of the reformation. These reformers were opposed indeed, as the apostles were, by the most frightful, horrid persecutions; but they counted not their lives dear unto themselves. They pressed onward in face of dangers and of death, and have left an example of missionary ardor, perseverance, and success, which will never cease to be appealed to and admired, to the end of time.

The grand theatre of the reformation, at least in its early stages, was Germany. And examples to our purpose have since occurred on the same ground. Some hundred years subsequent to the death of the reformers, when the Lutheran churches had been delivered out of the hands of

their enemies and became settled and established; they experienced a sad decline in respect to piety and godliness. They had the Bible, and the gospel. Their creed was (what it ever had been) substantially orthodox. But the power of religion was not felt, discipline was relaxed, and coldness and worldliness prevailed. In the midst of the darkness, however, God was pleased to hold up a light. The farther progress of the declension he mercifully interposed for a season to arrest. In the latter part of the seventeenth century, there was a precious revival of religion in different parts of Germany, under the auspices of such men as Philip James Spener, and Hermann Francké. These men and their adherents—who were reproachfully called Pietists—instituted meetings for the study of the Bible and for prayer, and did what they could to infuse the life and warmth of piety into the dead masses with which they were surrounded. They experienced much and virulent opposition, but the assaults of their enemies seemed rather to quicken than discourage them. They made special efforts to promote religion in the Universities, and actually founded

what is now the University of Hallé, as a school in which to train up young men of piety and promise, for usefulness in the church; and it deserves to be noticed, as going to illustrate the point under consideration, that this University was *the great missionary institution of the age*. Every one has heard of Ziegenbalg, Grundler, Schultz, Swartz, and other distinguished German missionaries, who, more than a hundred years ago, were connected with the Danish mission at Tranquebar. Now it is an interesting fact, that nearly every one of these missionaries was trained and educated at Professor Francké's school at Hallé. They were supported, in considerable measure, by funds from England; but there was scarcely enough of the life of religion at that period in England to raise up a missionary. Whenever any new recruits were wanted for the service, it was necessary to send to Professor Francké for the requisite supply from among his students. Educated in the midst of the reproached Pietists of Germany, and having their hearts penetrated with the spirit of the gospel, these young men were ready to go any where. Like the great

apostle of the Gentiles, they counted not their lives dear unto them, that so they might spread the knowledge of their Saviour, and finish their earthly course with joy.

A little later, we have still another example to the same effect, in Germany. It is that of the Moravians, or United Brethren. The founders of this church claim to have descended from the Bohemian reformers, or Hussites. After various dispersions, and the most distressing persecutions, endured for the long space of more than two hundred years, the scattered remains of this excellent people were brought together at a place which they called Hernhutt, on the estate of Count Zinzendorf, in Upper Lusatia, about the year 1722. Scarcely had these poor emigrants obtained a settlement, and secured for themselves the comforts of life, when the Holy Ghost was shed down upon them, and a missionary spirit was diffused throughout the congregation, such as the world has scarcely ever witnessed. They regarded and organized their church as a *missionary institution*, every member of which was pledged and consecrated to do what he could—to do and suffer whatever

his brethren decided that he ought—for the enlargement of Christ's kingdom, and the salvation of souls. This class of Christians seem to have made it an object to carry the gospel to the *most abject* of men—to those portions of the human race which were involved in the deepest degradation and wretchedness. Accordingly we find them selecting their fields of labor in situations the most forbidding and repulsive—those where the greatest personal trials might be expected, and the fewest comforts enjoyed. We find them toiling for the poor slaves in the West Indies—at different places among the North American Indians—and amid the snows of Greenland and Labrador. We see one company sailing to Guinea, another to Algiers, and others to South Africa, Egypt and Abyssinia. When the mission to the slaves in the West Indies was first proposed, it was expressly stated that the negroes could have no opportunity of attending to the truths of the gospel, unless their teachers were united with them in their daily and laborious avocations. Nothing daunted by this intelligence, two of the brethren immediately offered themselves for the service,

declaring their willingness to *sell themselves into slavery*, should such a step be necessary in order to the accomplishment of their purpose. I mention this fact, to show the spirit by which these people were actuated. It is perfectly obvious that such a spirit could not be restrained. It *must* act; it *must* labor in the service of Christ; nor would its labors be likely to pass away unblest. Accordingly we find the early labors of these Moravians attended with great success. Perhaps the gospel was never diffused more rapidly (at least by so small and feeble a company) than it was by the members of this church, during the first fifty years of their missionary operations.

That the spirit of the gospel is a spirit of missions, is happily illustrated in the case of the Pilgrims—the early settlers of New England. It was not contumacy, or sectarianism, or party zeal, or a love of power, which drove those excellent men from their comfortable homes, to seek an asylum in this wilderness. It was the force of conscience, and a quickened spirit of religion—the love of Christ, and of souls, by which they were actuated. No Christ-

ian can look into the history of the persecuted Dissenters of England, about the time of the first settlement of this country—no one can follow the venerable Robinson and his congregation to Holland, and read of their social meetings and their religious exercises there, without perceiving that they had strong faith, and fervent love, and were enjoying what may be termed a *revival of religion*, at least in their own souls. They also exhibited the appropriate fruits of a revival; for few and feeble as they were, they had much of a *missionary spirit*. One of the recorded motives which drew our fathers to these shores, was compassion for the poor natives, and a desire to do something for their instruction and salvation. And scarcely had they arrived here—the difficulties of a first settlement were not half overcome, when they commenced their missionary operations. The apostolic Eliot led the way in this enterprise, but he was assisted and supported by many others. And before the first generation of settlers passed off the stage, we find the Bible and other religious books translated and printed in the language of the natives; we find their

children gathered into schools, and taught to read the word of life; we find hundreds of hopeful, spiritual converts, and whole villages of Christian Indians; we find churches gathered in several places, and native pastors settled over them. Our fathers of that age had not learned to say, "The red man of the forest never can be civilized." They saw him reclaimed, in great measure, from his wandering, wicked courses. They saw him clothed, in his right mind, and sitting with them at the feet of Jesus.

The revival of religion which occurred a hundred years ago, under the preaching of Whitefield and the Wesleys, illustrates the same point as all the rest;—*the identity of the missionary spirit with that of the gospel*. To be sure, these men did not themselves go to the heathen; and for the same reason that Luther and his fellow laborers did not go: They had no time. Their field of labor was nearer home. They saw Protestant England and America asleep, and they desired, if possible, to awake them. They saw coldness, worldliness, and formalism prevailing, substituting show for substance, the appearance for the reality; and they

felt themselves called upon to blow the trumpet of alarm, and infuse into the torpid mass something of the life and power of the gospel. Such was the work to which both the Spirit and providence of God manifestly summoned the men of whom we speak;—a work of essentially a *missionary character*—the work of *diffusion*; and they entered upon it with an ardor which nothing could quench, and with a zeal and perseverance which nothing could overcome. They had reproach, opposition and persecution in abundance; but none of these things moved them—unless it were to excite them to greater diligence. Few men have ever labored more effectually in the cause of evangelical religion, than those here referred to. Few in any age have left behind them richer or more abiding results.

The fruits of the revival under Whitefield and the Wesleys continue to the present time. The great Wesleyan Connection, now extending itself into every quarter of the world, is one direct result of their labors. The revival of evangelical religion in the church of England, affecting an important section of that church, is

another result. And the revivals which, during the last fifty or sixty years, have so richly blessed our own country, may be traced back to the same source. They connect, obviously, with the revivals a hundred years ago, under Whitefield, Edwards, the Tennents, and other excellent men who participated in their labors. And in connection with these more recent revivals has come up *the great missionary movement of our times*. It is interesting to contemplate these two things—the same essentially in nature and character, and see them appearing in the American church together. The revivals of which we speak, and the work of missions in our churches, both commenced near the close of the last century; and in the early part of the present century, they became somewhat general. As was natural, the Home Missionary enterprise was first entered upon; but the claims of the heathen soon came to be considered; and individuals—the precious fruits of our revivals—were found not only prepared, but resolved (the Lord willing) to go far hence unto the Gentiles. The great missionary injunction of the Saviour was brought into discussion, and was presented

in new attitudes and lights. The world's conversion was held up, not only as a thing practicable, but as a *duty binding*; and Christians began to form plans and to adopt measures with a view to its accomplishment. The missionary movement of our times—the effort now making for the salvation of the world—is a natural fruit of our revivals of religion; I might even say a *necessary* fruit, without which the genuineness of our revivals might well be suspected, and they could hardly have manifested themselves to be the work of God.

The identity of the spirit of religion with the missionary spirit has thus far been illustrated, by reference to great public movements. The same point might be farther illustrated, and that, too, to almost any length, by referring to particular individuals. From the days of Paul to those of David Brainerd and Henry Martyn, wherever we find an *eminent* Christian—one who has drunk deeply into the spirit of his Lord and Master, we are sure to find one who has at least *the spirit* of a missionary. That spirit may be restrained by circumstances; there may not be the opportunity fully to develop it;

but I repeat, wherever there has been enlightened and eminent piety, the *spirit* of a missionary has been felt. It *must* have been felt. The two things cannot be conceived of as altogether separate. They must, and they do, invariably go together.

To show how the missionary spirit sometimes operates, when circumstances do not favor its full development, I may refer to the case of an eminently pious female, in private life, who resided at Newport, R. I., a hundred years ago. Feeling deeply concerned for the advancement of Christ's kingdom, and the salvation of men, she wished to know what an obscure female in her situation *could do* to promote objects which lay so near her heart. There were then no Sabbath schools in which she could enlist as a teacher; no tract distribution in which she could engage; no mission from this country to which she could attach herself; and no missionary associations, of which she had any knowledge, with which she could become connected. After much deliberation, she concluded that she could do more for the cause of God and truth by continued and earnest *prayer*, than in any other

way. Accordingly, she often set apart whole days, when circumstances would permit, and spent them in secret fasting and prayer for the conversion of Jews and heathens. She also spent the last afternoon and evening of every week, and the morning of every Sabbath, in the same way. "Why," says she, "were not I a miserable heathen? Why have I heard the joyful news of a Saviour? And why hath he been savingly revealed to my soul? O send thy light and truth into the dark corners of the earth. Let those who have never heard of a Saviour come to the knowledge of him, and fall down before him. May the savages of the wilderness become the lambs of Christ's spiritual flock. And may Jews and heathen soon see that salvation which they have hitherto despised."*

As the spirit of the gospel is essentially a missionary spirit, so *nothing but this spirit—the true spirit of Christ*—is adequate to sustain missions on Christian principles. Superstition and bigotry, sectarian prejudice and party zeal,

* Memoir of Susanna Anthony, Sab. school Edition, pp. 101—112.

are sufficient, I know, to carry those under their influence a certain way. They may lead (as they have done among the Romanists,) to the establishment of missions in heathen lands, and to persevering efforts and great sacrifices, to the endurance of hardships and even of death, in promotion of these objects. But missions thus originated can hardly be called Christian missions. Certainly, they are not conducted on Christian principles. Those engaged in them may tell of numerous conversions; but these are changes only from one form of delusion to another. The changes, too, are effected, for the most part, under the influence of mercenary and selfish motives—not unfrequently by violence and force. An enterprise, to be entitled to the name of a Christian mission, must originate in *Christian love*—love to the Saviour, and love to the perishing souls of men. And it must be sustained and prosecuted, at every step, in the same spirit. No other motive should be permitted to mingle its influence with this. Such a mission, unless interrupted by uncontrollable events in providence, may be expected to move on steadily and successfully. Having the best

end in view, and employing none but the best means for its accomplishment, it will commend itself to the consciences both of those who sustain it, and those for whose benefit it is established. Above all, it will enjoy the approbation of Him, whose whole heart is love, and the depth of whose concern for perishing men has been manifested in his willingness to die for their salvation.

In view of the principle above illustrated, every one may see what is most needed, at the present time, for the success of missions, and indeed of all our benevolent enterprises. It is a *general revival of religion*—a great and *general increase of the spirit of the gospel*. This would set all our moral machinery in motion, and cause it to move easily, spontaneously. While without this, every wheel must continue to move heavily, and will soon cease to move at all. Let the spirit of religion be revived and strengthened through all this community, and there will no longer be any lack of *men* to stand in every breach, and fill every vacant post, throughout the whole field of Christian enterprise. Nor will there be any lack of *means* to

supply the wants of these men. The treasury of the Lord will be ever full, while it is ever pouring forth supplies for the sustenance of those who are bearing the burthen and heat of the day. Let the spirit of religion be revived, and with it the spirit of earnest prayer, and the promised blessing of heaven will descend, to fertilize every barren field, and cause the wilderness to bud and blossom as the rose. It behooves every friend of missions, therefore, to seek earnestly and *now* a revived spirit of religion—in his own heart—in the church of which he is a member—and through the whole circle of his acquaintance and influence. First of all, and above all, let him pray and labor, to bring about so desirable an object. Let this point be gained, and all is gained. But failing of this, we can have nothing in prospect but increasing desolation.

CHAPTER III.

The work of Missions of Divine Institution.

THE command of Christ, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations," was addressed, in the first instance, to his immediate disciples; and in the judgment of some, *exclusively* to them. But if so, then that which follows it, in the same sentence, must have been addressed *exclusively* to the apostles: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, *baptizing them* in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." And if both these commands were limited to the apostles; then the assurance annexed must be understood with the same limitation, "*Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*" This gracious assurance has been the comfort and support of faithful ministers, from the time when it was uttered to the present hour. But on the supposition we oppose, none since the apostles have had any reason to take comfort in it, seeing it was ad-

dressed exclusively to them. Is it not plain, then, that this supposition is unscriptural and untenable? The gracious assurance of Christ that he would be with his people "*always, even unto the end of the world,*" was not, and from the nature of the case could not be, limited to the apostles, but extends to the whole body of the faithful, in all succeeding ages. Neither was the command to *baptize* limited to the apostles, but constitutes the authoritative precept, under which baptisms have been administered ever since. And neither was the command to "*go and teach all nations*" limited to the apostles, but must continue to bind, with undiminished force, till all nations are brought to the knowledge of the truth. But if Christians are bound, by a positive command of Christ, to "*go and teach all nations,*" or to do what they consistently can for the diffusion of his religion and kingdom, then the work of missions—the work of teaching the nations—must be regarded as of *Divine Institution*.

This proposition is almost too plain to stand in need of proof. Still, it may require illustration and impression. And with a view to im-

press it more deeply on the mind, let it be observed,

1. That the missionary work is manifestly prior and preparatory to that of *pastors*—which is confessedly of Divine institution. Nothing is more evident than that churches must be founded, before they can be fed. Truth must be disseminated, the Holy Spirit must be poured out, souls must be converted, and churches gathered, before an establishment exists, over which the pastor can preside. When our Saviour ascended, the little company of disciples at Jerusalem constituted the only Christian church in the world. At that period, therefore, there was no room for pastors, for the very good reason that there were no churches. There was little or nothing out of Jerusalem, which the pastor, in his own appropriate sphere, could perform. Accordingly, our Saviour commissioned his disciples, not as pastors, but primarily as *missionaries*. “Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations.” “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” When the necessity for pastors came to be felt, this order of church officers was duly insti-

tuted ; but prior to it, in the order both of nature and of time, was the work of the missionary. It follows then, since the pastoral work is an institution of God, and since that of missions is of absolute necessity in order to prepare the way for pastors, that this latter work is also to be regarded as of Divine institution.

2. The same conclusion is further evident, from the recognition of *apostles* and *evangelists* among the constituted ministers of Jesus. The word apostle, whether we regard its etymology or its use, is very like in signification to our word *missionary*. Either word denotes, and with equal propriety, one who is *sent forth* to preach and propagate the religion of the Saviour. The word *evangelist* is also used in a similar sense. The evangelists of the primitive church were a class of itinerants, who labored, in most cases, under the direction of the apostles, and were engaged with them in establishing churches, and publishing the gospel. Such were Philip, Timothy, Titus, Silvanus, and doubtless a great many others. Both these classes of teachers were in fact *missionaries*. They were those who ran to and fro that knowledge might

be increased, and were chiefly concerned in the propagation and establishment of the religion of Christ. But apostles and evangelists are expressly mentioned among the ascension gifts of the Saviour, and the constituted ministers of his Word. "He gave some *apostles*, and some prophets, and some *evangelists*, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." If the fact that pastors and teachers are here mentioned is evidence that the pastoral work is of Divine appointment, does not the fact that apostles and evangelists are also mentioned, prove the same in reference to the missionary work?

3. The wonderful manner in which the way was prepared for the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles or heathen, furnishes evidence that the work of missions is of Divine institution. An angel was sent to direct Cornelius (who was an officer in the Roman army) to the place where he might find a messenger of salvation. At the same time, a miracle was wrought to remove the scruples of Peter, and convince him that "to the Gentiles also God

had granted repentance unto life." It was revealed to Paul, soon after his conversion, that the grand purpose of his future life must be to publish the name of Christ among the Gentiles. And when he and Barnabas actually went to the Gentiles, they went by the command of the Holy Ghost. "Separate me Paul and Barnabas for the work whereunto I have called them." Is it not perfectly evident, from these various and manifest intimations of the will of heaven, that the work of spreading the gospel among the heathen is one of Divine appointment? I only add,

4. That the *example of the apostles*, standing in connection with those commands which they had for their guide, is sufficient to decide the question before us. Before the crucifixion of Christ, they had been directed to confine their labors to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But after his resurrection, a new and a vastly more extended commission was given them. They were to go and teach *all nations*. They were to preach the gospel to *every creature*. "It behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day, that repentance and

remission of sins should be preached in his name *among all nations.*" "Ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto *the uttermost part of the earth.*" Such were the instructions which Christ gave to the apostles, at his several interviews with them previous to his ascension. Their subsequent example shows in what manner these instructions were received and understood. "They went forth and preached *everywhere*, the Lord working with them." When they were scattered from Jerusalem, in consequence of persecution, "they went *everywhere*, preaching the Word." It was while "Peter was passing *throughout all quarters*, that he came down to the saints which dwelt at Lydda." Paul made the declaration, long before his death, "that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, he had fully preached the gospel of Christ." Indeed, so laborious were the primitive disciples in the work of spreading the gospel, that Paul says of them, in his Epistle to the Romans, "Their sound went forth into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world." It is perfectly evident from these pas-

sages, qualify and limit them as we may, that the apostles considered themselves under indispensable obligations to publish, far and wide, the truths of the gospel, and to do all in their power to fill the world with the doctrines of their Lord and Master. We may then conclude with absolute certainty, that the work of spreading the gospel through the earth is founded on the authority of heaven, and is to be numbered among the institutions of God.

If what has been said is true, then the work of missions is as solemnly binding upon Christians, as any other Divine institution. There are those in the Christian church, who seem not to be sufficiently sensible of this. They have a regard for Divine institutions, and a disposition to maintain and observe them. They remember the Sabbath day, and endeavor to keep it holy. They reverence the sanctuary, and are exemplary in their attendance on the appointed means of grace. They observe the special ordinances of the gospel, baptism and the Lord's supper, and profess to love and value them. But they are inclined to do little or nothing for the spread of the gospel in heathen

lands. They feel no particular hostility to the work, but regard themselves as under no strong and binding obligations to engage in it. Now it may well be inquired of such persons, what reason they can have for observing any Divine institution, which is not a reason for observing this. Will they say that the other institutions of the gospel are founded on the command of Christ? And so is this. Or will they say that the apostles and primitive disciples regarded the others as Divine institutions? And so they did this. Or will they say that it is honorable to God, and profitable to themselves, to observe the other institutions of Christ? And it will not be honorable to God, and profitable to themselves, to observe this also? The more carefully any Christian examines the subject, the more, I am persuaded, he will be convinced, that all the reasons which bind him to observe any of the institutions of Christ, equally bind him to observe that of which we have here spoken.

Again, if the work of missions is of Divine institution, then those churches cannot expect to prosper which sinfully neglect it. Who would expect a church to prosper, which should pay

no regard to the Sabbath—or should neglect altogether public worship—or should presume to dispense with, if not to abolish, the Christian sacraments? But these are not more clearly institutions of God, than is the work of missions to the heathen. Christ says to his churches—to the whole body of those who bear his name, “Go, teach all nations. Go, preach the gospel to every creature. Do what you can, collectively and individually, for the universal triumph of my religion and kingdom.” But here is a church, called by his name, which virtually says, “I will do nothing in this business.” And shall such a church expect a blessing from Christ? Christ walks now, as of old, in the midst of his churches. He walks among them, to inspect and govern them, with a vigilant eye and a powerful hand. His favor to them is life, and his loving kindness is better than life; but his frown is destruction, which nothing can avert. If he sees them faithful in his service, and devoted to his institutions and commands, he will bless and build them up; but if he sees the opposite, he will chastise if not destroy them. It is from principles such as these that we

gather the conclusion, that those churches which discountenance, or neglect, all suitable exertions for the spread of the gospel, cannot expect to prosper long. They stand opposed to a plain institution of Christ, and Christ must stand opposed to them.

In this view, we may account for it, in part, that the churches of Christendom have experienced so many rebukes, and such long and distressing darkness, in ages that are past. They have neglected and perverted the institutions of Christ, and that especially which has now been considered. While the primitive churches were faithful in the work of missions, and labored to spread the knowledge of the truth, they enjoyed evident and constant tokens of the Divine favor. They "walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost, and were greatly multiplied." But when they began to decline from their duty, and instead of devoting their strength to the service of the gospel, began to waste it in biting and devouring one another; of course, they forfeited the favor of Christ, and he began to visit them with the rod of his wrath. And as their declensions continued,

they became more and more deserted and afflicted, and one candlestick after another was removed out of its place, till their light and comforts were at length succeeded by ages and centuries of the most distressing darkness.

And it is observable, that nearly all the rays which glimmered upon the gloom of this long and dreadful night shone forth from those regions where individuals were employed in diffusing the gospel. Accordingly Milner, in endeavoring to trace the true church of Christ through this dreary spiritual wilderness, found himself obliged to leave those places where Christianity had been long established, and to "travel with faithful missionaries into regions of heathenism, and describe the propagation of the gospel in scenes altogether new."* "Those that honor me," saith God, "I will honor; but they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." Those churches that continue faithful in the service of Christ, and in their adherence to his commands and institutions, he will own, and prosper, and bless; but those that pursue a different course, and prefer the gratification of

* See Preface to Milner's Ecc. Hist. Vol. III.

self to the injunctions of the Saviour, cannot reasonably expect the tokens of his love.

If the work of missions is of Divine institution, then the various excuses urged for the neglect of it are all of them without foundation. It has been said, for example, "We have heathens enough at home. Let these be enlightened and converted, before our attention is drawn away to foreign regions." But is it strictly true that we have *heathens* at home? By heathens I understand those who have never heard of a Saviour, or seen a Bible, and who know nothing of what the Bible reveals. That there are those among us who are in a great degree ignorant, careless, stupid, and hardened, is admitted and lamented; but these are not heathens, in the sense that those are, whose minds have received no light from the pages of revelation, and who are totally removed from the influence of the gospel. And even if they were heathens, would the excuse be valid? Must an institution of the gospel be neglected, and a plain command of the Saviour be disobeyed, till we have not an ignorant or an unconverted person left within our borders? Were

there none ignorant and unconverted among the Jews, when it was revealed in vision to the apostle Peter, that "the door of faith was opened to the Gentiles?" Were there none ignorant and unconverted in Antioch, when the Holy Ghost said, "Separate me Paul and Barnabas for the work whereunto I have called them?" Or were there none ignorant and unconverted in the lesser Asia, when it was said to Paul in the visions of the night, "Come over into Macedonia and help us?"

It is sometimes denied that the heathen are in that deplorable condition which the friends of missions represent. "They have their own way of worship, and we have ours; and for aught that appears, they may be as sincere, as happy, and as safe for eternity, as ourselves." But will those, who endeavor to satisfy themselves and others, by placing the religion of the heathen on an equality with their own, consent, for once, to make an exchange? In the language of Dr. Beecher, "Will you give them your Bibles, and pastors, and Sabbaths; and receive their idol gods, their brahmins, and religious rites? Will you demolish the temples

of Jehovah, and rear up to roll through your streets the car of Juggernaut, besmeared with the blood of human sacrifice, and covered with emblems of pollution? Will you put out the Sun of righteousness, and bring back the darkness visible? Will you forsake the fountain opened in the gospel, and welcome to your hearts a religion which, if sin shall annoy, and the fear of punishment invade, will send you to drink of the waters that lave your shores, and wash in their flood as your most effectual remedy?" If the superstitions of the heathen are good for them, why would they not be good for us? Or if the religion of the gospel is a blessing to us, why should it not also prove a blessing to them? But there is a shorter method of replying to the objection now before us. That Saviour to whom we profess allegiance has *commanded* us to carry the gospel to the heathen. We cannot, then, doubt whether they need the gospel, without placing our own fancies above the decisions of Christ, and presuming to sit in judgment on the institutions of his Word.

It may be urged again, that Christ can take care of his own cause. "He can convert the

heathen whenever and however he pleases, without our assistance or cöoperation." And so indeed he can. He can raise up missionaries, and send them out in great numbers. He can send his ravens to feed them, as in the case of the prophet; or rain down manna from heaven for them, as he did for his ancient people. But what has all this to do with our present subject? Christ has left us an institution to observe—a solemn duty to perform; and shall we stop and ask, before we consent to undertake it, whether he cannot do his own work without us? Does it become the servant, when his task is set him, to demur and inquire whether his master cannot perform the labor himself?

After all it may be urged, that missions to the heathen are attended with very little success. It might be shown, in reply, that this assertion is not true;—on the contrary, that all the success in this work has been realized, which the most sanguine friends of missions had reason to expect. But suppose it were true. This would not alter the case, as it respects our duty, at all. We are nowhere commanded to be *successful*.

The injunction of Christ does not run, that we are to *convert* all nations ; but we are to use the appointed means, and make them acquainted with the gospel. And this injunction we should be bound to obey, even if we were favored with no present success.

In short, if the work of missions is of Divine institution, then no good reason can be given why it should not be vigorously prosecuted. The precepts enjoining it are plain, imperative, and unconditional ; and no excuse or objection can stand before them. The command of the Saviour answers every question, solves every doubt, sweeps away every obstacle. Bring up any excuse or apology for neglecting the heathen, and it passes over them all, as fire over the wood, the hay, and the stubble.

I have represented the work of missions as an institution of Christ, which all his followers are to understand and observe. This does not imply, however, that all Christians are to become literal missionaries to the heathen ; or that they are all to become public teachers of religion. We know not but James was as true and faithful a disciple as any of his brethren, though he

seems to have labored at Jerusalem to the day of his death. The command of the Saviour requires of us, and this is all it requires, that we love and value the cause of missions, and that we do every thing we consistently can do to help it forward. If called in providence to go personally to the heathen, we must be willing to obey. Or if called to contribute of our substance, we must cheerfully do it. Or if called to bestow time, or labor, or any thing else, we must not withhold. If we can do no more for the cause of missions, we certainly can pray for it; and this is a duty which all, without exception, are under obligations to perform. Whatever we bestow, we must follow it with our prayers; and if our circumstances are such that we have nothing to bestow, we must follow with our prayers the labors and offerings of others.

The cause of the Redeemer, at the present time, demands that every Christian should be at his post. Indeed, I think the period is near, when every true Christian *must be* at his post. When the season had arrived for the primitive believers, who fondly lingered about Jerusalem,

to be scattered abroad for the spread of the gospel, *persecution* was employed as the instrument of scattering them. And those churches and Christians now, who can be made sensible of their duty in no other way, must expect to be aroused to it by afflictions and stripes. Our covenant Father has a rod with which to correct his reluctant children. He has a fiery furnace in which to try them. The Lord give us all wisdom to know our duty, and to do it. The Lord strengthen and assist us to do what we can to carry into effect the great injunction of the Saviour, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*

CHAPTER IV.

Paul a Missionary to the Heathen.

THE literal, etymological meaning of the word *Apostle*, is one who is *sent forth*; and when used in a religious sense, it denotes one who is *sent forth to preach and propagate the gospel*. But this is precisely the signification of our English word *missionary*. These words therefore—the one of which has been received into our language from the Greek, and the other from the Latin—are of the same import; and were it not for a kind of sacredness which we justly attach to the primitive apostolical character, they might, without impropriety, be used interchangeably, the one for the other.

Several of the primitive disciples, it seems, were *domestic* missionaries. Their labors were confined principally to Judea, their native country. But Paul was more properly a *foreign* missionary. He is customarily spoken of as “the apostle of the Gentiles.” While others

were sent to "the circumcision," he was instructed and destined to go unto the heathen.

In order to remove, if possible, all doubt as to the missionary character of the apostle Paul, I shall proceed, in several particulars, to point out the analogy betwixt Paul the missionary, and the missionaries of our own times.

1. Missionaries at the present period usually receive *ordination*, previous to their going forth to preach the gospel. They are sent out by the churches, directly or indirectly, and go from regions where the truth is established, to others where it is comparatively or totally unknown. And thus it was with Paul the missionary. He was sent forth by the great church of Antioch, a city where the gospel had been for a considerable time established, and where "the disciples were first called Christians," to labor and suffer among the heathen; and previous to his departure, he, together with Barnabas, his fellow laborer, received ordination from the hands of his brethren. Of these important transactions, we have an account in the following words: "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers, as Bar-

nabas, and Simeon, and Lucias, and Manaen, and Saul. And as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."

2. Missionaries in this age, previous to their going forth to publish the gospel, receive *instructions* from some authorized individual, or some public body. They are advised and directed relative to the course they are to pursue, and the duties they are expected to perform. Thus also it was in the days of the apostles. When our Saviour sent forth his first missionaries, he gave them their instructions. These instructions were afterwards published, and may be found at large in the tenth chapter of Matthew, the sixth of Mark, and the ninth of Luke. Afterwards, when he sent forth the seventy, he gave them similar instructions, which were also published. (See Luke 10: 1—16.) Instructions, no doubt, were given to Paul the missionary, though we do not find them published in form. It is not likely that the church of Antioch

would ordain him with fasting and prayer, and send him forth among the heathen, and yet furnish him with no advice as to the course he should pursue.

3. Modern missionaries, in many instances, labor with their own hands for a support. This is particularly true of those who are stationed among the Indians of our own country. The lands they have cleared and cultivated, the buildings they have erected, and the large and numerous establishments they have formed, furnish evidence, that no men and women among us have been more diligent or persevering than they. And if other missionaries have not been equally laborious, it is not because they have been less devoted to their appropriate work, but because they were in situations where less manual labor was required of them. It is related too of Paul the missionary, that he, in several instances, labored with his own hands for his support. Appealing to the elders of Ephesus relative to the manner in which he had been with them, he says, "Ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered to my necessities, and to them which were with me."

In like manner he addresses the Thessalonian converts ; " Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought, but wrought with labor and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you ; not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an example to you to follow us."

4. Missionaries in these days are assisted by the churches. That which they are unable to procure for the support of themselves and their dependent families, without improperly interfering with their appropriate work, is furnished them by their Christian brethren and friends. And this is *all* that is furnished them. And we are expressly informed that Paul, in the course of his missionary labors, received frequent charitable aid from individuals and churches. " The house of Onesiphorus sought him out very diligently," while he was a prisoner at Rome, " and often refreshed him, and were not ashamed of his chain." In " many things also they ministered unto him," during his abode at Ephesus. While he was laboring at Corinth, he received contributions from other churches for his support. " I robbed other

churches," says he to the Corinthians, "taking of them wages to do you service." These were probably the churches of Macedonia; for he immediately adds, "That which was lacking to me, the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied." The brethren at Philippi were very liberal, in contributing for the support of the great missionary Paul; and in his Epistle to them, they are commended for it. "Ye have done well, that ye did communicate with my affliction; for even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again to my necessity. But I have all, and abound, having received of Epaphroditus the things that were sent from you."

5. Missionaries in modern times are accustomed to travel from place to place, dispensing the Word of Life as opportunities are presented. They have not parishes and churches where they constantly reside, and over which they are constituted pastors, but are in the habit of making frequent and extensive circuits, in accomplishing their labors of love. Now this is precisely the manner in which Paul labored. He was never the pastor of any particular church, or for any great length of time the

minister of any particular parish or city. He went about doing good. He traveled from city to city, and from place to place, scattering the seed of divine truth, and dispensing the gospel of the grace of God, wherever he went. At one time he is in Antioch, then in Iconium, then in Syria, then in Macedonia, then in Athens, and next, perhaps, in Rome. Thus he traveled and labored, as missionaries now do, and was enabled to say, several years before his death, that "from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, he had fully preached the gospel of Christ."

6. Missionaries at the present time are not unfrequently employed in collecting and receiving the contributions of the pious. They are employed as agents in this business, previous to their going forth among the heathen. And so far as the newly constituted churches have ability to contribute, they are occasionally employed in the same way afterwards. And in this respect, they are but followers of the great missionary, Paul. He was much engaged, during a certain period of his ministry, in taking up collections among the churches of the

Gentiles, for the relief of the poor and persecuted saints at Jerusalem. "Now," says he to the Romans, "I go to Jerusalem to minister to the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem." "Concerning the collection for the saints," he writes to the Corinthians, "as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. 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; and when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality to Jerusalem." It would be superfluous to quote more relative to these contributions; as the whole of the eighth and ninth chapters of the second Epistle to the Corinthians, besides other passages in the writings of Paul, expressly refer to them.

7. Missionaries at the present period are in the habit of keeping and transmitting journals of their proceedings. These journals constitute a continued history of their labors and travels, their successes, afflictions, wants, and prospects,

and in general of their circumstances. The most interesting parts of them are usually published, and are read and rejoiced in by thousands. Paul the missionary also kept, or caused to be kept, a journal of his proceedings; and for the benefit of Christians in all succeeding ages, this journal was early published. The Acts of the Apostles, from the thirteenth chapter to the end, is no other than a journal of the life and labors of Paul. Here we may follow him from place to place, and may study his bright and interesting example from the time of his being commissioned to go among the heathen, almost to the period of his death. We may listen to his instructions, witness his conflicts, and admire his persevering engagedness, and his brilliant success.

8. Missionaries now are in the habit of writing letters, to their employers, to one another, to Christian associations, and to their Christian friends. These in many instances are brought before the public. And Paul the missionary, it appears, was in the same habit. He wrote a variety of letters, to his fellow laborers, to the several stations he had formed, and to the

churches and the friends of his Divine Redeemer. Some of these letters were probably lost; but the most of them were collected and published in the volume of inspiration, and will be read in the churches till the end of time.

9. Missionaries at the present period frequently present reports of their doings and circumstances to the Societies which employ them. In some instances, they return to make these reports; though the foreign missionaries more frequently do it by means of periodical and joint communications. We read also of Paul, after his return "to Antioch, from whence he had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which he had fulfilled," that "he gathered the church together, and rehearsed all that God had done with him, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles." Soon after this, he and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem unto the elders; "and when they were come, and were received of the church, they declared all things that God had done with them. Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what

miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.”

It is thought that the missionary character of Paul, is now fully established, not only from the meaning of the word Apostle, which was constantly applied to him, but from the general similarity of his labors and circumstances to those of missionaries in modern times.

And if Paul was a missionary, then the cause of missions is supported by very high authority. It is sometimes questioned whether this cause has any real foundation in the Scriptures—whether it is not an innovation of the times, and a needless expense and burthen to the church. The view we have taken is sufficient to put such a question at rest forever. Paul was a missionary to the heathen. From almost the commencement of his public ministry to the hour of his death, he labored and suffered in this glorious work. The cause of missions is therefore supported by the whole example of the apostle Paul. It is supported, in like manner, by the example of the other apostles. The other apostles were all of them missionaries. They were those whom Christ himself sent forth to

preach and propagate the gospel. Indeed the cause of missions has all the support which the authority and command of God can give it. When Paul was set apart and sent forth from Antioch, it was done by the command of the Holy Ghost. "The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Paul for the work whereunto I have called them." It is moreover asserted that Paul was an apostle or missionary "of Jesus Christ by *the will of God.*" The cause of missions, then, should be regarded as of *divine institution*. It is not a thing proposed by our fellow men, which we are at liberty to think of as we please, but a work committed to us by our great Master, which we are bound to help forward by every method in our power.

How sinful, then, is it to *oppose* the cause of missions. It is to condemn the whole example, to pass a censure on the whole ministerial life and work of the apostle Paul; for Paul was a missionary. It is to oppose the example of all the apostles; for all the apostles were, to some extent, missionaries. It is to oppose the commission of Christ; for it was by his express command that the disciples were sent forth. It

is to oppose the will of God; for Paul was a missionary "of Jesus Christ by the will of God." In a word, it is to oppose a divine institution; for we have seen that the cause of missions is, to all intents and purposes, an institution of the gospel.

The friends of missions have great encouragement to pray and labor for the promotion of so good a cause. This is the cause for which Paul labored, and in which he died. It is the cause for which all the apostles labored, and in which most of them fell martyrs. It is the cause of millions of our fellow men who are ready to perish. It is the cause of Christ—the cause of God. It is a cause which *will go forward*. The same Omnipotent arm which rolls the spheres is pledged to carry forward the cause of missions; and the one of these can be stopped as well as the other. Let all esteem it an honor and a privilege to be engaged in such a cause. Let all pray fervently and constantly for its advancement; and as in the case of good Cornelius, let their "prayers and alms ascend up together, as a memorial before the throne of God."

CHAPTER V.

The Labors of Paul.

PAUL was a devoted minister and faithful laborer in those churches which had been established previous to his conversion. He commenced his public ministry in Damascus, whither he had gone to afflict the saints; and from that period to the time of his consecration to the great work for which he had been raised up—the work of publishing salvation to the heathen, he was never idle; but in Arabia, in Jerusalem, in Cilicia his native country, and in the great revival which took place at Antioch, he was continually, and, we may suppose, most successfully and delightfully employed, though in the midst of exposures and sufferings, in dispensing the gospel of the grace of God.

Paul had much to suffer from his Jewish brethren, both those who believed in Christ, and those who rejected him. But this did not abate the ardor of his affection for them, nor check

him in his endeavors to do them good. At two different periods, we find him engaged in taking up contributions "for the poor saints which dwelt at Jerusalem;" and in both instances, he went up to the city himself, and ministered to their necessities with his own hands. He no doubt expressed the true feelings of his soul, when he said, "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart; for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, for my kinsmen, according to the flesh."

It is, however, as a *missionary to the heathen*—as a messenger of light and mercy to the surrounding nations, that Paul is presented before us in the most noble and interesting attitude. The first *branch* of his missionary labor was the dissemination of truth in regions where *Christ had not been named*. Not satisfied to continue building "on another man's foundation," as soon as he had been called to plant the standard of the cross in heathen lands, he most cheerfully obeyed. He entered the dominions of idolatry, cruelty, and death, and light and salvation followed in his steps. We first behold

him tracing and retracing the various parts of Asia Minor; next, visiting the cities of learned and classic but voluptuous Greece; next passing, in the character of a prisoner, but as a most indefatigable and successful minister, through Italy to Rome; and next, probably, accomplishing his expected "journey into Spain," and exploring the benighted regions of western Europe. Nor did he perform these long and these laborious excursions with the feelings of a mere traveler. He had a great object before him, which he never suffered himself for a moment to forget. It was to disseminate truth; to pour light upon the dark minds of men; to reclaim lost creatures; to found churches; and to extend, by every method, the kingdom of his Redeemer. And this heavenly object he was enabled most successfully to promote. Wherever he went, his path, like that of a meteor in the midnight heavens, was marked with light. The kingdom of darkness melted away under the influence of his persuasions; churches rose up after him as if by miracle; and in comparatively a little time, the greater part of the Roman empire was filled with his doctrine.

Paul's labors, as a missionary, extended not only to the dissemination of truth and the founding of churches, but to *regulating* and *establishing* them. The rude materials of which the newly formed churches were composed needed much moulding and shaping, before they were properly fitted for God's spiritual house; and this they received, under his plastic hand. He instructed them, not only in the faith, but in the order of the gospel; made them acquainted with the several institutions of Christ; "ordained elders in every city;" and was instrumental, under God, in building up churches, as spiritual temples for the dwelling of their Lord.

Another important branch of Paul's missionary labor was the *instruction of teachers* for the numerous churches of the Gentiles. Of many of these teachers he was the spiritual father; and they could have received special instruction from no one else. To have an adequate idea, therefore, of the labors of Paul, we must regard him, not only as a preacher of Christ, and a winner of souls, over a great part of the Roman empire, but as an *instructor in divinity*—a

teacher of future teachers—who was training up laborers to be his successors in the vineyard of the Lord.

Amidst the other labors of the apostle Paul, he maintained a *general care and inspection of the churches he had planted*. This is what he particularly mentions, as coming upon him daily—"the care of all the churches." In the exercise of this general care, he would be led to pray for them; to keep up a correspondence with them, and an acquaintance with their state; to warn them of their dangers; heal their divisions; correct, if possible, their disorders; refute the errors which appeared among them; and with the feelings of an affectionate, anxious parent, seek by every method to promote their good.

Nor did the labors of Paul, either in fact, or in his own probable estimation of them, have respect solely to the age in which he lived. He planned and labored for *posterity*. He labored for the good of the churches and of his fellow immortals, to the end of time. And to the labors of no mere man are the church and the

world more deeply indebted, than to those of Paul.

The sketch here given of this distinguished apostle and minister of Jesus is sufficient, to justify his own declaration, "I labored more abundantly than they all." And as he was disposed to take none of the glory of these extensive labors to himself, but ascribed it wholly to Divine grace, saying, "Yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me"—so it becomes us to honor Paul only as an instrument, and to ascribe the glory of his exertions and successes to sovereign grace alone.

But how can it be accounted for, that Paul should have accomplished so much as he did? Christians in these days think they do about as much as they can, if they maintain a round of religious observances, and take care of themselves. And ministers think they do as much as they can, if they preach two sermons on the Sabbath, and perform the usual clerical duties in their own parishes. But Paul's labors far exceeded these every way; and the question to be considered is, "How did he perform them? How was he enabled to bring so much to pass?"

Paul, let it be remembered, was no more than a man. Nor is there evidence that he possessed firmer health, or greater strength, or a more winning exterior or manner, than other men. His enemies said of him, by way of reproach, that "his bodily presence was weak, and his speech contemptible;" and all the accounts which ancient writers have furnished, represent him as small of stature, "rude in speech," and destitute of any peculiar personal advantages with which to be recommended.

Nor can his distinguished labors and success be accounted for, on the ground of his peculiar *facilities* for preaching and promoting the gospel of Jesus. Such facilities he did not possess. On the contrary, he was obliged to pursue his labors under many trying and distressing embarrassments. He was tried usually, if not always, with deep poverty. He was tried with frequent and cruel persecutions, and with constant exposures to danger and to death. And whatever may be intended by the "thorn in his flesh," there can be no doubt that *he* considered it a distressing hindrance to his usefulness.

Nor can the abundance of Paul's labors be

accounted for, from the great length of the period during which he was employed ; as the whole space, from his conversion to his death, could have been little more than thirty years.

The true reasons of which we are in search, and by which we are to account for the distinguished labors and success of the great apostle of the Gentiles, are, doubtless, chiefly of a *moral nature*.

In the first place, he gave himself *wholly to his work*. The leading object of his life was to promote the gospel and save souls ; and this he kept constantly in view. He had no farm to cultivate, no schemes of ambition to accomplish, and no private purposes of worldly policy or speculation to carry into effect. He had no time to devote to sensual gratification, to scenes of festivity and amusement, or even to many of the innocent enjoyments of life. He had a great work before him—one on which his whole heart was set—one, in comparison with which all worldly affairs appeared as trifles ; and nothing was permitted to divert him from it. He was not satisfied to engage in this work one day in the week, and in the pursuits of the world

the other days; but he was *every day* devoted, and *every day* active, in promoting the cause of his Redeemer and Lord.

In this great work of spreading the gospel, Paul, it appears, was an *indefatigable* laborer. There was no stopping him, and no tiring him. Whether on the land or on the ocean; whether among Christians, Jews, or heathens; whether a prisoner or a freeman; whether in plenty or in want; in one respect he was always the same. His heart was habitually fixed, and his mind, his tongue, and his hands employed in advancing the cause and kingdom of Christ.

Again, the apostle Paul was an *ardent* and yet a *most affectionate* laborer. Of the intense ardor with which he engaged in the great work he had undertaken, we have many examples. Thus, it is said of him, during his abode at Athens, that "his spirit was *stirred within him*, when he saw the whole city given to idolatry." At the commencement of his public labors at Corinth, it is also said that he "was *pressed in spirit*, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ." Of the state of feeling denoted by these expressions, perhaps no person of less

ardor than the apostle Paul can well conceive. "His spirit was *stirred* within him"—he "was *pressed* in spirit"—the strong emotions of his heart must have utterance, or his heart must break: Still, the ardor of his soul did not discover itself in the language of violence and resentment, but rather in the melting accents of affectionate entreaty. He warned his hearers "night and day with tears"—"*with tears.*"

Other traits in the character of Paul's labors were *prudence* and *faithfulness*. He kept nothing back which was profitable to his hearers; and yet adapted his instructions, in the wisest manner, to the circumstances of time and place. "Unto the Jews he had become as a Jew, that he might gain the Jews; to them that were under the law, as under the law, that he might gain them that were under the law; and to them that were without law, as without law, that he might gain them that were without law. To the weak, he became as weak, that he might gain the weak." He was made all things to all men, that he might by all means save some. And yet, he "was determined to know nothing among his hearers, save Jesus Christ and him

crucified ;” and he “shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God.”

The manifest *disinterestedness* of the apostle Paul spread a moral charm over his labors, and made him all but irresistible. There was a kind of transparency about him, which rendered his designs evident and open to all whom he addressed. They could not but be satisfied, at once, that he had no private ends to answer, and that he “sought not theirs but them.”

It was characteristic of the labors of Paul, and may be regarded as one reason why he accomplished so much, that he constantly *aimed at great things*. In all his movements, after he became a missionary, we discover the march of a man, who, though deeply humbled, was conscious of his own powers, and was determined to accomplish much for Christ. The maxim of a distinguished modern missionary—“expect great things ; attempt great things”—must have been familiar to him in thought, if not in words. Every spiritual conquest he gained, every church he founded, served to inspire him with resolution to gain another conquest, and to lay another trophy at the footstool of his Lord.

It was, doubtless, a principal reason why Paul was enabled to do so much good, that he maintained a constant sense of his *dependence* upon God, and pursued all his labors with fervent *prayer* for the Divine assistance and blessing. Of his deep and chastened spirit of dependence he has given us many proofs. "We are not sufficient of ourselves to *think any thing* as of ourselves, but all our sufficiency is of God." "Neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase." In the exercise of such a spirit, we can readily conceive that he would not undertake any thing of importance, without first referring the matter to God. He would engage in no work of faith or labor of love, without humbly and fervently seeking the Divine assistance and blessing. And this, he has authorized us to say, is the manner in which he lived. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication." "Making mention of you always in my prayers."

It must be added again, in accounting for the labors and successes of Paul, that the Divine assistance and blessing, which he so fervently

implored, *were not withheld*. The God of heaven worked with him—as he will ever work with those who possess and exemplify such a spirit—and enabled him always to triumph in Christ.” Thus, with a heart burning with love, and with his tongue, and pen, and hands all devoted to a single object—the advancement of his Redeemer’s kingdom; and with God and heaven enlisted on his side; he went forward from labor to labor—from achievement to achievement—yes, like his Divine Master, “from conquering to conquer,” till he had accomplished all that great work which we have attempted to describe, and which is attributed to him in the book of God.

The foregoing remarks should teach us several important lessons; and, first, that *one man is capable of doing much good*. Paul was a man of like passions and infirmities as ourselves. He had no more than the powers of a man; and with his numerous and distressing embarrassments, he could not have had superior facilities for doing good. Yet how much did he do? How much the church in all succeed-

ing ages has been indebted to the labors of Paul?

Nor do we learn this lesson from Paul only. Other individuals have appeared since, whose distinguished labors and usefulness may serve to increase our impressions of the same important truth. How much did Luther accomplish? By his single voice, he broke the silence of Europe's long slumber, and not only exposed, but in great measure dissipated, the deplorable ignorance, superstition, and wickedness, in which priests and people, and all classes around him, were involved. By his almost unassisted efforts, he humbled the pride of the Roman Pontiff—him who had “exalted himself above all that was called God,”—and delivered a considerable portion of the Christian world from spiritual bondage. How much, also, did Whitefield accomplish? Raised up at a period when the spirit of religion, both in his own country and in this, was lamentably low, and the holy fire seemed almost extinct; by the power of his eloquence, and the fervor of his heart, he was instrumental in arousing a slumbering church, in rescuing thousands from the thralldom of sin,

and in introducing, extensively, a spirituality and warmth into the services of religion, which, we trust, they may never lose.

And if it be said, that these were eloquent and powerful ministers, possessing on that account peculiar advantages for doing good, we may contemplate the labors of one who was not a minister. Look then at the philanthropic Howard. Roused by misfortune to a sense of his duty in regard to the temporal sufferings of his fellow men, he visited nearly all Europe and the East, not to feed a thirst for knowledge, or to gratify a vain curiosity, but, in the eloquent language of Mr. Burke, "to dive into the depth of dungeons; to plunge into the infection of hospitals; to survey the abodes of sorrow and pain; to take the gauge and dimension of misery, depression, and contempt; to remember the forgotten; to attend to the neglected; to visit the forsaken; and to compare and collate the distresses of all men in all countries. His was a voyage of discovery; a circumnavigation of charity; and the benefits of his labors continue to be felt throughout the world."

And if it be said, that the persons here spoken

of were all of them males, who may be supposed to move in a sphere of usefulness more extended than that of the other sex, I may introduce for consideration the labors of a humble, unassuming female. Look then at Hannah More, and contemplate the good which she has accomplished. It has been remarked, and I think justly, that by the salutary influence of her writings on the minds and morals of the lower classes in England, she did more, at a certain period, for the salvation of her country, than could have been done by the whole British army or navy.

Nor is she the only female whose labors have been followed with important blessings to the church. How many pious, watchful mothers, like those of Timothy and Augustine, of Doddrige, Newton, and Dwight, have been chiefly instrumental in forming the characters of their sons; and have reared them up, to shine as stars of the first magnitude in the sphere of usefulness on earth, and in the firmament of heaven forever and ever?

We may further learn what each of us *most needs*, in order to our becoming extensively useful. It is not, in ordinary cases, more health,

or more strength, or greater natural facilities for doing good. It is rather this—a *heart* to do good. We need the spirit and the heart of Paul. We need his disinterestedness, his diligence, his burning zeal, his humble dependence, and his untiring perseverance in the cause and service of his Lord. Did these several traits belong to us, to the degree in which they belonged to him; we should not need our natural capacities enlarged, or our station in life materially altered, in order to our becoming extensively useful. With hearts to do good, either to the bodies or the souls of men—with strong *desires* to be useful, in promoting and extending the Redeemer's kingdom; opportunities of gratifying these desires would not long be wanting. And with the promised blessing of heaven on our side, we might expect every labor of benevolence in which we engaged, would be crowned with desirable success.

We learn, again, what the church and the world *most need* at the present time. It is the falling mantle of Paul. It is—not drones in the spiritual hive, who only desire to get a living from the church—but *laborers*, coming forward

in the vineyard, in the spirit and power of the great apostle of the Gentiles.

This is what we most need in the churches at home. In seasons of prevailing stupidity and coldness, it is often asked by ministers and people, What shall be done? What *can* be done to bring about a more desirable state of things? And by way of answer let me inquire, What would Paul do, if he were present? Were *he* present in any of our churches, where coldness and stupidity prevail—were *he* present, “pressed in spirit,” as he once was at Corinth—in the holy ardor of his soul, were *he* present; what would he do? If, under such circumstances, we can satisfy ourselves what Paul would do; we may rest quite satisfied that it is incumbent on us to do the same.

And the spirit of Paul is needed, not only in the churches at home, but in the missions abroad, and in those vast fields of spiritual darkness which are still spread out upon the earth.—Far be it from me to insinuate that the present missionaries to the heathen are not faithful men. I have the utmost confidence, that they *are* faithful men. They are men, I believe,

who exhibit more of the spirit of the primitive disciples, than perhaps any other class of Christians. Still, none of them will feel at all disparaged, in not being ranked with the apostle Paul. It is laborers such as Paul that the heathen most need. And the nearer modern missionaries come up to his standard, and to the bright example which he has left; the greater, doubtless, will be their usefulness, and the more they will be honored and approved of God.

CHAPTER VI.

Comparative advantages of Primitive and Modern Christians, for spreading the Gospel.

IN the Epistles of Paul, we find declarations such as these: "Their sound went into *all the earth*, and their words unto *the ends of the world*." The gospel "is come unto you, as it is *in all the world*, and it bringeth forth fruit, as also in you." "Be not moved away from

the hope of the gospel which ye have heard, and which was preached *to every creature which is under heaven* ; whereof I, Paul, am made a minister."

Whatever construction or limitation may be put upon these passages, it will, I think, be admitted by every candid interpreter, that they denote a very rapid extension of the gospel in the earliest period of the Christian church. At the time when they were written, the Saviour had not been crucified and the new dispensation instituted, more than about thirty years ; and yet, in this comparatively short space, his religion and kingdom had been so greatly extended, through the labors of his disciples and friends, that it could be said in truth, and in some authorized sense, that "their sound had gone into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world;" and that his gospel had been "preached to every creature which is under heaven."

How shall we account for this rapid spread of the gospel in primitive times ? And especially, in what manner can we account for it, considering the slow progress which the same gospel

has made in most periods since ; and the comparatively slow progress which it is making now ? Can it be accounted for on the ground that the primitive believers enjoyed superior *advantages* for spreading the gospel, compared with those which are enjoyed at present ? To institute a comparison of these several advantages, and thereby furnish a satisfactory answer to this question, will be my principal endeavor in the present discussion.

It is obvious, I think, that in some respects the apostles *had superior advantages* for spreading the gospel. In the first place, they were favored with the gift of *tongues*. As they passed from nation to nation, and from place to place, publishing the gospel of the grace of God, they were not necessitated to suspend their public labors, till they had made themselves familiar with the various languages and dialects. By a supernatural influence, they were enabled to speak intelligibly in any language, as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance. This gift of tongues was an advantage to them, not only as it saved the labor and delay of acquiring languages, but as it was fitted to excite attention

and wonder, and to impress those who heard them with the truth and importance of their message. "Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born?"

Another decided advantage which the primitive disciples possessed over modern believers, consisted in the power of working *miracles*. They were able, in this way, not only to arouse attention and overcome opposing prejudices, but to afford instant and incontestible evidence that their doctrine was conformable to the will of God.

And so far as the apostles and their fellow laborers were under the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they possessed an advantage to which Christians, at the present day, can make no pretensions. We are not to suppose, however, that they were at all times the subjects of a supernatural influence; for had they been, we should not have heard of their frequent mistakes and imperfections, and their history would have been very different from what we actually find it. Doubtless, they were

supernaturally directed, when it was absolutely necessary that they should be ; and they were sufficiently favored with a Divine inspiration, to render them acquainted with the truths which it was their business to teach, and which they were to record for the instruction of mankind.

In recounting these superior advantages of the apostles, it must however be remarked, that they are advantages of which we stand in but little need. Though Christians at the present day do not possess the gift of tongues ; there are those, calling themselves Christians, who are capable of speaking, perhaps, in every tongue. And besides ; the comparative ease with which different languages are now acquired, and translations made, almost removes the hindrance, once so formidable, arising from the confusion of tongues, to the universal spread and triumph of the gospel. And though religious teachers in modern times have not the power of working miracles in attestation of the truth of their doctrines ; yet, so far as their doctrines accord with those of the apostles, they are supported by all the miracles which the apostles wrought. And, as an able writer has well observed, “ the turn-

ing point of receiving Christianity, even in the apostolic age, consisted less in having seen the miracles, than in seeing their own need of a revelation, and its adaptation to the present circumstances of humanity." The miracles of that period frequently excited wonder and astonishment, but we have no evidence that they were often instrumental, either of enlightening the understanding or renewing the heart. In the production of these effects, "moral influence has always prevailed more than supernatural influence. The generation which literally lived on miracles, and had angel's food for their daily bread, perished from unbelief in the desert; whilst their children, brought up in the loneliness of the wilderness, far from the corruptions of the surrounding nations, were ever eminent, to after times, as an example of a godly nation."* And though none, at the present time, can pretend to that Divine inspiration with which the primitive Christians were occasionally indulged; yet we enjoy the full benefits of their inspiration. The important

* Douglas' Hints on Missions, p. 23.

truths, which were suggested to them by the Holy Spirit, have all been transmitted unimpaired to us.

It may be supposed by some, that the *newness* of the Christian system, as propagated by the apostles, gave them an advantage over all succeeding teachers. To the weight and importance of their doctrines were added the charm and the advantages of *novelty*. But it will be recollected, that neither Christ nor his apostles ever pretended to establish a new religion. Theirs was only a new dispensation of the true religion, which had been the same in every previous age. They taught "none other things than what Moses and the Prophets did say should come." It will also be recollected, that the Christian religion, when first made known to idolatrous nations, is as new to them now, as it could have been then. And it may well be questioned, in either case, whether the novelty of the system is any recommendation of it. Does not the inquiry, "What new religion is this?" which missionaries, then and now, are obliged to hear so often asked, and asked too by

way of reproach, occasion them, on the whole, more harm than good?

Let us now turn from a consideration of the superior advantages of the primitive saints for propagating the religion of Christ, to notice several particulars in which we obviously have an advantage over them.

One of these, and one of no inconsiderable magnitude, results from the modern improvements in the art of *navigation*. By the discovery of the magnetic needle, and its application to the purposes of navigation, the wide world of waters is easily explored, and the most distant parts of the globe are brought, as it were, together. Doubtless, Paul would have deemed it a very great privilege, could he have enjoyed, in respect to this, the advantages of modern travelers and missionaries. A voyage in our days half round the globe would not, probably, be more arduous or tedious, than his little excursion from Jerusalem to Rome.

Another invention of vast advantage to us, as an instrument of promoting the gospel, is the *art of printing*. In primitive times, to obtain copies of the Scriptures, or of other valuable

works, when the whole must be transcribed with the pen, was necessarily tedious and expensive. I remember to have seen it stated somewhere, that it once cost the same in England, to procure a copy of the Scriptures, as to build one of the arches of the London bridge. But with what comparative ease are books now multiplied and circulated? How would Paul have exulted, could he have gone forth on his missionary excursions, bearing thousands of Bibles and tracts? Or could he, within a few days, and at a trifling expense, have placed his invaluable Epistles in ten thousand different hands? No miracle he ever wrought, or perhaps thought of, would in his estimation have been so important to him as the privilege of doing this.

Our advantages for spreading the gospel are superior to those of the primitive disciples, in that we enjoy the protection of *government*. This they did not enjoy. They labored at the constant hazard, not merely of all their worldly comforts, but of their personal liberty and lives. The apostle Paul represents himself as having been, and that simply because of his attachment to the gospel, "in perils" almost innumerable,

“in stripes above measure, in prisons frequent, and in deaths oft.” During a considerable part of his public ministry, he was an “ambassador in bonds.” He was obliged to pursue his benevolent labors under the suffering and embarrassment of wearing a chain. Would he have deemed it no privilege, could he have been released from this painful species of confinement, and could he have been delivered from his constant exposure to stripes, imprisonment, and death? Would he have deemed it no privilege, if, instead of the persecution of the civil power, he could have enjoyed its protection, as ministers and Christians generally do at the present day?

The *numbers* and *acquirements* of Christian teachers, and of Christians generally, at the present time, give them great advantages over the primitive believers in the work of spreading the gospel. When Christianity began to prevail, the number of its public teachers was few; and for several years afterwards, they could not have been numerous. And not only so, they were generally, in the usual sense of the term, illiterate. However important, in other respects,

their ministerial qualifications may have been, they were deficient in a knowledge of books and of the world. They had never enjoyed opportunities of becoming extensively learned. And with little qualification, these remarks may be extended to the whole primitive Christian family. The number of Christians was few at first, and though it constantly and rapidly increased, it did not often draw within its compass those who were distinguished for their literary attainments? "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble were called." In their first attempts to spread the gospel, particularly among the Greeks and Romans, Christians were obliged to assume the embarrassing attitude of teachers, in relation to those who, both in their own estimation and that of the world, were far more learned than themselves.

But in respect to Christians at the present time, the opposite of nearly all this is true. The present number of Christians is very great. Of those now living who bear the Christian name, there cannot be less than two hundred millions of souls. The present number of Christian teachers is also great. Bating the

vast number of Ecclesiastics connected with the Roman Catholic and Greek communions, the number of Protestant Christian ministers must amount to a great many thousands. And should we detach from these all such as are essentially disqualified for preaching the gospel, still there would remain a mighty host, who love their Master and his work, and who are highly qualified with learning and talents, as well as piety, to inculcate and defend the faith of the gospel, and to promote its universal prevalence and triumph. And the Christian world at the present period, instead of being inferior in knowledge and civilization to other portions of the globe, is vastly and confessedly superior. This is the portion, to which Mohammedan and heathen nations must ultimately look, not only for their religion, but for most other things which are truly valuable, either in science or the arts of life. The facts here stated constitute, obviously, not a single advantage, but a powerful train of advantages, in the hands of Christians at the present day, for spreading the gospel.

The *mode of operation* pursued by Christians at present affords them some advantages over

the primitive disciples in their efforts to advance the kingdom of Christ. Formerly, the different parts of this arduous and important work seem not to have been accurately defined, or properly distributed. The division of labor into the two distinct departments of making contributions and exertions at home, and acting as missionaries abroad, was not sufficiently understood. And to such as were inclined to make contributions, the most desirable facilities, probably, were not afforded. The plan of combining effort by means of organized associations, so far as appears, was unknown. Whatever was done, therefore, was done individually; and those who were able to do but little would not think it of consequence to attempt any thing. And those who actually went to the mission fields seem either to have overlooked, or (what is more probable) to have been prevented by the force of circumstances from employing, one of the most powerful means ever devised of assailing the empire of darkness;—I mean the establishment of *schools*, for the religious instruction and benefit of heathen youth.

It will be admitted, I should think, in view of

these remarks, that the present mode of missionary operation is, in several respects, superior to the ancient; and consequently that it places advantages in our hands of which the early Christians were destitute. The necessary division of labor between those who contribute at home, and those who are active abroad, is now understood and universally obtains. And to such as are willing to aid the work by their contributions, every desirable facility is afforded. The smallest mite is not refused, nor is it bestowed in vain. Every rill is directed into its proper channel; and every channel into a still broader stream; and the effect of all united is to swell the current of that mighty river, which is making glad the city of our God. Associations composed of individuals, and these united in larger auxiliaries, and these again combining their power, and bringing it to bear upon a single object in the dissemination of gospel truth,—must obviously give to the charities of the present day all that energy and efficiency which system and union are able to impart. The missionaries abroad, too, are everywhere availing themselves of the benefits of schools.

They are carrying into effect a system of education, which, though necessarily slow at first, must, if persisted in, be sure;—which, though not fitted to produce immediately a multitude of converts, is gradually undermining existing superstitions, and preparing the way for their ultimate overthrow.

Indeed, all the advances in science and knowledge which have been made since the days of the apostles, are, directly or indirectly, so many advantages in the hands of present Christians for promoting the cause of their Redeemer. These advances, it will not be questioned, are very great. But it is a well-grounded maxim, that “knowledge is power;” and it is not more powerful in its influence upon any work, than on that of promoting the gospel. Every step taken in the field of real science is so much gained to the cause of light and truth, and is fitted, in some way, either more or less directly, to subserve the interests of true religion in the world.

The comparison we have here made between the several advantages of the primitive Christians, and those possessed by Christians now, in

relation to the work of spreading the gospel, must, I think, satisfy every impartial mind, that their unparalleled success is not to be accounted for on the ground of their superior advantages. For if in some respects they had an advantage over us; in many others, and those too, I venture to say, of greater importance, we have a decided advantage over them.

Perhaps it will be urged, in accounting for their successes, that *the Spirit* in a remarkable degree attended their labors. Wherever they went, the Holy Spirit followed them, and rendered their efforts powerful and effectual. This, doubtless, was the fact; but the question still remains, Why did the Holy Spirit follow them? Why did he bless their exertions more signally than ours? God, to be sure, is a sovereign in the distribution of spiritual favors; yet he is not an arbitrary sovereign; he never acts but in view of reasons. What reason then can be given, why the Holy Spirit should have accompanied and blessed the labors of the primitive Christians, more than the labors of Christians now, except that they were more prayerful, more devoted, and more eminently holy?

I am sensible that this mode of accounting for the difference must be a humbling one to us; still, I have reason to believe it is the only mode. It is evident, from the very face of the New Testament, that the primitive saints were more devoted to their work, more dead to the world, and more fervent and abundant in prayer—yes, *altogether more*, than Christians are now, or than they have been, probably, at any later period. They were, as an apostle expresses it, crucified to the world, and the world to them. Its riches, its honors, its fascinating pleasures—all were “counted as dross and dung,” that they might win Christ themselves, and might extend the blessings of his gospel to others. By unceasing labors and willing sacrifices, accompanied by fervent and persevering prayers, they secured to themselves the constant smiles of heaven, and the unfailing influences of the Holy Spirit. They were continually active, “warning every man, and teaching every man;” and wherever they went, they carried a revival with them. Thus their doctrines and their religion spread, and converts were multiplied. “Their

sound went forth into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.”

And here we may see to what the Christian world must come, before a renewal of the triumphs and the successes of primitive times can be reasonably expected. There must be a renewal of the *spirit* of those times. Christians are not yet half awake on the subject of spreading and promoting their religion. The world will never be evangelized in this way. Indeed, those parts which are evangelized will scarcely be retained. The spirit of the primitive ages must return. The mantle of the apostles must descend. The labors, prayers, and sacrifices of the early Christians must be renewed. Doubtless, the frequent persecutions which those precious Christians were called to endure, served to brighten their graces, and to excite their zeal; and if the slumbering church of the present age will not awake by any other means, God is able to kindle the fires of persecution again. He is able to chastise, and chastise, and chastise his people, till they *will* learn and follow the path of their duty.

CHAPTER VII.

Our Indebtedness to Missions a reason for supporting them.

THE apostle Paul, in writing to the Gentile converts, often reminds them of what they once were, and from what they had been recovered by means of the gospel. Such hints, he might naturally suppose, would serve to humble them, give them a sense of the value of the gospel, and excite them to the performance of those duties which were devolving on them, as professed followers of Christ.

It may be profitable to my readers also, and especially my young readers, to consider for a moment *their* great indebtedness to the gospel, and the fearful depths of debasement and wretchedness from which, by means of it, they have been saved. Though it cannot be said of us that we have been literal idolaters, still it is in a sense true that we have been *saved from idolatry*, with all its attendant miseries and horrors,

through the gospel. Our European ancestors were once heathens, "carried away unto dumb idols, even as they were led." They were the blinded, determined votaries of an idolatrous and bloody superstition; and had they not been recovered from it by means of the gospel, *we* might have been born under the same yoke, and lived and died in the same miserable state.

The inhabitants of Britain and the adjacent countries, from whom we claim to be descended, were once a cruel and ferocious race of pagans. Their priests were denominated Druids; who had their dwellings in impenetrable forests and caverns, far from the abodes of men. They kept themselves, their diabolical acts, and religious rites in profound secrecy and mystery, by which means they were enabled to hold all around them in a state of the most debasing terror and servitude. They are said to have been worshipers of the oak; and when their sacred tree was cut down, would even deify its shapeless stump. The misseltoe, a small vine or shrub attaching to the boughs of the oak, was also an object of high veneration. Their sacrifices were offered in thick groves of oak,

and on some occasions in temples, or more properly inclosures, formed of massy stones.*

It will give us a sufficiently dreadful idea of the rites of the Druids, and the religious customs of our pagan ancestors, to know that they were in the frequent, if not constant, practice of offering human sacrifices. Such is the testimony of all credible historians, ancient and modern, who have treated of the subject. Cæsar, speaking of the inhabitants of Gaul and Britain, says, “Those of them who are afflicted with any dangerous disease often *sacrifice a man* for their recovery. In this business, they employ the ministry of the Druids; because these have declared to them that the anger of the gods cannot be appeased, so as to spare the life of one man, but by the life of another.”

Suetonius affirms that the Druids *sacrificed men*, and says “that Mercury is the god to whom they offered them.” Pliny tells us that “they considered it as a part of their most solemn and most obligatory religion to *put men*

*One of these, denominated Stonehenge is partly standing in England at the present time. The sites of several others have been discovered.

to death; and that to feed upon their dead bodies they esteemed most wholesome. The human victims were generally selected from among criminals or captives; but when none of these were to be had, they did not scruple to sacrifice innocent persons." One of the principal haunts of the Druids was on the island of Mona, or Anglesea. The poet Lucan, in his description of it, says, that "the trees were so thick and interwoven, that the rays of the sun could not penetrate through their branches; and that there was nothing to be seen there but a multitude of altars upon which the Druids sacrificed human victims, whose blood had turned the very trees of a horrid, crimson color."

Speaking of the Druids, Goldsmith and Hume both say, "No species of superstition was ever more terrible than theirs. They sacrificed human victims, which they sometimes burned in large wicker cages, made so capacious as to contain a multitude of persons at once, who were thus consumed together. And besides these severe penalties which they were permitted to inflict in this world, they inculcated the

eternal transmigration of souls, and thus extended their authority as far as the fears of their votaries. They were dreaded and almost adored by the people." Another historian says, "The most horrid of the superstitious rites of the Druids consisted in human sacrifices. The victim or victims (for there were sometimes many) were enclosed in a large figure resembling a man, formed of osier twigs; or according to some authors, they were simply wrapped round with hay. In this state, fire was applied, and they were reduced to ashes." Still another writer has observed, "The people were so devoted to this shocking custom of human sacrifices, that no business of any moment was transacted among them, without being prefaced with the blood of men. The altars where these offerings were made were far removed from the common resorts of mankind, being situated in the depth of woods, that the surrounding gloom might add to the horror of the operation, and give a reverence to the place, and the proceeding." An American traveler, not many years since, visited one of these mysterious and awful retreats of the ancient Druids. Here he "saw

a vast stone, or altar, on the face of which a cavity was scooped out, so shaped as just to receive an extended human body." In this cavity, multitudes of human beings have, in all probability, been stretched, and their life-blood spilled. It is sufficient evidence of the horrid nature of the superstition here described, that the Romans, though proverbially tolerant towards the different species of idolatry practiced in their provinces, were excited to vengeance by the cruelties of the Druids, and attempted to put an end to them by force.

Do we shudder and turn pale, in view of the atrocities and abominations here referred to? Let us remember, then, who were their authors, and to whom they properly belonged. It was not to strangers, but to our own *natural ancestors*—the fathers and mothers from whom we are lineally descended! Tracing back our genealogy only a few centuries, we arrive at the very scenes which have been described, and may behold our own progenitors partaking in them! We may behold our own father lifting the bloody knife, and plunging it into the heart of his victim; or sinking, it may be, him-

self beneath the stroke of a Druidical priest! We may behold him kindling the fire which is to consume a trembling prisoner to ashes; or himself confined in the "wicker cage," involved in smoke and flames, and death!!

And who extinguished these awful fires? What angel of mercy cut down these unhallowed groves, overturned the bloody altars, and put an end to these horrid superstitious rites? What rescued our fathers and mothers, and instrumentally *saved us*, from terrors and cruelties such as have been described? There can be but one answer to these inquiries. It was the *Bible*, the *gospel*, that effected our deliverance. } It was the benign and saving influence of the *religion of Christ*.

The precise time of the introduction of the gospel into England is unknown. It is thought by some to have been preached there by the apostle Paul, or by those who had received instruction from him, during the first century of the Christian era; but this is not sufficiently ascertained. We have conclusive evidence, however, not only of its existence, but of its having made considerable progress, in the sec-

ond century. So far as appears, it continued to be cherished and propagated, particularly in the southern parts of the island, so long as the Romans retained possession of the country. But when the Roman garrisons were withdrawn, in the fifth century, and England was invaded, first by the Scots and Picts, and afterwards by the Saxons, all of whom were inveterate idolaters, Christianity suffered a dreadful repulse, and was well nigh extirpated. Nevertheless, after the lapse of about a hundred years, it began to triumph over its pagan invaders and enemies, and those who had sought its overthrow became, one after another, its avowed supporters and friends.

Early in the seventh century, Christian missionaries entered England both from the North, and the South, and its second evangelization was vigorously commenced. The work proceeded, without serious interruption, till Christianity obtained such an ascendancy, that it could be shaken no more. It was a long time, however, before idolatry and heathenism were entirely rooted out. So late as the tenth century, we find laws enacted against the worship

of idols, which proves that the practice was still continued.

As to the *manner* in which our forefathers received the knowledge of the gospel, there can be no dispute. It was through the labors and sufferings of *missionaries*. They could have received it in no other way. Their lot was cast at a great distance from Jerusalem, where the gospel was first promulgated. Immense regions of spiritual darkness and death lay between them and the rising light of heaven. How were these wide spread regions of idolatry and darkness penetrated? How did the light of heavenly truth reach the distant and benighted abodes of our fathers, in the west of Europe? It must have been, and it was, by the efforts of missionaries. The churches already established made it an object, not only to preserve religion among themselves, but to extend it to others. Missionaries in great numbers were raised up and sent forth; church after church was planted; conquest after conquest was gained. The star which rose in the East scattered its rays farther and farther to the West, till at length it beamed on German and British lands. Paul, and the

missionaries trained under him, accomplished much in this benevolent work; they were followed in it by others of a similar spirit; and thus the standard of the cross became unfurled, not only in Greece, Italy, Spain, and Gaul, but in more distant England—the land of our fathers' sepulchres. England therefore—which was before a land of darkness and of the shadow of death, and literally “full of the habitations of cruelty”—was enlightened, humanized, civilized, reclaimed, through the persevering efforts of Christian missionaries. Not by tortures and punishments, but by the soothing, saving influence of the gospel, they succeeded in quenching the fires, and overturning the altars, and destroying the groves of the murderous Druids, and rescued those from whom we derived our being, and in effect *saved us*, from all the horrors of heathenism, here and hereafter.

I cannot conclude this painfully interesting account, without some practical reflections. And,

1. It becomes us to adore the sovereign grace of God, as manifested in the circumstances of *our* existence. Why was our lot cast in this favored period of the world, and in this

highly favored portion of it? Why were not *we* doomed to an age of bondage and darkness—an age of Druidical superstition and cruelty? Why were not *we* left to worship the oaks of our forests, or the work of our own hands; and to the forlorn hope of appeasing, by human sacrifices, the dreaded wrath of imaginary gods? Why were we not consigned, with others who have lived before us, to a state of barbarism, without Bibles, without ordinances, destitute alike of rational enjoyments in this life, and a hope of glory beyond the grave? Are we better than our fathers? Who then has made us to differ from them? And why are we thus highly and happily distinguished? These questions can be solved, only by referring them to the sovereign pleasure and grace of the Supreme Being. It hath *pleased God* to distinguish us from all the generations which have been before us, by loading us with greater mercies, and putting into our hands a richer price to get wisdom. May we have hearts to adore his sovereign grace, and to render again according to the blessings we have received. We should remember, too, that our responsi-

bilities increase with our privileges ; and that if, after what has been done for us, we fail of the grace of life, our doom in the other world must be peculiarly dreadful. More tolerable will it be, in that case, for our poor pagan ancestors—more tolerable even for Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for us.

2. The subject is fitted to impress upon us the *exceeding value of the gospel*. Compare Old England, or New, at the present time, with what they were previous to their being visited with the light of the gospel ; and how surprising the change ! Instead of unmeaning ceremonies, and barbarous, murderous rites ; the God of heaven is worshiped in the way of his own appointment, the consolations of the gospel are felt, and its precious institutions are known and observed. Instead of terror and bondage in this life, despair in death, and darkness and wretchedness beyond the tomb ; the pleasure of the infinite Creator is revealed and understood, and by all who truly seek him, his love and favor are enjoyed. Learning, too, has taken the place of ignorance, wealth of poverty, social refinement of barbarian rudeness, rational liber-

ty of lawless domination, in short, all the charities of Christian society of the multiform horrors of untutored heathenism. And what has done it? To what, as a leading cause, is this great and happy change to be traced? The answer is so obvious, that no one can mistake it. The change of which I have spoken is to be attributed, directly or indirectly, to *the gospel*. Without the gospel, we had lived and died in all the wretchedness of our pagan ancestors. We had been a race of ignorant, untutored savages, destitute alike of every rational enjoyment here, and of the hope of blessedness beyond the grave. How deeply, then, are we indebted to the gospel, and how highly we should value it. Whatever else we underrate and despise, we must cling to our Bibles, our Sabbaths, our Christian privileges, as standing in immediate connection with every thing desirable, in respect both to this life and that which is to come.

3. The subject further teaches us our great obligations to the cause of *missions*. It is not uncommon for persons, even in this age and country, to despise and oppose the cause of

missions. They represent the missionary work as a needless sacrifice, and lose no opportunity of embarrassing and reproaching it. But what had been the condition even of such persons themselves, had it not been for the work of missions? And what had now been the condition of the world, but for this truly benevolent work? The gospel was once confined to Palestine, and to a small part of the Jewish nation. Suppose it had never extended farther; and *no pains had been taken* to extend it farther. In other words, suppose the work of missions had never been undertaken. What had been the present condition of the nations? And what had been *our* deplorable case? Our ancestors were brought to a knowledge of Christianity by the labor of missionaries. We know this, historically; and we know it must have been so, from the very nature of the case. Suppose then this labor had been withheld, and our fathers had been left to their idols, their Druids, and their murderous rites. In this case, what had become of us? What had been our condition at the present hour? Those who oppose the work of missions are opposing that, without

which themselves had been savages and heathens—without which the fairest, happiest portions of our globe had been filled with idols, and covered with pollution and blood.

4. If we are thus deeply indebted to the cause of missions, then we are under strong obligations to *support it*. Every consideration which could have induced Christians, more than a thousand years ago, to send the gospel to our heathen fathers, and thus snatch them and us from the horrors of a bloody and idolatrous superstition, is now urging us to send the same gospel, and to perform the same friendly office, for those who dwell in darkness and in the region and shadow of death. On the other hand, every objection which can be arrayed against the cause of missions now, might with equal if not greater propriety have been insisted on then. If it be said, for example, that the work of missions is laborious, hazardous, and expensive ; so it was then. Nor had Christians a hundredth part of the ability to bear the expense, that they have at present. Or if it be said that we have heathens enough among ourselves ; the same remark, in a stricter sense, and to a much greater extent, was true then.

Or if it be said, that Christ can take care of his own cause, and spread his gospel, without human aid ; so he could then. But if objections such as these had prevailed with Christians formerly, and prevented them from sending the gospel to the benighted abodes of our pagan ancestors ; what had become of them ? And what, I repeat, had become of us ? Our personal *indebtedness* to missions is an argument which should come home to every bosom, inducing us to lay aside all vain excuses and objections, and engage in the work of spreading the gospel with perseverance and zeal.

I cannot conclude the chapter without observing, that all who possess the gospel should *embrace it*, without delay. It is an inestimable price put into our hands to get wisdom ; but unless we have hearts to improve it, it can do us no permanent good. So far from this, it must, as a slighted, abused privilege, become a means, indirectly, of increasing our guilt, and aggravating our eternal condemnation. "He that chastiseth the heathen," who have not the word of life ; shall he not with a sorer, heavier hand correct and punish us, if we madly reject this heavenly word, and go down to death ?

CHAPTER VIII.

The Cruelties of the Heathen.

“THE dark places of the earth,” says the inspired Psalmist, “are full of the habitations of cruelty.” And what was true of these “dark places,” three thousand years ago, is equally true at the present hour. They are now “*full of the habitations of cruelty.*” The dark places of the earth may be classed under three divisions:

1. Those which are covered with the darkness and delusions of *Popery*. The popish religion retains, indeed, the name of Christian, but it can claim almost nothing else. There is little of the spirit or form of Christianity about it. The Scriptures are locked up from the common people; prayers are offered in an unknown tongue; while the instruction which is imparted is often no better, and in some respects worse, than none. The cardinal duties enjoined are an implicit subjection to the Pope and the priest, together with a scrupulous observance of

needless, senseless rites ; while the ground of hope proposed is, not the atoning blood of Christ, but the merits of the saints, and the intercession of the virgin Mary. To this form of delusion, vast multitudes of the human family are still in bondage. In Europe, the Pope wields his sceptre over Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, Naples, Sicily, Austria, Belgium, and a considerable part of Switzerland and Germany. He claims also, as belonging to his spiritual dominion, vast regions in North and South America, in Asia, and among the islands of the sea. Immense tracts of the habitable globe are, therefore, covered with the darkness of Popery ; a darkness well nigh as gross, and vastly more inexcusable, than that which broods over the regions of paganism.

2. Among the dark portions of the earth, we next notice those which are subject to the *Mohammedan delusion*. The Koran, which contains the pretended revelations of Mohammed, and is the bible and rule of all his followers, may be described as a heterogeneous mixture of Judaism, Paganism, and Christianity. It is an artfully written performance, and the religion

it inculcates was propagated with the sword. Mohammed was the greatest warrior of his age ; and the nations he conquered had no alternative, but to receive him as their prophet, or perish by his arms. The influence of such an argument was irresistible. His religion was embraced by multitudes, and for many centuries has spread itself over some of the fairest portions of the globe. Its dark and desolating influence is still extended over Turkey, Syria, Persia, Arabia, Egypt, and all the northern states of Africa. That holy land, where patriarchs sojourned, and prophets preached, and the Saviour of sinners lived and died, has for ages been numbered among "the dark places of the earth."

3. Those parts of the globe are emphatically dark, which are under the influence of *Paganism*, or *idolatry*. Soon after the fall, men began to discover an unaccountable predilection for idolatry. It can hardly be doubted that there were idols before the flood. At any rate, we have certain knowledge of them among the early posterity of Noah. It was a principal object of the call of Abraham, and of the institutions in Israel, to preserve *one* family among the nations

free from the general contagion of idolatry. The Egyptians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Persians, Greeks, Romans, and indeed (with the exception of Israel) all the enlightened and powerful nations of antiquity, were idolaters. And though the propagation of Christianity gave a check to this vile superstition, still, vast multitudes of our race ever have been, and are now, the worshipers of idols. Asia with its hundreds of millions, the greater part of Africa, the unexplored wilds of North and South America, and most of the islands of the sea, are in a sense filled with the objects and monuments of a stupid and debasing idol worship.

How true then is it, that darkness still covers the earth, and gross darkness the people? In what deep and widely extended delusion the benighted children of men are involved? And how much remains to be accomplished, before the Sun of righteousness shall have illumined every land, and the knowledge of the Lord has filled all the earth, as the waters do the channels of the deep?

But these "dark places of the earth are *full of the habitations of cruelty*;" and cruelty not of

one kind, but of *every description* which men and devils have been able to invent.

1. One species of cruelty which abounds in all the dark portions of the earth, is *murder*. There are murders, too, of different forms ; and they are perpetrated under various pretences.

One form of murder, which prevails to a most fearful extent, is *infanticide*. The ancient Arabs considered female infants a burthen, and often "buried them alive as soon as they were born." The lower classes among the Chinese frequently "drown their daughters in a vessel of water, at the moment of their birth." Mr. Abeel, an American missionary long resident in China, and who has devoted much attention to the subject, expresses the opinion that at least one fourth of the female infants are suffocated as soon as born. In some parts, the proportion is much greater than this.*

"Hundreds of helpless children," says Mr. Kingsbury, "have been inhumanly murdered by their parents, among the Choctaws. Sometimes the mother digs a grave, and buries the

* See Miss. Herald for April, 1844, p. 133.

babe alive, soon after its birth. Sometimes she puts it to death by stamping on its breast, or by strangling it, or by knocking it on the head."

The Rajpoots, a particular class among the Hindoos, have long been in the practice of murdering all their female children." Not one survives. The boys marry in the tribe next in rank below them." Other classes among the Hindoos often sacrifice their helpless infants to the gods. Some suspend them in baskets from the limbs of trees to perish with hunger, or to be devoured by birds of prey; some drown them in the sacred rivers; while others cast them to the monsters of the deep, and willingly remain to be witnesses of their destruction.

Infanticide was perfectly common at the Sandwich Islands, until within a few of the last years. Christian mothers now living have often confessed that, in the days of their ignorance, they had murdered several of their own children. Indeed, this most unnatural crime of infanticide is one of very ancient date. As long ago as the time of Moses, there were those who burned their children in the fire, as an offering to Moloch. (Lev. 18: 21.) There can be no doubt

that the practice has prevailed, in different parts of the heathen world, for thousands of years.

Another species of murder practiced among the heathen is that of their aged and helpless *parents*. Murders of this kind were frequent among the islanders of the Pacific, up to the time of their embracing Christianity. The natives of some of the Asiatic islands not only put their parents to death, but even devour them. The Greenlanders, before they were enlightened by the gospel, used frequently to destroy their aged mothers, by burying them alive. It is said also of the Chinese, that when their parents become old and helpless, they not unfrequently confine them in solitary places, and leave them to perish with hunger.

Vast multitudes have been murdered among the heathen as an offering to their sanguinary gods. It is in this way, as we have seen, that millions of infant children have been inhumanly destroyed. We have also seen, in the previous chapter, how much our own pagan ancestors were addicted to this horrid practice. Whole hecatombs were often sacrificed together, being consumed in the fatal "wicker cage." But of

all the heathen nations of which we have any knowledge, none carried the practice of human sacrifices to such an appalling extent as the native Mexicans, previous to their conquest by the Spaniards. "The number of victims immolated," says Prescott, "would stagger the faith of the least scrupulous believer. Scarcely any author pretends to estimate the yearly sacrifices throughout the empire at less than twenty thousand, and some carry the number as high as fifty. On great occasions, as the coronation of a king, or the consecration of a temple, the number becomes still more appalling. At the dedication of a great temple in the year 1486, the victims ranged in files, formed a procession nearly two miles long. The ceremony occupied several days, and not less than 70,000 captives are said to have perished at the shrine of the terrible divinity. It was customary to preserve the skulls of the sacrificed in buildings appropriated to the purpose. In only one of these edifices, the companions of Cortes counted 136,000 skulls."

The *manner* in which the Mexican sacrifices were offered is scarcely less frightful than their

number. The prisoner was stretched on a huge stone, the upper surface of which was somewhat convex. "Five priests secured his head and limbs; while the sixth, clad in a scarlet mantle, dexterously opened the breast of the wretched victim, and thrusting his hand into the wound, tore out the palpitating heart. Having first held up the heart towards the sun, he then cast it at the feet of the deity to whom the temple was devoted, while the multitudes below prostrated themselves in humble adoration."

The offering of human sacrifices prevailed, not only at Mexico, but among all the native tribes of North and South America. It has prevailed too, not only among untutored savages, but in the most learned and cultivated heathen nations. It prevailed in ancient Egypt, as existing monuments plainly indicate. That it was of frequent occurrence among the Greeks and Romans is well known to every student of their classic literature. In short, the numbers that have been murdered on heathen altars exceed all computation. They can never be known, till "the earth shall cast out its dead,

and no longer cover the slain"—till the whole truth is unfolded in the disclosures of the final day.

Another long list of murders, cruelly perpetrated in the dark portions of the earth, falls under the head of *persecutions* for religious opinions. But on this, as on the previous topics, I can but briefly touch. Who can count the number of martyrs which, by every species of torture, fell, during the long reign of the Pagan emperors which preceded Constantine? "They were stoned; they were sawn asunder; they were tortured, not accepting deliverance; they were slain with the sword." They were thrown to wild beasts; they were consumed by fire—some quickly, others by slow, protracted tortures. And if Paganism destroyed its thousands, Popery, which soon followed, has destroyed its ten thousands. The former continued its ravages but about three hundred years; while the fires of the latter have been raging, with greater or less degrees of violence, for more than a thousand years. It has been estimated, on a moderate calculation, since Popery fully developed itself and became a persecuting

power, that it has been the destruction—including Moors, Jews, and Christians, together with the natives of the East and West Indies, of Mexico, and of South America—of not less than *sixty-eight millions of human beings!* Nor does this include the exiled, the imprisoned, the tortured, the plundered, those who in a thousand ways were persecuted, and yet escaped with life. O what an account shall this anti-christian, persecuting power be called to render, when inquisition shall be made for blood!

Another species of murder still found among the heathen, is that of persons suspected of *witchcraft*. It is stated by Crantz, in his history of Greenland, that upon the occurrence of any unusual or unpleasant event among the natives, some harmless woman is almost sure to be stoned, drowned, or cut in pieces, for the supposed crime of witchcraft. Murders of this kind have formerly been common, and probably are so now, among several tribes of American Indians.

Some nations of heathens are in the habit of murdering nearly all their friends, when they see them exposed to great worldly calamities.

An instance of this kind occurred, not many years ago, on our own continent, when, as Lewis and Clark inform us, a tribe of Indians put to death many of their women and children, to save them from the ravages of a contagious disease.

2. Another species of cruelty, which is not only practiced, but *commended* and *enjoined* in some of the dark portions of the earth, is *suicide*. Thousands upon thousands in ancient times, and other thousands more recently, all over the Eastern world, have put an end to their existence, by retiring into dens and forests, and exposing themselves to all kinds of sufferings, in the vain hope of obtaining deliverance from the debasing influence of matter, and of becoming, at length, absorbed in the spiritual substance of the Deity. Multitudes have prostrated themselves under the wheels of their idols, and been instantly crushed. Others have drowned themselves in the sacred waters. Others have consented, and even chosen, for various reasons, to be entombed alive. While a host of others have madly ascended the funeral pile of their husbands, and been burnt to death. It was estimated by Dr.

Ward, only a few years ago, that more than two thousand widows were annually consumed in this way, in British India. As many as six every day, in the British possessions alone, were, as he expressed it, "roasted alive." To be sure, this dreadful practice is now abolished in British India; but it is continued, with unabated horrors, in all those provinces which are under the government of the native princes.

3. A kindred form of cruelty, common among those who inhabit the dark places of the earth, is *self-torture*. The Roman Catholic religion enjoins various species of self-torture, as a means of obtaining the *pardon of sin*. With this view, persons are not unfrequently seen, even in Italy, loaded with chains and crosses, and unmercifully lashing themselves at every step. Many torture themselves, to gain the reputation of *superior sanctity*. For this purpose, some have forcibly compressed their heads into singular shapes; others hold their arms erect, till they are incapable of holding them in any other posture; while others bury themselves in ant heaps, to be tormented and devoured by the voracious insects.

False religions of different kinds encourage, if they do not enjoin, long and perilous *pilgrimages*. These pilgrimages are always attended with the greatest fatigue and privations, and frequently with starvation, disease, and death. Dr. Ward "once saw a man making successive prostrations to Juggernaut; thus measuring the distance with his body from some place in the north of India down to the temple of the idol, which stands nearly at the southern extremity." There is one man now (and probably many) who has undertaken to roll the same distance. At one of the annual Hindoo festivals, "many persons are suspended in the air, by large hooks thrust through the integuments of the back, and are swung round for a quarter of an hour, in honor of their deity. Others have their sides pierced, and cords introduced between the skin and ribs, which are drawn back and forth, while these victims of superstition dance through the streets. Others cast themselves from a high stage or platform, upon open knives, inserted into packs of cotton. Often one of these knives enters the body, when the poor wretch is carried away to expire. On the

same occasion, numbers cut a hole through the middle of their tongue, into which they insert a stick, or some other substance, and thus dance through the streets. At the close of the festival, these devotees dance on burning coals, their feet being uncovered."

4. Nearly all the dark portions of the earth are distinguished for the cruelties which are practiced upon *females*. In the early days of the Roman commonwealth, men were allowed by law to put their wives to death, for no greater crime than that of excessive drinking. It was a law of the ancient Saxons, that he who hurt or killed a woman, should receive only half the punishment exacted for inflicting the same injury on a man. In the greater part of the Eastern world, women of *rank* are now obliged to live in almost perpetual confinement. They seldom appear abroad, and never unless under the most rigorous regulations. If they walk, they are closely veiled and guarded; or if they ride, their carriages are secured with bolts and bars of iron. At the same time, females of the *lower classes* are doomed to perpetual drudgery. They perform, in some places, nearly all the labor.

Many are compelled to work, with an infant at their back, while their husbands, in all probability, are gaming. They are often seen dragging the plough and harrow. While their husbands ride, they may be seen following many a weary mile on foot, carrying on their backs provision for the journey. In almost all the Southern and Eastern parts of the other continent, wives are never treated as companions and equals, but rather as slaves, or as beasts of burthen. In many places, they are beaten by their unfeeling husbands and fathers, without either mercy or hope of redress; and not unfrequently are sold into perpetual slavery.

5. The dark places of the earth are remarkable for their cruel methods of *trial* and *punishment*. Of this species of cruelty, I cannot present a more striking instance, than that furnished by the bloody Inquisition. Here persons, without being confronted by their accusers, or informed of their offences, are expected to bear testimony against themselves; and they are put successively to the most excruciating tortures, till they acknowledge all that their tormentors require. In ancient Rome, criminals were often

exposed in the amphitheatre to the fury of wild beasts, while thousands beheld, and seemed to enjoy, the spectacle of seeing them torn in pieces. In barbarous countries, in our own times, some criminals have been roasted ; some impaled ; some sawn asunder ; and some flayed alive. Some have been rolled in casks stuck with nails pointing inward ; some emboweled ; and some torn in pieces with red hot pincers of iron.

6. Some heathen nations are distinguished for the cruelties which they practice upon *the sick* and *the dying*. "Every Hindoo, in the hour of death, is hurried to the side of the Ganges, or some other sacred river, if near enough to one of these rivers, where he is laid in his last agonies, exposed to the burning sun by day, and to the dews and cold of the night. The water of the river is poured plentifully down him, if he can swallow it, and his breast, forehead, and arms are besmeared with the mud. Just before the soul quits the body, he is immersed to the middle in the stream ; while his relations stand round him, tormenting him in these his last moments with superstitious

rites, and increasing a hundred fold the pains of dying. Very often, where recovery might be reasonably hoped for, these barbarous rites bring on premature death."

7. *Cannibalism*, or the *eating of human flesh*, is a very common species of barbarity in heathen lands. It has been practiced, in numerous instances, by the savages of this country. In South America, "there are whole nations of cannibals, who slaughter and devour their captives. Sometimes they slay their own wives, and invite their neighbors to the repast."

The custom of eating their prisoners is universal among the New Zealanders. Mr. Marsden states, after a long and extensive acquaintance in the island, that he "has met with no family, but some branches of it have been killed in battle, and eaten by their enemies." The native inhabitants of Sumatra are in the habit of slaughtering and devouring, not only their captives and criminals, but even their parents. "When a man becomes aged and infirm, he invites his children and neighbors to come and eat him." "In the interior of Africa, and especially among the Gagers, the chieftains and

principal warriors feed daily upon the bodies of their fellow men." Hundreds of children are annually slain, "to satisfy their tiger-like appetite for human flesh." I have spoken already of the immense numbers that were offered in sacrifice by the native Mexicans. I now add, that the bodies of these victims were in most instances eaten. Nor was this the coarse repast of famished cannibals, tearing the flesh from the bones, and devouring it raw; but it was "a banquet teeming with delicious beverages and delicate viands, cooked and prepared with art, and attended by both sexes, who conducted themselves with all the decorum of civilized life. Surely," says Mr. Prescott, "never were refinement and the extreme of barbarism brought so closely in contact with each other."

8. The dark places of the earth are distinguished for the cruelties which attend their *wars*. The visage of war is a horrid one, presented under any aspect. The very name imports little besides carnage and cruelty. But in the dark and uncivilized portions of the earth, its features are peculiarly forbidding and dread-

ful. What must be the horrors of war, where private property is utterly disregarded, and where every woman and child is liable to be massacred, or carried into a long and doleful captivity? What must be its horrors, where every captive is instantly sold for a slave, or butchered for the table, or doomed to drag out life in hopeless confinement and misery; where death, in any decent form, is denied to the imploring prisoner, and the principal study is to enhance his expiring agonies, by the invention and application of the most excruciating torments? If this subject needed any practical illustration, we might find it in those scenes of Indian warfare which have been so often witnessed upon these shores. The father butchered and scalped in presence of his family—the infant's brains dashed out before its mother's eyes—peaceful villages suddenly wrapped in flames—bands of wretched prisoners grouped and tied together, and just entering on the horrors of savage captivity—scenes such as these may give us some faint idea of the sufferings and cruelties which are the invariable attendants of uncivilized war.

But I need not pursue this painful subject farther. Enough, and more than enough, has been said, to justify the declaration of the Psalmist, "The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty."

If what has been said is true, can the heathen, in their present condition, be saved? It is the opinion of some, that this benighted class of our fellow men are in a safe state. 'God does not require them to improve talents which he has never bestowed, and will not condemn them for their ignorance of the true religion.' I will not here discuss the question, whether any can "believe in him of whom they have not heard," or be saved without the knowledge of the Saviour. Should it be admitted that such a thing is possible; still, there is an insuperable bar to the salvation of the heathen: *They manifestly have not the spirit, the character of heaven.* Heaven is a holy place; and all who enter there must be renewed in the temper of their minds, and be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. But this most essential preparation for heaven, the heathen, so far as we can judge, do not possess. Their

hearts are hard ; their motives sordid ; and their characters eminently depraved and vicious. "The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty." Are those monsters in the shape of men, whose cruelties have been described, *prepared* for the society of the blessed above ? Have they aught of the spirit of heaven—the temper of the holy Jesus ? Their hands red with blood, and their lips stained with human gore ; are they in a situation to enter into the society of angels, and to enjoy the presence and communion of a holy God ?" The melancholy conclusion seems to me inevitable, that the heathen, in their present state, are heirs of perdition. They are of their father the devil, and the lusts of their father they will do. The mighty current of time is rapidly bearing them away, and as rapidly pouring them into the abyss below.

The subject teaches us that much, very much remains to be done, before the triumphs of the church on earth shall be complete. For a long period, the church has existed in a state of comparative depression, and has been struggling against the wrath and power of her enemies.

She has been obliged to flee into the wilderness, from the face of the dragon, who has poured forth his poisonous floods to overwhelm her. But she is soon to come forth. Her triumphs are predicted, and will be accomplished. "The kingdom, and dominion, and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." But before this bright consummation is realized, much, very much remains to be done. The dark places of the earth, which are many, and which are all full of the habitations of cruelty, must be enlightened; every species of barbarism must be done away; hosts of idols must be destroyed; superstitions, hoary with age, and supported by the most inveterate propensities, must be abandoned; multitudes of faithful missionaries must be raised up and sent forth; the Holy Spirit must be extensively poured out; millions of depraved hearts must be regenerated; the King of grace and of glory must ride forth in the chariot of his salvation from conquering to conquer; and under his powerful guidance, the conflicts and triumphs of his church on earth, however arduous and great, will be spee-

dily consummated. "The darkness of a hundred ages will be scattered; the strong man armed will be ejected, as an usurper; millions of his miserable captives will be delivered; and the river of the water of life will flow in a thousand new channels, bearing upon its unruffled current the blessings and the triumphs of the cross."

If the cruelties and miseries of the heathen have been accurately described, then it is the dictate, not only of Christian benevolence, but of common *humanity*, to extend to them the relief and blessings of the gospel. This certainly is the dictate of *Christian benevolence*. How *can* those, whose religion prompts them to seek the good of others, and who profess to love their neighbor as themselves, hear, without strong emotion, of enormities and wretchedness such as have been described? And believing that the gospel is the only remedy of these evils, how can they refrain exertion to extend to every benighted soul the light and privileges of the gospel? And there is another class who, it should seem, must be interested in this subject, and for whose indifference in regard to it, it is

not easy to account. They evidently possess strong feelings of humanity. They can sigh and weep over the pages of a romance, and are not backward to alleviate the distresses of real life. They perform many charitable deeds ; but then their charities are limited to a very small circle. They mourn over the sufferings endured immediately around them, but have no sympathy for those in distant heathen lands. They contribute to the erection of alms-houses for the poor, and asylums and hospitals for the friendless and the insane, but have no bowels of compassion for the helpless infant sacrificed to idols, the decrepid father abandoned by his children, the widowed mother consuming on the funeral pile, or the deluded victims who are annually crushed to death under the wheels of "the modern Moloch." They hear of the horrible cruelties which are perpetrated and endured in heathen lands, but harden their hearts against them, and refuse to make any sacrifices for their removal or their alleviation. Now the conduct of such persons is palpably inconsistent, not only with the benevolence of the Christian, but with the common feelings of humanity. It is

inconsistent with that humanity which they exhibit in respect to other things. Is not human suffering the same, in other quarters of the globe, as it is in our own? Is not life as valuable, and the soul as precious elsewhere, as here? Why then should we not extend our sympathies and charities to the utmost limit of the miseries of our race, and heartily engage in the great enterprise which has been undertaken for the conversion and salvation of the world. The spiritual privileges we enjoy we have no right to monopolize; and if we are Christians, we have no disposition to do it. Under a sense of their value, we should be in earnest to extend them to all those benighted beings who now sit in darkness, and dwell in the habitations of cruelty. Thus we may have the satisfaction of obeying and pleasing our Divine Redeemer, of following in the steps of his holy apostles, and of bearing some humble part in promoting the promised triumphs of the gospel, and in terminating the cruelties and miseries of man.

CHAPTER IX.

The Future State of the Heathen.

IN the previous chapter, I have spoken of the condition of the heathen in the present life. I have adverted to the different forms of cruelty and misery which exist, and are endured, in the dark places of the earth. Let us now pass over from the present life, and contemplate the poor heathen in the other world. What are their hopes beyond the grave? What is to be their condition in eternity? In investigating this painful subject, I remark,

1. That the heathen, universally, are *sinners against God*. This is evident, in the first place, since they belong to a *sinful family and race*. They are (with us) the children of a fallen father, and have naturally proud and selfish hearts. Until they are renewed by sovereign grace, all their affections are depraved and sinful. I shall not stop here to prove the doctrine of man's entire sinfulness by nature.

Suffice it to say, that all who believe this doctrine, and admit the heathen to be human creatures, must also admit that they are sinners.

That the heathen are sinners is further evident from the representations of *Scripture*. The converts from heathenism are spoken of by Paul, as having been "the servants of sin;" and as having "yielded their members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity." And he exhorts these converts not henceforth to "walk as other Gentiles (or heathen) in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God because of the blindness of their hearts; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." Eph. 4: 19. Paul further describes the heathen of his time, with whom he had the best opportunities of being acquainted, as "filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers,

without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful." (Rom. 1: 29—31.)

Such is the testimony of Paul, the missionary, to the character of the heathen with whom he was conversant. Nor has heathen character at all improved, since that period. In the various accounts transmitted to us by competent and impartial witnesses, the heathen are constantly represented, not only as sinners, but as flagrantly vicious and corrupt. Among them, every command of the decalogue, every precept whether of natural or revealed religion, is openly violated. They are universally idolaters. They are, to a fearful extent, profaners even of their own sacred things. Instead of honoring and protecting their aged parents, they in some instances abandon them to perish with hunger; in others, they burn or bury them alive; while in others, they slaughter and devour them. Their murders are continual, and of various descriptions. Their lewdness, says one who had long resided among them, is "such as can never be described by a Christian writer." Their sacred books allow them to steal; and in some places, they "even pray that

they may become expert in it, boast of it when they recount their exploits, and expect to be rewarded for it in the future world." Among the common people of India, says Dr. Ward, "perjury is so common, that no reliance whatever can be placed upon the testimony of heathen witnesses." For a piece of money not larger than a fourpence, they can be hired to swear to any thing that their employer suggests. Dr. Ward further assures us, that "the characters of the heathen have not at all improved, since the days of the apostle Paul. The language of that apostle is most strikingly applicable to them all. "Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; their feet are swift to shed blood; and the way of peace have they not known."

The following is the testimony of an American missionary, relative to the characters of the heathen whom he had visited. "I feel as though misery lives here incarnate. The people are ignorant, degraded and vicious. I thought I had seen something of vice in America, and in France, but those countries are, I

had almost said, *pure*, compared with this. Every sin enumerated by Paul in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans"—the same that I have quoted above—"is committed here without a blush, and without any apparent remorse."

I need add nothing further to show that the heathen are *sinner*s. They are actual and flagrant *transgressors of the law of God*. I remark,

2. That being sinners, they have incurred *the penalty* of God's righteous law, and are under *the curse*. The law of God, like every other good law, has a just penalty annexed to it. This is true, not only of those laws which are contained in the Bible, but equally of those which are discoverable by the light of reason and nature. In respect to both, the infinite Law-giver hath said, "*Cursed* be every one who continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." "The soul that sinneth, *it shall die*." "The wages of sin is *death*"—*eternal death*. Now we have seen that the heathen are sinners. They have failed to "continue in all things written in the law to do them"—even that law which is discoverable

by the light they enjoy ; and consequently they are under the curse. They have transgressed the precepts of this law, and have incurred its penalty. They have sinned, and they must die. Accordingly, the apostle says, referring especially to the case of the heathen, "As many as have sinned without [a written] law, shall also *perish* without [a written] law." And in another place, having described the wicked characters of the heathen, he represents it as "the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are *worthy of death*." (Rom. 1 : 32, and 2 : 12.) To be sure, the punishment to which the heathen are exposed will be in proportion to the light they have resisted. It will be far less, in degree, than though they had sinned against the Bible, and rejected a freely offered Saviour. Still, it is "the wages of sin," which is eternal death. It involves the everlasting ruin of the soul. Such is the penalty of the Divine law, which the heathen, by transgression, have incurred. And I now remark,

3. That this penalty cannot be remitted—in their case, or in any other—without *repentance* and *reformation*. We find no intimations in

Scripture that God will forgive any, not even the heathen, without repentance; but everywhere the strongest assurances to the contrary. It was to a heathen congregation that Paul said, "God now commandeth all men, everywhere, to *repent*." Also in his speech before king Agrippa, Paul affirms, that he had showed unto the Gentiles or heathen, "that they should *repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance*."

And the language of *reason* on this subject is as decisive as that of revelation. For God to bestow pardons upon impenitent sinners of any description, would be to destroy his character, his government, and law. In the law he says, "The soul that sinneth *it shall die*." But in bestowing pardon upon impenitent transgressors, he would manifest that he had changed his mind; that he had ceased to hate sin as he once did; that his compassions had overpowered his principles; and he had consented to receive unhumbled rebels to his bosom. His law would be dishonored, and the strictness and integrity of his government relaxed. His authority would no longer be respected, and all ground of obedience and confidence would be taken away.

Besides, of what avail would it be to pardon the impenitent? Retaining their hard, unchanged hearts, they would instantly and continually repeat their transgressions, and fall again under the sentence which had been remitted. And should God pardon them finally, and receive them up to heaven, it would be no heaven to them. It would not be a heathen elysium, or a Turkish paradise. They would have no relish for such a heaven; they could not unite in its employments, or participate its joys; and though dwelling in the midst of the celestial city, they would find themselves forever miserable.

It follows from these remarks, that God cannot consistently pardon sinners, whether heathens or others, unless they repent. Such is the language of the Bible, and it is equally the decision of reason. By their voluntary transgressions, all sinners have incurred the penalty of God's righteous law, and from this they cannot be delivered without *repentance* and *reformation*—without coming to possess the Spirit of the gospel, and a meetness of character for heaven.

4. My next remark is, that the heathen in general exhibit *no evidence of repentance*, but *decisive evidence to the contrary*. They exhibit evidence of impenitence, in the characters which they sustain, and the vices they practice. Who can believe that characters, like those described by the apostle Paul in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans—and recent accounts show that the heathen have experienced no change for the better, since that description was written—are *true penitents*, and exhibit or possess the least preparedness for heaven? They also exhibit evidence of impenitence, in shutting their eyes upon the light of reason, and violating the plainest dictates of natural religion. Nearly all those vices which the heathen practice, and in which they persist, are as much opposed to natural, as to revealed religion. They are in palpable opposition to the light which the heathen enjoy, and which, if they were true penitents, they would improve.

Some writers, in commenting on the Scriptures, have been careful to make exceptions in favor of “the pious heathen.” But the truth is, if recent and unexceptionable testimony may

be credited, there are few, if any, such characters in the world. After a twenty years' residence in India, Dr. Ward says, "I have never seen one man, in his heathen state, who appeared to fear God and work righteousness. On the contrary, the language of the apostle seems most strikingly applicable to them all. *There is none righteous, no not one. There is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God.*" Another missionary says, "As my acquaintance with the natives increases, I am the more convinced that there is scarcely one, who has the least pretension to any religious concern." Gladly would we believe that the heathen might be saved, if there were evidence that any considerable number of them appeared penitent and humble, and possessed a moral fitness for heaven. But it is painful to find, that all the accounts received from them contain not only no evidence of this, but evidence the most indubitable to the contrary.

I have before shown that the heathen are sinners; that as such they are under sentence of eternal death; and that this dreadful sentence cannot be remitted without repentance and re-

formation. And we here see that (in the general, at least) they do not repent, but are disposed to persist in their vices and crimes. The conclusion is inevitable, that the great body of the heathen are not delivered from the wages of sin, but are descending, in fearful multitudes, down to the chambers of eternal death.

Although this point may now be considered as settled, and with it the question as to the future state of the heathen ; still, there are some other considerations, tending to the same conclusion, which ought not to be omitted in the argument, and,

1. On supposition the heathen are safe for eternity, the light of revelation can hardly be deemed a blessing. For those who enjoy this light are in imminent danger of losing their souls. They inevitably *must* lose them, unless they repent and embrace the gospel. But on the supposition before us, those who are destitute of revelation are in no danger. The heathen are safe. "What advantage then," I ask, in possessing a revelation? "What profit," that we have "committed unto us the oracles of God?" Again,

2. On supposition the heathen are saved, it is impossible to account for the conduct of the apostles and primitive teachers of Christianity. It is certain that these men were deeply and constantly engaged in what they considered the benevolent work of spreading the gospel. For this, they braved winds and waves, deserts and persecutions, and even death itself. It was for this that Paul exposed himself to "perils of waters, and perils of robbers, and perils by his own countrymen, and perils by the heathen, to perils in the city, and perils in the wilderness, to perils in the sea, and perils among false brethren." But what did Paul mean by all this, if the heathen were in no danger? He knew they would be in danger, if he carried to them the gospel—in danger of rejecting the counsel of God against themselves, and perishing forever. Is it possible, then, to reconcile his conduct with the supposition that he believed them safe in their heathen state? Most manifestly not. It cannot be. "His eye, lighted by inspiration, beheld them sinking, as fast as from among them death multiplied his victims, to endless woe. His benevolent soul was moved

at the sight, and he determined at all hazards to endeavor to *save some*." But,

3. In numerous passages of Scripture, some of which have been quoted already, the heathen are represented as in danger of perishing forever. It is said by Solomon, and probably with reference to the circumstances of the heathen, "Where there is no vision, the people *perish*." Our Saviour taught that "the servant who *knew not* his Lord's will, and did commit things worthy of stripes, should be *beaten*," or *punished*, though with comparatively but "few stripes." The apostle Paul, addressing those who had been recently converted from heathenism, and speaking of the practices in which they formerly indulged, adds, "For the end of these things is *death*." The connection shows that the death here spoken of is *eternal death*, as it is placed in immediate contrast with *eternal life*. "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life." Rom. 6: 21—23. The sacred writers further represent *characters*, like those of the heathen, as being wholly inconsistent with a title to heaven. "Be not deceived: Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulter-

ers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall *inherit the kingdom of God.*"

"The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like, of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in times past, that they which do such things, *shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*" Again, "no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man who is an idolater, *hath any inheritance in the kingdom of God.*" Now these several sins, which are so repeatedly and expressly asserted to be inconsistent with a title to heaven, are *the very sins* in which the heathen live. They are the same in which the apostle, in other places, declares them to live. It is submitted, then, whether the painful conclusion is not fully established—established on grounds never to be shaken but with the Bible, that *the end of heathenism is eternal death*; or that the great body of those

who live and die heathens must “go away into *everlasting punishment.*”

And oh! what a dreadful conclusion is this! Let us pause, and contemplate it for a moment, and not be in haste to dismiss it from our minds. Not less than six hundred millions of the present inhabitants of our globe are heathens. Each one of them is an immortal creature, destined to outlive the stars—destined to exist forever. Now they have a season of probation; but this is rapidly, and in respect to successive multitudes constantly, coming to a close. More than forty of the heathen die every minute; and between two and three thousand every hour. Such is the mighty stream which is ever pouring them over the boundaries of time; and when once they have passed these boundaries, where do they fall? Alas! we have seen where. They fall to rise no more! They sink in darkness, misery, and despair! They go to be treated, not with cruelty, but with unrelenting justice; go to Him “by whom actions are weighed,” to be punished forever as their sins deserved. These are not fictions, but *facts*—facts fully established by the Scriptures, and

proved incontestably in the foregoing remarks. And are they not impressive, overwhelming facts? Are they not sufficient, and more than sufficient, to rouse the energies of every Christian heart? Here is a current, rushing down from the heathen world into that lake which burneth with unquenchable fire, on which hundreds of millions of immortal beings are descending, and by which thousands upon thousands are every day destroyed; and shall we sit down and contemplate such a scene—shall we be able to speak and write about it, unmoved? Or shall not each one rather exclaim, in accents prompted by Christian love,

“ My God ! I *feel* the mournful scene !
My spirits yearn o'er dying men !
And fain my pity would reclaim,
And snatch the firebrands from the flame.”

There is a remedy for all this evil—a remedy sovereign and effectual; and this we have in our own hands. It is the gospel. This proposes peace and pardon to those who are guilty and ready to perish. This bears, on its healing wings, the messages of light and salvation to those who wander in fatal darkness. Let the

gospel be universally diffused and embraced, and not only are the unnumbered miseries of heathenism in respect to this life removed and healed, but the broad road to ruin becomes unfrequented; the stream of moral death is dried up; and souls, "immersed in the guilt and pollution of sin, and ripening only for fellowship with spirits in the prisons of despair, are transformed into the likeness of the Holy One—cheered on earth by the consolations of his grace, and received to the mansions prepared for them that love him in the skies."

Who then would be backward in diffusing the gospel? Who will say, There is nothing for *me* to do, in the benevolent work of spreading all over the earth the knowledge and blessings of the great salvation? Who that has a competence of this world's goods, but will feel it a privilege to contribute of his substance towards the necessary expenses of such a work? Who that has a *mite* to spare, but will cheerfully yield that mite, when the cause of a bleeding Saviour, and the eternal welfare of millions ready to perish, are requiring it at his hands? And who that has a heart to feel, or a tongue to

pray, but will unite to give his God no rest, till he shall appear to save the sinking nations—till he shall establish and make Jerusalem a praise in the whole earth?

Those who insist that the heathen are happy in this life, and safe for eternity, will, of course, deride and oppose all exertions to send to them the gospel. And those who regard the gospel as a means, not of saving them from endless ruin, but merely of improving their temporal condition, will never be much engaged in diffusing its blessings. But those who look upon the state of the heathen as it has been exhibited in the foregoing pages—who regard them as plunging together down to the regions of eternal death, from which nothing can rescue them but that mercy which is offered through Christ—all such, it would seem, *must* be engaged to bring them to a knowledge and acceptance of this mercy. It was these views of the moral miseries and dangers of the heathen which pressed like a mountain on the heart of Paul, and urged him onward in his career of love. And similar views have impressed and excited

all faithful missionaries and ministers who have lived and died since.

Of such may all my readers, and especially my young readers, be the followers; and whatever sacrifices we may be called to make, or afflictions to suffer, in the service of our beloved Lord, will shortly be compensated, and swallowed up, in a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

CHAPTER X.

Obligations of Christians in relation to the Jews.

It is certain, from numerous declarations and promises of Scripture, that the Jews will, at some period, become sincere converts to the faith, and members of the church of Christ. My principal design, in this chapter, is to show cause why it is devolving on Christians, at this day, to attempt in earnest the conversion of the **Jews.**

I scarcely need premise, that there are the same *general* reasons why the gospel should be sent to them, as to any other people. If others are fatally deluded without the gospel; so are they. Or if the command of Christ, or our concern for perishing immortal souls, induce us to send the gospel to others; the same reasons are equally applicable and powerful in relation to the Jews. I design not to insist, however, on these general reasons, but to adduce several of a more specific character. And,

1. The veneration we are accustomed to cherish towards the pious *ancestors* of the Jews, is a reason for attempting the conversion of their children. Do we not, in other cases, look with peculiar affection, and feel constrained to bestow special attention and favor, upon the children of our deceased friends? Here is an orphan family in distress, whose father we remember with high veneration, and whom we claim as, in some sense, our relative and patron. Shall we not feel strongly inclined, and regard ourselves as under peculiar obligations, to afford assistance and comfort to his needy and distressed offspring? Now this precisely illustrates the

manner in which it becomes Christians to feel and act, in respect to the Jews. Abraham, the father of the faithful, and the original proprietor of the covenant, in whom all the churches of the Gentiles are blessed, was literally their ancestor. From the ancient patriarchs, who lived in such intimate communion with God, and whom we are accustomed so much to venerate, they are lineally descended. Ought not Christians, on this account, to regard the Jews as peculiarly entitled to their sympathies, prayers, and alms? This people are said to be in some sense beloved, even of God, “for *their fathers' sakes* ;” and for the same reasons should they not be loved, pitied, and aided by the professed people of God?

2. Christians are under peculiar obligations to attempt the conversion of the Jews, on account of *the favors which have been received from them*. Is not the Christian world deeply indebted to such men as Moses and Joshua, David and Solomon—to Peter, John, and Paul—to the inspired prophets and holy apostles? Yet these men, it will be recollected, were Israelites or Jews. Above all, are we not infinitely indebted to our

Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? Yet our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the flesh, was a Jew. What had been our present condition, and that of all other Christians, had we never received the holy Scriptures? Yet every word and letter of the New Testament, and almost all the Old, was written by Israelites or Jews. And we are indebted to this people, not only for penning the oracles of God, but for preserving the original language of the Old Testament, and transmitting to us, in its purity, that large and invaluable portion of Divine truth. From the completion of the canon of the Old Testament to the present hour, the Jews have ever been the most vigilant and faithful guardians of the sacred text.

To this catalogue of favors received by us from the Jews it may not be improper to add, that in their long dispersion, their cruel sufferings, their marked distinction from all other people, and their continued separate existence, they have been, and are, a kind of living *miracle*. They have furnished an instance of the fulfillment of prophecy, and an argument to Christians of the heavenly origin of their relig-

ion, which no enemy can gainsay or resist. Is it true, then, that we are so deeply indebted, and under so great obligations to the Jews? And how can we better discharge the debt, than by continued labors, sacrifices, and prayers for their conversion?

3. It is painful to reflect that Christians owe to the Jews a debt of a very different nature. The cruel and unwarrantable manner in which, for fourteen hundred successive years, they have been accustomed to treat the Jews, furnishes a powerful reason why they should now begin to seek their good. It might have been supposed that a sense of propriety and moral obligation would have induced Christian nations at least to *pity* the poor outcasts of Israel, and by persuasive motives and kind treatment to endeavor to win them to the truth. But the faithful voice of history proclaims, and will proclaim to the latest posterity, that this has not been the case. It is not said that all Christians have been equally culpable in respect to the Jews, or that this people themselves have not, at particular times, furnished just occasion for a resort to severities; but I must say that, from the establishment

of religion under Constantine down to the commencement of the present century, and even later, the Jews have generally been the subjects of persecution, and often of the most flagrant and shameful persecution, from those who bore the Christian name. It will not be expected that I should give a full recital of their sufferings here. I can only refer to a few instances, as indicative of the manner in which they have been treated.

In the reign of Justinian, the Jews were forbidden, among other things, "to make wills, or bequeath legacies, or to educate their children in their own faith." Their synagogues, too, were violently taken from them, and converted into Christian churches. Heraclius, a succeeding emperor, "ordered multitudes of the Jews to be inhumanly dragged into the churches, in order to be baptized by compulsion and violence."

The crusades, for almost two hundred years together, were a source of the greatest terror and suffering to the miserable Jews. In one of these wild expeditions to the holy land, the infatuated soldiery burned fifteen hundred Jews

in a single city, thirteen hundred in another, and drowned or slaughtered five thousand more only while they were marching through Germany.

The Inquisition was another source of incredible suffering to the Jews. Compelled in many countries to submit to baptism, if they were subsequently detected in practicing any of their Jewish rites, they fell at once into the hands of the merciless inquisitors, and were subjected to the most dreadful tortures and to death. During the first year of the establishment of this diabolical institution in Spain, the inquisitors condemned to the flames no less than two thousand Jews.

When king John came to the throne of England, the Jews covenanted with him, for a large sum of money, to grant them protection and a continuance of their privileges. But regardless of this, he shortly after ordered them all to prison, till they should agree to pay him the additional sum of sixty-six thousand marks. Of a Jew in Bristol, he demanded ten thousand marks, and ordered that he should have a tooth torn out of his head daily, until he paid it.

And not satisfied with these extortions, he at length confiscated all the property of the Jews, and drove them out of his kingdom.

In the reign of Edward I. of England, all the Jews in the realm were imprisoned in one day, and several hundreds of the poor wretches were executed. He then proceeded to confiscate their property, and banished them, to the number of sixteen thousand persons, from his kingdom. As they were hurrying out of the country under these circumstances of poverty and disgrace, great numbers of them were thrown into the sea and drowned.

In repeated instances, the Jews were driven in like manner out of Spain; and "no one," says a Jewish writer, can describe, or even imagine, the calamities that befell them, such as the horrible famine which some experienced on their voyage; the ferocity of the robbers, who despoiled others of all that they possessed; the cruelty of ship-masters, who carried others away into distant lands and there sold them as slaves, or threw them into the sea, in order to seize upon their effects.

During these ages of superstition, the Jews

were often accused of the foulest crimes, such as murdering children at their feasts, poisoning the wells and fountains, setting fire to houses, and bewitching their enemies, that so a pretext might be furnished for plundering and destroying them. On some one of these pretences, great multitudes of Jews were at a certain time imprisoned in Spain; and though the accusation was soon found to be false and malicious, still the prisoners were not released. They were kept in confinement, it was said, to *convert* them; and at length fifteen thousand were put to death, because they refused to be baptized.

In the fourteenth century, a terrible disease, called the *black death*, spread desolation over a considerable part of Europe. In ignorance of the true cause of this distressing visitation, the credulous multitude everywhere accused the Hebrews of poisoning the waters, and of polluting the atmosphere by magical arts. In vain did the accused protest their innocence; in vain did they adduce the testimony of the most eminent physicians in their favor; in vain did they point to the deaths among themselves, which proved that they had no control, more than oth-

ers, over the raging pestilence, and no exemption from its fury. Nothing could satisfy the ignorant populace but the blood of the Jews, and this was freely and most cruelly shed. In the single city of Strasburg, two thousand perished in one fire,—a fire, too, kindled and sustained by the furniture and other combustibles torn from the Jewish houses.

The Jews have been treated by Christians, not only with cruelty and injustice, but with the most marked and abject *contempt*. They have been confined to particular quarters of the large cities; have been obliged to wear some disgraceful badge to distinguish them from others; have been called by odious names; and when passing gates and bridges, have been subjected to the same toll as the basest animals. Nor are we to suppose that this mode of treating the Jews was peculiar to the dark ages. In some countries, it has continued to the present time. So late as the year 1819, the Jews were dreadfully persecuted in different parts of Germany. From some cities they were expelled and driven by violence; while in others, their synagogues were demolished, their houses plundered, and

their persons and even their lives put at hazard. Such then is the manner in which the professed followers of the Messiah of Israel, and the votaries of a religion which breathes nothing but peace and good will to men, have been accustomed, for a long course of ages, to treat the poor dispersed Jews. Is it wonderful that this injured, abused people have strong prejudices against the Christian faith? And does it not now devolve upon all Christians, by a totally different mode of treatment, to endeavor to overcome these prejudices, and bring the remnant of Israel to the knowledge of the truth? The Jews have a long and dreadful account against us. We owe them a debt which we shall be in no danger of discharging. Is it not high time, then, for all who bear the Christian name to begin to seek and promote their good.

4. It is a strong reason why Christians should attempt the conversion of the Jews, that we have the most satisfactory *assurances* of their future recovery and salvation. We have promises to this effect in both the Old Testament and the New. "If thou (Gentiles) wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert

grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree, *how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?*"

"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; for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." "Behold the days come, saith the Lord," by Jeremiah, "that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of Egypt, which covenant they brake; but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; *I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people; and they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.*" "I will gather them out of all countries whither I have driven them in my anger, and will bring them again unto this place, and cause them to dwell safely; and *they shall be*

my people, and I will be their God. And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them and of their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me."

The promises here quoted (and there are many like them in the Bible,) are certainly plain and positive, affording the strongest encouragement to those who are inclined to labor for the conversion of Israel, that they shall not be suffered to labor in vain.

5. We have assurances in the Scriptures, not only that the Jews are to be converted, but that their conversion will be effected through *the instrumentality of Gentile believers*. "For as ye (Gentiles) in times past have not believed God, yet now have obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these (Jews) also now not believed, that *through your mercy, they also may obtain mercy.*" This representation of Paul, as to the manner in which the rejected Jews are ultimately to be brought to the recep-

tion of mercy, is confirmed by many of like import in the Old Testament. By the mouth of his prophets, we hear the Jehovah of Israel addressing his people in the following manner: "Behold I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and *they* shall bring thy sons in their arms and thy daughters shall be carried upon *their shoulders*, and kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers," and "thou shalt *suck the milk of the Gentiles*, and shalt suck the breast of kings." "Surely, the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to *bring thy sons from far* unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel. And *the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls*, and *their kings shall minister unto thee*." "*They* (the Gentiles,) *shall bring your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations*, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord." The import of these various, prophetic representations is obviously this;—the Jews are to be converted and restored, *through the instrumentality of Gentile believers*. What encouragement, therefore, for Christians of the

Gentiles to pray and labor for the conversion of the Jews.

6. It is further evident from Scripture, that upon the conversion of Israel are suspended *rich and abundant blessings to the Gentile churches*. "If the fall of them (the Jews) be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; *how much more their fullness?* For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, *what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?*" It is represented also in the old Testament, that when the Jews begin to be converted, "they shall be in the midst of many people as a *dew from the Lord*, and as *showers upon the grass*," promoting, of course, spiritual fertility and fruitfulness. Then "shall ten men, out of all languages of the nations, take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, *we will go with you; for we have heard that the Lord is with you.*" Then shall the Gentile churches, beholding the beauty of the renovated Zion of Israel, "be *satisfied with the breasts of her consolations*, and be *delighted with the abundance of her glory.*" If intimations such as these, gathered from differ-

ent parts of the sacred volume, are worthy to be trusted, then the Gentile churches owe it to *themselves*, to their own spiritual prosperity and happiness, to labor for the conversion of the dispersed of Israel. I add,

7. There are peculiar reasons for such labors at the present time, growing out of the existing *facilities* for engaging in them, and the *success* with which they have more recently been crowned. In our own country, and in Europe, associations exist, and are in successful operation, differing indeed in minor particulars, but all aiming at the same grand object, *the conversion of the Jews*. Those therefore, who are disposed to aid in this important work, can do it easily, promptly, and effectually. Without so much as leaving their homes, they may have the satisfaction of doing all that they think it their duty to do, for the recovery and salvation of the ancient people of God.

And God, in our own times, is evidently smiling on efforts of this nature. He is regarding them with manifest tokens of his favor. Hopeful conversions from Judaism to Christianity—events which in former ages have been

scarcely known to exist—are becoming frequent ; and some of the most diligent and successful laborers now in the Lord's vineyard, are converted Jews. Professor Tholuck has recently affirmed, that “more sincere proselytes from Judaism have been made within the last twenty years, than since the first ages of the church.” The city of Berlin alone is said to contain not less than a thousand converted Jews. One of the ministers of Berlin thus writes : “The propagation of the gospel among the ancient people of God is in rapid progress. No rabbinical opposition can now stem the tide of Israel's conversion. They join the Christian church by tens and twenties, and I confidently anticipate their doing so soon by hundreds.” In London, there is a church, consisting of almost three hundred members, composed entirely of converted Israelites. These facts, to which many of a like nature might be added, are full of encouragement to the people of God. They show that the obstinate blindness and prejudices of the Jews are beginning to pass away ; that the veil is being removed from their hearts. They are now willing, in many places, to listen candidly

to the instructions of missionaries, and to receive and examine the New Testament and Christian tracts, which are circulated among them in their own tongue. A spirit of free and impartial inquiry is beginning to be exhibited, and a disposition is manifesting itself, which, if continued and cherished, must ere long result in the conversion of many Jews. Now then is the time for Christians to think and feel, to pray and labor, on their behalf. Now is the time for a prudent, vigorous, and persevering effort for their conversion and salvation. Let the people of God now arise, and labor together in behalf of Zion, for "the time to favor her, yea the set time is come."

The reasons here given why it becomes Christians, at this day, to attempt the conversion of the Jews, are sufficiently numerous; and they are, as it seems to me, *pertinent* and *important*. Whether we regard those feelings of veneration which we are accustomed to cherish towards their patriarchal ancestors—or the unspeakably important favors which we have received from them, as a people—or their long and cruel persecutions from the hands of Christ-

ians—or the promises of Israel's God respecting them—or the present aspect of his dispensations towards them, both in providence and grace;—all these things are pointing in the same direction, and are pressing upon Christians the immediate duty of promoting, by all human means, the conversion and salvation of the dispersed Jews. Too long have this once favored but now scattered and depressed people been neglected already. Too long have they been left to mourn, in the language of one of their ancient Psalmists, “No man careth for my soul.” It is high time that Christians should awake to a sense of their duty to God's ancient people, and commence in earnest the benevolent work of imparting to them the consolations of the gospel.

Let my readers, one and all, consent to ponder this subject, and endeavor, in view of it, to ascertain their own duties. We profess to be Christians—to be the disciples and followers of Jesus. Consequently, the remarks which have been made are all applicable to *us*; and the reasons assigned why Christians should attempt the conversion of the Jews, are reasons why *we* should unite personally in such an attempt.

Are they not sufficiently powerful to satisfy us on this point, and leave but the single question to be decided, *What can we do?* Obviously, we all can give to this important work our warmest *affections*, and our earnest prayers. We can follow it with our desires and wishes, and implore the God of Israel to crown it with success. And must we stop here? Can we do nothing more? For the blinded descendants of our Father Abraham—those through whom we have received the precious word of God—those whose spiritual interests he has committed specially to us, and upon whose conversion he has suspended the richest blessings to his church;—for these have we no offering to present, no sacrifice to make, no labor of benevolence to perform? Let us endeavor to view this subject as it will appear to us in the last great day; and answer the questions here proposed as we have reason to believe we should do, were they pressed upon us from the throne of judgment.

CHAPTER XI.

*The Work of promoting the Gospel a Privilege
to the Church.*

IN promoting his cause and kingdom on earth, God works by his own agency. Whoever may plant, and whoever may water, *he* "giveth the increase." Accordingly, the apostle says to the newly established churches among the heathen, "Ye are God's husbandry; ye are God's building."

God has seen fit, however, in carrying forward his work of grace, to admit the cöoperation of his creatures. He has seen fit to employ the instrumentality of *angels*. These, he has informed us, are his "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation." He has also been pleased to employ the agency of *men*. It was through the instrumentality of men, that the true religion was sustained and promoted under the former dispensation. Patriarchs, priests, and prophets were raised up, to inculcate its truths, and im-

press its duties, on those around them. It was by the instrumentality of men, that religion was so powerfully revived, and so widely diffused, in the early days of the Christian church. The apostles and their fellow laborers "went forth everywhere, preaching the Word." It is by the instrumentality of men, that the same religion is supported and propagated now. Laborers are raised up and sent forth into the great spiritual harvest, to feed the church of the living God, and extend the borders of their Redeemer's kingdom. And it is by the same kind of instrumentality, that the religion of the gospel will ultimately spread through the earth. Spiritual laborers will continue to go forth, in greater and still greater abundance, carrying with them the "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," and enlarging the empire of the Prince of Peace, till the last abode of sin and darkness shall be irradiated with the light of truth, and the last victory over the grand enemy of God and man shall be achieved.

Men may be instrumental in extending the gospel in a variety of ways. They may do this by their fervent and persevering prayers.

They may do it by a correspondent life of exertions and sacrifices. They may do it (as multitudes already have done it, and as other multitudes doubtless will,) by going forth as actual laborers to the mission field.

It may possibly have been a ground of complaint with some, that in carrying into effect the purposes of his grace, God should make so large demands upon the worldly comforts and exertions of his friends. 'Could he not have executed his designs without them? Can he not, with a word, fill the earth with Bibles and teachers, and bring all the heathen to the knowledge of the truth? Can he not very well relieve his friends from their present burdens, and accomplish his promises without their aid?' In reply to inquiries such as these, I design to show, not that God has a *right* to the services of his people, and that when he requires their services they can have no reason to complain, but that it is a *privilege* and a *blessing* that he does require them. This will be evident if we consider,

1. That it is a great *honor* to us to be employed, as we are required to be, in the work of

the Lord. In all our exertions and sacrifices for the spread of the gospel, we are associated in labor with *the angels of light*. We are pursuing with them the same noble objects, and looking forward to the same glorious results. And not only so, we are associated in labor with the *great God* himself. Thus it was said of the apostles, that "they went forth and preached everywhere, *the Lord working with them.*" In their various trials and exertions, they could comfort themselves by reflecting, "We are laborers together *with God.*" Angels may well consider it an honor and a privilege, to be associated in employment with the Infinite Mind. Much more may we consider it an honor and a privilege, to be associated with God and with angels too. What are we, guilty, miserable creatures, that we should be received into this high and holy fellowship, not only with the angels of light, but with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—and should be admitted, as "*workers together with them*" in promoting the same glorious object and kingdom?

2. The people of God should be thankful for their appointed work, because by means of

it they may be kept from such things as would *injure* them. They may be kept from spiritual *sloth*. It is not less true in the spiritual than in the natural world, that "drowsiness will cover a man with rags." There is scarcely a situation in which the Christian can be placed, where he would be likely to suffer more, than under the chilling, stupifying influence of sloth. It should be matter of thankfulness with him, therefore, that his heavenly Father is taking measures to preserve him from so fatal an evil—that he is making him acquainted with the purposes of his love, and calling upon him to arouse his dormant energies, and cöoperate in carrying them into full effect. And the Christian may be saved, by the same means, not only from sloth, but from *low, unworthy, and sinful pursuits*. By being continually occupied in the service of God, he may be delivered from the service and snares of the destroyer. He may be delivered from an inordinate and vicious thirst after the honors, pleasures, and vanities of this fleeting life. It is doubtless a privilege to the Christian to be kept from such things. And how can he better be kept from them, than

by having the cause of the Redeemer, and the noble work of spreading the gospel, lying constantly on his hands ?

3. It should be matter of thankfulness to Christians that they have an important service assigned them by their heavenly Father, because, by means of it, their *best affections* may be brought into lively and vigorous exercise. While laboring for Christ, they will naturally contemplate his labors and sufferings for them ; and their hearts will rise in devotion, and melt in gratitude, towards him. While they are “workers together with their heavenly Father, and walk hand in hand with him in promoting his holy cause and kingdom, they will be growing daily in a love of his character ; and their communion with him will be intimate and sweet. While they are associated with saints and angels in advancing the same benevolent object and work, they experience in their hearts a constantly growing affection for all holy beings, and feel more and more the bonds of that sacred and joyful union, which is to exist forever. While they are studying the wants of their perishing fellow men, and endeavoring to

feed them with the bread of life, the reigning power of self is breaking down within them, and a rich and fruitful benevolence is becoming established in their souls. And while, in the ardor of their desires for the diffusion of Christ's kingdom, they are led to contemplate and rest upon the promises of God's word, their faith in these promises waxes stronger and stronger, and their hopes and consolations proportionally increase.

4. It is a privilege to Christians that they are allowed to cöoperate in the building up of Christ's kingdom, since this work will excite them to frequent and earnest *prayer*. The real Christian knows that it is good for him to pray. He believes that a life of prayer is not less his privilege than his duty. It is prayer, he finds, which renders him solemn, spiritual, and humble. It is this which keeps his conscience tender, and excites to increased watchfulness against the approaches of sin. It is in prayer, too, that he has the most delightful views of God's character; feels most deeply his dependence on him; and enjoys the sweetest communion with him. Indeed, whenever he goes to the

throne of grace in a proper manner, he can come from it with the declaration of the devout Psalmist on his lips, "My prayer is returned into mine own bosom." But if prayer is so great a privilege to the Christian, then those things must be counted privileges which lead to prayer. And where, among all these, shall he find a more powerful excitement to it, than in his appointed work of spreading the gospel? Prayer is, in fact, an important part of this work; and in the prosecution of other parts of it, how often will the Christian be led to look up to his Infinite Fellow-worker in the heavens, for his direction and his powerful help? How often will he feel, that he cannot take another step, without first consulting with his heavenly Father?

5. The people of God should esteem it a privilege that they are allowed to cöoperate in the building up of Christ's kingdom, because this affords them an opportunity of manifesting the *true spirit of their religion*. It is of great importance that religion should be exhibited. It is in this way only, that the world can see what religion is, and be made sensible of its

reality, excellence, and power. It is in this way only, that religion can be honored, and its Divine Author glorified, and that saints can refute the charges, and silence the reproaches, which are cast upon them. But how can Christians so clearly and satisfactorily exhibit their religion, as by cheerful sacrifices and persevering exertions for its support and prevalence in the world? Whose piety ever shone forth in a more clear and amiable light, than that of the apostle Paul? And who in modern times have exhibited more bright and shining evidences of piety, than Brainerd, and Eliot, and Martyn, and the whole number of those who have devoted themselves to labor and toil on earth, in spreading the gospel of the Son of God?

6. Christians should be thankful for their appointed work, since this is adapted more than any thing else to give *life and vigor to the church*. The church on earth has uniformly exhibited deplorable marks of the corruption of the materials of which it is composed. It has exhibited evidence to this effect, in its constant propensity, except when under the influence of some powerfully exciting cause, to sink down

into a state of spiritual torpor and death. To counteract this fatal propensity, and to impart life and vigor to his drowsy church, God has employed a variety of methods. In some periods, he has lifted over it the rod of correction; then again he has kindled around it the fires of persecution. But the proper means of keeping alive his church is doubtless its great and appropriate work—the work of cöoperating with him in spreading abroad the religion of the Saviour. Accordingly, it has in all instances exhibited the most life and vigor when called to make the most costly sacrifices, and the most laborious exertions, for the diffusion of the gospel. Look at the church in the days of the apostles. When has it put on its garments of beauty, and shone forth, as it did then? And if equal life and vigor are ever imparted to it again, it must probably be under an equal pressure of calls and obligations in regard to the work of spreading the gospel.

On the whole, we have the utmost reason to be, not only satisfied, but thankful, that God is not accomplishing his plans and promises alone; but is graciously pleased to benefit and honor

his unworthy children, by admitting them as "workers together with him," in advancing his holy cause and kingdom. Paul was thankful that he was permitted to bear a part in this important work; and Christians now, instead of considering it a burthen which their Saviour has imposed, and from which they cannot be released, should regard it as a *privilege* which he has in mercy granted, and of which they would not, on any account, be deprived.

If the work of spreading the gospel is a privilege to the church, then all *openings* and *opportunities* for engaging in it should be viewed with gratitude. How do we feel in relation to other things which we esteem as privileges? Do we not regard new openings and opportunities for improving and enjoying them as an occasion of gratitude? The apostle Paul urged upon his brethren to pray for him, that "God would *open unto him a door of utterance* to speak the mystery of Christ," although he was well aware that such an opening must involve him in new labors and sufferings, and although he was at that moment, for his attachment to the gospel, a prisoner "in bonds." He regarded

every new opportunity of labor and usefulness as a precious privilege, to be seized and improved—a privilege, for which prayers should be offered, and thanks returned. And it obviously becomes us to view the subject in the same light. We should consider every new field of labor which is opened, every new and practicable method of doing good which is devised, and every new opportunity which is afforded of making exertions or contributions for the spread of the gospel, not as an additional burden imposed upon us, but as a new and precious privilege to be improved, so far as other and higher considerations will admit.

Again, if the work of promoting the gospel is a privilege to the church, then those Christians who are most engaged in it enjoy the greatest privileges, and are the most happy. This remark has been true in all periods of the church, and is true now. Who was ever more engaged in this benevolent work than the apostle Paul; and viewing his whole existence as a Christian, where was there ever a more highly privileged or a more truly happy man? During his ministry on earth, notwithstanding his many and

cruel sufferings, he customarily spoke of himself as having "great joy"—being "filled with joy"—and as being "exceedingly joyful in all his tribulations." And who can describe the ever-flowing tide of his joys, now that he has entered on his eternal rest? How much more happy was he on earth, and how much more happy will he be in heaven forever, than though his course had been that of a comparatively idle and slothful Christian. And as it was in his case, so it is in every other. Those individuals now, and those churches, and those portions of the Christian world, which are most engaged for the spread of the gospel, are doubtless the most privileged, and altogether the most happy.

Still again, if the work of spreading the gospel is a privilege to Christians, then none can vainly excuse themselves from it, without doing themselves an injury. Persons often, and those too on whom the world has lavished some of its best favors, excuse themselves from contributing for the spread of the gospel, under the pretence that they are not able. They cannot do it, without intrenching upon what they esteem their necessary comforts, and doing themselves a real

injury. But persons in such circumstances ought to reflect, that so far from being injured by contributions and exertions for the spread of the gospel, they cannot excuse themselves from the work without being injured. This work, we have seen, is not a burthen but a privilege; and to all to whom it is proposed, it furnishes ground, not of complaint, but of devout thankfulness. Those, therefore, who criminally neglect it, or excuse themselves from it, are denying themselves a real privilege, and doing themselves a great injury.

If the work of spreading the gospel is indeed a privilege, then we live in a day of peculiar privileges. We live in a day when much is attempted, and much done, in this important and benevolent work; and when opportunities of engaging in it are continually recurring. The greatness of our privileges in this respect impresses on us a weight of responsibility; and we must expect to be called to a solemn account for the manner in which we have improved them. How then have we improved them? And what account shall we be able to render in the final day? Do we not know, that

many opportunities of doing good to Zion have been suffered to pass without improvement? Do we not know, that we have done and enjoyed very little in the service of our Divine Master, compared with what we ought to have done and enjoyed? And does it not now become us, by increased activity and diligence, to redeem the time, and so far as possible to redeem the privileges, which we have already lost?

The work of spreading the gospel is sometimes urged simply on the ground of duty; but I urge it here on the ground of privilege. God could have accomplished this work without the aid of his people; but in that case his people must have suffered. It is an honor, a privilege, and a mercy to them, that he is pleased to employ them. Let it then be their highest emulation, not who shall make the least exertions and sacrifices, but who shall make the greatest; and as they value their own personal, spiritual interests, let them be willing to engage in their appointed work, with zeal, with diligence, and with untiring devotedness.

CHAPTER XII.

Advantages of an Acquaintance with Missionary Intelligence.

1. THOSE who keep up an acquaintance with Missionary intelligence will hereby increase their *general knowledge*. This may be the least of the advantages resulting from the study here recommended; still, this is of sufficient importance to be particularly mentioned. Those who engage in the benevolent work of missions are usually men of cultivated minds. They visit the various regions of the globe; have ample opportunity to make discoveries and observations; and are capable of examining with faithfulness and accuracy whatever peculiar appearances nature, society, or art may present. Consequently, their journals are, in many instances, instructive and interesting to the philosopher and antiquary, as well as to the Christian. Through the instrumentality of missionaries, more real knowledge has been

gained respecting the present condition of the Jews, the natives of north and South America, the Islanders of the Pacific Ocean, and many of the debased tribes of Africa and Asia, than has been acquired by all other means. Several of the more important missionary publications of the day would be worth more than the cost of them, were it only for the advantages they present of acquiring general information.

2. An acquaintance with these publications necessarily promotes valuable *religious knowledge*. Religious knowledge may be gained, not only by a direct attention to the Scriptures, but by comparing the representations of Scripture with the various appearances of human nature, with the exercises of Christians, and the operations of the Divine hand, under different circumstances, and in different attitudes. On this account, the peculiar circumstances, feelings and duties of the missionary will be likely to suggest to him new and interesting views of religious truth, which it will be his duty and his pleasure to communicate. What a confirmation, for example, we have of the Christian doctrine of the native and entire depravity of

our race, in the accounts of missionaries relative to the debasing and bloody superstitions of the heathen, and their rooted aversion to every thing good. Here we may see what man, left to himself, is ; and to what our fallen natures are capable of descending. And the frequently detailed operations of the Holy Spirit, in enlightening the benighted understandings of the heathen, awakening their consciences, renewing their hearts, and forming their vacant minds to duty and to bliss, open new sources of inquiry and knowledge, on some of the most interesting points of Christian doctrine. From the letters and journals of missionaries, we also become acquainted with the past history and present state of churches and Christians in other parts of the world, and may have the advantage of comparing their traditions, creeds, and observances, with those received and practiced among ourselves. But the most important result of an acquaintance with missionary intelligence is a fuller knowledge of our privileges and our duty. Until we know the characters and wants of the poor heathen, we cannot properly estimate our own blessings, or the obligations we are under to

afford *them* relief. It is when we behold them presented before us by the faithful pen of the missionary, in all the darkness and wretchedness of their present condition, and the infinitely deeper darkness which is brooding over their prospects for eternity, that our consciences are aroused to a sense of obligation, and we come to feel that we have duties to perform respecting them with which we cannot longer dispense.

3. An attention to missionary intelligence is fitted to call into lively and vigorous exercise every *Christian grace*. This is a just conclusion from what has been already said; since growth in knowledge among real Christians may be expected to result in growth in grace. But the point under consideration is capable of being illustrated otherwise than by mere inference. What Christian can witness the strong representations frequently made in the pages of a missionary journal of the native depravity of our race, and the depths of moral turpitude to which we are capable of descending, without feeling his benevolence excited, and the pride of his heart humbled and subdued? Or who can contemplate the wonders of power and mercy

which God is continually performing in respect to such depraved, debased creatures, in bringing them to the knowledge and enjoyment of the gospel, without the liveliest emotions of admiration and gratitude, and the sincerest praise? Or who can reflect on the evidence thus furnished of the faithfulness of the Supreme Being—that he remembers all his promises, and will speedily accomplish them, and not feel inclined to look up to Him with increased affection, confidence, and joy? The accounts also which are furnished of the liberality, fidelity, and zeal of some of the recently established churches among the heathen are fitted, more than any thing, to reprove the slumbers of Christians at home, and excite them to new and greater efforts in the service of their Lord.

4. By an acquaintance with facts relative to missions, every plausible *objection* to the missionary cause may be removed. The most charitable conclusion respecting those objections which are commonly urged against missions is, that they are the result of ignorance. Persons do not make themselves acquainted with plain matters of fact pertaining to the subject; and, of

course, unreasonable objections are conceived and retained. But all objections of this nature would instantly vanish, on a candid and careful perusal of missionary intelligence. The objections, for instance, that the heathen are as safe and happy with their religion, as we are with ours—that the principal object of missionaries in their excursions is personal ease and aggrandizement—that the funds contributed for their support are wickedly squandered—and that their labors among the heathen are attended with no success;—objections like these could no more subsist with a full knowledge of facts, such as are daily published, than the darkness of midnight could subsist under the burning beams of a meridian sun. The most effectual method of dealing with honest minds, and removing their objections to the cause of missions, is to continue publishing the truth, and to make them acquainted, so far as possible, with missionary intelligence.

5. A careful attention to this species of intelligence excites an interest, and promotes an enlightened *zeal*, in favor of missions. The reason why so many persons, and among them

some of hopeful piety, feel no more interested in the cause of missions is, they know very little about it. They may have heard remarks on the subject of missions, and may have heard as much against them, as for them; but of the plainest facts—those which have been often published, they remain in almost total ignorance. This ignorance, to be sure, is inexcusable. When the light is shining all around them, they ought to see it. They ought to become acquainted with facts relative to the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom; and whenever they do this, they will unavoidably feel an interest in the subject of missions. This work is so obviously good, so palpably benevolent, that no person of common candor or humanity can become acquainted with it, and not feel an interest in its favor. And as his acquaintance with it is continued and increased, the interest he takes in it will be increased. It will grow and rise just in proportion to his knowledge. And ere he is aware (i. e. if he has a good heart) he will find it has kindled into engagedness and zeal, and that he is now not only a friend, but a warm advocate and supporter of the missionary cause.

His heart, his hands, his tongue, his pen, are all enlisted in its favor. He watches with interest its various movements, rejoices in its successes, and is prepared to participate in its ultimate triumphs. The proper mode of producing this desirable state of feeling in respect to missions is, to scatter the light of truth and of facts; and there is, I am persuaded, light enough on the subject, which either has been or may be scattered, to excite a lively interest, and a glowing zeal in every pious heart.

6. A careful attention to missionary intelligence affords great and constant *encouragement* in the missionary work. A person might feel deeply interested in this work—he might be a zealous advocate and supporter of it; and yet, were he ignorant of the facts which, from time to time, have been published respecting it, he would be in great danger of becoming wearied and discouraged. The work he would see was great; he might think himself almost alone in it; and he would probably relinquish it, under the desponding impression, that it never could be accomplished. A proper acquaintance with missionary intelligence is an effectual security

against such despondency, and affords the friends of missions great and constant encouragement to persevere. In attending to this, they discover that although the work is great, they are *not* alone in it. The thousands of Israel are all united with them. There are thousands and ten thousands, in different parts of the globe, whose hearts and hands are resolutely engaged to carry it forward to the desired result. And they discover farther, that the united efforts of the friends of missions are crowned with great and signal success. Much has been already done ; a deep impression has been made on the kingdom of darkness ; the throne of superstition in some regions is completely overturned ; in others, it is tottering on its bloody base ; and nothing is wanting but persevering effort and prayer, united with the promised blessing of heaven, in order to the moral renovation of the world. In view of these animating facts, the hands of the friends of missions are strengthened, and their hearts encouraged, and they devote themselves to the cause they have espoused with renewed diligence, devotion, and zeal.

7. An acquaintance with missionary intelli-

gence excites to *prayer* for the success of missions, and fits us to pray with understanding, as well as fervor. Prayer is an expression of our desires to God; and the power of prayer is in proportion to the ardor of these desires. But it is impossible to excite and sustain an ardor of holy desire in respect to missions, except by a knowledge of facts in relation to the subject. And an acquaintance with facts is requisite to our praying with understanding, as well as fervor. If we were requested to intercede for a friend in affliction, we should wish to know the circumstances of his affliction. Or if we were to offer prayer for any desirable object, we should wish to know the facts respecting it. So when we pray for the success of missions; in order that our prayers may be appropriate, and may flow forth from an enlightened mind and a fervent heart; it is necessary that we keep up an acquaintance with missionary intelligence. Otherwise we shall be liable to ask, we know not what, and our prayers must of necessity be formal and ineffectual.

8. An acquaintance with missionary intelligence excites to an enlightened and well-di-

rected *liberality*, in our contributions for the support of missions. True liberality is very different from prodigality. The liberal man may entertain a high sense of the value of property ; but he is willing to bestow it, so far as it is his duty, whenever he is made acquainted with great and worthy objects. To bestow it upon objects with which he is unacquainted, would be little better, on his part, than throwing it away. It would be to dispense his favors in the dark, and where, for aught he knows, they may as probably promote evil as good. There can be no true liberality in respect to missions without some previous acquaintance with the subject. And the more the sincerely benevolent become acquainted with this object, the more will they be disposed to contribute for its support. Besides, their contributions will, in this case, be wisely directed. They will know what part of the great system of charity, under existing circumstances, most needs support—will know where to place their helping hand—and will be, not only disposed to do all they consistently can, but enabled to direct and apply their charities in the wisest manner. I only add,

9. The perusal of missionary intelligence is a source of rational and high *enjoyment* to the people of God. I know not how better to illustrate this idea, than by appealing directly to the experience of Christians on the subject. Have you never, my dear brethren, felt your souls refreshed, and your hearts dilated and filled with joy, when beholding, through the medium of some religious publication, the gradual undermining and overthrow of Satan's empire, and the mighty march of your Redeemer's kingdom? Have you ever been happier, than when contemplating the animating facts, and the still more animating prospects, presented before you by means of missionary intelligence? In view of facts and prospects such as these, the very heavens rejoice; and it is reasonable that we should rejoice with them. It would be an impeachment of our piety and benevolence, were we capable of doing otherwise.

I would not be understood, in any thing here said, as recommending the study of missionary intelligence, to the neglect of the Scriptures, and other religious books. I am aware that, in the minds of some, there is danger of this. But

the real Christian, I confidently trust, will suffer nothing to detract his frequent, studious, and solemn attention from the Word of God. And the Christian who is wise will not allow his thirst after missionary intelligence to give him a disrelish for doctrinal discussions, and for religious studies of a severer nature. There is such a thing as sustaining the Christian character in its due proportions. We may, I think, stately peruse and wisely improve the interesting religious intelligence of the day, and still not neglect those other important studies and pursuits, which pertain to the Christian life.

It should excite our gratitude, after what has been said, that so much animating intelligence of a religious nature is furnished and published at the present time. Only a few years have elapsed, since this was not the case. Little religious intelligence was published, or was to be published. But a new era in this respect seems to have commenced. Christians now have the privilege of hearing often respecting those things in which they are most deeply interested. Religious papers and pamphlets are circulating in almost every village and hamlet

of our country; they are flying to the utmost regions of the world; and to have them in possession, and to keep pace with their contents, are deemed essential to a religious education, and to an accomplished religious life.

In view of what has been said, let every reader duly appreciate the importance of giving attention to missionary intelligence. This, we have seen, will be conducive, not only to our general improvement, but to our religious knowledge, and growth in grace. Or if we have conceived objections to the missionary cause, it is by this means they will best be obviated and removed. Or if those who love the kingdom of Christ have never yet felt interested and engaged on the subject of missions, it must be because of their ignorance of facts; as a full knowledge of facts pertaining to this subject cannot fail to enlist every pious, benevolent heart in its favor. By a proper attention to these facts, we shall also find encouragement to persevere in our devotedness to the cause of missions; shall be excited to pray for it; shall know how to pray; and our prayers and alms shall ascend up together as a memorial of us

before the throne of God. And by thus observing the movements and triumphs of the Redeemer's kingdom, the hearts of his people will rejoice and be glad; and they will be prepared to sing with the sweetest devotion, "Be thou exalted, O Lord, above the heavens; be thou exalted in thine own strength; and let the whole earth be filled with thy glory. Amen and Amen."

CHAPTER XIII.

Change of Feeling and Action in respect to Missions.

WHEN we compare the state of religion in this country with what it was during the latter half of the last century, we perceive, at once, that there has been a great, and I must think a *favorable* change. There are those, I am aware, who will have it that "the former days were

better than these ;” but it may well be doubted whether they judge “wisely concerning this.” In some respects, it is very likely, the present age will not bear comparison with that which preceded it. There may be less *stability* in our times, than formerly—less of a staid, quiet, conservative spirit. The preaching of the last age, too, may have been more didactic and instructive, especially on some points of doctrine. But was it more pungent, eloquent and persuasive? Was it attended with greater and better effects?

Many persons now living can remember the time, when there were almost no young persons, of either sex, in the evangelical churches of New England, and when the whole number of church members was comparatively small. They can remember when there were few revivals of religion, and in many congregations none at all. Some pious people of mature age had never witnessed such a scene, and had scarcely heard of one, unless it were by tradition from the times of Edwards and Whitefield. There were few pious young men in our colleges and seminaries of learning, who were

looking forward to the gospel ministry; and nothing done to aid young men of piety and promise, in their preparation for so great a work. There were no Bible, Missionary, and Tract Societies; no Sabbath schools; and almost no religious books, except the Bible, in which children and youth would be likely to feel interested. In regard to the whole subject of missions, whether to the destitute of our own land, or to the distant heathen, the Christian world was comparatively asleep. There were a few, here and there, whose sympathies were awakened in behalf of their perishing fellow men, and whose feelings prompted them to spend much time in prayer in reference to the subject; but no system of effort was matured, and little or nothing was done to carry into effect the great missionary injunction of the Saviour.

When we contemplate these facts, we can but see that there has been a change—a great change—a change, on the whole, very much for the better. The state of the religious world (among and around ourselves, at least,) has *improved*; and it would be an affront to the God of

grace not to acknowledge it, and not to make the acknowledgment with gratitude and praise.

It is not my purpose to speak of this change in all its parts, but only as it relates more especially to the cause of missions. Within the memory of many still living, there has been a great and glorious change in respect to this subject; and the question to be considered is, *How has this change been brought about? By what means and influences has it been effected?* If we shall succeed in answering these questions correctly, we may the better see how the begun work is to be carried on, and at length consummated.

Obviously, the change of which we speak has not been brought about by *miracles*, or by any *sudden, surprising revolution*. Christ has not appeared personally in his church, to issue commands, or to urge motives. He has not employed *visibly* the ministry of angels, or commissioned individuals to return from the dead, to impress and arouse his slumbering people. Nor has he imparted to any of his servants, as in primitive times, the gifts of healing and of tongues. Nor have there been any striking,

overwhelming providences, or any sudden revolutions, to which the change in question can be ascribed.

This change commenced silently, almost imperceptibly, some fifty to seventy years ago. It has proceeded gradually, from year to year, and all in the natural use of means. No law of nature has been suspended or violated, but every thing has moved on so quietly and unobtrusively, that an indifferent observer could hardly see that any special movement was in progress. It was once said by our Saviour, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." In the change of which we speak, this remark has been signally verified. At some of its stages, it has been scarcely perceptible from one year to another; and yet, when we look back upon it at the end of fifty years, we see that it has been great and glorious.

The change here referred to is to be ascribed primarily and efficiently to the Holy Spirit of God. It has been, and is, *the work of God*. God has poured out his Spirit and revived his work, in all the several branches of it; and in this, among the rest—*the interest which should*

be felt and manifested in the salvation of the world. But though the change in question is to be ascribed, and the glory of it rendered, to the Holy Spirit; still, this divine agent has been operating, not upon passive, but *active* subjects, and his influence, at every step, has been exerted through the intervention of means, and in perfect accordance with the laws and principles of the human mind. It is pertinent to inquire, therefore, what means have been used, and what has been done by individuals and churches, in bringing about the change we are considering. And,

1. In promoting this work, there has been the diffusion of *light and truth*, not only in heathen lands, but among Christians in our own land. Many subjects, connected more or less with that of missions, have been brought into discussion, and their true import and practical influence have been pointed out. Among these, are the sufficiency and universality of the provisions of the gospel, and the singular adaptedness of these provisions to the wants of man, wherever and however he may be situated; whether civilized or uncivilized, Pagan or

Christian. Then the reasonableness of our Saviour's injunction, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," has been clearly exhibited, and its binding obligation, not only upon the disciples who first heard it, but upon Christians in this age, and in all ages, has been strongly urged. A vast increase of light has also been shed upon the actual condition and prospects of the heathen nations. Their darkness and ignorance, their vices and cruelties, their deep degradation and wretchedness, have been searched out and pointed out. They have been held up to the gaze and the wonder of Christendom. Christians have also been led to investigate more accurately than formerly the prospects of the heathen for eternity. The hope used to be indulged, and was not unfrequently expressed, that there were many *pious* persons among the heathen, who, though ignorant of the gospel, might yet be saved on the ground of it, in the final day. But more recent inquiries have led to the melancholy conclusion, that true piety is scarcely to be found in heathen lands, and that the countless myriads who swarm those dark portions of the earth, are not only degraded

and miserable here, but are preparing for unutterable miseries hereafter. The light which has been shed upon these and kindred subjects has made Christians better acquainted with their *duties* to the heathen than ever before. Duties once but little thought of, are now clearly perceived—too clearly to be neglected with an easy conscience, or a cheerful heart. But this leads me to remark,

2. That the diffusion of light on the subject of missions has been attended, to some extent, with its appropriate effect, in exciting *interest* and awakening *feeling*. Christians have not only perceived the truth, but they have *felt* its power. It has been set home upon their hearts by the Holy Spirit. Especially have the new views entertained respecting the miserable condition of the heathen in this life, and their prospects for eternity, awakened a deep sympathy in Christian minds, and an earnest desire to extend to them relief. Many of my readers will remember what a sensation was produced, when such works as Buchanan's *Researches*, and Horne's *Letters on Missions*, were first published in this country. It was as though a new world

had been discovered—a world of darkness and of the shadow of death; and many a heart burned with desire to hold up in that world of darkness the light of spiritual life. The memoirs of some of the earlier missionaries, who fell upon the high places of the field, tended greatly to increase the interest which was before felt. Their premature departure, instead of damping the ardor of others, operated rather to promote it. Numbers began to feel, and to feel deeply, that a cause in which such precious lives had been offered up must not be abandoned; and one after another declared themselves ready “to make up the hedge and stand in the gap” which God in his providence had occasioned. It is not pretended that there is as much feeling on the subject of missions, or that there ever *has been*, among Christians in this country, as the cause demands. Nor am I sure that there has been any considerable increase of feeling, more especially as to the intensity of it, during the last twenty years. An interest in the subject has certainly been extended. It has been more widely and generally diffused. It has become, too, I trust, more chastened and enlightened.

But it was as deep, perhaps, in the soul of particular individuals, during some of the first years of the foreign missionary movement, as it has ever been since. Light burst in upon their minds, and it awakened all the sensibilities of their hearts. And these awakened sensibilities could not be suppressed. They were early manifested, and continue to be manifested, in such ways as the divine Word inculcates, and as the Spirit of God may be supposed to suggest. In particular,

3. There has been a great increase of enlightened and earnest *prayer* for the conversion of the nations. Probably there never has been a time since the first promulgation of the gospel, when individuals were not praying for its general diffusion. Indeed, so long ago as the days of the Psalmist, God's ancient people were accustomed to pray, that "his way might be known upon earth, and his saving health among all nations." But there is something remarkable in that spirit of prayer, which began to exhibit itself at the very commencement of the missionary movement of modern times. The whole subject was studied and pondered with

prayer. The successive plans of operation in regard to it were projected and matured in the same way. The manner in which the monthly Concert of prayer came into being and was adopted, is evidence that the spirit of prayer was then very generally diffused. More than a hundred years ago, a proposition originated in Scotland for a "visible union of God's people in extraordinary prayer for the revival of religion, and the advancement of Christ's kingdom on earth, pursuant to Scripture promises and prophecies concerning the last time." In accordance with this plan, a quarterly concert of prayer was established, not only in Scotland and some parts of England, but in this country; and the first President Edwards wrote a book with a view to recommend it, and further its adoption. Still, it never became general, and except in a few congregations, the observance of it was not long continued.* There was not enough of the spirit of prayer at that time in the churches to sustain it. But no sooner was the plan of the

* It is an interesting fact, that in some congregations it *was continued*, till the establishment of the present *monthly* concert of prayer.

present monthly concert of prayer (which originated in a small circle in England,) proposed, than it was generally and cordially welcomed. No book was needed to urge its adoption. As fast as it became known, it was received with almost universal favor, and for a long course of years, its monthly return has been greeted as an occasion most grateful to the people of God. In every land where the gospel is preached—in many lands where, till but recently, the midnight of heathenism was unbroken—the Monthly Concert of prayer is now observed, and we hope will continue to be observed, till the great object prayed for is fully realized, and the earth is filled with the knowledge and love of God. But,

4. The revived spirit of missions has shown itself not only in prayer, but in corresponding *efforts* and *sacrifices* for the spread of the gospel. Young persons of both sexes—the flower of our churches—have freely offered themselves for the service. Foregoing the endearments of country and home, they have gone to endure privations, to encounter perils and hardships, and to wear out life among the distant heathen. And while

they are thus employed in foreign fields, bearing the burthen and heat of the day, their brethren at home have banded themselves together for their encouragement and support. They remember those who have gone out from the midst of them at the throne of grace, and provision is made, from year to year, for their sustenance and comfort.

And we see performed, not only those works of benevolence which stand in immediate connection with the missionary service, but others, which are related to it more remotely. Increased attention is given to the religious instruction of children and youth, and care is taken to imbue their minds early with a missionary spirit, and to train them up to habits of benevolence. Thus, a generation, it is hoped, is about to come upon the stage, which will feel more deeply for the cause of missions than their fathers have done, and will carry it forward with increased energy and success. Special efforts are also made to educate pious young men for the ministry, and prepare numbers of them for the missionary field. And while these necessary branches of the great enterprise are in pro-

gress, the Bible is being translated into all the languages of the world, and is scattered on every breeze to the benighted and destitute. The press, too, is pouring forth its myriads of tracts, whose leaves, like those of the tree of life, are for the healing of the nations.

Nor have the manifold obstructions to the free progress of the gospel—such as intemperance with its kindred vices, oppression, persecution, slavery and war—been overlooked. These giant forms of iniquity have been successfully assailed, and are likely, ere long, to be taken out of the way; so that the chariot of salvation may roll freely on, and the world's redemption may be speedily consummated.

Such are some of the ways in which the awakened spirit of religion is showing itself in our own times—some of the means and characteristics of that great moral change, of which I spoke in the commencement of the chapter.

There is much reason to hope that this good work will continue and increase, till the glorious end at which it aims shall be finally accomplished. For in the first place, it has been a *silent* and *gradual* work. It has been the fruit,

not of a high and momentary excitement, but of faith, of patience, of Christian love. It has been conducted, so far as appears, on Christian *principles*, which principles are unchanging and abiding. Then this work has all the marks of the Spirit's influence upon it—of being a genuine *work of God*; and when God commences a great work of this kind, he does not leave it half accomplished. It is his usual method to complete, to consummate it.

“The work that wisdom undertakes,

“Eternal mercy ne'er forsakes.”

But then, as God has commenced this vast enterprise, and thus far carried it on, by human instrumentality; so he will continue it (if it be continued,) in the same way. His people must exert themselves, as they have done, and *more* than they have done, or the work will come to a stand, and shortly cease. They must continue to search for *light* on every topic connected with the missionary enterprise; and as new light is obtained, it must be diffused. They must scatter it abroad, to the utmost extent of their means and influence.

They must be watchful, too, lest by familiar-

ity with the subject of missions, their sensibilities become callous, and their hearts hard. Christians should not only study to become better acquainted with this great subject, but they should feel its importance more and more. This is one of the few subjects that will bear inquiry, bear *thinking of*; and the more deeply and thoroughly it is pondered, the more impressive and interesting it will become.

Moreover, if God is intending to carry forward this work, he will be *inquired of* by his people to do it for them. The work of missions was commenced in prayer. Every step of its progress, thus far, has been taken in prayer. And if prayer is withheld, it will proceed no farther. Let Christians then be admonished to be instant in prayer. Not only at the monthly concert, but in the closet, in the family, in the social circle, in the great congregation, let them remember a world lying in wickedness, and earnestly plead for its redemption.

And let them continue to *labor*, as well as pray. Let them gird and prepare themselves for greater labors and sacrifices, and sorer conflicts, than any they have yet experienced. The

grand enterprise before them has been commenced, but is not accomplished. Nor will it be accomplished without a struggle. Satan has held his empire over this world too long, to resign it easily. He is too firmly enthroned in the hearts of his vassals, to be dispossessed, but by great and persevering exertions. But let not the people of God despair. *Nil desperandum Christo duce.* "With Christ for a leader nothing is to be despaired of." "Prayer and pains can accomplish all things." The great Son of God is yet to have the whole heathen world "for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." "He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." Only let his people follow him—fight under him—and yield a cheerful obedience to his commands; and his words of promise shall, ere long, be verified, and all the ends of the earth shall see of his salvation.

CHAPTER XIV.

Disastrous Results of a failure of the Missionary Enterprise.

THE failure of any great enterprise renders the renewing of it exceedingly difficult—much more so than it was in the first instance to commence it. We see this illustrated in the every day occurrences of life. The prisoner in close and solitary confinement forms a plan for effecting his escape; and by the assistance of others, and by long and wearisome effort on his own part, he has carried it almost to the point of execution. The labor of a few hours will set him at liberty. But in this crisis of all his pains and toils, he is discovered and defeated. His hopes are disappointed; his labor is lost. Instead of liberty, he is more closely guarded, and his confinement is made more rigorous than ever. He is discouraged, therefore; his spirit sinks and dies within him; and in every view, it is more difficult for him to make another effort to escape, and carry it out, than it was to enter upon the first.

Here is a young man trained to commercial pursuits, and just entering the great mart of business for himself. Full of enterprise and hope, he lays his plans, anxiously watches every turn of affairs, spreads his sail to the favoring breeze, and expects soon to be wafted into the snug harbor of wealth. For a time, he moves pleasantly and prosperously on; fortune seems to favor; and the object of his wishes is almost within his grasp. But in an evil hour, some unanticipated change takes place, and all is lost. By the failure of those on whom he depends, or to whom he stands pledged, or by some other of the thousand casualties to which men of enlarged business are liable, his fair fortunes are suddenly wrecked, and he finds himself overwhelmed with embarrassments. It is perfectly obvious, that this man has now more formidable difficulties to contend with, than when he first entered the business of life. He *may* rise again. He may come up with more experience, and under better auspices, than ever before. But it is rather to be expected that he will become discouraged, and give over the pursuit of wealth, in despair.

One of the severest shocks that the cause of civil liberty has received in modern times, grew out of the failure of the French revolution. The republicans of France succeeded in overthrowing their ancient monarchy, and in establishing a free, representative government. They proceeded with it a certain way; but it soon became obvious that the people were incapable of governing themselves. They must have a stronger government, or none at all; and to escape the horrors of anarchy, revolution, and blood, the nation threw itself into the arms of the great military despot of modern times. It greeted the return of monarchy, as a happy deliverance. And for the last half century, the revolution in France has been appealed to by the legitimatists of Europe, as a standing proof of the dangers and evils of civil freedom, and of the blessedness of being ruled by a king.

We have an affecting illustration of the same thought frequently presenting itself in the religious world. The thoughtless sinner is awakened to a sense of his guilt and danger, and to the importance of attending to the concerns of his soul. He deeply feels that something must

be done, and solemnly resolves that something shall be. He inquires, he converses, he weeps, he prays. He earnestly entreats the prayers of others, and does every thing he can think of—except to repent and believe the gospel—to secure his salvation. But neglecting to do the one thing needful, he grows no better ; makes no progress ; receives no real, spiritual comfort ; and after a time, becomes discouraged and relapses. He grieves away the striving Spirit, and plunges again into stupidity and worldliness. Now it is by common consent acknowledged, that this man's spiritual prospects are darker, and his case more hopeless, than it was before. He is a greater sinner than ever before. His heart is harder ; his courage to attempt any thing for his own salvation less ; and the probability is fearfully increased, that he will persist in wickedness and go down to death.

The great lesson taught by these several examples is one and the same ; and I propose now to apply it to another subject of much interest in the religious world ; I mean that of *missions*. The great missionary enterprise of modern times, having for its object the conversion of the

nations, has been commenced ; but is not completed. It has been fairly entered upon ; but its full consummation is yet in the distance, and (except as we have the Divine promises to support our faith) may be regarded as a problem. The enterprise has not so far advanced, as to render an utter failure in *itself* an impossible, or even an improbable event. I have great confidence, indeed, that it will not fail ;—that it will be carried on, with increasing energy and success, till all, and more than all that its friends anticipate, shall be realized. But then my trust is in God, and not in men. I have no firm confidence in changeful appearances, or in human professions or resolutions. I know that the work is great and arduous, involving much toil and suffering, and many sacrifices ; and that men, even good men, are mutable and frail. Then they have enemies to contend with of great subtlety and power, and of vast resources. And the religion which they are laboring to propagate is not agreeable to the natural desires, inclinations and habits of men, but directly opposed to them. Under such circumstances, except as the *Divine arm* may be relied on to sustain, assist, and

bless his people, and crown their efforts with success; who can anticipate any thing but failure. Let God but withhold his Spirit from our churches for a few years, so that our youth are not converted, and missionaries are not raised up, and the requisite support is not furnished for those already in the field; and *where are we?* What is the fate of the great missionary movement of our times? Its wheels are not only stayed, but running back; and when once their retrograde motion is commenced, it will be hard stopping it. It will be likely to go on, and the cause to go down, till the work of missions has literally failed, and all the bitter consequences of a failure are realized. Have the friends of missions sufficiently considered the subject in this light? Have they duly estimated the *consequences* of a failure in this enterprise, and thus nerved themselves with resolution to resist and prevent it? Or have not *some*—under the impression that a failure was impossible—consented to relax effort, and to rest and slumber on their arms?

Passing over much that might be said as to the consequences of a failure, I propose to draw

attention to one of them only. It is that indicated in the examples and illustrations above adduced. If the present missionary movement is suffered to subside, and that great and glorious enterprise on which the church has entered with so much encouragement and hope, fails, *how, when* shall it be renewed? Can it ever be renewed under so favorable auspices? Will not the difficulties of another commencement be fourfold greater than those we have experienced; and an hundred fold greater than can possibly be realized in the farther prosecution of the present enterprise?

In the first place, should the existing effort be permitted to fail, the few surviving friends of missions would be deeply, heartily discouraged. That the cause would still have friends, and friends on the earth, is as certain as that God's promises can never fail. But then these, it may be feared, would be few and feeble, and in no situation, and with no heart, to make another effort. For they would reason in this way: 'If, when the missionary work had been commenced, and carried on successfully for a course of years, it could not be sustained; much less can it be

sustained and prosecuted now! If, when it was in existence, and in happy progress, it was suffered to languish, and at length to cease; what encouragement can there be for *us*, in our present circumstances, to make another effort? No; "the time has not come, the time when the Lord's house is to be built;" and we can only wait till our strength is renewed, and providence brings round a more favorable opportunity.'

And not only would the friends of missions be discouraged, but the enemy would be greatly encouraged and strengthened. Popery, Paganism, Judaism, infidelity, and all those numerous forms of error which now stand arrayed against the church, would lift up their heads, and their votaries would rejoice together with a malicious, a satanic joy. All hell would be moved at such a triumph, and its inmost recesses would resound with notes of victory. When John saw in vision the two mystical witnesses slain, the wicked of the earth are represented as rejoicing over them, and making merry, and sending gifts one to another. Such rejoicing would there now be among the wicked of the earth, if the

work of publishing the gospel among the nations was to come to an end, and be abandoned.

Again, should such an event be realized, it might be referred to for ages as a standing proof that the gospel could never be universally propagated—that the world could never be converted to Christ. 'For when,' it would be asked, 'can the world's conversion be attempted to better advantage, than it was in the first half of the nineteenth century? And as it failed then, it must always fail. It is to no purpose to waste time and money, strength and life, in any farther efforts of this nature.' So the weak faith of surviving friends might reason, as I have remarked above. So the hostility of exulting enemies would most certainly reason. They would appeal to the acknowledged failure of the missionary effort, much as the enemies of civil freedom all over Europe now appeal to the experiment of the revolution in France. 'The French people made the attempt to establish a republican government; and it ended in anarchy and blood. These Christians made the attempt to propagate their religion all over the earth; and having expended much money and many

lives, they were constrained to abandon it. Let both classes learn wisdom, and be cautious how they enter again upon such fruitless and disastrous experiments.'

Thus sagely would the world reason, and proffer its counsels to the people of God, and dissuade from any further missionary movements, on supposition the present movement were to be abandoned. And in all probability, their arguments would be yielded to. The Christians of that day, weakened and discouraged, would relapse into a profound slumber—the more profound for having been, for a long time, disturbed. Popery would soon succeed in extinguishing the lights of religion and learning, which had been kindled here and there, within the circle of its influence. Paganism, no longer invaded, would protract indefinitely its bloody reign. The false prophet would sway his iron sceptre over the souls and bodies of his deluded votaries. Darkness would again cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; and the only remaining hope of the world would be, that after another slumber of ages—another long reign of superstition, delusion, crime, and

misery ; the promises of heaven would at length be remembered, and a season of reviving and refreshing would come.

Do any say that the present missionary enterprise *cannot* fail, and that these deplorable results can never be realized? But why may not the present effort for the conversion of the nations fail? Is there any thing in its nature and object to forbid a failure? Or any thing in the spirit and resolution of its friends, or in the extent to which it has already advanced, to give assurance of success? * For one, I must confess, that I can see no ground of assurance here. But the promise of God, it is said, stands pledged,

* The reformation from Popery went on gloriously, for the first forty or fifty years. Had it proceeded in like manner for the next fifty years, Popery had been utterly overthrown. But it came to a stand, and has made little progress since. So the Moravian missions prospered wonderfully, for the first forty or fifty years. Had the same ratio of increase been continued, from that time to this, the world had been converted. But though their missions still exist, and are highly useful, it is very evident that the freshness and vigor of the original movement are gone. I feel no little anxiety to see the great missionary movement of modern times fairly over the first half century of its existence, and prosperously launched upon its second half century. If this can be done—I do not say without any diminution of interest, but with a steady *increase* of interest ; there will be much reason to hope.

and his promise never fails. God has indeed promised that "the knowledge of the Lord shall one day "cover the earth, as the waters do the seas"—that "the kingdom, and dominion, and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall" at some time, "be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." But has he promised that this shall be done immediately—done in connection with the present missionary effort? It would be difficult, perhaps, to demonstrate as much as this. Hence, the promises of God as to the ultimate prevalence of Christ's kingdom in the earth may not fail; and still, the present missionary effort may cease and be abandoned.

But it will be said, that it is not God's usual method to send his Spirit, and commence a great moral movement of this kind, and then relinquish it. And this, I admit, is true. Nor will God abandon the present missionary enterprise, unless his friends become remiss and negligent in it, and thus provoke him to depart. That the work of missions is a work of God—one dear to his heart—one sustained and accomplished by his power, I have no doubt. It is a work which he has enjoined, in which he is

deeply interested, and which he loves to see prosper. But his plan is to carry forward this work, not by miracles, but by human means; not exclusively or chiefly by an angelic ministry, but through the instrumentality of his people. So long as his people are active and faithful, the work of missions will undoubtedly prosper. God will work in them, and by them, and crown their labors with all desirable success. But when his people become weary in well-doing, thinking the service committed to them hard and burthensome, and desiring and praying to be excused from it, God's Spirit and presence will be withdrawn, and defeat and failure will inevitably follow.

The present missionary effort—that glorious work which has been undertaken in our churches, and the influence of which is felt to the ends of the earth—*need not* fail. It certainly *should not* fail. It *will not* fail—except through the fault of the present generation of Christians. Opposition from without cannot overthrow it. Not all the powers of earth and hell can defeat it, so long as those concerned in it enjoy the continued favor and blessing of God. And God will never be wanting to them, unless they are

first wanting to him, and to themselves. Let them, then, gird up the loins of their minds, and put on strength. Let them address themselves to the work they have undertaken, with renewed energy and zeal. Every year that this work is successfully prosecuted, increases hope. Every advance that is made in it—every difficulty overcome, or victory gained, renders it less and less probable that it will ever be abandoned. On the contrary, every symptom of coldness or weariness in regard to it—any apparent diminution of interest and effort, or any seeming unwillingness to make further sacrifices—these are the things most calculated to awaken solicitude, and fill the heart of intelligent, watchful piety with anxiety and fear.

These then are the things to be chiefly guarded against, by all those who are waiting and praying for the world's redemption. Let them not feel as though the present missionary effort *could not* fail, but as though it *need not—must not*. Let them not think it will certainly go on, through the promise and power of God, independent of their exertions, but remember that every thing, under God, is depending *on them*—

selves. And by all the considerations that have been urged—by all the darkness, discouragements and miseries consequent upon a failure of the present effort—let them impress and charge upon themselves to be faithful. Let each one say on his own behalf, and consistently carry out the declaration, “So far as my personal efforts or sufferings—my toils, sacrifices, and prayers can avail any thing; *the cause of missions shall never fail.* I stand committed to this cause for life. Be the conflict longer or shorter, I am enlisted for the war. I am enlisted, too, with my whole heart and strength. Myself and all that I have is consecrated. Nothing that I can reasonably be expected to do to promote the kingdom of Christ in the world, shall be left undone. Nothing that I can consistently render shall ever be withheld.

Let the people of God, collectively and individually, come up to the work of missions in this spirit; and it can never fail. The everlasting mountains shall be scattered; the perpetual hills shall bow; but the cause of missions, thus supported, thus cared for, *can never fail.* From year to year it will go forward, sustained

and blessed by the right hand of Omnipotence. One conquest after another will be achieved. One hindrance after another will be taken out of the way. And soon shall be heard, "great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

CHAPTER XV.

The Prosperity of the Churches essential to the Success of Missions.

PAUL and Barnabas were distinguished among the primitive disciples, as missionaries to the heathen. After they had accomplished their first mission, we read of their returning to Antioch, "whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled." Here, it is said, "they abode long time

with the disciples." Their attention was occupied, during this interval, in discussing and settling the great question whether circumcision and the ceremonial law should be imposed upon the Gentile converts; in "teaching and preaching the Word of the Lord;" and in promoting, by all methods, the peace, purity, and enlargement of the church.

Possibly it may have been thought, that as Paul and Barnabas were missionaries to the heathen, it was aside from their appropriate sphere to expend so much time and labor for the benefit of the church at Antioch. They however judged differently, and doubtless correctly: for the same love of religion and concern for souls, which prompted them to go forth as missionaries to the heathen, would prompt them to labor, as occasion presented, for the benefit of the churches they had left. And not only so, they must have felt deeply, that it was all important and even essential to the success of their labors abroad, that the churches at home should continue to prosper. And this is the subject to which I would now invite attention: *The continued prosperity of the churches at*

home essential to the success of foreign missions.

That the churches at home may continue to prosper, several things are necessary. And

1. That they be supplied with *able and faithful pastors*. Without pastors, they will have no spiritual watchmen or guides, none to feed them with knowledge and understanding, none to break to them the bread of life. They will of course be scattered as sheep having no shepherd. And with any besides *able and faithful* pastors, their situation might be even more pitiable than though they were entirely destitute.

2. That the churches may prosper, they must *live in peace*. Broils and dissensions are nowhere more destructive, or more to be deprecated, than in the church of Christ. They are attended necessarily with a spirit of alienation, envy, and bitterness, which is directly contrary to the spirit of the gospel. In a season of contention respecting religion, and especially respecting its external appendages, the substance of religion is sure to be lost, and the holy fire of love is extinguished. No instance, it is presumed, can be mentioned, in which religion has

flourished, and a church prospered, during such a season. In the earliest and happiest days of the Christian community, it is recorded of its members that they "were of one heart, and of one soul;" and it was among the last directions of Paul to the church at Corinth, a direction on which was suspended signal blessings, that they should "be of one mind, and live in peace."

3. The prosperity of the church requires that its members properly understand and cordially receive the great *truths of the gospel*. These are the spiritual nutriment of the Christian—"the sincere milk of the word," which he desires to receive, and by which he lives. And as they are the support of Christians, so they must be of churches which are composed of Christians. These also are the spiritual instruments, by which hard hearts are broken, stubborn wills bowed, and the rude children of nature are prepared for the church of God, and the kingdom of glory. On these accounts it must be essential to the prosperity of a church, that it understand and embrace the great doctrines of the gospel. Deprive any church of these doctrines, and however elevated its pres-

ent standing, it will soon be seen to fall from its spiritual glory, to wither, and decay.

4. It is further necessary to the prosperity of the churches, that the true *spirit* of religion be generally diffused among the members. This is essentially a spirit of *love*—love which fixes upon God as its supreme object, and upon other objects in proportion to their perceived importance. It is a spirit of *humility* and *faith*. It disposes its possessor to entertain low thoughts of himself, but high thoughts, exalted conceptions, of God. It disposes him to fall, as an unworthy sinful creature, at the feet of an atoning Saviour, and fix his whole trust and reliance upon him. It is also a spirit of *activity* and *prayer*. It will excite those in whose hearts it dwells to do all they consistently can, for the honor of God, the advancement of his cause, and the salvation of immortal souls. And feeling that they can do nothing without strength and assistance from above, they will be led to approach the throne of grace, to seek by fervent, persevering prayer, the promised Spirit and blessing of Jehovah. The spirit of religion is moreover a spirit of *liberality*. He who main-

tains it in vigorous exercise can assent heartily to the truth of the apostle's declaration, "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; wherefore glorify God, in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." He regards all that he is and has as consecrated to the service of Christ, and is ready to make any sacrifice or exertion, whenever he can be satisfied that his Redeemer calls. No words are necessary to show, that when a spirit such as this is generally diffused and enjoyed in the churches, they must be in a prosperous state. They will walk, like the primitive churches, "in the fear of the Lord and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost," and will be builded up under the smiles of their all-powerful Redeemer. And as little need be said to show, that no external circumstances or advantages can compensate for the absence of such a spirit. Churches may be able to tell of their wealth and numbers, and point to the splendor of their exterior embellishments; but if they lack the true spirit of religion, all is but a body without a soul, and on all may properly be inscribed, "The glory has departed."

5. When the churches prosper, the spirit of

religion among them will be not only felt, but *exemplified*. Those who exercise love, humility, and faith, will manifest the reality of these inward graces, not in empty professions, but by habitual obedience, fleeing from sin, and walking humbly with their God. Those who possess a spirit of activity and prayer, will exhibit this, by unwearied efforts and persevering cries, that the kingdom of Christ may be advanced, and perishing immortals converted and saved. And those who feel that all that they are and have is consecrated to the Lord, will manifest this, in being "ready to distribute, willing to communicate," and thus "laying up a good foundation against the time to come."

6. It is necessary to the prosperity of the churches, that the holy *discipline* of the gospel should be maintained in its purity. The members must be willing to watch over one another in love, and mutually to perform those painful but important offices, which their Saviour has enjoined. Those who decline from their duty must be admonished; those who wander far away must, if possible, be reclaimed; and those who prove themselves incorrigible, must be cut

off, as lifeless members, and regarded as unworthy of a standing among the saints.

7. It may be observed again, that when the churches prosper, they will be *enlarged*. They will be builded up with lively stones, and numbers will be added to them of such as shall be saved. By frequent revivals, frequent seasons of spiritual refreshing, the enmity of many hearts will be slain, and many will "subscribe with their hands unto the Lord," and enrol themselves among his people. Numbers will be coming forward to "stand in the gaps" which death is making; to take the places of those who are removed to higher scenes; and to bear the burden and heat of the day in the vineyard of their Divine Redeemer.

I have thus endeavored to point out, under several particulars, what is most necessary to the continued prosperity of the churches. Let us next inquire, in what manner the prosperity of the churches at home is connected with the success of missions.

This connection, plainly, is a very intimate one. The missions are, in an important sense, *dependent* on the churches. I know not but it

may be said that, under God, they are entirely dependent. The connection is that of the stream with the fountain; or that of the extremities with the seat of life. It requires no greater sagacity to perceive, that the stream must diminish, as the fountain fails, than that the missions abroad must decline and languish, in proportion as the churches at home are suffered to decay.

1. The establishments abroad are dependent on the churches at home for *missionaries*. Melancholy experience proves, that those beloved brethren and sisters who are at present laboring in foreign regions are fast wearing away their constitutions, and will soon be gone. And although native teachers, in some places, are already commencing their labors, and will in future be raised up, we trust, in great numbers, yet, these cannot, for a considerable time at least, supersede the call for laborers from home. And missionaries from home will long be needed, not only to repair the ravages which disease and death are continually making, and to retain the ground already gained, but to form new establishments, enter on new and extended fields of labor, and make farther advances upon the

empire of darkness. But how are all these laborers to be furnished, unless the churches at home continue to prosper? Unless by frequent and powerful revivals of religion, multitudes of our youth are brought into the kingdom of Christ—unless the spirit of religion is felt and its power exemplified in the hearts and lives of its professors—unless the doctrines of the gospel are taught and received, and the pulse of Christian feeling beats strong and vigorous in the churches; how shall faithful, devoted soldiers of the cross in sufficient numbers be raised up, to forego the pleasures of home and kindred, of Christian intercourse and civilized life—to encounter the dangers and hardships of missionary exertion in foreign and unhealthful climes—and to stand in the places where others have fallen, and from which they have gone to their final reward?

2. The missions abroad are dependent on the churches at home for *support*. To provide for the personal wants of those who have cast themselves upon our charities, and gone with the Word of life to the perishing heathen—to procure for them the comforts or even the

necessaries of life—to support their dependent families and schools—to furnish them with the various means of doing good, and to send forth others, as fields of labor continue to open, and the Lord of the harvest in his providence shall call,—to do all this, must necessarily be attended with a very considerable expense. And it involves expense, not only at first, but to be *continued*. There must be continued contributions towards this great object. The stream of Christian charity must be kept constantly flowing. But how can all this be done, unless the churches at home continue to prosper? Suffer these to diminish and decay—let their hedges be broken down, their pastors be removed, their discipline relaxed, and their harmony disturbed—let the spirit of religion become cold and inconstant, and the seasons of revival and refreshing cease;—and where are we to look for the fountain from which the ever-flowing stream of religious charity is to take its rise? On what are the foreign establishments to depend for their necessary support?

3. The missionaries abroad are dependent on the churches at home for encouragement and

counsel. Owing to the peculiarities of their situation, they not unfrequently find themselves in circumstances of trial and embarrassment, where they can scarcely determine what they ought to do. At such seasons, after imploring Divine light and direction, they will find a comfort in seeking the advice and counsel of their fathers and brethren at home. And not only so, when their benevolent work is opposed, their motives impeached, and their characters vilified; or when darkness and difficulties thicken around them, and they are ready to sink under the pressure of their cares;—where shall they look for countenance and encouragement, except to the churches and dear Christian friends whom they have left behind? And with what confidence can they look to these, their last earthly resource, if they know that they have lost the spirit of religion, forfeited the favor of their Lord, and fallen into a declining and decaying state? I add,

4. The missionaries abroad are dependent on the churches at home for their *prayers*. Those who have devoted themselves to missionary labors among the heathen are, probably,

more sensible than others can be of the inefficacy of mere human efforts, and that success must come from God alone. In the language of a distinguished missionary,* they “have had to grapple with the tremendous difficulties in the way of conversion among the heathen, in addition to those which exist in what is called a Christian country. The prejudices of the natives; their superstition, ignorance, levity, and multiplied errors; their slavish subjection to the priests; the difficulties of the languages; and the terrific deprivations following a profession of Christianity;—these, and many other things, added to the natural enmity, hardness, and unbelief of the heart, all lead the mind of the missionary to feel the need of Divine help.” Others can scarcely “participate in the deep anxiety felt by him, relative to those influences which render the gospel the power of God.” At the same time, he knows it to be a standing ordinance of the Divine administration, that God will be inquired of to bestow his special blessings. It is his pleasure to connect the prayers

* Dr. Ward.

of his people with the accomplishment of his purposes of grace. Thus the faithful missionary is prepared peculiarly to feel the worth of prayer; and to feel his dependence on the churches, and his brethren whom he has left behind, to pray for him. Accordingly, there is scarcely a letter comes to us from our missionaries abroad, which does not contain this particular request, "Brethren, *pray for us*;" and in some of the letters which have been received and published, this request is not only made but *urged* in the most importunate manner. But unless the life and spirit of religion is retained in the churches, what will their prayers avail? With no heart to pray for themselves, to what purpose shall they attempt to pray for others? And with what confidence can the devoted missionary look to the churches for their prayers, if they become cold, formal, divided, corrupt, and comparatively a spiritual desert?

We may see then, in view of these remarks, the very intimate connection subsisting between the cause of foreign missions and the well-being of the churches. We may see the dependence, under God, of the former upon the latter. Ob-

viously it cannot be of greater importance to the animal system that the pulse of life beat strong at the heart, than it is to the whole system of missions among the heathen, that the pulse of spiritual life, and of genuine Christian feeling should beat firm and vigorous in the churches at home.

We learn from our subject, and it is a very comforting conclusion to those of us who are prevented in providence from engaging directly in the missionary work, that every thing which is done to promote the prosperity of the churches at home, is tending strongly to encourage the progress, and secure the ultimate success, of the missions abroad. Every pastor, and every private Christian, who moves actively and faithfully in his own proper sphere, does his duty, and is instrumental of good at home, is aiding, and very efficiently aiding, the cause of missions among the heathen. Every religious meeting which is attended and improved; every revival of religion which is experienced; every humble prayer which is offered up; indeed, every thing which is done for the honor and advancement of true religion among ourselves, is not without

its influence on the progress of that cause, which is ultimately to fill the earth with the Saviour's name and glory.

In view of the representations which have been made, it appears not without reason, that the most active friends of foreign missions are among the most efficient promoters of religion in our own country. That this is in fact the case, no persons of intelligence and impartiality will doubt. If we look over the names of those ministers and private Christians, who are doing most, at the present time, for the success of missions among the heathen, we shall find, perhaps in all instances, that they stand præeminent in the number of those who are laboring to instruct the rising generation, educate pious youth for the ministry, raise the tone of Christian feeling, and promote the triumphs of the cross among ourselves. And if what has been said is true, there are good reasons why it should be so. The spirit required in both species of labor is the same; and besides, the two causes are most intimately connected, and are in fact but one cause. If the churches at home fall or decay, the foreign establishments must fall or decay

with them. It would be as preposterous, therefore, in any one to attempt raising foreign missions upon the ruins of the churches at home, as for the builders of a tower to undermine its deep foundations in the hope of obtaining materials for carrying up its top.

In fine, the grand system of religious effort in operation at the present day, though consisting of a variety of branches, is still a stupendous whole. Its dependencies are mutual; its connections, we trust, indissoluble. May it continue in harmonious and vigorous movement, till the darkness of an hundred ages is dissipated, and the light of Divine truth has illumined the world.

CHAPTER XVI.

Idolatry in Christian lands.

CHRISTIANS at this day hear much and often concerning the various species of idolatry that are practiced in the world. The Catholic worships a piece of bread, under the impression that it is the real body of the Saviour; also the pictures and images of the virgin, and the saints. The Tartar worships a fellow mortal, styled the grand Lama, in whom he believes that the Divinity resides. Some worship the sun, moon, and stars, and also fire. Others worship brute animals, insects, and even vegetables. While millions upon millions are devoted to the worship of dumb, inanimate idols, of brass and iron, wood and stone. No enlightened person can contemplate these facts, without mourning over the debasement to which the human faculties are subject; nor can he think of the obscenities and cruelties with which most of the heathen idols are served, without mingled emotions of disgust and pity.

But while we pity and detest the abominations of the heathen, and do all we consistently can for their conversion and salvation, it becomes us seriously to inquire, Is there no idolatry practiced among ourselves? Are none of us chargeable with loving, serving, and in fact worshipping *something*, rather than the great Creator?

Idolatry is not merely the overt act of prostrating one's self before a graven image, a picture, or some other created thing, with the intent to worship it. In the larger sense of the term, idolatry is the putting of some inferior, created object into the place of the uncreated God. It is the allowing of something, other than God, to occupy that place in our thoughts and affections, which belongs to him alone. We ought to regard the God who made us with supreme and constant *love*. If then we withdraw our hearts from him, and suffer our warmest affections to fasten on any other object, we are, in the larger sense of the term, idolaters. We ought to *trust* in the Almighty for protection and support, and make him the object of our highest confidence. If then we turn away

from him, and place our dependence on any created arm; we are, in the sense explained, idolaters. We ought to make God our *portion*, and seek and find our happiness in him. He should be regarded as the infinite fountain, and the best of created objects as merely streams. But if, instead of this, we are inclined to make the world our portion, and seek our happiness in worldly objects; are we not idolaters? Again, it is our duty to *submit* to the God who made us, and acknowledge him as our rightful Disposer and Governor. We are to exalt the Lord God in our hearts, and hold every thing we possess in subserviency to his cause and kingdom. If, then, we choose and serve some other master rather than him; if we can dispense with his commands, rather than with our own selfish desires and purposes; or if we are exerting ourselves for some private, personal object, more than for the advancement of his kingdom and glory; are we not putting other things in the place of God, and becoming, as before explained, idolaters?

An inspired apostle has told us that "*covetousness* is idolatry." It is so, because it is the

putting of our worldly possessions in the place of God, and rendering them the homage of our hearts. It is loving, craving, trusting to, and seeking our happiness in, uncertain riches. But on the same principle it may be shown that pride, selfishness, ambition, and a love of pleasure are idolatry. The God we worship, "looketh on *the heart*," and will judge of us according to the state and feelings of our hearts. If we "worship him in spirit and in truth," he will regard and accept us as sincere worshipers. But if we place other objects above him in our hearts, let our external acts be what they may, he will regard and condemn us as idolaters.

Having thus defined idolatry, and shown what it is, let us consent to inquire, more closely and particularly, how far any of us are chargeable with this gross and detestable sin. The inquiry, my readers will perceive, is not, whether we have literal images, or crucifixes, or pictures in our houses and temples, before which we bow in humble adoration; but whether we set up any thing in our hearts higher than God, or suffer any inferior object to usurp his place.

Are none of us chargeable with that *covetous-*

ness, which inspiration has declared to be idolatry? Do we not love our worldly possessions and enjoyments, more and better than we do our Creator? Do we not feel a deeper solicitude and interest for the advancement of our temporal good, than we do for the advancement of his kingdom and glory? And are we not putting that trust and confidence in uncertain riches, which we ought to place in God alone? The impression, I believe, is very common, that money can answer every purpose, and accomplish for us almost all that we shall ever need. Have none of my readers admitted, at least in practice, this erroneous and idolatrous sentiment? Have we not been disposed to seek our happiness in the world, more than in God? Or have we not served mammon more faithfully and constantly, than we have the Supreme Being? When the command of God has pointed one way, and our supposed worldly interest another; have we not chosen to pursue the latter? So far as we are constrained in conscience to answer these several questions in the affirmative, we need have no doubt as to the fact of our being, in the larger sense, idolaters? The

particular shape in which an idol is formed, or the material of which it is composed, is of no account in the sight of God. It may be a graven image, or it may be an image of the fancy; it may be silver shrines of Diana, such as Demetrius made for the Ephesians, or it may be silver dollars; it may be a picture of the virgin Mary, or it may be the engraving and superscription of a bank note;—be it what it may, if we put it in the place of God, and render it that love, trust, and service which are due only to God; we in fact make it our god, and become idolaters.

There are those who make worldly *honor* and *power* their god. They love and pursue popularity and influence. Their whole heart's incense they willingly offer upon the unhallowed altars of ambition. It becomes us to inquire, therefore, to what extent we have fallen into this species of idolatry. If we have loved our own glory more than God's; or have yielded to the impulses of an aspiring disposition more than to the unerring dictates of heaven; or have labored with greater zeal to exalt ourselves than we have to advance the kingdom of Christ;

it need not be a question with us what has been our god, or whether we are not in fact idolaters. We may not have prostrated ourselves in honor of

“Moloch, horrid king, besmeared with blood
Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears ;”

but we have rendered homage to an imaginary deity, who has instigated more wars, and shed more blood, than all the heathen gods and idols.

Many persons seem to make *pleasure* their god. They value their sinful amusements and gratifications higher than any other objects. These they supremely love, and in them they seek and find their principal enjoyment. With such, no considerations of duty or of Divine command are of any account, when they come in competition with their pleasures. Possibly, some of my readers may find, on examination, that this is a description of their own case. And so far as they do, they need be in no doubt as to their characters. They may know that there is an idol in their hearts, and one of the most gross and detestable kind. They as really worship the idol of pleasure, as though they

had a literal image in their houses, and daily prostrated themselves in adoration before it.

Persons may make idols of their *talents* and *acquirements*, by doting upon them, and trusting in them, more than in the God who gave them. In the same way, they may idolize their *children*, or their *friends*. When they love these more than God; or find their happiness in them more than in God; or are more solicitous to please and honor them than they are to please and glorify God; they may know that these endearing objects have usurped that place in their hearts which belongs to Jehovah, and consequently have become their idols.

The literal idols of the heathen are very numerous. There is no telling the number of their pretended divinities. Those of India alone amount to no less than *three hundred and thirty millions*. And perhaps we shall find, if we examine the subject with care and faithfulness, that we have more idols than one. We may find that we are not only idolaters, but are the worshipers of many gods.

The great idol, however, which has a seat and an altar in every unsanctified, unholy heart,

is *self*. This is the divinity which, under one form or another, is supremely loved, labored for, and served. With mankind in general—with all men in their state of nature, it is the good of self which is chiefly studied and pursued; and to the advancement of this darling object all other ends and interests are made subservient. A little self-scrutiny will satisfy every one, how obsequious and devoted has been his service to this great and contemptible idol of mankind.

What a spectacle does this world of sin exhibit to the eye of its holy Creator! It may be gathered from the Scriptures that there is no form of wickedness more directly dishonorable and offensive to the Supreme Being, than idolatry. And yet, as his all-penetrating eye runs over the earth, how much of this hateful wickedness does he behold? Vast portions of the globe are covered with literal idols, and sunk in all the debasement and wretchedness which are necessarily consequent upon idol worship. A vast majority of our race are at this moment *professed* idolaters. Turning therefore from these to lands where open idolatry is abolished, and where the true God is known; how much

that *he* regards as idolatry still prevails? Some are setting up one thing in their hearts, and some another, while the great God "in whom they live and move, and have their being," is excluded. In the multitude of their idols, they have no place, no supreme worship, no homage for him. And if God looks away from these to his professing people, who have chosen him for their portion, and committed themselves to his hands, and where, of course, he might expect a pure and constant service; even here the world is loved and pursued, and idols are admitted to a participation of those hearts which had been consecrated to him forever. Even his own people are not effectually weaned from inferior objects and attached and devoted to him alone.

And should he turn now to the temples dedicated to his name, and to the congregations assembled professedly for his worship; would he not find idolatry mingling and contaminating even here? As his pure eye follows those who enter the sanctuary, and sees them rise from their seats to praise, and pray, and unite in the worship of their infinite Creator; is he not often obliged to see that their souls are not sincere—

that other objects have engrossed their affections, and that the homage of the heart is not rendered to him? Is it to be wondered at that such prayers are not effectual? Is it not more a wonder, that for their hypocrisy and idolatry, men are not consumed while in the act of offering them?

After the view here taken, may we not with an emphasis repeat the exclamation, What a spectacle does this world of sin exhibit to the holy eye of its Creator! How little is there that he can approve! How much everywhere presents itself—not excepting our most holy places, which he must regard with detestation and abhorrence! What a wonder it is that this world yet stands! That the patience of a God towards it has not been exhausted! That he has not long ago consumed it with the breath of his mouth, and destroyed it with the brightness of his coming!

The subject is fitted to impress two important duties upon the hearts of God's professing people.

1. Let them search out their own idols, and labor and pray for their removal. Idolatry is

never more odious and inexcusable, than when existing in the hearts of the children of God. God can tolerate it any where else, sooner and better than here. As God's people then would hope for his blessing, they must search out and destroy their idols. If any thing has been set up in their hearts above God, it must be taken down. If any thing has crept in and usurped His place, it must be removed. And if they find the work of removal difficult and painful, transcending their own unaided strength; let them humbly cry to God for his assistance. Let them pray in the beautiful, but in some respects *fearful* language of Cowper :

“The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from thy throne,
And worship only thee.”

2. Let Christians not only search out and destroy their own idols, but let them labor and pray for the utter extinction of idolatry all over the earth. This odious, debasing, corrupting sin has offended heaven, and polluted the earth, and peopled hell, long enough. It is time, high time, that it was taken forever out of the way.

By his Word and Spirit, his providence and grace, God calls upon his people to labor for its removal. Never before were they summoned to the work in accents so intelligible and impressive. Let them, then, listen and obey. Let them feel that the work of missions is never to cease, till the great object and end of it are fully accomplished—till the whole earth is filled with the knowledge, love, and glory of God.

CHAPTER XVII.

The way to be Rich is to be Liberal.

IN considering the proposition which constitutes the subject of this chapter, it is necessary, first of all, to *define liberality*. What is it to be truly and consistently liberal?

Christian liberality is something very different from *prodigality*. Many persons, possessing property, appear to hold it for no other

purpose than to gratify their pride, or their passions, or to promote in some way their sinful indulgences. And to accomplish these objects, they lavish it with an unrestrained profusion. Like the prodigal of old, they "waste their substance in riotous living." And as this ancient prodigal performed not, probably, *one* charitable deed, in all his career of profusion and wickedness; so it is true of those who now resemble him, that their great expenditures not only are not liberality—they are totally inconsistent with it. Bound up in self, and devoting all they possess to the purposes of selfish and sensual indulgence, such persons have nothing to spare for the benefit of others, and are the farthest from true Christian liberality, perhaps, of any persons in the world.

Again; Christian liberality is not *indifference* in respect to property, and a willingness, on that account, to part with it without or beyond reason. Some persons, who come into the possession of large estates, seem not at all to appreciate the value of them. They hold property with so easy a hand, that they are constantly exposed, and directly fall victims, to the arts of fraudulent

and designing men. Persons of this description may be easily induced to bestow large sums in charity—more, perhaps, than their circumstances or their duty require. They may be charitable, in particular cases, to a fault. Their charity is prompted, however, not so much from a sense of duty, as from a feeling of sympathy, or a kind of heedless indifference as to the value of property, and as to what becomes of it, when it passes from their hands. They make no proper estimate of objects presented to them, but are ready to patronize all alike, whether of greater or less importance—whether good or bad. Of such persons it may be said, that they are *lavish* and *wasteful* in the distribution of property, but not that they are truly *liberal*.

Christian liberality is consistent with, and even implies, a just estimate of *the value of property*. The truly liberal man is not indeed a miser, nor is he sinfully avaricious or covetous; but he understands and feels the value of wealth, and is diligently engaged in the acquisition of it. For this purpose, he chooses and habitually pursues some lawful and lucrative employment. He practices industry and econ-

omy, and uses all proper means for acquiring wealth. And he is as careful to retain it, as he is to procure it. He has too great a sense of its worth, to lavish it for purposes of mere carnal gratification, or to suffer it to be wrested from him by the arts of the fraudulent, or to throw it away upon doubtful or unworthy objects. For the same reason, too, he will stand aloof from hazardous engagements, and unadvised contracts, and from those numerous follies and vices which involve so many in poverty and distress. He will avoid luxury and extravagance of every kind, and by wisely adapting his style of living to his particular circumstances and station in society, will exhibit a worthy example of one "professing godliness."

Still, the man does not value wealth, nor does he seek it, or save it, on its *own account*. He does not value or seek it, that he may thereby be enabled to live at his ease, or shine in splendor, or that he may hoard it for others when he is dead, or for any such mean or mercenary motive. But he values and pursues it, chiefly as an *instrument of doing good*. He thinks it desirable to be rich, because his ability to be

useful will thereby be increased. He regards his possessions, when he has gained them, as not in the highest sense his own. He is no more than a *steward* of the Supreme Disposer, who is to hold and manage the wealth committed to him according to the pleasure of his Lord. With these views, when objects of charity are presented, he is ever ready to consider them. He has no question to settle in respect to them, but that of *duty*. He is ready to patronize them, and to bestow his substance, just so far as he thinks his duty, and the pleasure of his Divine Lord require. And in endeavoring to settle the question of duty, he does not confer with flesh and blood, or consult the maxims of mere worldly prudence, but goes at once to his great Directory, the Scriptures. He compares the case submitted to him with the light and precepts of the written Word, and like a just steward, endeavors to feel and act precisely as his master would, were he actually present. Proceeding in this way, whatever he concludes to give, he gives cheerfully. He gives it, in compliance with what he considers a rightful demand upon him from his sovereign Lord—a

demand too, not issued with the intent to depress and injure him, but flowing from infinite kindness and love. And he gives it, not with the selfish design of obtaining a recompense, but with the purpose and hope of benefitting his fellow men, and advancing the cause and kingdom of that Redeemer whom he desires in all points to serve and please. At the same time, he follows his bounty with earnest prayer, that God would graciously accept the offering, and make it an instrument of good.

Such is *Christian liberality*; and it remains to be shown that by such liberality men, ordinarily, are not impoverished, but the contrary. *The way to be rich, it to be truly and consistently liberal.*

This appears, in the first place, from what has been already said. In the acquisition of wealth, as in the accomplishment of every other important object, appropriate means are to be employed. And wherever these are faithfully employed, the end may be expected to follow. But we have seen that the truly liberal man is sensible of the value of property, and diligently uses the appropriate means of procuring and

retaining it. He is industrious, frugal, temperate, virtuous. He manages his affairs with wisdom and prudence, and is an example of all those traits which are necessary in the honest pursuit of wealth. Why then should he not acquire it? Will the circumstance that he seeks it—not as the sordid worldling does, but as an instrument of increased *usefulness*—for the noble purpose of *doing good*—will this be likely to blast his endeavors, and prevent his success? Or will not the God of heaven, whose blessing maketh rich, be the more likely on this account, to render him successful? Will he not more than make up to him what he calls him from time to time to bestow, and from the opening windows of heaven pour him out an abundant blessing?

That God may be expected to do this is evident, in the second place, from the *promises* of his Word. “There is that scattereth, and yet *increaseth*; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty. *The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth, shall be watered also himself.*” (Prov. 11: 24, 25.) “Honor the Lord with thy sub-

stance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase ; *so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.*" (Prov. 3 : 10.) " If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee ; thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thy hand, from thy poor brother. Thou shalt surely give him, and thy heart shalt not be grieved when thou givest unto him ; because that for this thing *the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou putteth thine hands unto.*" (Deut. 15 : 10.) Our Saviour says, " Give, and *it shall be given unto you ; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over,* shall men give into your bosom." (Luke 6 : 38.) It was with reference to the duty of giving alms, that the apostle Paul says, " He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly ; and he which soweth bountifully *shall reap also bountifully.*" (2 Cor. 9 : 6.) The import of these and other similar passages cannot be mistaken. They are *promises*, not so directly of spiritual, as of temporal good, to those who hold their substance as stew-

ards of the Lord, and are ready to bestow it, as he in his providence shall call. And the infinite Author of these promises has innumerable ways in which to fulfill them. He holds the life and health, the powers, and faculties, and various circumstances of his creatures—holds the winds, and waves, and seasons, and all the sources of temporal as well as of spiritual good, most completely in his hands, and at his control. In any way, and at any time, he can bless those whom he is pleased to bless, and curse those whom he is pleased to curse. His promise, therefore, is of all securities the greatest, that “the liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.”

Thirdly, the views which have been expressed are confirmed by some of the best and wisest Christians, both of ancient and modern times. Clemens, of Alexandria, one of the early Christian fathers, uses the following language: “Not he who possesseth wealth, and keepeth it by him, but he who *distributeth it*, is rich. We lose all earthly things by keeping them; *we keep them by giving them away.*” Basil, another of the primitive fathers, says, “The best

way of thriving is to give to them that are in want. The field of the poor is very fruitful, and *quickly yieldeth an increase to the charitable*. God twice pays what is lent to him; once in this world *by multiplying the wealth of almsgivers*; and then in heaven he pays it over and over." Augustine, an eminent Christian and bishop of the fourth century, says, "That which thou givest out of thine estate to charitable uses will be no loss to thy children, but rather *an advantage*."

To these testimonies from the ancients, I might add almost indefinitely from modern divines. In one of the published discourses of the celebrated Dr. Hammond, the following is laid down as the leading proposition: "Almsgiving or mercifulness was never the wasting or lessening of any man's estate, but rather *the increasing of it*." Jeremy Taylor, in his "Rules of Holy Living," has the following statement: "That portion of our estate which goes forth to the poor, or in some offering to God for religion, *returns with a great blessing upon all the rest*. It is like the widow's barrel of meal, which consumed not, as long as she fed the prophet."

Mr. Thomas Gouge, an excellent London minister of the last century, published a treatise on the following subject: "*To be truly Charitable, is the surest and safest way of Thriving.*" In this work, we have the following strong expressions: "I dare challenge all the world to give one instance, or at most any considerable number of instances, of truly merciful men whose charity hath undone them. But as living wells which, the more they are drawn, the more freely do spring and flow; so *the substance of the charitable doth ordinarily multiply in the very distribution.*" "A man may grow rich," says Matthew Henry, "by prudently spending what he has, as the corn is increased by being sown." "Liberality, exercised from right motives," says Thomas Scott, "is sowing seed; and God gives the increase, generally, even in *temporal things*. If he sees best, large increase, flourishing trade, kind friends, and various other supplies and savings, will soon reimburse the expenses of genuine charity."

I add, fourth, we may safely test the point under consideration by an appeal to *facts*. In numerous instances, the truly liberal have found

the promises of God abundantly verified in their own experience. By yielding to the demands of duty, and freely bestowing their property for benevolent purposes, they have experienced the streams of God's bounty and blessing flowing in upon them in an unexampled manner. Look at Job. He "delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him." He "was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, and a father to the poor." But his liberality did not impoverish him. He had immense wealth previous to his sore trial; and when that was ended, the Lord "gave him *twice as much as he had before, and blessed his latter end more than his beginning.*" The poor widow of Zarephath was exceedingly charitable to the distressed prophet Elijah. She willingly received him into her house, and divided with him the last morsel which she had reserved for herself and her son. And how wonderfully was she prospered and blessed? Her stock of provisions was miraculously continued and increased, during the season of famine, and afterwards her beloved child, when breathless, was restored living to her bosom.

In like manner the Shunamite was blessed, because of her kindness to the prophet Elisha. She had a son given her in the first instance, and afterwards restored to her from the dead, in answer to the prophet's prayer. She was also put in possession of her house and her land, which had been taken from her during her exile in the country of the Philistines. (See 2 Kings, chap. iv and viii.)

Numerous instances of a like nature, have occurred in all periods of the church. Eusebius says of Constantine the great, "God gave that merciful prince more wealth than heart could wish, because of his bounties to the poor." Tiberius II, a succeeding emperor, was so bountiful in his charities, as to incur the censure of some of his friends. His reply was, "I shall never want money, so long as, in obedience to Christ's commands, I supply the necessities of the poor." On one occasion, after he had bestowed much in this way, "A marble slab was accidentally removed, under which was found a very great treasure. News was also brought to him of the death of a very rich man, who had left him his whole estate."

John, a bishop of Alexandria in the sixth century, was surnamed *the Almoner*, on account of the extent of his charities. In a season of distress and famine, he continued to bestow his largesses, till he was on the point of being reduced to want. But just at this crisis, when his money and credit were about to fail, he heard of the arrival of two large ships, richly laden, which had been sent to him from the island of Sicily.

As the charitable bishop of Milan was one day traveling with his servant, they were overtaken by some poor people who asked alms. The bishop directed to give them what money he had, which, as it happened, was no more than three crowns. The servant, however, thought it not prudent to part with all, and so gave them but two. Shortly after, the bishop received a present of two hundred crowns; upon which he said to his disobedient servant, "See how, in wronging the poor, thou hast also wronged me. If thou hadst given those three crowns, as I commanded thee, I had received *three hundred crowns*; whereas now I have but two."

Mr. John Walter, a citizen and draper of London more than a hundred years ago, was remarkable for his liberality, even from his youth. But notwithstanding this, his possessions so rapidly and constantly increased, that he became satisfied with his worldly estate, and twenty years before his death entered into a solemn covenant with God, that all future additions to his wealth should be sacredly devoted to charitable uses. After this, as riches continued to pour in upon him from every quarter, he commenced building almshouses and chapels for the poor, investing property for their support when he was dead, and in every way possible ministering to their necessities; and yet he left to his family, who survived him, a very large estate.

It would be easy to multiply instances of this nature, but it cannot be necessary. They are too frequently occurring, in the present age of charitable effort, to require a particular detail. What God has promised in his Word, he has abundantly verified in his providence, that "the liberal soul shall be made fat," and that the

safest way in which to become rich is to be *truly and consistently liberal*.

It follows from what has been said, that covetousness—which is a “withholding more than is meet”—“tendeth to poverty.” It does so in several ways. In the first place, covetousness is the property of a *little mind*—one which is incapable of extending itself to large and liberal views, and consequently of deriving those *worldly* advantages which such views of things are adapted to afford. It is also attended by a contractedness of scheme and effort, and the adoption of a narrow, truckling policy, which is any thing rather than the road to wealth. It moreover leads to a degree of meanness, if not dishonesty, in the pursuit of its object, which is almost sure to defeat itself. Again, covetousness tends necessarily to excite envy, disgust and hatred; to increase the number of enemies, and diminish that of friends; and thus cuts off very many advantages for the promotion of temporal prosperity and comfort. Above all; covetousness may be expected to end in poverty, because it is highly sinful in the sight of God, and of a nature to provoke his desolating judg-

ments. As God has all the sources of wealth at his disposal, and can open them in mercy to those who honor him with their substance, so he can dry them up, and cut them off, in judgment upon those who pursue a different course. He can commission his tempests to sweep their forests; or his fire to consume their dwellings; or his drought to parch their fields; or his bottomless ocean to swallow up their wealth. Though they sow much, he can cause them to bring in little; and though they earn wages, and put them in a bag, he can cause it to be "a bag with holes." God hath himself said, that "covetousness is idolatry." It is a heinous, odious sin, and tends, perhaps more than any other, to provoke the desolating judgments of heaven, and involve those who indulge it in poverty and misery.

The subject is fitted to remove mistakes, and to afford instruction and encouragement in relation to the great work of spreading the gospel. Some persons are uneasy, on account of the efforts which are now made for the universal diffusion of true religion. They think that the friends of religion make too much of it, and

that they are too frequently called upon for contributions. They wonder why things cannot be suffered to remain as they have been in centuries past. They almost wish that their lot had been cast in some former age; or that the present exertions and sacrifices for the spread of the gospel had been postponed to a later period. All complaints of this nature, whether uttered or felt, proceed evidently upon the principle that the gospel is a burthen, and that every thing they do for the promotion of it is so much taken from them and lost. But this principle, it will be perceived, is in palpable opposition to the Scriptures, and to the views which have been here advanced. He who holds his property at the disposal of Providence, and is ready to bestow it cheerfully and liberally for the promotion of great and worthy objects, shall not thereby be impoverished. He may the rather expect to be enriched. "The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." Instead therefore of repining, we have the utmost reason to be thankful, that our lot is cast in this favored period of the world, when the claims of so many great and import-

ant objects are presented, and so frequent demands are made upon the liberality of Christians. If there is any truth in the Scriptures, or in that view of the case which has been here exhibited, the present age should, on this very account, be regarded, not as a hard and impoverishing one, but as one of peculiar privilege and mercy.

Some persons seem to entertain fears that the present efforts of Christians for the spread of religion will be a means of *weakening and injuring the churches*. In their zeal to extend the blessings of the gospel to others, they will become so enfeebled, as to be unable to support it among themselves. But if what has been said is true, there is no ground for such apprehensions ; nor would there be, were the contributions of Christians increased fourfold. Have the different Protestant churches, in this country and in Europe, been actually impoverished, by their recent exertions for the spread of the gospel ? Are they less able now, or less disposed, than they were forty years ago, to maintain religious institutions among themselves ? Or is there an individual church, in this country or in

any other, which has become so enfeebled by missionary efforts, as to be unable to retain its customary religious privileges? I hazard nothing in asserting, that there is no such church in existence, and never was. So far from this, it has proved universally true, that the more the churches did for the spread of the gospel, the more they found themselves able to do; and the more they did for the diffusion of their religion abroad, the greater was their ability and their disposition to support its institutions at home. It is true, indeed, there is a point of liberality, beyond which neither churches nor individual Christians ought to go. Overstepping this, they would transcend the demands of duty and of Christ, and might be impoverished. But there is no reason to think that, in general, they have reached this point; and no reason to fear that they very soon will.

Persons in moderate worldly circumstances are liable to think, that *they* are under no obligations to do any thing for the spread of the gospel. It is the business of the rich, they say, to be liberal. It is as much as we can do to take care of ourselves. But if what has been

said is true, this impression is false and groundless. God is, indeed, a reasonable being. He "accepteth according to that a man hath." He does not require those with one talent to improve ten; or those in moderate worldly circumstances to vie with the rich in the extent of their charities. But he requires all his intelligent creatures to possess what the apostle denominates "a willing mind"—a liberal and charitable spirit. He requires them to feel for the necessities of their fellow men, and to hold whatever he has committed to them, be it more or less, in subserviency to his glory, and the interests of his kingdom. Our Saviour, while on earth, did not consider poverty as any excuse for covetousness. He commended the poor widow, who possessed only two mites, because she had cast her *all* into the treasury of the Lord.

It becomes those in needy circumstances to institute the inquiry, whether it is not their covetousness which has made them poor. The Jews, at a certain period, thought themselves too poor to build the house of the Lord, and to pay their tithes and offerings according to the requisitions of their law. And the consequence

was, that God "smote them with blasting, and with mildew, and with hail, in all the labor of their hands," and thus impoverished them more and more. At the same time he promised them, that if they would "honor him with their substance"—if they would "bring all the tithes into the storehouse, and prove him therewith," he would "open unto them the windows of heaven, and pour them out a blessing that there should not be room to receive it."

Had we stronger *faith* in the promises of God, and a more unwavering confidence in his fidelity and truth, we should be more ready to meet the calls of his providence, and to hold our earthly substance at the disposal of his will. We should be more ready—in labors, sacrifices, and self-denials—to devote our whole selves to his service and kingdom. Our prayer then for *ourselves* should be that of the sometimes wavering disciples, "Increase our faith." And as we regard the advancement of Christ's precious cause, and the fidelity and comfort of his followers, we shall offer the same prayer for *them*—"Increase their faith."

May the faith of all those who profess to be

followers of the Lord Jesus Christ be increased many fold. Thus will they increase in liberality, and in every grace; and the knowledge of their Divine Redeemer will be rapidly spread "from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth."

CHAPTER XVIII.

The World impoverished by its Wickedness.

THERE are those among us and around us, who think Christianity a very expensive religion. They complain of efforts for the propagation of the gospel in foreign lands, and even for the support of religious institutions at home, on the ground of the expense which is thereby incurred. When they read of the sums contributed from month to month, and from year to year, for the support of missions to the heathen, they are alarmed. The country, they fear, is

to be drained of its resources. In imagination, they see it already depressed and impoverished.

Now I shall not undertake to say, in reply to this, that Christianity makes no demands upon the wealth—the worldly convenience and comforts of its votaries. I shall not say that to establish, support, and extend its institutions involves no expense. For this would not be true. There *is* necessarily some expense connected with the maintenance of religion *at home*. Temples for the worship of God must be erected; religious teachers must be educated and supported; and the ordinances of the gospel must be sustained. Time, too, and labor must be given to the subject, and self-denial and sacrifice must sometimes be experienced.

There is also expense involved in the *missionary enterprise*, whether in our own country, or in foreign lands. Missionaries must be raised up and sent forth to their respective fields of labor. And for a time, they must be supported in those fields. Houses must be prepared for them, and the comforts of life must be provided. They must have books and tracts, schools and presses, and all the manifold apparatus for cre-

ating and extending a salutary influence. And as their numbers are thinned by death, or as new doors of influence are opened, others must be sent forth to their aid. Now to commence and carry forward this mighty enterprise, reaching forth in some directions to the ends of the earth—to carry it forward with *vigor* and *success*, involves necessarily a degree of expense. Money must be furnished—regularly, systematically, and to a considerable amount, or the wheels of this great enterprise cannot move forward. They must first be retarded, and finally stop.

I admit, then, all that can with propriety be urged as to the expensiveness of religious institutions, and of missionary efforts. I shall not attempt to remove apprehension, or to silence complaint, by denying or disguising any part of the truth. At the same time, I insist that our country has never been impoverished by its religious institutions or enterprises. So far from this, it has been greatly blessed by them, and on the whole, I have no doubt, has been enriched.

This nation, and the individuals composing

it, have been impoverished—so far as they have been so at all—from a very different cause. It has been done by their *wickedness*. Sin, in all its forms, is expensive. One lust, habitually indulged, is enough to ruin a man in soul and body, and often in estate. It is righteousness that exalteth a nation; while sin is the reproach and ruin of any people. Let us consider, for a moment, some of the sins which are practiced in the world, and endeavor to form some estimate as to their real and relative expense.

I would, in the first place, direct attention to *idolatry* and *false religion*. I need not say that idolatry is sinful; and it is a fact, that nearly every species of idolatry that has ever existed is enormously expensive;—so expensive, that those of us who have been born and educated in Christian lands, can form little idea of it. Temples numerous, magnificent, and gorgeously decorated—a priesthood proud, imperious, rapacious, and vastly multiplied—frequent and riotous festivals, protracted often through several days—burthensome rites and ceremonies—costly offerings—long and perilous pilgrimages to sacred places,—in short, there is no end to the

exactions which the different forms of idolatry and false religion make upon their deluded votaries. Time, labor, property, health, and even life itself, are wantonly sacrificed in these ways; and all for nothing, and a great deal worse than nothing. No important privilege—no blessing, temporal, spiritual, or eternal is received in return. In all parts of his service, the devil is a hard master. His demands upon his cheated, deluded followers are exorbitant and ruinous. But in none of his claims is he more cruelly grinding and oppressive, than in those systems of false religion over which he presides, and in which he is so obsequiously served.

But we need not go to the dark regions of idolatry and heathenism, to learn the expensive-ness of sin. We see this truth illustrated all around us.

Who can estimate the expense of *pride*, in the different forms in which this odious sin presents itself? Under the influence of pride, men must live in splendid houses, not to say palaces, requiring a vast amount of labor to take care of them, and constructed not so much for convenience and comfort, as for show. They must

have costly furniture which is never used, and books which are never read, and a corresponding equipage, which is more trouble than profit, but with which pride will not suffer them to dispense. Under the same controlling influence, the whole subject of dress and personal adornment is to be regulated. Fashion—not Christian propriety or comfort—is the presiding genius here; and particular ornaments or articles of dress must be assumed or rejected, worn or laid aside, according to her bidding. I know not that any precise estimate has been made, or can be, as to the expense of the different forms and manifestations of pride, but every one can see that it must be enormous—so great that only a few are able to bear it, while vast numbers sink under it, and come to absolute poverty.

Let me next direct attention to the long train of *sinful amusements*, and inquire as to the amount expended upon them. Under the head of amusements I class balls, theatres, operas, assemblies, and parties of sinful pleasure. The expense incurred in these and the like ways, it would not be easy to compute; but every one at all acquainted with the world knows that it is

very great. A favorite dancer from Italy makes her appearance among us, and passes through the country, depraving our morals and corrupting our youth, and carries home with her her hundreds of thousands. Some distinguished actor or actress has an engagement at one of our theatres for only a few nights, at an expense that would support a dozen pulpits for a whole year. And yet there are no murmurings or complainings on account of expenditures such as these. 'Those who acquire their money honestly have a right,' it is said, 'to expend it as they please.' But let these same persons become serious, devoted Christians, and please to expend half as much for the support of the gospel, or to forward some religious charitable enterprise, and they will be the subjects of severe remark. It will be thought and said, that they had better look at home, pay their debts, and take care of their own interests, and not squander their substance upon projects of doubtful expediency.

But there are other ways in which sin impoverishes individuals and communities, of a still more gross and revolting character. Look,

for example, at the single vice of *intemperance*. In years past, this one form of wickedness is known to have cost our country more than to support all the different branches of national and state governments, all our colleges and schools, and all the religious teachers and charitable institutions in the land. It has cost each individual, city or town more than all its taxes of every description. Or if we consider the cost of this vice to the individual indulging in it, we shall be presented with a picture still more appalling. If there is an object in creation at once odious and pitiable, it is the miserable victim of intemperance. He may boast of his freedom, and his independence, but he is a bloated, wretched slave. There is no expense which he will not incur, and no labor he will not perform, for the gratification of his appetite. He will sell any thing from his house, or his back, or out of the mouths of his hungry children, to procure the means of intoxication.

Nor is the vice of intemperance more expensive and ruinous than some others. Perhaps it is less so. It may be as sure to end in ruin, but it is commonly slower in its operation.

What the intemperate man will accomplish in a few short years, the gamester, the debauchee, the professed votary of sinful, sensual pleasure will often accomplish in as many months. Such characters are on the high road to ruin—not only eternal, but *temporal* ruin; and to the certain end of their course they are advancing by rapid stages. An estate, which it had cost a whole life to gain, is often lost in a single night. And with it is lost reputation, comfort, health, every thing; so that nought remains to the wretched victim, but poverty, frenzy, self-reproach, and often self-murder.

I shall notice but another way in which sin impoverishes and ruins nations, and that is *war*. And here I need spend no inquiry, whether war, in every supposable case, is sinful. It will be admitted by all serious, candid persons, that nearly every war that was ever waged on earth *has been* sinful. It will be admitted, too, that war, in the general, is one of the most frightful, horrid forms of wickedness that has ever been exhibited. And as to the *expensiveness* of it—in every sense of the word *expensiveness*—there can be no question. Of human life, with all its

endearments, comforts and blessings, war has been, in all ages, the great destroyer. Maimed limbs, and mangled corpses—confused heaps of the dead, and the groans of the dying—peaceful villages sacked and plundered, and crowded cities laid in ashes—mourning parents, disconsolate widows, and homeless, friendless, unprotected orphans—such are some of the things which mark the progress, and follow in the train of war. The pecuniary cost of war, too, exceeds that of every other form of wickedness. How is it that great national debts, like that of England, and some other European powers, have been contracted? Not by supporting schools, and founding hospitals, and sustaining other important charities. They have been contracted, I believe in every instance, by *war*. There is no other way in which they can have been contracted. Our late war upon the poor Indians in Florida cost more, by fifty times, than Christians in America have ever expended for the conversion and civilization of the native tribes. A single month's war with England would cost this nation more, probably, than all we have ever payed for the propagation of the gospel throughout the earth.

There is no difficulty, then, in perceiving how it is that this world is impoverished. It is not, as is sometimes pretended, in the service of the Lord. It is not that men are obliged to spend so much time in religious meetings, and so much money in supporting religious institutions among themselves, and in charitable efforts to extend them to the destitute. True, these things cost something, but then it is, in comparison, but a mere trifle, and there is a blessing promised to attend them which more than compensates for all their expense. But the world is, and ever has been, greatly, ruinously impoverished by its *wickedness*. This has been abundantly set forth and illustrated in the foregoing remarks. Look at the heathen world ;—groaning and crushed, as it has been for ages, under the burthen of its costly and bloody superstitions ! And how has the whole earth groaned, in all periods of time, under the pressure of those wars, and fightings, and cruel sufferings, which have been perpetrated and endured ! And to what a fearful extent is the Christian world now impoverished, by its pride and folly, its amusements and pleasures, its vice

and wickedness! Let any one go in imagination (for he should not go in any other way,) to those various scenes of vice and crime which are exhibited in our own land—to the tippling shops, and gaming tables, and theatres, and circuses, and brothels, and see, for once, how much time, and toil, and money, and reputation, and comfort, and health, and life, are thrown away upon these things; and he will be satisfied how it is that the world is impoverished. He will see, too, how to estimate those whimperings and complainings which are sometimes heard about the expense of religious institutions. What is the expense of these institutions, compared with that incurred by the wickedness of man? Scarcely more than as a drop to the ocean. The original *destroyer* of this world was the great Prince of darkness—the instigator of all mischief and crime. And he it is who has desolated the world, and made it poor. And he it is who keeps it poor. The yoke of service which he imposes upon it is an *intolerable burthen*—borne willingly, indeed, by his abject servants, but sufficient to sink them to

perdition ; and unless they speedily shake it off, it must sink them down forever.

I have already intimated that the institutions of the gospel, though attended with some expense, are on the whole a great blessing to a community. They are actually worth more than they cost. And this may easily be demonstrated, in view of what has been said. Nor in pursuing the argument, will it be necessary to look beyond the present life. We may lay out of the account entirely those spiritual, everlasting blessings, which the gospel proffers beyond the grave. The world, we have seen, is impoverished by its wickedness. This (under the instigation of Satan,) is that which makes it and keeps it poor. But what is it which stands most directly opposed to the wickedness of man? What is the grand *antagonist* principle, which is operating in a thousand ways to dry up the sources of human wickedness ; to cut off its poisonous streams : to rescue the world from that curse of sin by which it has been so long blighted and desolated ? It is *the gospel*. The gospel, with its benign institutions and saving influences, can do all this ; and *nothing else*

can. Neither education, nor civilization, nor human governments, nor any thing merely human, can stay the dire streams of which I have spoken. At best, they can but modify their influence, and direct them into other channels. But the gospel is capable, and was given for the very purpose, of *delivering the world from sin.* "For this was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins."

It follows, then, that no one need ever fear being impoverished by the gospel. Its whole influence is to *enrich* those who possess it, not only by the direct blessing which it entails, but by counteracting and removing those vices and sins, by which the world is desolated and impoverished.

People sometimes have the impression, that they are *not able* to support the gospel. The probability is, that they are not able to do without it. If they would make the requisite effort and sacrifice, and secure to themselves the institutions of religion; not only would they be blessed in their own souls, and become prepared

for everlasting blessings, but in all probability, they would soon find their worldly circumstances improved. The blessing of God, which maketh rich, would rest upon them; expensive courses of sin would be forsaken; and their ability to possess and enjoy the comforts of life would be materially increased. "Godliness is profitable unto all things; having the promise of the life that *now is*, and of that which is to come."

CHAPTER XIX.

The Sin and Folly of hoarding up Riches for Children.

AMONG the most intimate of all earthly relations, is that of parents to their children. From this relation result duties of the highest importance, which require to be accurately defined and understood, It is the duty of parents to

provide for their children. "If any man" (having the requisite ability) "provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

It is the duty of parents to *educate* their children. And by this I mean that they should afford them, so far as they are able, that physical, intellectual, and moral culture, which will best fit them for that sphere of life in which it is intended they shall move.

It is the duty of parents who have the means, to afford to their children such assistance, when entering upon the business of life, as shall aid in overcoming *the difficulties of a commencement*—shall give a spring to their *internal resources*—shall be an *encouragement* to industry and enterprise on their own part. There is such a thing as doing just this; and there is such a thing as doing a great deal more. Parents may afford to their children such a degree of assistance, or may encourage them to expect it, as shall take away all *necessity*, and remove all *inducement*, for enterprise and exertion on their own part. To do the latter, is to do chil-

dren an essential injury. To do the former, and to do it judiciously, may be to them of essential advantage.

What I propose in this chapter, is to discourage the common practice of *hoarding up riches for children*—of scheming, planning, laboring for this object—making it a leading purpose and pursuit of life. This is strongly discountenanced in the Scriptures; and it is equally forbidden by the dictates of reason and benevolence.

It is natural that parents should love their children. It is natural and right that they should seek their good. And under the mistaken apprehension that the best thing they can do for their children is to provide for them an estate; many fathers and mothers give themselves to this object with unwearied ardor. They rise early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness, not so much for their own personal advantage—they scarcely think of this—as with a view to the amassing of treasures for their children. The sin and folly of such a course of life will appear from several considerations. And,

1. Parents in this way deprive *themselves* of a great many comforts. This is perhaps the least of all the evils resulting from the course they pursue; and yet this is worthy of being noticed. Why should not worthy, laborious, and affluent parents themselves enjoy, to an extent at least, the fruits of their own industry? Why should they deny themselves (as they sometimes do) not merely the luxuries but the conveniences of life, and pursue a course of stinted parsimony, that they may amass wealth for their children; when they know not that their children shall live to enjoy it; or if they do what use they will make of it; and whether it may not prove to them more an injury than a benefit?

2. By this course of life, parents deny themselves, in a great measure, the luxury of *doing good*. Intent upon securing estates for their children, they have little to spare for the necessitous and suffering. So far from searching out objects of benevolence, they permit those to pass unheeded, which fall directly under their eye. They deliver not the poor that cry, and those that have none to help. The blessing of him

that was ready to perish does not come upon them, nor do they cause the widow's heart to sing for joy. They have never felt the truth of that saying of the Lord Jesus—a saying on which his whole life was but a practical comment—"It is more blessed to give, than to receive."

3. By the course of life we are considering, parents greatly *injure the cause of Christ*. At this time, there are many ways in which those who have wealth may bestow it, for the advancement of the religion of the Saviour. Channels of benevolence are open before them, and running by them on every side, into any of which they may cast their bounty, and be sure that it will turn to the furtherance of the gospel. But there are many parents, and I am sorry to say some professedly Christian parents, who turn away from all these objects, and close their hearts and hands against them, under the miserable pretence of laying up estates for their children. They are so much engaged in getting and keeping property for them, that they have little to spare for the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world. Now such per-

sons greatly injure the cause of Christ. They injure it by their example. The language of this is (whatever their professions may be) that Christ's cause is, at best, but a secondary object—one claiming their regards but in an inferior degree. They injure this cause, too, by directly withholding from it that support, without which it cannot be successfully prosecuted. Suppose all other Christians should do the same as they; what would be the prospects of the church and the world? And may not other Christians withhold their support, on the same pretence, and with equal reason? But,

4. The remark on which I intend chiefly to insist is, that by the course of life which has been considered, parents almost inevitably *injure*, and often *ruin their children*. They love their children, and labor for them with the most assiduous kindness. But this is almost always an inconsiderate kindness, tending rather to the injury than the benefit of those who are the objects of it. How many children have been utterly ruined, soul and body, for time and eternity, by having large estates treasured up for them, and put into their hands? How many

have fallen into temptations, and contracted habits of indolence and vice, which otherwise they might have shunned? How many are at this moment in the world of despair, who will remember and curse forever the rich patrimonies which had been treasured up for them, as the means of their destruction?

And where the result is less deplorable—where those who are born to affluence escape the fascinations of vice, and sustain through life unexceptionable characters; how generally do we find them unenterprising, inefficient, and comparatively useless members of society? I do not say that this is *always* the case; for it is not so. We have here and there an example of distinguished activity and usefulness, from among the class of persons of whom I speak. But does not every one who has mingled much with the world know, that the individuals who have chiefly distinguished themselves in the different professions, and in the several walks of life, are generally from among those who have made their own fortunes, and have risen to eminence by their own exertions.

There is an inherent difficulty in the way of

a rich man's educating his children, and especially his sons, to become active and useful members of society. I well know that some few have overcome this difficulty, and that, on this account, both themselves and their children are entitled to the greater credit. But where one, in circumstances of affluence, has overcome it, hundreds, and it may be thousands, have been prostrated by it. The difficulty lies just here; and it is high time that it was explained and understood.

The son of a wealthy father, as soon as he is capable of knowing any thing, ascertains that his father is rich. This is an important fact, and one of which the boy cannot be kept long in ignorance. And his very first inference from this fact probably is, 'I am a privileged child. I need not exert myself like other children. I can live easier than they. If my parents were poor, I should be under the necessity of taxing my ingenuity, and of making exertions; but this is not needful now. While other boys work, I may play. While they are occupied with their studies and labors, I may take my ease, eat, drink, and be merry.'

Thus the boy begins early to reason, and *there is no help for it*. And the perverse conclusion to which he comes, as to his own privileged state, and his consequent exemption from ordinary responsibilities, will be likely to follow him, to the school—to the counting room—to the college—and to the studies of professional life; and if, under the influence of it, he escapes the contamination of vice (which ordinarily he will not do)—if his moral character remains unsullied; he will be almost sure to become indolent and inefficient. He has not the *motives* to exertion, which other young men have, and of course—unless he have very peculiar *internal* resources—he will not exert himself like them. He will fall behind them in the race of acquisition and usefulness; and, except as his money (while it lasts) may give him currency, he will be of little consequence in the world. In a majority of cases, he will become vicious, and ruin himself in a little time; but if he escapes this imputation, he will do little more, ordinarily, than to plod through life, scatter the estate which his father had gathered for him, and die at last poor and unlamented.

5. But this leads to another remark, showing the folly of laboring to amass wealth for children, which is, that such labors are almost sure to *defeat themselves*. The object of the parent is, to treasure up riches in his family, where he fondly hopes they may remain, and be a permanent blessing to his posterity. But in the course of two or three generations, at farthest, his treasure is all scattered, and passes into the hands of the hardy and enterprising sons of poverty, who in their turn rise to the possession of influence and wealth.

So it was, as long ago as the days of Solomon. He was indefatigable and most successful in acquiring riches. He drew them together from every clime, and hoarded them up, till they became a burthen upon his hands. He hardly knew what to do with them. His object was, probably, to perpetuate them in his family. He expected to give birth to a long line of kings, and he intended they should surpass all the kings of the earth in splendor and magnificence. But how differently from his intentions were events ordered in the providence of God? His only son, as might have been anticipated, is a

spoiled child. He lives only to dismember that kingdom which his father, by his wisdom, had consolidated, and to scatter those immense treasures which his father had heaped up. Besides provoking the ten tribes to separate from him, he engaged in a war with Shishak, king of Egypt, who, we are told, "came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house; he even took away *all*. And he took away all the shields of gold that Solomon had made." Here then is the issue of all king Solomon's endeavors to gather together and treasure up wealth. In less than half a dozen years after his death, the whole is scattered, and his pampered son is left in comparative poverty.

And so it has been in all periods since. So it is now. This is emphatically true in our own country, where estates are not entailed, but are left to the natural course of providence. Property is continually shifting hands. Those who are born rich, die poor; and those who are born poor, often die rich. It was said by the late President Dwight, near the close of life, that

among all the rich men at that time in the city of New Haven, there was not one who was a rich man there, or the son of a rich man, when he first became acquainted in the city. Within the short space of his recollection, the property of the city had entirely shifted hands. And so it is in other places. A skillful, industrious young man begins the world with little or nothing; but soon rises to the possession of wealth, which he carefully lays up for his children. His children, educated under the impression that their father is rich, and of course that they need *do nothing*, soon become incapable of doing any thing, and only live to spend what their father had gained. The hard earnings of the parent are quickly scattered, and pass into other hands.

I know not that this almost invariable course of things is, on the whole, a detriment to society. But it shows the folly, the *vanity* (as Solomon would say) of hoarding up riches for children, with a view to benefit *them*, and through them their posterity. By an almost invariable course of providential dispensations, the Supreme Disposer admonishes us that this is

not *the way* in which to benefit our children, but rather to injure them ;—not the way in which to make them and their posterity rich and happy, but rather to make them poor and miserable.

It will be said, perhaps, that although the consequences of treasuring up riches for children are often such as has been described ; still, these are not *necessary* consequences. Children are under no *necessity* of becoming indolent and profligate, merely because they are favored (in possession or in prospect) with large patrimonies. I admit there is no *invincible* necessity in the case ; and yet there is a kind of *moral* necessity which is scarcely less sure in its results. Men act from motives ; and they are more powerfully influenced by strong motives, than by weak ones. If we expect those around us to act efficiently and vigorously, we must set before them sufficient motives to induce to such action. If we expect them to act feebly and dubiously, or not to act at all, we have only to diminish the power of motive. Now the mistake of those parents who treasure up large patrimonies for their children, lies just here : They take away from their children nearly all

motive to efficient exertion. They have not the *incitements* to vigorous action, which other children have; and consequently they will not act as other children do.

With few exceptions, men are constitutionally lazy, both in body and mind. They will not exert themselves, unless they see some necessity for it. Take away this necessity in early life, and not only is immediate indolence the result, but *habits* of indolence are soon formed, which it is not easy to overcome. Persons who, from the pressure of stern necessity, have acquired habits of activity and enterprise in early life, will, from the mere force of habit, continue to exert themselves, when the immediate necessity for exertion has ceased. But take away the necessity for exertion in early life, and let habits of *indolence* be formed, and as a general thing, they are incurable. The man cannot do any thing, if he would; and he would not, if he could. He prefers to live upon his patrimony, while it lasts, and trust to Providence for the rest.

I have said that there are individuals here and there—sometimes whole families—which are exceptions to the foregoing remarks; as

there are exceptions to most other general rules. But the *general rule* certainly is, as I have stated it. It is to be *calculated on*, as a general rule. The evils connected with it are to be *provided against*, as those resulting from a general rule. And parents, who would not expose their children, whom they so tenderly love, to almost inevitable injury and ruin, must be careful how they heap up treasure for them, and thus take from them in early life those *motives* to action—those inducements to virtuous and honorable enterprise, without which their children, in ordinary cases, will no more act, than though they had lost some of the members of their bodies, or the faculties of their minds.

It is obvious that both parents and children have a deep *personal interest* in the subject here discussed; and more than this, *the public* are deeply interested. How pitiable, even in a public view, to see children, who are favored with the choicest privileges, perverting and abusing them! To see those, into whose lap Divine providence has poured her richest blessings, growing up in indolence, often in vice, disappointing the hopes which had been enter-

tained respecting them, and soon falling behind—and ultimately far behind—the hardy sons of poverty and want, in the race of honorable distinction and usefulness.

Possibly some parent, who reads these pages, may feel inclined to inquire, 'What shall I do? I perceive the difficulty in regard to my children, but how shall I remedy it? Shall I throw my property to the winds? Shall I reduce myself and my children to want, that they may feel the necessity of exertion? Or shall I cease from all further efforts to acquire property, and become indolent and shiftless myself, for fear that my children may in the end become 'so?' To inquiries of this sort, I would reply: Do neither of the things which you have suggested. To do either of them would be to commit sin. If you are engaged in a lawful and gainful business, continue in it. And not only so, be *diligent* in business. Be provident, enterprising, and active. Get all the property that you honestly can, and save all you get. You have no right to waste or squander a farthing of it. But remember habitually, that every farthing of it is *the Lord's*, and that you are but his stew-

ards. You hold all under him, and are bound to dispose of all according to his pleasure. And so far as your children are concerned, your Lord has told you with sufficient plainness what his pleasure is. He would have you provide for your children. He would have you educate them. He would have you afford them such assistance, that they may enter upon the course of life for which you intend them, without disheartening difficulties and embarrassments. But he would not have you hoard up riches for them. He has told you the danger of doing this, and warned you against it. And now, if you will not take warning—if you will do for your children what God has directed you not to do; *he* will not change the ordinary course of providence to rescue them from injury; but the natural course of events will move along, and you and they must take the consequences. The use which God would have you make of your worldly substance, or of that portion of it which can be spared from the necessary demands of yourself and family, he has very plainly set before you. “Give alms of such things as ye have.” “Make to yourselves friends of the

mammon of unrighteousness." "Charge them that are rich in this world that they be rich in good works; ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come." "To do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." "Do good unto all men, especially to them who are of the household of faith."

The modes of doing good by means of our worldly substance, are at this day numerous and various, perhaps beyond all former example. Not only have we the poor always with us, so that when we will we may do them good, but the great benevolent enterprises of the age,—those which have it for their object to advance the kingdom of Christ, and save the souls of men, all need the fostering care and munificence of the church. Those who have property at their disposal beyond the wants of themselves and families, need be at no loss, in these days, what to do with it. *The Lord hath need of it*; and it is only for them to inquire and consider in what ways, and for what particular objects, he needs it most.

Not only should parents, who are entrusted with large estates, understand this subject themselves, but they should cause their children to understand it, and do it early. Let the rich father, who wishes well to his children, say to them distinctly, and in season; 'To be sure, the God of providence has prospered me in my business, and committed to me a portion of this world's goods; but he has done it, not that it might be a means of injuring and destroying you, nor am I permitted to use it for such a purpose. It is my intention to give you a suitable education; to provide for you during your minority; and to afford you such assistance, that you may enter upon the active business of life without embarrassment. Thus much I shall do, and do cheerfully. But having done this for you, you must thenceforth rely on your own resources, and not on mine. You must fly on your own wings, not on mine. The property which I call my own is all *the Lord's*. He permits me to do for you to the amount I have stated, and no more. To do more would be to do you an injury. Besides, what of my property is not needed for you, and for the other members of the family, is needed for other pur-

poses. It is needed to supply the wants of the destitute, and for promoting the cause of Christ in the world. I wish you to understand this subject *in season*. Beyond a certain amount, you are not to rely on me. Beyond a certain amount, it is not my purpose to aid you, while I live, or when I die. I wish you to go to school, and to your places of business,—to form your plans, and to shape your several courses of life, under this impression; and by diligence, activity, and enterprise,—by a watchful reliance on the providence of God, and on your own resources and exertions, prepare to be useful and respected in the world.'

If rich parents would deal with their children in this way, and do it with so much seriousness as to make themselves believed; if they would let their *actions* speak, as well as their words, and train up their children to habits of industry, as though they expected them, in future life, to rely chiefly on their own resources; they might obviate more than half the difficulties which now lie in the way of their educating their families as they could wish. And really I know of no other way in which these difficulties can be obviated. They are *inherent* difficulties,—

they are *great* difficulties, which, unless removed, will continue in years to come, (as they have done in years past), to work the ruin of a large proportion of those who are born to affluence, and who grow up under the impression that it is only incumbent on them to enjoy, and to spend what their fathers have gathered.

In the preceding remarks, I have had my eye chiefly upon two objects.

1. The benefit of wealthy and prosperous families, and more especially the *children* of such families. It is truly lamentable, to see so much property wasted, and so much kindness lavished upon children, to their injury;—to see the common *motives* to vigorous action taken from them, by the misplaced bounty of parents and other relatives, and themselves left to grow up in ease and indolence, to be nuisances, or at best but mere cyphers, in the world. In exposing this evil, and pointing out the remedy, I have looked specially to the *benefit* of such children;—that they may have the same motives to exertion with other children, and may enter on the race of usefulness with them, with an equal prospect of success.

2. I have had also in mind the benefit that

would accrue to *the church of God*, if that course of life that has been recommended could be generally pursued. There is no want of property to sustain all the benevolent institutions of the age, and carry into effect the grand designs of the church; if property could only be used according to the directions of the Bible—the recorded will of Him by whom it was all bestowed. If the property which is hoarded up for children to their *injury*,—their injury in this world and the next, were but judiciously expended; there would be enough, and more than enough, to sustain all the benevolent institutions of the church.

But this is only a part of the means which might justly be put in requisition. How many there are in the possession of wealth, who have no children to educate and provide for, and who hardly know what to do with the substance which God has committed to their hands. How many of this description are there, who, instead of leaving their wealth to their connections,—who do not need it,—who will probably be injured by it more than benefited,—and who never will thank them for it,—might do much for the

cause of Christ, during their lives, and at their death, and might have the blessing of multitudes ready to perish, heaped upon their memories, long after they had gone down to the dust ?

Christians have much yet to learn, respecting the right disposition of property ;—respecting the *tenure* by which it is held, and their obligations to dispose of it in that manner, which will most promote the kingdom of Christ, and the eternal well-being of their fellow men. Let them live under the impression, that themselves and all that they possess are the Lord's,—that they hold all under him, and have consecrated all to him,—and that they are bound, as good stewards, to dispose of whatever is committed to them, according to the will of their Divine Master, and for the advancement of his kingdom and glory ; and there will be no want of means to carry forward any object which the church of God ought to desire. The treasury of the Lord would be ever pouring forth its streams of beneficence, and yet would be ever full. The blessing of God would rest richly on his church, and soon it would spread and fill the earth.

Meanwhile, children in general, and the children of the rich in particular, would be as well educated and provided for as they are now,—and *much better*. They would be much more likely to become active, enterprising, and useful citizens; honored in life, happy in death, and prepared for a glorious meeting with their pious and honored parents and relatives, who have gone before them to the heavenly world.

CHAPTER XX.

Prayer for the Universal Extension of Christ's Kingdom.

LITTLE need be said to show that it is the duty of all Christians to pray for the coming of Christ's kingdom; or for the universal prevalence of the religion of the gospel. Such prayer is in strict accordance with, and is virtually required by, the great law of love,—that law which enjoins that we love God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves. Will

not he who loves God with all his heart, be constrained to pray that God may be glorified in the universal extension of his religion and kingdom? And will not he, who loves his neighbor as himself, be led to pray earnestly for his fellow men, that they, as well as himself, may enjoy the privileges and blessings of the gospel, here and hereafter?

It were enough to enforce the duty of such prayer (if nothing else could be urged in its favor), that it is enjoined in the *Lord's prayer*. We have here a prayer, dictated by the Saviour himself, for the imitation and constant use of his disciples and followers. "After *this manner* pray ye," &c. Yet two entire petitions of this short prayer are for the advancement of Christ's cause and kingdom in the world, "*Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.*" It is hardly possible to conceive how the duty of praying for the extension of Christ's kingdom, could be more explicitly and solemnly enjoined.

I need only add, that the duty of such prayer is, perhaps, *universally admitted*. Who doubts that Christians ought to pray, and to pray earn-

estly, for the universal prevalence of their religion? Who does not admit, at least in words, that this is their duty? While the writer of this was a settled minister, he received and read more than twenty Proclamations for public Fasts and Thanksgivings; in each of which, without an exception, the people were directed, by their different Chief Magistrates, to pray for the universal spread of the gospel. I mention this fact just to show the *general prevalence* of the sentiment, that it is the duty of Christians, in all places, to pray for the extension of the religion and kingdom of Christ.

But although such prayer is so obviously the duty of Christians,—and a duty withal so commonly admitted; still there are many who seem not to consider what is implied in it. Certainly, there are many who *act* as though they had not duly considered this. It is important that we inquire, therefore, how much is implied in habitual and earnest prayer for the general diffusion of the gospel. Such prayer implies,

1. That we earnestly *desire* the diffusion of the gospel. “Prayer is the offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his

will." Plainly, therefore, if it is our duty to pray, and to pray earnestly, for the universal spread of the Christian religion, it is our duty to desire, and to desire earnestly, the same event; and to make a pretence of praying without such desires, is no better than hypocrisy and mockery.

2. Fervent prayer for the universal spread of the gospel, implies that we take a deep and joyful *interest* in all well-directed efforts for the advancement of this end. Apply the subject to any other case. Here is a person who prays much, and with great earnestness, for the conversion of a beloved child, or of a dear and valued friend. At the same time, he knows that exertions are making to arrest the attention of this friend, to convince him of sin, and bring him to repentance. And will he feel no interest in these exertions? Or will he not take a deep and joyful interest in them? Will he not, with feelings almost indescribable, watch their progress, and wait for their successful and happy issue? Fervent prayer for any object necessarily supposes that we earnestly desire it; and such desires and prayers as necessarily suppose,

that we take a deep and joyful interest in every thing which has a tendency to promote it. It is plain, therefore, from the universally admitted point, that Christians ought to pray, and to pray with fervor, for the coming and prevalence of their Redeemer's kingdom, that they ought to feel *interested*,—deeply, solemnly, joyfully interested, in the exertions which are making at the present time to bring about so desirable an event. Indeed, if they pray as they should in relation to this object, they *will* feel interested in exertions to promote it. Their feelings *will* be enlisted, and their hearts engaged. They will keep up an acquaintance with these benevolent efforts, and watch all those changes with anxious vigilance, which may have a bearing on the interests of the church, and the furtherance of the gospel. I add,

3. It is implied in fervent prayer for the universal spread of the religion of Christ, that we are disposed to *do* all we consistently can, by our influence, our personal labors, and our property, to promote this object. Prayer is an expression of our desires, and fervent prayer of our earnest desires, that this holy religion might

be promoted, and fill the earth. But if we earnestly desire such an event, shall we not be willing to *do* what in us lies to accomplish it? And if we manifest an unwillingness to do this, who will give us credit for the earnestness or the sincerity of our desires? Who will believe that our prayers are not heartless and insincere? Will not the sick person, who prays for the restoration of health, be disposed to use all necessary means that his health may be restored? Will not the pious parent, who prays for the conversion of his children, be disposed to do whatever he is able, that they may be converted and saved? And will it not hold universally true, that any object, for which we can sincerely and earnestly pray, we shall be disposed and engaged, so far as in us lies, to accomplish? How plainly, therefore, is it implied in prayer for the universal diffusion of the gospel, (which we all believe ourselves under obligations to offer), that we consider ourselves engaged and pledged to *do*, whatever we consistently can, by our influence with others, and by our personal labors and sacrifices, to spread the gospel of salvation throughout the earth?

There is but one way in which Christians can rid themselves of the obligations here urged upon them; and that is by denying it to be their duty to pray for the spread of the gospel. We may, if we please, deny this, and then we may consistently deny that which is necessarily implied in it. We may say, if we will, that we are under no obligations to love our fellow men as we love ourselves; or if we are, that this does not bind us to pray for their spiritual and eternal welfare. We may say that our Saviour was under a mistake, in dictating to his disciples and followers, petitions such as are contained in the Lord's prayer. We may say that all Christians, since Christ was upon the earth, have erred in offering up such petitions; and that the Christian world now are strangely deluded in supposing it to be their duty to pray for the universal spread of the gospel. But if we will not, and dare not, say this; if we accede to the propriety of praying as our Saviour directed, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;" then we must accede to the propriety of desiring the coming and universal prevalence of Christ's kingdom;

of feeling a deep and joyful *interest* in exertions which are making to promote this kingdom; and of *doing* ourselves all we consistently can do to carry forward the work, and fill the world with the Saviour's name and glory.

If all this is implied in praying for the universal diffusion of the gospel; then are not many chargeable with a very great inconsistency in relation to this matter? They accede to the propriety of praying for the coming of Christ's kingdom; and when they hear themselves exhorted and directed to offer up such prayers, all is in their view as it should be. They have no objection to praying for such an object, and in words, perhaps, they often do pray for it. But notwithstanding this, they take no pains to make themselves acquainted with the efforts of Christians for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, and are unwilling to do any thing, either in word or deed, either by their influence, their personal labors, or their property, to promote the object for which they are praying, and to spread the gospel throughout the earth. Now whether such persons are sensible of it or not, they are chargeable with a great

and dreadful inconsistency. They are ostensibly praying that Christ's kingdom may come, and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven, while they sit still and behold the powers of darkness pushing forward their work of misery and death, without so much as lifting a finger against them. The language of their lips is, "Carry on, O God, the purposes of thy redeeming love; gather in thine elect; save mankind from their awful state of wretchedness and sin; proclaim the glad news of salvation to the distant corners of the earth; send forth the ministers of thy word, and the missionaries of thy cross; give thy Son the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost part of the earth for his possession." But the language of their conduct is, "Excuse our remissness in thy service; leave us to amass wealth, to feast on pleasure, to shine with distinction, and to say to our soul, 'Soul thou hast much goods laid up in store for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.'"

There is reason to fear, that the inconsistency here spoken of is no uncommon thing. It is an evil, which, in a greater or less degree, exten-

sively prevails. Nor is it difficult to understand why it prevails. It is owing to the pride, and sloth, and avarice of men. It costs them nothing to pray for the coming of Christ's kingdom, and the universal diffusion of his holy religion; indeed such prayers, under particular circumstances, may gain them credit; but to do any thing to accomplish that for which they pray,—to make an effort to propagate the religion of the gospel, must necessarily be attended with some labor and expense. It costs rulers nothing to recommend to the people, in their public Proclamations, to pray for the universal prevalence of the religion of Christ. So far from this, such recommendations are actually and deservedly creditable to rulers. But it might cost them something, were they to enter with zeal and spirit into the great work of spreading the gospel, and exert their influence and power for the purpose of advancing it. It costs ministers and people nothing to comply externally with the recommendation of their rulers, and the direction of Christ, and to pray, in words, that his religion might fill the earth; but were they to do that which is necessarily implied in such

prayers, and without which the prayers themselves are no better than mockery in the sight of God,—were they to engage heart and hand in the great work of sending the gospel to the remotest nations; this would involve exertions and sacrifices from which their slothful and selfish hearts revolt.

May both writer and readers earnestly endeavor to ascertain how much of the inconsistency here spoken of attaches to them. We believe it our duty to pray for the coming of Christ's kingdom; do we also feel it our duty to *do* what is obviously and necessarily implied in such prayers? And if we feel thus, do we act accordingly? It is of great importance that we be consistent somewhere. If then we are unwilling to stop praying for the coming of Christ's kingdom, (as all must be who are not infidels), let us consent to *act* as well as pray, and be engaged to accomplish that for which we present our supplications before the throne of heaven.

Of those who have been consistent in this great work, we are favored with numerous examples. Paul the Apostle was consistent. He prayed for the diffusion of the gospel; and he

labored, and suffered, and sacrificed his earthly all, in spreading the gospel throughout the earth. David Brainerd was consistent. He prayed that the religion of his Saviour might prevail; and he was willing to deny himself, and bear his cross, and wear out his life, to accomplish the object of his prayer. And thousands of others have been consistent, who have not been missionaries, or ministers, or persons of extensive influence or high rank in life. They have prayed for the coming of their Redeemer's kingdom, and have done what they consistently could do to promote it; and more than this cannot be required of any one. Of such persons, let us consent to be the followers. They may have been despised among men, but they have been owned and honored of God; and in following them, we shall be owned and honored too. The blessing of many ready to perish will descend upon us in the present life; while our prayers, and labors, and alms, like those of good Cornelius, will ascend up for a memorial of us, before the throne of our heavenly Father.

CHAPTER XXI.

Benefits of the Monthly Concert of Prayer.

By the Monthly Concert of prayer, I understand the season set apart by Christians, on the evening of the first Monday of every month, to pray for the conversion of the world. This observance is understood to have originated in a small circle of pious people in England, near the commencement of the present century; but as fast as it became known, it was approved and adopted, till it has come to be well nigh universal. Wherever there are pious Protestant Christians, the friends of missions and of God, whether in the East or the West, the North or the South,—whether among the heathen abroad, or the churches at home; there we find the Monthly Concert of prayer.

And one of the most interesting views of the world which the Christian can now take, seems to me to stand connected with this sacred Con-

cert. Suppose some angel were commissioned to travel with the great sun, in his apparent diurnal circuit round the earth on the first Monday of every month, (and we read of an angel standing in the sun), as he retired from the different regions, and the shades of evening followed on; what could he witness more deeply interesting to him, than the little companies of Christians, here and there, assembling for their concert of prayer? In the remote East, he would first see our missionary brethren, with their native converts, gathering together in China, Borneo, and New Holland; then in Burmah, Siam, and the Indian Archipelago; then at the different stations all over India; then in Persia, and Armenia, and Syria, and along the eastern coast of Africa; then in Turkey, in Greece, and in some of the islands of the Mediterranean Sea. In different parts of Germany, Holland, Switzerland, France, and more especially in the British Isles, he would see numerous assemblies of Christians moving spontaneously together, and uniting their prayers for the same great object. Casting his eye far Southward, along the Western coast of Africa, from Sierra Leone to the Cape of Good Hope, he would see little

groups, of different colors, assembling to pray for the salvation of the world. Crossing the wide Atlantic, he would find numberless praying circles already convened, along the eastern shores of America, from Greenland and Labrador, through the extent of the United States, and at the mission stations in the West Indies. At numerous points in Western America, he would see the poor natives coming together, with their teachers, to prolong the grand concert of prayer and praise. And with the various islanders of the Northern and Southern Pacific, the long, the blessed prayer meeting would come to a close.

Here then would be a whole day of prayer! Here actually *is*,—month after month, through the whole year, and from one year to another, —an entire twenty-four hours of *united concert prayer*! The retiring sun scarcely leaves one prayer meeting before he lights upon another! Yes, month after month, this great globe of earth may be said to be encircled, belted with prayer; rising up like one vast cloud of incense, offered up together for the same grand object,—the evangelizing of the nations,—the conversion of the world to God! What Christian can con-

ceive of a spectacle more deeply interesting! What view of the world can possibly be taken, more touching to the pious heart!

Still, a question may arise in some minds,—the same that was on the lips of scoffers and infidels as long ago as the days of Job,—“*What is the benefit? What is the Almighty, that we should serve him; and what profit shall we have if we pray unto him?*” For the satisfaction of all concerned, I propose to state, very briefly, some of *the benefits* resulting from the monthly concert of prayer.

1. This meeting is of great *personal* benefit to those who unite in it. So they think and feel; and are they not the proper judges in the case? Those who stately attend the monthly concert, gain much valuable *information*. The intelligence communicated at these meetings respecting not only the progress of the gospel, but the geography of remote countries; their natural and political history; the characters, customs, and superstitions of the heathen; and the general condition of the world, is of great value,—often more than enough to compensate (were this the only consideration,) for all the trouble of attending. But the *spiritual* advan-

tages of the concert far transcend those which are merely intellectual. Acceptable prayer is always a benefit to him who offers it. Whether his particular request is granted or not, his prayer is answered in a blessing upon his own soul. A devotional spirit is awakened; his heart is softened and subdued. By communing with God, he comes to be more like God, and to bear more of his perfect image. His prayer, like that of the Psalmist, "returns into his own bosom." There are, moreover, some *special* personal advantages connected with prayer for the conversion of the world. It tends to enlarge one's views, and his benevolent desires; to give him new interest in the world; to make him feel, in his measure, like Christ, who consented to die for the world's redemption.

To those who faithfully attend it, the monthly concert thus becomes a precious means of growth in grace; and as they grow in grace, their spiritual consolations increase and abound. They rejoice in God's promises,—in his government,—in his unchangeable love and care for his church. They rejoice in the assurance that he hears and will answer the prayers of his

people; and that their highest anticipations respecting the future prosperity and glory of Zion, will ultimately be realized.

2. Another benefit of the monthly concert is, it serves to *distinguish*, and to *unite* true Christians, all over the world. Those who truly love Christ, and his cause,—love religion and its duties, will love the monthly concert of prayer. It will be to them a season of deep and absorbing interest. They will be sure to attend it as often as practicable; and to be detained from it, will be regarded as a serious deprivation. Thus the concert serves to *distinguish* true Christians everywhere, from those which are such only in name and profession. And not only so, it serves to *unite* them. They are called, it may be, by different names, and are sundered by sectarian barriers. Their feelings too, in some instances, become alienated, and they hardly realize, for the time, that they are members of the same great spiritual household. But in the monthly concert of prayer, they all meet before the same throne of grace; and meet to present there the same great object,—an object of sufficient magnitude and interest to throw into the shade all

minor differences. They feel now, as they ought ever to feel, that they constitute but one family. Their points of difference are slight and temporary, while the bonds that unite them are strong and everlasting. They have the same good cause at heart, and they are striving to promote it by the same means.

“ Their fears, their hopes, their aims are one,
Their comforts and their cares.”

An observance which tends so powerfully to counteract sectarian prejudices, and bring Christians of different names to feel and act together, must be one of an important character.

3. It deserves to be numbered among the benefits of the monthly concert, that it tends to *encourage and comfort missionaries*. Those beloved brethren and sisters, who have left their country, their friends and home, and gone to distant lands to preach Christ to the heathen, have many things to discourage them. They are tried, it may be, with sickness and bereavements, or with unanticipated hindrances and difficulties. They are tried with the dullness and stupidity, or with the treachery and obstinacy of those for whom they labor. And then

as to Christian society and sympathy, they are alone. They have few or none, with whom to take sweet counsel; none, aside from their covenant Father and Redeemer, to whom they can look for direction and support. We, in Christian lands, may talk about the trials of missionaries, but they are such, in many instances, as none but themselves can ever know. And if we can do any thing to encourage and comfort them under trials, surely we ought to do it cheerfully. I ask then,—and I might safely appeal, were it possible, to every mission station on the globe, do not our brethren and sisters in foreign lands regard the monthly concert of prayer as among their greatest encouragements, their richest comforts? As this consecrated season returns, and they assemble in their little places of prayer,—which otherwise might be lonely and comfortless; do they not feel, for the time, that they are not alone? Not only the invisible hosts of heaven, but the whole church on earth,—the thousands of Israel in every land, are with them. Every missionary on earth may then comfort himself with the thought, that he is remembered by every other missionary; and not only so, but

by his brethren and sisters throughout the world. They are all bowing together with him. They are bearing him on their hearts to the throne of grace. They are uniting their supplications with his, that he may be supported, guided, protected, blessed, and that his labors may be crowned with all desirable success. What cheering, comforting thoughts are these to the lonely missionary! What Christian would be willing to deprive him of them? Who, that has the least sympathy for him, or interest in him, would consent to take from him this best of his earthly comforts?

4. Another obvious benefit of the monthly concert is, that it tends to *the conversion of souls*, and *the building up of Christ's kingdom in the world*. Both the promises and providence of God go to assure us, that prayer is not a vain service. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." And if the prayers of *one* righteous man have so much efficacy, still more may be attributed to united prayer. "If two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, *it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.*

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." But in the monthly concert of prayer, there are more than two or three,—more than hundreds or thousands; there is, in a sense, the *whole militant church* bowing before the throne of heaven together, and sending up their united cries for the same great object,—one which they know is dear to the heart of heaven,—one which God has assured them shall be accomplished. They are pleading together for the speedy conversion of the nations, and for the upbuilding of the cause and kingdom of Christ. And will not God hear such prayers? Will he not in mercy answer them? It would be a libel on his truth and faithfulness to suppose the contrary. In fact, God *does* hear and answer the prayers of the monthly concert. He is actually bestowing, and our eyes see it, the very things for which his people unite to pray. The Holy Scriptures are translated and circulated; the gospel is extensively preached; the spirit of God is poured out; the heathen in great numbers are converted; and some of the largest churches on the face of the earth now exist in lands that were,

till lately, covered with idols. It is thus that the united prayers of Christians tend directly to the conversion of the nations, and to the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world. They tend to draw down those spiritual influences, without which missionary efforts would not be made; or if made, would be in vain.

There is another way in which the concert tends to the promotion of Christ's kingdom. It affords a convenient opportunity, which is continually improved, for the collection of *funds* for this important object. Those who have been laying by them in store, from week to week, as God hath prospered them, bring their united offerings to the monthly concert, that so their prayers and alms may go up together, as a memorial before the Lord. This is one of the ways in which the Lord's treasury is replenished from year to year, and missionary operations are sustained.

5. I mention but another benefit of the monthly concert, which is, that it is *honorable to God, and to religion*. Christians honor God, when they believe his word, and unitedly cast themselves upon his mercy. They honor him,

when they go to him, as to the source of all blessing, and earnestly supplicate his promised grace to descend upon the guilty nations, and transform this dark and degraded world into a paradise of holiness and peace. And not only is God glorified in this way, but *religion itself* is honored. Christians thus manifest their sense of the excellence of their religion,—of its transcendent value and importance. They prize it so highly,—they love it so well, that they desire to see it extended all over the earth. They desire to see all nations blest in it, and by it, “who see the light or feel the sun.” They say in the language, not only of praise, but of prayer,

“ Great Sun of righteousness, arise,
Bless this dark world with heavenly light ;
Thy precepts make the simple wise,
Thy laws are pure, thy judgments right.”

It follows from what has been said, that the monthly concert is an institution, not only of deep interest, but of *high importance* to the church and the world. It is fitted, as we have seen, to answer the most important purposes. It is actually productive of the richest benefits. Christians should thank and praise God for the establishment of such a meeting; and they

should endeavor to improve it in the best manner for the glory of God, for their own edification, and for the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world. The present duties of Christians, in regard to the monthly concert, are two-fold :

1. They should attend it more generally and promptly. In many places,—perhaps in most places,—there is room for much improvement here. All special meetings are too much neglected; and the monthly concert among the rest. It is time that this evil was exposed and corrected. If this precious concert of prayer is to be sustained, and the benefits of it to be realized, it *must be attended*; and Christians, if need be, must make an effort to attend it. It should be regarded as, next to the Sabbath, the great devotional meeting of the church. Those who can attend no other special religious meeting during the month, should form their plans, and make it an object to be present at this.

2. The other duty of Christians in regard to the monthly concert, is to make it as *interesting* and *useful* as possible. In this particular, as in the last, there is room for improvement; and every improvement of which the occasion is

susceptible, should be sought out and attempted. There is nothing in the mere name of monthly concert, to give interest to a religious meeting. There is nothing in the occasion to make it interesting, if pastor and people come together coldly, stupidly, and without any previous preparation. Those in a congregation who have the means, (and what Christian at this day may not have the means), should make it an object beforehand to *prepare* for the monthly concert. Let them keep up an acquaintance with missionary publications, and treasure up items of interesting intelligence, to be communicated. Let them anxiously watch the course of God's providence, in its bearings on the missionary work, that they may be able to discern and expound the signs of the times. Let them be ready with a word of instruction, of caution, of exhortation, as opportunity may be presented, and occasion may require. Especially, let them cultivate a devotional spirit, and be in the constant habit of praying in secret for the speedy coming and triumph of Christ's kingdom. Thus, when they come together, the subject will not be new or strange to them. Their minds will be

familiar with it; their hearts will be warmed and quickened by it; and the effect of their remarks and prayers, will be to warm and interest the hearts of others. In this way, Christian brethren and friends may essentially benefit one another, and the monthly concert may be made the most deeply interesting of all the special services of the church. The prayers which are offered will be intelligent and fervent, and will come up with acceptance upon the altar of heaven; the promised Spirit of all grace will descend; Christ's enemies will be confounded, his kingdom advanced, and the glories of the Millennial morning will speedily rise, and shine upon the world.

CHAPTER XXII.

The Millennium.

THE church of Christ is not always to be, what it always has been, a body comparatively feeble, despised, and persecuted. It is yet to be enlarged, so as to fill the earth, and is to

enjoy a long period of rest and peace. All this is clearly predicted in the Scriptures of truth, and is the almost universal belief of evangelical Christians. God the Father is represented as saying to his Son, "Ask of me, and I will give thee *the heathen for thine inheritance*, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." "I will give thee for a light unto the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto *the ends of the earth.*" It is predicted by the Psalmist, that "*all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him.*" "*All kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him. Men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed.*" It is predicted by Isaiah and the prophets, that "in the last days, 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.*" "Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the Lord, and *all nations shall be gathered unto it; neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.*" "His

dominion shall be from *sea to sea*, and from the river, even unto *the ends of the earth.*" "The earth shall be *full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*" Daniel "saw in the night visions, one like unto the Son of Man; and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that *all people, nations, and languages, should serve him.*" "The stone cut out of the mountain without hands," itself "became a mountain, and *filled the whole earth.*" "The kingdom, and dominion, and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven *shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.*"

Our Saviour compared his kingdom on the earth "to leaven hid in three measures of meal, until *the whole was leavened;*" and predicted, that after he was "lifted up," or at some period subsequent to his death, he should "*draw all men unto him.*" The Apostle Paul speaks of the time, when "*the fullness of the Gentiles shall come in, and all Israel shall be saved.*" We are also told in the Revelation, that when the seventh angel sounded, "there were great voices in heaven, saying, *The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.*"

Such are some of the predictions or *promises* of Scripture, relative to the interesting subject before us. They have been selected from different parts of the Bible, to show how the whole current of Scripture runs in the same channel, and points us forward to the same glorious scenes. Certainly, the earth has never yet witnessed a time answerable in any degree to the predictions which have been quoted. We may be sure, therefore, that this blessed period is still future, and that in due time it will be ushered in. The period *will come*, when all that the Scriptures set forth in regard to the future peace and prosperity of the church on earth, will be accomplished.

It has been generally supposed, and I think correctly, that the passage in the twentieth chapter of the Revelation, respecting the binding of Satan for a thousand years, has reference to this future period of rest to the church. Such was the universal belief of the early Christians, as appears from the writings of Barnabas, Justin, Irenæus, Tertullian, Cyprian, and others. Such has been the belief of the best modern writers and commentators who have treated upon the

subject. Accordingly, the anticipated rest of the church on the earth has commonly and properly been denominated *the millennium*, or *the thousand years*.

As to the state of the world during the millennium, the Scriptures lead us (and we have no light except from Scripture,) to the following conclusions :

1. It will be a period distinguished beyond all others for *religious knowledge*. Superstition, error, idolatry, and false religion of every kind, will be done away, and the true and holy religion of the gospel will everywhere prevail. It will prevail, too, in great purity and power. Its truths will be acknowledged, its doctrines understood, and the influence of them will be deeply felt. The præeminent *knowledge* of that day is indicated in Scriptures, such as these :
“The eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken. The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerer shall be ready to speak plainly.” “Moreover, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven-fold,

as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound."

2. The millennium will be a time of eminent *holiness*, as well as knowledge. As Christians then will *know* more of God, than ever before, so they will love him more, and serve him better. As they will know more of the nature and obligations of religion, they will more faithfully discharge its duties. The spirit of God will be poured out upon all flesh; children will be early and generally converted; and high attainments in holiness will be everywhere visible. In speaking of the universally revived state of religion at this period, the prophets use the following language. "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, and as willows by the water courses." "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, *holiness unto the Lord*; and the pots of the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judea shall be *holiness unto the Lord*." So devoted will

men be at that period, that they will be ready to *consecrate every thing unto the Lord*, even the common utensils and enjoyments of life.

3. Though the inhabitants of the world will be vastly numerous during the millennium, still, it will be a time of universal *love and friendship, plenty and peace*. As vice then will have no victims, and the causes of premature sickness and mortality will cease to operate, there can be no doubt that men will rapidly increase, and that the world will soon be filled with inhabitants. Still, there will be so much temperance in eating and drinking, and the means of acquiring a subsistence will be so well and so universally understood, that there will be an abundance for the supply of human wants. That wars will cease, at this period, the prophets have expressly assured us; and with the cessation of war, there will be the suppression of those lusts, and passions, and evil practices, in which wars and fightings for the most part originate. Tyranny, oppression, usurpation, and slavery, will be done away. The common rights and privileges of man will be acknowledged and respected by his brother man. So far as the law of God is regarded, and holiness

prevails, each one will love his neighbor as himself, and do to others as he could wish that they should do to him. The following are some of the passages which set forth the quiet and peaceful state of the world, during the millennium. "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. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places." "The wolf 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's den." At the period of which we speak, the *civil governments* of the earth will be in the hands of God's people. "Kings shall be nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers to the church." "The kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall bring presents; the kings of

Sheba and Seba, shall offer gifts." The rulers and governors of the earth shall all be pious, and every thing of a civil nature which opposes itself to the kingdom of Christ, shall be put down and destroyed.

4. There can be no doubt, that during the millennium, *useful knowledge* of every kind—science, literature, and the arts of life, will be carried to a high degree of perfection. Let any one consider the improvements which have been made in these respects, during the last thirty years, and casting his eye forward, conceive of improvements as going on, in the same ratio, for a thousand years to come, and he will have some idea of what the world may be, in respect to *knowledge*, in the progress of the millennium. And this perfected knowledge will be—not perverted, as it often is at present—but firmly enlisted on the side of truth and holiness. The literature of the world will be an elevated, purified, Christian literature, in accordance with, and subservient to, the purposes of the gospel. The arts, too, will be studied and employed for the advancement of Christ's kingdom, and the universal happiness of men.

5. I only add, that the millennium will be a time of great *enjoyment*. This may be inferred conclusively from what has been said ; and is also very explicitly set forth in the language of prophecy. “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. Be ye glad and rejoice forever, in that which I create ; for I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.” The delights of that day are represented under the figure of a joyous festival, consisting of provisions and viands of the most delicious quality. “In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, a feast of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.”

Such are some of the points which I think may be safely assumed, as to the improved and happy condition of the world during the millennium. There is no reason to suppose, that Christ will appear and reign *personally* on the earth at that time ; or that any of the martyrs and glorified saints will be resuscitated to reign with him ; or that the inhabitants of the world will

no longer be on probation, or that they will be entirely exempt from all trial and conflict. Persons will be born in sin then, as they are now; though it is hoped and believed that they will be early and generally converted. They will make great attainments in knowledge and holiness, and be blessed with a peaceful and happy life; and yet they will have need of prayer and watchfulness, and of resisting and overcoming the evil propensities of their hearts. Their trial may not be *so severe* as that of Christians in these days; neither is ours so severe as that of many who have gone before us. Still, Christians in the millennium will doubtless have *trials*; they will have a *probation* of some sort; they will feel the need, as we do, of girding on the armor, and will enter heaven at the end of a race, and as victors in a conflict. The state of the world at that period, as disclosed by the prophets, is sufficiently inviting and glorious to excite the warmest aspirations of God's people, without investing it with any of our own fancies; and especially with such as are rather contradicted than supported by the current representations of the inspired volume.

But it is time that we proceed to another branch of the subject, viz : *the manner* in which the millennium is to be introduced. How are the necessary antecedent changes to be accomplished? How is the latter day glory of the church to be ushered in?

In replying to these questions, I hardly need say, that the millennium will not be introduced by *miracles*. The direct object of miracles, in the age of them, was not so much the conversion of the nations, as the attestation of the Divine word. And as this object has long since been answered, so the era of miracles seems finally to have passed away. It may well be doubted, whether a proper miracle has been performed on the earth, during the last fifteen hundred years. And I as much doubt whether there will be another, for fifteen hundred years to come. Or if miracles should be again performed, I question whether they would aid essentially in the work of the world's conversion. They would undoubtedly startle those who witnessed them. They would attract attention, and lead to various inquiry and speculation. But miracles alone never converted men, and they never will.

There is reason to believe that God will do

much in preparing the way for the introduction of the millennium, by *providential arrangements*. He is now on the throne of Providence, and he is ordering all things with a view to the good of his church, and the ultimate triumph of his people. He is removing obstructions and hinderances out of the way, and *preparing* for the introduction of that day, when “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” And this work of providential preparation, God will continue. He will overturn, and overturn, and overturn—till intemperance, and war, and oppression of every kind, and Popery, and Mahometanism, and Judaism, and every species of idolatry and false religion, and all those multiform evils which now afflict the earth, and insult the heavens, shall be removed, and “the kingdom, and dominion, and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.”

All this may not be done so speedily as some, in their benevolence, may desire and anticipate; but *it will assuredly be done*. The God of grace and of nature, the beneficent Author of the promises, and the Supreme Disposer of

events, are *the same*; and while his promises are directing the faith, and encouraging the hopes and prayers of his people, the wheel of his providence is rolling right on, and rolling into complete effect all the good and glorious things that he has spoken. He may give himself more space and a wider sweep, in effecting these objects, than men in their littleness would think of, or could fill; but when things are once done in the providence of God, they are effectually done. They are forever done. When the evils referred to above, which now oppose themselves so fiercely to the rising empire of the Son of God, are once taken out of the way, they will never return. They will rise up to afflict his church, and oppose the influence of his truth, no more.

But the chief instrumentality to be employed by God in bringing in millennial glory, will be *the faithful preaching of his gospel*, and *the benevolent exertions of his people*, accompanied (as they will be) by the power and influence of his Holy Spirit. It is in this way that religion has always been promoted in the world. Under the former dispensation, there was the ministry of judges and prophets, scribes and priests. At

the first introduction of the gospel, there was the ministry of the Apostles, and their coadjutors and successors ; and so it has been in all periods since. God has not sent back the dead from the other world, to preach to the living on the earth. Nor has he employed the ministry of angels, for the publication of the gospel, and the conversion of souls. The ministry which he has employed, and will employ, for this important purpose, is that of *men*,—men whom he has raised up and qualified for so responsible a work.

Some have doubted as to the *power* of the gospel, in the ordinary ministration of it, for the fulfillment of the Divine predictions in the conversion of the world. But such persons must have forgotten, both the representations of Scripture on the subject, and the glorious conquests which the gospel, when accompanied by the Spirit, has already achieved. What cannot that instrument effect, which the inspired writers have told us is “quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword,” and “mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds ?” What has not this instrument *effected*, in the hands of glowing, faithful preachers, and

set home by the accompanying power of the Spirit? Only a brief period elapsed, in the first age of the church, before it was said of the Apostles and evangelists, "Their sound has gone forth into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." And so at the period of the Reformation. In the course of twenty or thirty years, the light of evangelical truth, beaming forth from Wittemberg and Zurich, had pervaded half Europe, and deeply penetrated the other half. When the Moravians or United Brethren commenced their missionary operations, their number did not exceed that of an ordinary congregation; and they were even more limited in point of pecuniary resources, than of men. And yet, in the period of thirty years, their establishments were found in every quarter of the globe. For a time, they seemed likely to fill the world with their doctrine.

In view of facts such as these, we see what the gospel earnestly administered, and accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit, is able to accomplish. We need not the ministry of angels, to give efficiency to the truth of God. We need not the gift of miracles, or the resurrection of the martyrs, or the personal presence

of the Lord Jesus Christ. We only need warm hearts and devoted hands, quickened and encouraged by his *spiritual* presence. When the Lord shall stir up his people to pray earnestly, and give liberally, and labor faithfully, and perseveringly for the advancement of his kingdom; when he shall shed down his Spirit, not only to excite to effort, but to bless effort, so that his people may not labor in vain; then shall the gospel's power be speedily and universally acknowledged, and all the good and glorious things which have been spoken respecting Zion, shall be accomplished.

I remark once more, that in introducing the latter day glory of his church, God will *cut off* those who persist in their opposition to him and his people, from the earth. It is a mistake, I think, to suppose that, previous to the millennium, all the inhabitants of the world are to be converted. Vast numbers, there is reason to fear, will be cut off. In the progress of things, the gospel will be universally diffused. It will be preached, in some form, to every creature. All those who embrace it, and enroll themselves among the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ,

will be saved. But those who *persist* in rejecting it, and in opposing the triumphs of the Son of God, will be taken out of the way.

As much as this seems to me to be indicated in a variety of Scriptures. Thus the power denoted by the little horn of Daniel's fourth beast is represented, not as converted, but destroyed. "They shall take away his dominion, to *consume* and *destroy* it, unto the end." Daniel, 7: 11, 26. So of Paul's "man of sin," and "son of perdition," it is said, "Whom the Lord shall *consume* with the spirit of his mouth, and *destroy* with the brightness of his coming." 2 Thess. 2: 8. And so in the Revelation, immediately preceding the annunciation of the millennium, all the fowls of the heaven are summoned together "unto the supper of the great God, that they may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great." Rev. 19: 18. Here certainly is a symbolic representation of great and terrible destruction, which is to fall on the incorrigible enemies of God; and to be inflicted

immediately preceding the millennium. We find a like representation in other writings of the prophets,* which renders it clear to my own mind, that preparatory to the introduction of millennial glory, the *persisting* and *abandoned* enemies of God and his people; more especially those denoted by "the little horn," of Daniel, and "the man of sin," of Paul, and "the beast and false prophet," of the Revelation, are in some way to be miserably destroyed. And then is to come to pass all that God has promised respecting the glory and blessedness of Zion, in the latter days. Then "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

But this leads me to another inquiry—the last on which I shall now enter—respecting the probable *time* of the millennium. When shall this expected, prayed-for-season of rest and peace to the church be realized?

On this point, it becomes every interpreter, whether of the word or providence of God, to speak modestly and cautiously. It is not for us

* Ps. 2: 9—12. 110: 5, 6. Rev. chap. 18.

to know definitely "the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power." Still, it does not follow that we may not know *something* in respect to the time of predicted events. Daniel understood, not from revelation, but from *books*, that the time of his people's restoration drew nigh. And in the days of our Saviour, the learned Jews were censured by him for not understanding "the signs of the times."

In regard to the subject before us, we have two sources of evidence—the *word* of God, and his *providence*. It would be interesting, had we space for it, to go into an investigation of the *prophecies* of Scripture, and see what light *they* afford us in respect to the *time* of the millennium. It might be shown, I think, from them, that this joyous, anticipated season, cannot now be distant. But on this part of the inquiry, we have not time or room to enter.

We turn, then, to the book of *providence*; and here, if I mistake not, the same important lesson may be learned. The *providences* of God, as well as his word, seem to me to indicate that the latter day glory of Zion is at hand.

I would inquire, in the first place, whether God is not already preparing for the introduction of his kingdom, by putting an end to *un-christian practices*, and removing *obstructions* and *hinderances* out of the way. The history of nations, in past ages, is little more than a history of their *wars*. Man has thirsted for the life of his brother, and his sword has been bathed in blood. But a great change has been effected in regard to this matter, within the last thirty years. A light has beamed forth from the sacred Word, before which the spirit of war stands abashed, and is beginning to hide its hideous head. Military glory has ceased to dazzle ; nations are learning the importance of settling their differences otherwise than by an appeal to the sword ; and we are beginning to look back upon the wars of mankind much as we do upon their crusades and idolatries.

Again, *intemperance* has been rolling its fiery tide over the earth, ever since the days of Noah, and perhaps longer. Within the recollection of many now living, it seriously threatened the destruction of our own institutions. But thanks be to God, this giant evil has been checked.

The monster intemperance has received a blow which, if followed up, (as we trust it will be,) may be expected to drive it from the earth.

From a very remote period to the present hour, this world has been cursed, in one form or another, with *slavery*. Man has degraded his brother from the dignity of a person to the level of a *thing*; to be bought and sold, to be used and abused, as an article of merchandise. But it needs no prophetic eye to see, that this unjust and unnatural state of society can exist in the world but a little longer. A train of causes has been put in operation, which will be likely, ere long, to break every yoke, and leave the oppressed, under the whole face of heaven, to go free.

Nearly all the governments that have ever existed on earth have been absolute *despotisms*. The few have usurped the rights of the many, lorded it over them, and trodden them under foot, at will. But we have decisive indications that this state of things is not much longer to be tolerated. The struggle between popular liberty and titled legitimacy, between the rights of the people and the alledged divine rights of kings,

has already commenced; and has made such progress, that it cannot go back, till the object of it has been, in some good degree attained.

Almost from the earliest periods of time, the great mass of the world's inhabitants have been *idolaters*. They have made gods, and then worshiped them. They "have said to a stock, Thou art our father; and to a stone, Thou hast brought us forth." But some of the proudest systems of idolatry have been already banished from the earth; and those which remain are fast preparing to follow. They are losing the confidence of their votaries, and becoming objects, not so much of veneration, as contempt. Mohammedanism, too, is tottering on its base,—or rather giving signs that it has no base; and many of the Jews are inquiring, with unwonted assiduity, whether their Messiah has not already come. Numbers have already embraced the Christian faith, and are rejoicing in the hopes of the gospel.

It deserves also to be mentioned, that the unnatural alliance between *church and state, religion and the world*, which has obtained in nearly all countries where Christianity has been

established, and by which the free spirit of the gospel has been fettered, and its vitality almost taken away, is now undergoing a most searching investigation, and is likely, ere long, to be sun-dered forever. The last remains of this smothering alliance have been removed in our own country, and our example in this respect is having influence all over the Christian world.

Is it not evident from the class of facts here referred to, that God is already preparing the way, in his providence, for great and happy changes in the world,—changes, such as might reasonably be expected, on supposition that mil-lennial scenes were near at hand.

Let us turn now to another class of provi-dences. I have said that the millennium is to be ushered in, by the faithful preaching of the gos-pel, and the benevolent exertions of God's people, accompanied by the power and blessing of the Holy Spirit. In this view, are not many things, which we see taking place around us, of a highly encouraging character? The Bible is already translated into most of the languages of the world, and is being circulated by hundreds and thousands in every quarter of the globe.

Tracts and religious books are greatly multiplied, and Christian missionaries are sent forth to preach the gospel to every creature. And while these things are doing for the nations abroad, the good work at home is not wholly neglected. Much prayer is offered up,—earnest, *united* prayer,—for the outpouring of God's Spirit, and the universal extension of the kingdom of Christ. Sabbath schools are established in all Christian lands, and increased attention is paid to the early religious instruction of the young. Revivals of religion, too, are frequent, and thousands upon thousands in different parts of the earth,—some in heathen, and others in Christian lands, are yearly brought to the knowledge of the truth. Indeed, Christians have actually set themselves to *the work*,—not with the zeal and fervor that they should, but still with some degree of engagedness,—the work of the world's conversion. And are not facts like these of a nature to encourage us? Are they not to be regarded as *signs of the times*? In the view here taken, does not the providence of God conspire with his Word to assure us, that the world's redemption draweth nigh?

I have said that previous to this glorious consummation, there is to be a *struggle*, a *conflict*, in the issue of which all who persist in opposing God and his church shall be taken out of the way. And if this final struggle is not already begun, the way is evidently preparing for it, and to human view it is now inevitable. Lines are drawing, sides are taking, and (to my apprehension,) all things around us give fearful note of preparation. On the one side, Satan seems to have come out in great wrath, as if under the presentiment that his time is short. He is exercising all his cunning, and stirring up all his forces, to distract (if possible) the counsels of Christians, and to oppose the triumphs of the Son of God. He has his presses and periodicals, his meeting-houses and ministers, his expounders of Scripture, and interpreters of prophecy, his conversions, and even his revivals of religion,—any thing, to beguile unwary souls, and obstruct the progress of truth and righteousness in the earth. Especially, is he stirring up the old harlot of Rome; giving new energy to her counsels, and vigor to her arms. Her minions are to be found in every place, always

intent upon resisting the truth, stamping her mark and binding her yoke upon all that fall beneath her power.

But the designs of the great adversary against the truth will not be successful. There is a more powerful influence at work on the other side, and the conflict will be carried on. Christians will feel the necessity of making greater sacrifices; they will redouble their efforts and their prayers; and God will afford them an increased measure of success. His Spirit will be poured out more and more; revivals of religion will be frequent; and converts will be multiplied.

And on this very account, the wicked will be more excited and enraged. They will see their numbers thinned, their strong holds captured, and their influence curtailed; and they will awake to a more daring and determined resistance, and will concentrate their forces to oppose the triumphs of the Son of God.

This conflict, which in its commencement is to be one of principles and measures, may end in a struggle of a more terrific nature. In the progress of it, there may be days of anxiety and

distress, such as never were before since the foundation of the world. The furnace of Divine providence may become, at length, so heated, as to melt down all minor distinctions among Christians. A band of fire may be girt about the church, till its members are drawn together, and come to act as one body. Meanwhile, there will be a great increase, we trust, of the spirit of prayer, of humility, of earnest devotedness, of self-sacrificing zeal. The tone of religious feeling will be elevated, and on every hand disciples will be multiplied.

Still, the incorrigible enemies of God and his people will not be discouraged. They will be aroused to a more determined and dreadful opposition. In their desperation, they may come to the resolution to take the sword, and cut off the children of God at a stroke.

But in this awful crisis, the great Head of the church will interpose. He will not suffer a hair to be plucked from the heads of his own people. Dreadful judgments of some sort will overtake the wicked, and they will be swept from the face of the earth. And then will come to pass what the prophets have spoken: "The kingdom, and

dominion, and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

The course of remark which has been pursued, exhibits the present inhabitants of the world,—and my readers among the rest,—as placed in very critical circumstances. We are living in eventful times. "The battle of the great day of God Almighty" is rushing on. A conflict is already commencing, which, in its progress, is to put an end to all idolatry, superstition, and false religion; which is to rend the foundations of many generations, and break every oppressor's rod; which is to dispossess the grand deceiver of his usurped dominion over man, and send him and all his adherents down to hell; which is to give "the kingdom, and dominion, and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven into the hands of the people of the saints of the Most High." God is beginning already to shake terribly the earth; and he will continue to shake it *morally*, if not

physically ; he will overturn, and overturn, till He shall come whose right it is to reign.

The times in which we live call for much prayer, efficient labor, earnest expectation, and unceasing watchfulness, on the part of God's professing people. Let them set a watch over their own spirits ; and be watchful in regard to the movements of adversaries, and especially of their great, invisible adversary. We may be sure he will be busy in times like these ; and it should not surprise or discourage us to see him busy, and to see his plans of mischief rapidly unfolding. After all the experience which Christians have had of his cunning and his power, they ought not to be ignorant of his devices. To some extent, he has gained an advantage over them already, in breaking their ranks, and weakening them by untoward divisions. Let them be more watchful and prayerful in this respect, in days to come.

The times call, also, for much *patience*,—patience, not only in the bearing of burthens, and the enduring of evils, but in waiting upon God. We are prone to be more in a hurry, than God is. We are prone to say, with the

sinners of old, "Let him hasten his work, that *we* may see it; and let the counsel of the Holy One draw nigh, that *we* may know it." While we discharge faithfully and earnestly our duty, we must not yield to impatience in respect to God, or distrust his faithfulness and love. He will fulfill his promises in his *own time*, not ours; and we shall then see, and be satisfied that his time was best.

Christians are called, at this day, to decision and firmness, to a preparedness for trials, and to an untiring activity in the service of Christ. There must be no indolence or desertion in the cause in which we are engaged; no sleeping on the watch; no faintness of heart, or feebleness of hands; no parleying and dallying with temptation, in whatever form it may be presented. If there ever was a time in which Christians might with propriety pursue a dubious, vacillating course,—in which to dote upon earthly treasures, and think to live only for themselves; that time is now past and gone forever. Every friend of Christ must now be a fast friend,—a liberal friend,—an active, devoted, unfailing friend. Every friend of Christ must possess, in

large measure, *the Spirit of Christ*, and suffer no contradiction of sinners to deprive him of this. With meekness and kindness, with humility and gentleness, weak in ourselves, but strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, we must go forth together to the work assigned us, prepared to meet sacrifices, to encounter dangers and difficulties, and (if it must be so), to suffer death, in the service of him who once died for us.

The present is an exceedingly critical and important period to *the young*;—so much so, that the intelligent Christian can scarcely look upon those around him in childhood and youth, without strong emotion. For they, he believes, are destined to witness, and bear a part in, eventful scenes. They may live to see the gathering, bursting storm. They may even see the termination of the conflict, and (if prepared for it,) their feet may stand on Millennial shores. How important, then, that the work of their religious instruction and education be diligently plied! How important that they be early converted, and deeply sanctified; that they be warmly enlisted on the side of Christ; and prepared in

the spirit and temper of their minds, for the duties and trials to which, in the providence of God, they are likely to be called.

Let every reader of these pages remember, that the conflict of which we here speak,—the conflict between the friends and the enemies of God, is one which admits of *no neutrality*. He that is not with Christ is against him; and he that gathereth not with him scattereth abroad. And how unspeakably *dreadful*, at such a day as this, and in full prospect of what is coming on the earth,—how dreadful to be found on the side of God's enemies! How dreadful to be enlisted under the prince of darkness, to crush the rising kingdom of Christ, and oppose the progress of truth and righteousness in the earth! Such opposition, my young readers may be sure, can *never prosper*. As there is a God in heaven, or any truth in the Bible, it *cannot prosper*. The work of Christ in the earth will be carried on. The successes already gained are but a pledge of still greater successes. The victories achieved over the powers of darkness are but an earnest of more splendid triumphs. All who persist in the love and practice of sin, and in

opposing the cause and kingdom of Christ, must fall before him. They must speedily be taken out of the way.

To the impenitent reader, whose eye may chance to run over these pages, I have a single remark farther, and with this I close: *The church of God needs your help, and the great Head of the church now invites it.* He earnestly calls upon you to change your relations. He entreats you to cast off that hard yoke which is upon you, and to take *his* yoke which is easy, and *his* burthen which is light. He entreats you now to engage in his service, that so you may be partakers of his kingdom and joy. Remember, impenitent reader, it is *your Saviour* that speaks. O listen to him! O return to him! If you have sinned away all your past days and years, you surely have sinned long enough. Now then be persuaded to repent and return. "Turn to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope, before your feet stumble on the dark mountains, and there be no remedy, and no deliverer."

THE END.

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