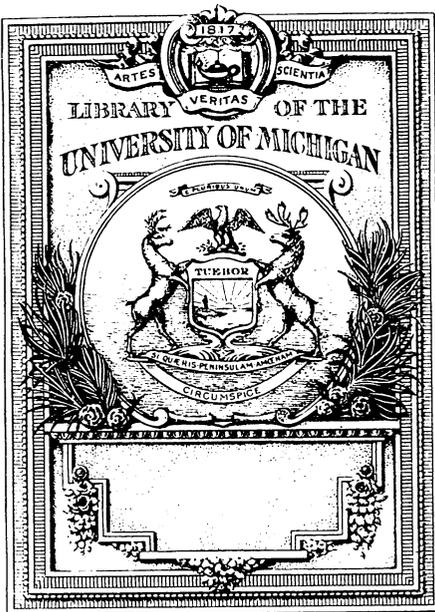


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ON THE 22D OF OCTOBER, 1845,

BY THE REV. JAMES W. ALEXANDER, D.D.*

1804-1857

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To assume the teacher's place, where I would gladly learn, and to use the words of admonition to men at whose feet it would become me to sit, must cause undissembled embarrassment. And yet obedience to your command is my highest token of respect. There are occasions, moreover, where personal sensibilities should be rebuked, in consideration of paramount duty; and where even one's consciousness of his own lukewarmness must not excuse him from exhorting his brethren. For, let the truth be told, our progress in the work of Missions is such as can give no ground for complacency. As a church, we have not yet come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty. With abundant means of warfare, we have proved but sluggish and despondent soldiers. "The children of Ephraim, being armed with bows, turned back in the day of battle."* After having contended with some heat, for the privilege of conducting this work in our church-capacity, we seem little disposed to avail ourselves of the advantages afforded by our separate organization and our church polity. There prevails, through the length and breadth of the Church, a paralyzing doubt as to our success. It is in opposition to this, that I have risen to speak.

There are difficulties, but there are encouragements. At the outset, there seemed nothing but obstacles. Let those witness, who remem-

ber the measures towards a transfer of the Western Society. These obstacles have been wonderfully surmounted. We have lived through times of pecuniary embarrassment. Our Foreign Board does not awaken as great public interest as the American Board. Its resources are smaller; its missions consequently fewer. It is moreover not to be concealed, that we have to make our call on a population, who have come later into this great work, and who, in general, are less acquainted with the wants of the unevangelized world, and less habituated to benefaction. Yet our advance has been such as we could not have dared to hope; and I see no reason why we may not expect, in a holy emulation, to outstrip the noble institution, which gave us our example and impulse, and with whom this shall be our only strife. If the great Presbyterian bodies were united in visibility, as they are in doctrine and worship, and as I think they ought to be, what a front would they present in this, as in every good work! It is high time to give over our lesser controversies among ourselves, and in union to push the conquests of truth into the heart of an unconverted world; to take up the work of reformation, where the plough was left in the furrow of the sixteenth century; and especially to press onward in the enterprise of Missions. But so long as we doubt our own prospects, we must labour at an immense disadvantage; in which I find my reason for respectfully calling you

* Psalm lxxviii. 9.

* A few paragraphs of this discourse have appeared in a work just published, called *The Missionary Memorial*.

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minds to the CONDITIONS OF MISSIONARY SUCCESS. Meritorious conditions there are none, but those which reside in the great head of the Church; but, under God, the work is made to depend on certain foregoing particulars, among which I select these following:—The instrumentality used—the spirit prompting the effort—the hope which animates the work—and the divine agency which crowns it.

1. *The Instrumentality in our work of Missions is the Truth alone*: and on the presence or absence of this does the result depend. When our blessed Lord compared true Christianity to the smallest of all seeds, which should nevertheless grow to be an overshadowing tree, he suggested a principle in divine truth which is of vast importance.* That which the church is scattering, is not a dead thing; it is vital; it has a propagative virtue; it perpetuates life; *for it is seed*. As the means in the hand of the Spirit, without which no carnal mind receives it, the word of God liveth and abideth forever.† There is something to be observed in this principle of germination and increase: it is not like a building. The building has no life. It may be a pyramid, a parthenon, a cathedral of Cologne; but it stands—so long as it stands at all—only as it was built. The principle of the whole fabric, however vast or beautiful, is simply this: one stone put upon another. No art can produce the first tendency towards vital force. No bud or blossom ever breaks forth from the carved stone of the vine or the olive in those glorious walls. But a seed is a thing of life. Though carried by the merest down of the thistle, it swells, and gathers force, and evolves its like. The truth of God, under a spiritual agency, is a living principle. When cast into soil, it is not buried, as if it were only a jewel of gold, but awakes to new forms of vigorous beauty, like a precious seed. This emboldens us to send the Gospel where it has never been.

When we multiply works of art, the progress is slow and the series is arithmetical; but living things increase in a high geometrical ratio. This is the benign law of harvests. *Maria d'Escobar*, a Spanish lady, first brought a few grains of wheat into the city of Lima. For three years she distributed their produce among the colonists, giving twenty or thirty grains to each farmer. "Maria d'Escobar (says Mackintosh) brought into existence more human beings, by this supply of food, than Napoleon destroyed in all his campaigns."‡ Had this lady built a thousand churches in Peru, they would have been only a thousand even now. The wide extent of the Church, in the glory of the latter day, will be the result of

a like plantation: "There shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon."§

When God's time for divulging a great truth comes—how he can make it fly! This should encourage us. When, on the last of October, 1517, Brother Martin, with hammer and nails, fixed to the door of All-Saints' Church at Wittenberg, his Ninety-five Theses against Indulgences, he performed an act which he little thought would be known beyond his native kingdom: "In fourteen days, Luther's Theses were known in all Germany; in five or six weeks in all Europe." "Within three years, these and others of his writings were translated into Spanish, in Holland; and, four years after, a traveller bought them in Jerusalem."

If we look at the nature of this truth, we shall find a new reason for sowing in hope, and sending it to distant countries. It is the "word of life," which we "hold forth."† It reveals Him who is "the Life."‡ That which every true missionary communicates—is Christ. And when Christ is received by faith of God's elect, the series does not stop. Flame is not more communicative. It is "a torch of fire in a sheaf"§ Thus we are reminded of the game of Grecian boys, to which Plato alludes, in which, during a race, one would carry a lighted torch, which, when his strength was exhausted, would be caught up by another and another. By just such means it has come to us. A few years ago, on the platform of a religious society in New-York, addresses were made by a grandson of John Brown, of Haddington, and a grandson of Isabella Graham. A pious spectator sent up a donation, with these words on a slip of paper: "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever."|| Who was the first missionary to the glens of the Vaudois, we know not; but we know what seed he carried, for it is there still. Shall any man dare to predict, that the same effects shall not follow the same causes, in Burma or in Hawaii? The first seed sown, outside of Eden, by Adam and Eve, may have seemed hopelessly buried; but they were reassured by subsequent harvests; and we are eating the fruit of their labours. Every evangelical mission does the like. We should not hesitate to sow the very smallest portions. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand."¶ Our work is ministerial;

* Matt. xiii. 31. † 1 Peter i. 23.

‡ Mackintosh's Life, vol. ii. p. 46

* Psalm lxxii. 16. † Phil. ii. 16. ‡ Col. xiii. 4.

§ Zech. xii. 6. || Isa. lix. 21. ¶ Eccl. ii. 6.

the increase is of sovereign grace. Not every grain of wheat comes to the ear. Not every tract converts a soul. Yet, in the great account, the truth does its work, and sometimes mightily. The analogy of natural things is the same. Who questions the deadly efficacy of fire-arms in modern warfare? Yet it is calculated, that on the field of battle, not more than one ball in twelve thousand proves mortal, or strikes a human being. If the church were only putting forth a consentaneous effort, and causing the seed to fly over all nations, it is reasonable to believe, that she would soon behold singular and unexampled successes, from direct and copious visitations of spiritual power.

Our instrumentality then, must be the very truth of God. It is CHRIST in the missionary message, which gives it life, and fructifies the labour. For centuries, the nominal church has been bearing rank harvests of tares. An enemy hath done this. Amidst it all, some has sprung up, "first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear."* It is truth only which accomplishes the end. If there is a work in which it is momentous to communicate truth, pure and entire, it is in the work of missions. The doctrine of Christ and him crucified is the vivifying seed. How long did the Moravian brethren labour in vain, plying the Greenlanders with the ethics of Christianity! It was true, but it was inefficacious; a lambent flame, which kindled nothing. But when—as if by chance—they spoke of the *Cross*, the frozen savages were in a glow—the arctic ice began to melt. This is the grand secret of Gospel labour, at home and abroad; but more especially pertinent to labour in new ground. The question, *What is the Gospel?* is one of awful import in this seed-time of the Church, and closely connected with the success of missions.

2. As a second condition of success, may be mentioned *Fervent Piety in the Church*, as the source of the missionary effort. Here is undoubtedly our grand defect. Ours is a work which it were mockery to attempt in cold blood. True Gospel missions are the product of great and holy excitements. They are the overflowings of a full cup; of which the irrepressible contents burst over the brim. Not the sleepy motion of a canal, such as our present church endeavours, but an inundation of good: "for Jordan overfloweth all his banks, all the time of harvest."† Such is our present lamentable condition, that we have nothing to spare. There is unbelief among ministers and people; and unbelief respecting missions gains ground in seasons of coldness. I know there are some who stand in dread of all excitements. But, be it remembered, the state which the Church now holds was not reached by our present sleepy

progress, nor by any gentle gradation whatever. Times of gentle gradation have not been times of conquest. The grand achievements have been by wide-spread awakenings—shocks of influence—burst after burst of kindling energy. And for this reason great revival at home would be felt in distant missions, and would probably lead to great revival abroad.

A general, simultaneous, and extraordinary elevation of scriptural piety in our churches would bear most directly on the work of missions. First, there would be more *love*; and ours is a labour of love. The hearts of us all would flow out in more tender compassion for the souls of men. There would not be a contribution or an effort which would not go forth winged by affection. And in this work, love is power. In the next place, if our graces were more elevated, we should *attempt more*. Times of coldness are cowardly times: "For the divisions of Reuben, there were great thoughts of heart. Why abodest thou among the sheep-folds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks?"* It is with another temper, that God's people have sometimes "jeoparded their lives unto the death in the high-places of the field." Again, eminent piety would lead the church to *give more*. Very remarkably has this been the result of that great revival of religion which is now taking place in the Free Church of Scotland; where, "in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty, have abounded unto the riches of their liberality;" so that they have, in a year and ten months, contributed to church charities no less than \$3,595,034; of which sum \$97,961 have been given, in the last year, for Foreign Missions.† More hearty Christian zeal would rid our churches of all their nervous dread of agents for public objects. But I may add, greater piety would make us *pray more*. It would transform our Monthly Concerts, from the poor, scanty, drowsy, formal handfuls who go to the house of prayer, almost by stealth, "as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle," into joyful assemblies, lifting up holy hands for a blessing on the ends of the earth. Prayer is one of the great means for the conversion of the world. And I have thought, that if the missionary expenses, thus far, had done nothing more than to awaken believers to prayer, by the representations which missionaries have made, these expenses would have been well bestowed. A further consideration is this: if there were more eminent piety, there would be *more missionaries*. Converts would flock to our churches in greater numbers. Many more of these would seek the Gospel ministry than in our present unexampled winter. Also, we should see a supply of one of

* Mark iv. 28.

† Josh. iii. 15.

* Judg. v. 15.

† Free Church Statement of Collections, &c.

M.S.B.

the greatest defects in our foreign missions—I mean the extraordinary lack of preachers raised up from among the Gentiles, as in primitive days. And not only more, but *better missionaries*; men of heroic enterprise, who should not count their own lives dear unto them, so that they could finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they had received of the Lord Jesus.

For these and the like reasons, a universal increase of piety, all over the Church, would instantaneously elevate the tide of missions. We should be less engrossed with the business routine, and more elated with the delightful glow of love. It is not unlikely, reverend brethren, (may I be suffered to say it,) that more grace would have made some of *us* foreign missionaries; that the question might well come to some of us this evening, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" And perhaps he who addresses you on this occasion, but for want of higher experience, might at this hour have been preaching the word in foreign tongues. Nor do I consider it chimerical to suppose, that the day is coming, when it shall be far more usual for men of family, learning and fortune, to devote themselves individually to the work of missions, as so many did in the early ages. Instead of this, the common way, as we well know, is to exact enthusiastic ardour of the missionary, but to be all coolness ourselves. By very different tempers have the great foundations of Christendom been laid. In our own Presbyterian church, for example, the early progress was by missionary work, and was marked by great sacrifices, self-denials, and revivals. The spirit of domestic and of foreign missions is one and the same; and it breathed energy into such men as the Edwardses, Davies, the Tennents, and the great pioneers of our communion.

A wide-spread glow of zeal would mightily accelerate our aggressive movements. At present we are stagnant. I both wonder and am ashamed, when I find, within a few weeks, no less than ninety clergymen of the Free Church of Scotland, agreeing to bestow each a month of labour in destitute parts of the Highlands. More of this spirit would make us happier, and would sanctify our common affairs; and the day is coming when there "shall be upon the bells of the horses Holiness unto the Lord, and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar."* The impulses of such a consecration, upon the whole work of missions, we may dimly conjecture; but can fully learn it only by blessed experience. And the very *expectation* of this contributes to the object; which leads me to observe, that

3. *An Important Condition of Success is*

* Zech. xiv. 20.

Hope. We know how necessary the Scriptures make it to the individual believer; it is not less so to the Church. Any system of opinion which absolutely disconnects the evangelism of the present dispensation from the ultimate triumph of Christianity, damps the zeal of labour. But God has set before us another expectation. If, as one has said, the *remembrance of the past* is the great spring of *sentiment*, and the prospect of the *future* the great spring of *action*; then ought we to look more constantly *forward*. The torch of prophecy casts its flame over the path we are travelling. Blessed be God! he makes the future brighter than the past! Thus he confers the youthfulness of *hope* on the labouring church. And we are bound to compare the book of prophecy with the book of passing events: to look out for signals; to follow our Saviour's teaching, to watch tendencies of things, to "learn a parable of the fig-tree."* We are solemnly charged to look for signs of Christ's reign. What might we then expect, as tokens of a better day?

It will be a token of this, when believers, within different paces, shall begin to turn their eyes towards great rallying-points and centres: when they shall look at the things in which they are agreed: when they shall see the things in which they agree, to be the great things, and great because they are the more spiritual things. It will be a good token when thoughts of union shall rise in minds which have other marks of the kingdom; and it will strengthen the hopes of such as pray for this PEACE, if these conclusions of mind and heart shall be arrived at in different parts of the earth, without conventional means, spontaneously, and as it were, simultaneously.

Tendencies are watched by wisdom, no less than *results*. They indulge our hopes. There are lines, of which no calculation fixes the terminus. In these auguries, the *whither* of the flight may be discerned, even though the passage may reach far out of sight. There are tendencies in our age; and we arrive at something beyond simple conjecture, when these lines intersect one another, and intersect at the same point the great line of Scripture and prophecy. There are such lines of tendency in the prospects of society. Such are the approaches towards, and even efforts for, or aspirations after, good not yet reached. Such are the schemes even of mistaken benevolence, which for a season coincide with the line of God's revealed will. Among these strivings and yearnings of mankind, our age reveals a longing for certain great ends, dreamed of by philosophy, declared by revelation, and despised only by the brutal selfishness which dares not

* Matt. xxiv. 32.

take the form of words and avowal. Our day has multitudes, even among men walking in error, who sigh for universal peace, universal knowledge, universal freedom, and universal virtue. The progress towards these is a progress towards the very consummation which God has pointed out. It is still a progress, though weak, fitful, often disturbed, and seemingly interrupted. There is more concert in the world, about these great ends, than ever there was. The applications of Science in Art, point this way. Commerce points this way, binding nations together, shortening the transit between them, making their several stores and treasures a common stock; and causing them to be necessary to one another. Literature points this way; unlocking antiquities, tracing nations and races up to a primitive unity, and dissolving the ice-walls of language. Diplomacy is stealing away the sword of war, and teaching nations that murder is not the *ultima ratio regum*. Philanthropy, which in its very name is universal, points this way, by becoming the property of multitudes together. And when Philosophy and Art give wings to Religion, and bear the scriptures over all lands, the whole progress is seen most manifestly to concur with the tenor of revealed grace. Ten thousand projects may be mistaken, as ten thousand soldiers may fall, before a practicable breach is effected in a fortress, and yet victory may at length wave over the battlements. Enthusiasts and fanatics may utter their cries; and yet their very ravings may be but the voice of truth and love reverberated in the broken notes of a false echo. We are not to yield them a moment's assent, but we may recognise them as aiming blindly at a noble object; and the convergence of these lines all to one point, may indicate the region of the heavens where light is to break in on the long darkness. A myriad of gazers, watching for the dawn, shall probably turn their faces eastward; and if the grey streaks or radiant blushes favour the hope, and if the revelation of God promise a rising sun—we may be emboldened, even before day, to expect the morning, somewhere in that region. Such is the prophetic looking out of the meditative and hopeful minds of Christendom at the present hour. The advocate of sceptical perfectibility, and the bigoted Jew, the orthodox ritualist, and the Christian millenarian, all, while they strike at one another, bend their eyes in the same direction. And not more certainly has astronomy fixed the rising of to-morrow's sun, than prophecy has assured us of the coming of the Sun of Righteousness with healing under his wings. It has been the constant faith of the Jew, in all his wanderings and oppressions, distinguishing him from all other nations. The Gentile looked *back*, to a golden age: the Jew looks *forward*, to the coming of Messiah. No

wonder: his sacred word is full of such hopes: they are inscribed even in the ritual code. Even here, among levitical observances, we learn that the world is yet to behold a day of ingathering. The Feast of Tabernacles was the last and most joyful in the ancient calendar. It reminded them of their pilgrim-tents; it gave thanks for the abundance of harvest. Amidst the palm-trees, goodly trees, and willows of the brook, Israel sojourned for seven days in a state of exulting peace: "a day of great gladness." The eighth day was a day of solemn assembly. And I will acknowledge, my brethren, that this has been more forcibly brought to my mind by a little coincidence: for this day on which I address you, I have seen the Hebrews in their synagogue, celebrating this very festival. This, according to their calendar, is the twenty-second of Tisri: "the last great day of the feast," when water was brought from Siloam in a golden flagon and poured upon the altar; and when Jesus stood and cried: *If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink!*" All Jews agree, that he who had never seen the rejoicing for the pouring of water, never saw joy in his life. And the Jerusalem Talmud says, "the joy was because of the drawing, or pouring-out, of the Holy Ghost." On this very day they were accustomed to sing that missionary psalm, the seventy-second, which has been this evening used in our worship; and as the temple choir of singers and instruments carried up the words, *He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth*,—they did but predict what we are hoping for Israel. In the nine synagogues of our city, frequented by 15,000 persons, there has perhaps not been one spiritual thought on this great day of the feast. Whatever "the election" have obtained, "the rest were blinded." Their eyes are darkened: their back is bowed down alway. Yet "the lump is holy." The natural branches shall yet be grafted in. And there shall come out of Zion a Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.* Through our mercy, they also shall obtain mercy. In the latter day, the festival day of the earth, "with joy shall they draw water out of the wells of salvation."† The Gentiles shall share in the blessing, for in that day every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to KEEP THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.‡ There is, therefore, ground to hope: and our hope is in God. For it remains to be said,

4. That the *influence of the Holy Spirit* is the fourth, last, and greatest condition of success, and the cause of all the rest. In vain do we

* Rom. xi. 24, 26, 31. † Isa. xii. 3.

‡ Zech. xiv. 16.

lament over desolations, "until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high," and then shall "the wilderness be a fruitful field."* This condition is indispensable. Without this, men and missionaries, and money, yea Bibles and apostolic labours, are nothing. This unction is all-inclusive; it comprehends the rest. All our elaborate arrangements, are but conductors for this fire from heaven. With this, each of our mission-posts, which now glimmers like a distant light-house, amidst fog and storms, would kindle up into a radiant sun. Do we speak of *Hope*? here is the source of hope. Our arithmetic misleads and disheartens us. We spread the map on our tables, and compute thousands of millions of souls; and then, over against this, a little band of messengers; and then, on the scale of the exchange or the counting house, we calculate, that such and such instrumentality, in regard to such results, is stark naught. Such reckoning is not valid in the house of God. In the scale of the sanctuary, the proportion sometimes runs thus: one shall chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight.† In this problem, we must not omit the element which is infinite—the power of the Spirit with the word. Gideon was admonished of this; and his watchword should be ours.‡ In God's work, one Augustine, one Luther, or one Whitefield, counts for more than a bare numerical unit, and the quiver of the Almighty has not been exhausted. We are perpetually tempted to look at our little band and say—"What are these among so many?" One missionary among a million of idolaters is surely disheartening. The son of Amittai felt thus, when sent on his mission to Nineveh; it required a shipwreck and a miracle to reclaim the truant prophet. The city was idolatrous. Its wickedness had come up before God. It was an exceeding great city of three days' journey; it contained six score thousand persons who could not discern between their right hand and their left hand; and Jonah was but one. Yet the word was, "Arise, go into Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee." And Nineveh turned from its evil way, and God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them, and did it not.

We do a grievous wrong to our prospects when we measure the illumination of the coming period, by the poor twilight of the present. "The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day when the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound."§ By one effusion of the Spirit on the

seed sown, Christ can, and doubtless will, make the labours of a single husbandman equal to that of thousands. We must not measure every thing by our present rate of progress. It may please God to work in the latter day, on an unexampled scale. Jericho fell all at once, after seven days of circuit. The Man of Sin is to fall, all at once, "whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming."* Babylon the great is to fall, all at once, ("in one hour." Rev. xviii. 17), and who shall say, that by unparalleled manifestations of the Holy Ghost, other great and longed-for consummations shall not as suddenly come to pass? At any rate—all the effects produced are by the Spirit, and all the influence needed for the utmost effect is pledged in the covenant. Our present orderly and punctual quietude will give place to a radical disturbance and shaking of all nations, and all former precedent shall give way when the time of harvest shall be announced by the voice of the archangel: "and THE GREAT TRUMPET shall be blown, and *they* shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the out-casts of the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem."†

The impression is general, that we are on the eve of great events. A cloud impends—perhaps of mingled evil and good. It is an expectation which is solemn and emboldening. It leads a man to say, 'Away with trifles,—I must abandon all that is frivolous. Life is short. A great work is before me. I must gird myself. I must pray more.' It must affect men in their relations as associated. 'We are on the eve of great things, therefore let us be sober, let us be vigilant, let us be active, let us be at peace, let us live for Christ.'

In regard to seeking spiritual influence, and acting in view of it, we have been too much governed by a timid conservatism—a reverence for prescription and authority—for what is established—for rest and safety—rather than for hazard and movement. The world is moving, and we must move or be left behind. Vice and error are moving, and Truth must not sit still. In science, in politics, in the arts, every thing tends towards compendious methods. To neglect this, is to fight against providence. We may read old authors too much, and become mere gray-headed chamberlains in the house of Truth, bearing the keys of cobwebbed chambers which no man will enter; while the battle and the victory are going on in the open field.

O brethren, on how many fields might we be even now triumphant, if we were doing our part, and if the Spirit were sent down! We

* Isa. xxxii. 15.

† Deut. xxxii. 30.

‡ Judges vii. 18.

§ Isa. xxx. 26.

* 2 Thess. ii. 8.

† Isa. xxvii. 13.

are debtors to the Jew and also to the Gentile. We are debtors to the Indian and the African. The tawny inhabitants of this land have dwindled away before us. We have given them fire and sword and poison; but not the Gospel. Driving them from their native haunts, we have concentrated them beyond the great river. The blood of the departed cries to us to evangelize those who remain. The wide region between them and the Pacific, whether peopled by aboriginal or European stock, is marked by the very hand of God with physical features which are too extraordinary to be mistaken. It must one day have its millions of husbandmen. The Pacific slope is made to be a land of peace—to be our land—to be a land I trust for amazing displays of Gospel triumph. And what shall I say of Africa? how name her without blushing and tears! Millions of slaves, chiefly within our church borders, yet without any general church-provision. Thousands of free blacks—for whom, as a church, we are doing nothing. Time already fails me, when I would speak of other fields. The ruins of Hugonot temples call us toward beautiful France. India, from the Himalah to Cape Comorin, is absolutely unobstructed. And China, beside whose excluding wall we have stood so long, with protestations that we waited only for admission, is now thrown open by an imperial edict, which, little as the world regards it, is one of the great events of the age. The world is waiting for us. The pillar of fire and of cloud seems rising. It is time to rally—time for new and unexampled efforts and sacrifices—time for the sons of Aaron to sound the silver trumpets—time for the sons of Levi to bring forth the staves of the ark, and to bear it on to victory.

To feel aright on these points, is one of the gifts of that very Spirit whom we implore. In vain do we seek to awaken in our churches zeal for missions as a *separate thing*. To be genuine, it must flow from love to Christ. It is when a sense of personal communion with the Son of God is highest, that we shall be most fit for missionary work; either to go ourselves, or to stir up others. If we allow it to become a business of dollars and cents, we shall see no results." "*Find preachers of David Brainerd's spirit,*" (said John Wesley,) *and nothing can stand before them;* but without this, what can gold or silver do!"* Let gushing affection to the Lord Jesus Christ become the ruling passion, and it communicates the thrill of evangelical zeal to every member of the electric chain. A church of such ministers, of such members, would be an apostolic, a heavenly church.

* Journal; Aug. 4, 1767. Vol. ii. p. 260.

Reverend and beloved brethren, let us make this a personal concern. How is it with our labours and our hearts. Have we toiled all night and taken nothing? Jesus says to us: "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." Ah! there is more than one of us, I know, who looks fearfully upon his poor boat, at such a command. Yet each even of these will say: "If my Lord say *Come*, I will go to him, though it be through the jaws of hell." Notwithstanding past ill success; I will say: "At thy word I will let down the net."*

The spirit of a pious minister, is the spirit which the Church should have. What would be the experience of your heart, my brethren, if God should surprise you with great success? Your bark, like Peter's, would be ready to sink—but what then—if Christ be in it! In any measure of success, you would fall on your knees, ready to cry, Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord! I believe I do not misrepresent the heart of brethren in such circumstances, when I attribute to each of them, thoughts like these: O thou friend of sinners! I find language too narrow to tell my love to thee; but thou redest it *here*; and I will tell thee one day, if thou admit a sin-polluted but grace-saved wretch to kiss thy feet in paradise. Be *thou* with me, and the deep shall give me no alarm.

These are exercises which become the missionary, and which become us. If we would promote the work of foreign missions, let us be wholly absorbed in our work at home. Then shall our missions begin to revive, when we feel a new anointing from the Holy One—when our individual experience shall overflow in the work—and when love for human souls shall fill us with irrepressible desires for the ingathering of the lost. The travail of a genuine ministerial work is far different from the barely professional interest, with which we too often attempt duty. To be qualified to lead our people in the work of charity, we must have those feelings which shall make the saving of souls the great object of our lives.

Your speaker has said those things which rebuke himself; and which it would better become him to receive than to utter. Yet they are true; they are needed; and they are applicable. If foreign missions revive, it will be in consequence of revival in these churches; and towards the revival of our churches, nothing is so indispensable or so urgently demanded, as the revival of our *ministers*.

* Luke v. 5.

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