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SPRUCE STREET LECTURES.

LECTURE X.

*Delivered on the Evening of the 13th May, 1832, by the Rev.
John Breckinridge, of Philadelphia.*

CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise.
—*Isaiah* xliiii. 21.

That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.—1 *Tim.* iii. 15.

And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: so that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.—1 *Thess.* i. 6—8.

If the Church of Christ had been in any adequate measure pure in her spirit, and faithful to her trust, as the depository of the Gospel for mankind, then the history of the Church would have been the *history of missions*.*

But on the contrary, the history of the Church is often,

* Some of the views advanced in this Lecture were published by the author in the *Biblical Repository*, October, 1830.

in a principal degree, the record of its corruptions in doctrine and life ; and when we would trace from its rise to the present time, the pure stream of Christianity, instead of "the river of God," we find in many ages only a scanty brook, well nigh lost amid the rubbish and delapidations through which it wends its weary way.

The Apostles of Christ, in a qualified sense, may be said to have defined with their own hands the *present* frontier-line of foreign missions; and what has since been done for the conversion of the world, has been the result more of natural causes, than of the spirit of missions. What they achieved in a few years, under divine influence, by heroic enterprise, was ignobly left by after ages, to a great extent, to the work of time, and to the *indirect* influences only of Christianity.

Indeed, for several centuries before the days of Luther, the *Church itself was missionary ground*. The religion of Christ lay expiring on its own altar, the victim of its professed votaries and friends. And when at the ever memorable reformation, "the spirit of life from God entered into her, and she again stood upon her feet," the servants of Christ found Paganism within the very recesses of the sanctuary. *They* had but little leisure for the cultivation of a foreign field, who were absorbed in purging out abominations from the very temple of God itself. Their hands were busied in breaking down the idols from the holy places, in casting out those that made merchandise of the truth, in overturning the tables of the money-changers, and in restoring to its purity the worship of God. And then, alas! almost before the work of reform had been sufficiently extended to give numbers and strength to Christianity, the spirit of contention and of schism arose ; the progress of the holy

cause was arrested by the fatal divisions of its friends ; and the Reformed Church

“To party gave up, what was meant for mankind.”

The revival in latter days of the spirit of missions in Protestant Christendom, is a great epoch in the history of the Church and of the world. We have no doubt that future generations, passing by the fading glories of this world, will regard this as the most brilliant characteristic of the age in which we live: and if we are faithful to God and man, it may become the first in a series of progressive movements, which, with the divine blessing, shall issue in the conversion of the world.

But if we would take the proper impression of the subject, and gird ourselves fully for the great and solemn service we have to perform, then must we esteem the work of missions for the conversion of the world as but just begun. For though, compared with the spirit and labours of some other ages, much is doing now for this noblest of causes, yet, compared with the vast extent of unreclaimed heathenism, with the bountiful compass of the divine command, or with what we can and ought to do, our achievements are matter much more of humiliation than of mutual congratulation.

The subject of Christian Missions having, in the order of discussion, been assigned to us, we proceed this evening to present some hints in relation to it, which we trust will not be found unprofitable.

The passages selected from the word of God are intended to form rather the basis than matter of discussion; and may be considered more a continued motto, or running caption, than as a text for regular analysis. The first named passage

exhibits the divinely derived character, and appropriate influence of the people of God. “ *This people have I formed for myself: they shall show forth my praise.*” This is expanded as follows by the Apostle Peter: “ *Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*”* The next portion refers to this peculiar and chosen people, organized into a church, furnished from on high, as the house of God, with the means of extending “the truth” through the earth, and put by its great Head under requisition for this labour of love. “ *The house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*” Not that the Church is that on which the truth rests, for the truth rests on God; and it is the action of the truth by the power of God which called the Church into being, organized it into form, and furnished it with beauty and the means of doing good. Hence it is the *effect* of the truth, and, of course, can never be that on which the truth depends, to be what it is. But it is that, without which, according to the divine arrangement, the truth of God will never be adequately extended in the world. “ *It is the ground of the truth,*” as God’s chosen seat on earth; where ‘his truth is stationed, supported, and upheld,’—the pillar on which the truth is continually held to view, as a public proclamation of mercy to a lost world.

The last passage represents to us this Church in successful action—in the work of faith and the labour of love. “ *From you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place; so that ye became ensamples to all that believe.*”

* 1 Peter ii. 9.

It is taken for granted in this discussion, that the glory of God is the great end of all his works. In his dealings with our world, he has made his supreme glory to depend upon the influence and final triumph of Christianity. "He has magnified his *word* above all his name."* The plan of redemption subordinates to itself all beings and all things in our own, and, so far as we know, in all other worlds. "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, hath set him at his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all, to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God."† In the economy of redemption, man is regarded at once as an *object* and an *agent*; as an object, it proposes his eternal salvation; as an agent, he is to be occupied in extending the knowledge of this salvation to his fellow men, in all the world. By the comprehensive and general terms of the subject, "CHRISTIAN MISSIONS,"‡ we are to understand the nature, obligations, importance, &c. of that work in which we are required to engage as *agents* or *instruments* in the hands of God, for publishing the Gospel to every creature.

In examining this important subject, we remark:

I. *That the Christian man is, in the very constitution*

* Psalm cxxxviii. 2.

† Ephes. i. 17, 20—23, and iii. 10.

‡ A series of subjects, of which this is one, had been previously selected, and assigned to the several speakers.

of his character, a missionary; or, in other words, that which makes him a Christian, endows him in the same degree with the missionary spirit and influence.

The Christian character and spirit, properly so called, are peculiar, original, and from God. In the new and divine constitution of this character, the Christian differs in many essential respects from his fellow men, who are not Christian, and from his former self. A profession of religion is a declaration of this difference—the life of a Christian is its continued exhibition, or it is embodied Christianity. Our first proposition is, that this spirit and character are intrinsically fitted in themselves, and designed by God, to extend the influence of the Christian religion. In order to establish this, let us for a moment look at some of the distinguishing characteristics of a Christian.

The Christian is distinguished by a supreme regard for divine truth, and lives under its controlling influence. Divine truth exhibits God as he is, and man as he is, and all things in their true light and just proportions. It gives him right views of time and of eternity, of sin, and of the soul, of the law of God, of the plan of redemption and its glorious author; in a word, it gives right principles of action, sets a true value on all things, gives the just expression to all his relations, and by reducing his knowledge into practical use, under the divine Spirit, makes the believer, in some degree, feel, and think, and act like him “*who has left us an example that we should follow his steps.*”*

Personal holiness is an essential characteristic of a Christian. “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” “Ye are a holy nation.” “If any man be in

* 1 Peter ii. 21.

Christ, he is a new creature." He is renewed by the Spirit of God, "being his workmanship," "created after the image of God in Christ Jesus, unto good works, which God hath before ordained that he should walk in them."* By a holy man, we mean one cleansed from the pollution and delivered from the curse of sin, and having been made so, is kept so by the power of God. Holiness also includes the idea of dedication to God, being God's temple, inhabited by his Spirit, and set apart for his service. This is that 'beauty of the Lord our God upon his people,' which is seen of all men, by which the world take knowledge of them that have been with Jesus, and glorify God on their behalf. This characteristic will necessarily lead a man to hate sin for its own evil nature, for the indignity it offers to a holy God, and for the unbounded ruin which it occasions; and will impel him to seek its extinction every where.

Holy love is a leading characteristic of the Christian. We can, of course, do no more than allude to these qualities, while forming an argument out of their united force. But supreme love to God, and a disinterested love to his fellow men, is a summary expression of the spirit and duty of a Christian. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself. This is the great commandment."† And this love God-ward is not a vague and heartless theism, but a supreme, intelligent, commanding, and practical affection for the God of the Bible—God in Christ. And this love of man is not a vain sentiment, or a wild spirit of religious knight errantry; but a wise, dutiful, and disinterested love which

* Ephes. ii. 10, and Colos. iii. 10.

† Luke x. 27. Math. xxii. 37.

seeks to do good unto all men. It is a faint, but real copy of the spirit of Him who so loved the world, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, and gave himself up unto death, even the death of the cross, that we might not perish, but have everlasting life. This spirit necessarily leads its possessor to make every sacrifice which is clearly required, for God and his fellow man.

The Christian man is characterized by holy obedience to God's commands. "If ye love me, keep my commandments," is the great test of Christian character. "I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way." As sin is the transgression of the law, so he cannot be a holy man, a Christian, who permits himself to live in disobedience to, or any known transgression of, any law of God. Now he who commands us in the decalogue to keep holy the Sabbath day, and says "thou shalt not kill," has also said, "do good unto all men as ye have opportunity."* "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." "Go teach all nations" the Gospel of the Son of God. He who requires us, under pain of eternal death, to obey the first table of the law as to the duties especially owed to God, under the same pain, requires us to obey the second table, which defines the sum of our love and duty to our neighbour, and especially to his soul; and a neglect of these is, by eminence, offensive to God, because it kills the soul, beyond the tomb! "If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and them that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest behold we knew it not, doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? And he that keepeth

* Galatians vi. 10.

*thy soul, doth not he know it? And shall not he render to every man according to his work?**

Once more: It is a *distinguishing characteristic of the Christian, that he intends to glorify God in all his actions.* It is one great law of the kingdom, “Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” “Glorify God with your bodies and your spirits, which are his.” But the chief glory of God results from the triumph of the Gospel. This “*is glory to God in the highest, because it brings peace to earth, and good will to men.*” To the accomplishment, therefore, of this great end, the desires, labours, sacrifices, prayers of the believer are directed, in a degree that is supreme and controlling, even in his darkest and coldest hours. All things and all beings glorify God in some shape; but it may be reluctant, extorted, and unknown. “The wrath of man praises him.” If not, “he restrains it.” But it is the purpose and the effort of the Christian to give glory to God, and especially by the universal diffusion of the religion of Christ. Now this is the very spirit and work of missions.

There are other characteristics which distinguish the Christian, as the spirit of prayer, self-denial, &c. But these just named may suffice for the present use. Now our argument is, that these qualities do, in their own nature, constitute a missionary spirit, and fit their possessor with the divine blessing, to extend the influence of Christianity in the world. For, in the first place, the very presence of such a being in such a world as ours, is honourable to our holy religion, and useful to his fellow men. Such a man is the representative of an unseen Saviour; he is a *specimen* of the religion which he professes; a practical proof of its

* Proverbs xxiv. 11-12.

truth, value, and divine power. “*He shows forth the praises of him who hath called him out of darkness into his marvellous light.*” “*He is an epistle of Christ known and read of all men.*”^{*} Sometimes such a man, like lot in Sodom, stands the solitary, but yet expressive earnest of the divine presence among a guilty people; a living witness for the God of heaven; at once their honour, their reproof, and their security; “*the salt of the earth, the light of the world.*” But the influence of such a man is not merely the result of proper character. He is, in the next place, intentionally and actively useful. His views of divine truth lead him to *set a proper price on man*. He has an impression of the *true* value and importance of the soul, infinitely more just and elevated than ever entered the cold and narrow calculations of infidel philosophy. He measures it by the word of God, in the scale of an eternal existence; he sees his ruin by sin; he beholds a great salvation provided for him; he takes *truth’s* view of all things, and is properly affected by them. His holiness makes him hate sin, the common foe of God and man, while his love for both will impel him to seek the honour of the one, and the eternal salvation of the other. His obedience to the law of God—the law of love, will forbid him to stand still, when the great command sounds forth “Go ye unto all the world, and teach all nations;” “let him that heareth say come.” His nature is an active nature; his affections are strong affections, and eminently social. The influence of religion will give to them intensity, refinement, and elevation. He will labour where labour can avail. Where he cannot go in person, he will give of his substance, and give on a scale which shows the greatness of his holy pity to a

* 2 Cor. iii. 3.

ruined world, and the supremacy of his love, with the entireness of his dedication to the Lord Jesus Christ. He will not give grudgingly, or by measure, unto that beloved Lord who poured out his soul unto death for him. And having *influence in heaven* by his prayers, he will send out his alms, directed by his supplications, and by steady and fervent intercession, press the throne of grace with the wants of a ruined world. Oh! brethren, is this no more than a lovely vision—a fair, but impracticable theory! When we read the history of the Church in past ages, or even look around upon its professing millions now, in search of such examples, we may well tremble while we see the truth still indicated, that only a “*remnant shall be saved.*” But yet the character is not ideal. God requires this very spirit at our hands. It is that, and that alone, with which we can enter heaven.

It is then apparent, that the very constitution of the Christian character, is missionary in its nature, and that what makes a man a Christian, endows him in the same measure with the spirit and influence of missions.

II. *We remark that the Church of God is essentially, in its organization, and in the purpose of God, a Missionary institution.*

We speak, of course, of the visible Church catholic, properly so called. The Church of God was established, in order to keep alive and extend the true religion in the world, and thus to glorify God in the salvation of men. It has been essentially the same institution during the several dispensations through which it has passed; and every successive development of its scheme of mercy to mankind, has added new sanctions and helps to its missionary constitution.

If, as we have shown, the individual Christian who truly possesses, and properly displays the spirit of his religion, is a *missionary man*; when united into a society, with the accession of power, under God, peculiar to combined action, and when invested from on high with corporate rights, and qualifications for the work of missions, the body thus organized must be, in the highest form, a missionary institution.

The Church is a social institution. "A chosen *generation*, a holy *nation*, a peculiar *people*, called out of darkness into God's marvellous light." Each living member, of course, brings into the body, if we may speak so, in his person an accession to the common stock of missionary influence. Thus united to Christ, the common head, and being all members one of another, "*the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love:*"* and in the same degree is it fitted for harmonious and efficient action, in the work of faith and the labour of love.

But, besides the *relation of society*, or the collective effects of numbers, "the house of God, which is the Church of the living God," is *eminently a missionary institution in its furniture*. For this "peculiar people" are endowed by their sovereign for the work of missions. It is in the sense already explained, that the Church is "the pillar and ground of the truth." To her "are committed the oracles of God," and that not for her own manifold "advantage" alone,* but as a depository of the matchless blessings therein revealed, for all the world. "The truth by which she is sanctified,"

* Ephes. iv. 5.

† Roms. iii. 2.

is the sword of the Spirit for cleaving the closed hearts of men, and thus opening their darkened understandings to the light of an eternal day. And in order to give to this people the standing means to "show forth God's praise," his *public worship* is established, and sustained by his authority. The ordinances of his house are observed, and its sacred rites performed in public, with direct reference to the presence and the good of men. And with infinite wisdom and mercy, a day, originally set apart to celebrate God's praise, and keep alive the knowledge of Him in the world, is turned to the peculiar use of publishing the salvation of the Gospel. It is in an emphatic and peculiar sense, *the Lord's day*; and returning, in the measured and rapid revolutions of each succeeding week, renews to the listening earth the evidences of his resurrection, and the incessant calls of his mercy.

In addition to all this, there is *an order of men, given by God to the Church, set apart for the special purpose of ministering in his house, and of preaching to all men the Gospel of his Son*. The ministers of reconciliation, if truly called of God, go forth, furnished for their work by his holy Spirit, as well as commissioned by his authority. This is his chosen method of missionary effort; it has been selected by his wisdom, and is made successful by his Almighty power. Now this great mean of evangelizing the nations of the earth, is committed, if we may say so, to the fostering care of the Church of God. She is, under God, the mother of her ministering sons. The Head of the Church gives them unto her for the work of the ministry. "*When he ascended on high he gave gifts to men: he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and*

*teachers, for the works of the ministry.”** And God is prepared to give them in sufficient numbers, and in heavenly fitness, for the perfecting of the saints, and for the conversion of the world, whenever the Church truly asks them at his hands, and is really prepared to make the necessary sacrifices, in order to train them, and send them forth under the great commission, to preach the Gospel to every creature.

But the Church of God is attended by the Spirit of God, to give direction and effect to her missionary action. Each believer, as such, is “*a temple of God,*” that is, a *spiritual* man sanctified by the Spirit, led by the Spirit, his graces the gifts and adornings of the Spirit: and each minister, who is truly such, is personally and officially attended by the Spirit: and the collective body of Christians has the Spirit of God in the midst of - it. Even to two, and to three, is this Spirit promised by the gracious Head of the Church; and He dwells perpetually in the Church, as the divine representative of Jesus, as her Holy Paraclete and Guide; and goes forth, “without measure,” amidst the administrations of the Gospel to convince men of sin, and to convert them unto God. It is the glory of the Gospel, that it is the ministration of the Spirit; and that the Church is inhabited and attended by His perpetual presence. Thus “*all the body fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom his people are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*”†

And while the Spirit of Truth is thus vouchsafed to the Church, as an abiding gift, there “are seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord,” in which this greatest of blessings is dispensed with peculiar plenitude and power;

* Ephes. iv. 8. 11—12.

† Ephes. ii. 21—22.

when the Holy Spirit, by a simultaneous and diffusive work of grace, gives new impulse to his people in the divine life, and converts great numbers of sinners unto God. These special and illustrious occasions hasten, in an especial degree, the conversion of the world. They outrun the ordinary means of grace; they transcend all the resistance of men and devils, and divinely furnish a faithful and revived Church from on high, for spreading to all lands the saving knowledge of the Son of God.

We might add, *that the Church is a self-perpetuating institution*, and thus, under the divine blessing, is fitted to extend her influence from generation to generation. And it is equally true, that *success from God is promised* to the proper action of the Church in sending abroad the Gospel of Christ. But we have dwelt sufficiently on these suggestions, to answer the end in view, which is to show that the Church is furnished for the successful prosecution of the great work of missions, by her glorious Head. She has numbers and union; she has the truth and its preachers; the social ordinances of religion, and the time, and the opportunities, for their public, ever-returning and successful administration; and the Eternal Spirit attends his truth, and gives divine effect to the calls and labours of the Church.

What then is wanting, (to say no more,) towards a missionary institution? And how apparent is the intention of its divine Author in its entire constitution? Is it not the very husbandry (plantation, or nursery) of God, from which every wind that blows should waft its odours abroad; and carry forth its winged-seeds to every forest, and to every field!

But it is time that we pass, in the third place, to consider the direct commands of the Lord Jesus Christ, as to the work of missions. What we infer from the organiza-

tion and furniture of the Church, we learn explicitly from the standing laws of Christ, that the work of missions is *commanded duty of the Church*. "DUTY," (as has been admirably said by a modern missionary, now in the field)* "*resulting from the command of Christ—obligation founded on the authority of Christ, is the great argument in behalf of missions.*"

* William Swan, Missionary in Siberia. The following remarks are so apposite and forcible, that we cannot forbear to give them a place here:—

"Suppose an order issued from the highest authority in the kingdom, requiring certain faithful subjects to perform a specific service in the character of soldiers, and commanding all faithful subjects generally to be aiding to the utmost of their power in the execution of the will of their sovereign. In urging the people to obedience, what would be the most obvious, and we might almost say, exclusive topic that could present itself in the way of argument? unquestionably the *authority of the command*. It must not be resisted. It must not be neglected. It is at the peril of the sovereign's displeasure and the loss of character—and, it may be, under the pain of condign punishment, if it be not fulfilled. It would be self-evident that no one could justly retain the character of a loyal subject if he disobeyed; and he must forfeit the esteem and confidence of his better affected brethren if he not merely should refuse obedience, but should attempt to justify his conduct."

"I feel that this illustration, as indeed every illustration taken from earthly and sensible objects, must fall short of the paramount authority of the command of the King and Head of the Church, in reference to the extension of his kingdom and the subjection of all nations to *Him*. An earthly king is a mortal man, and he may err through ignorance or passion. His commands may be the dictates of cruelty, or imbecility, or ambition, or a wanton exercise of power; but even allowing his will to be in all respects accordant to the principles of the strictest justice and highest honour and universal benevolence—his subjects can never be under such obligations to obey him, as Christians are to "bring every thought into subjection to the obedience of Christ." And if any one should disregard *his authority*, I would not endeavour to work upon that man's mind by any other consideration. I allow other arguments a place, but that place is a lower one than the authority of Christ."

The ultimate appeal is to the authority of God. What then does He command. “*And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go YE, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*” “*Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.*” “*And he said unto them, thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem; and ye are witnesses of these things.*”^{*} Such is the language of standing, sovereign law. It was addressed, it is true, to but a little band; but it was *to* the Church, and *for* the Church, and the *entire* Church. It extends to all who have an interest in Christ, and to all who ever heard of Christ; and he who would excuse himself from its obligation, shuts himself out from the blessings it announces. It runs to the last day—and the last man. It is the great law of the Lord: it comprehends all the rest. Though the direct and official work of “preaching the Gospel” regards especially the ministers of Christ, yet the ministers must spring from the Church; they must be sent forth by the Church; and the only choice of every one in the Church, is between *going* or *sending*; between preaching the Gospel, or causing it to be preached. It is under law, the royal law,

* Matt. xxviii. 18—20. Mark xvi. 15—16. Luke xxiv. 46—48.

that the Church of God is required to do this. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they *be sent*?"

Now the whole duty comprehends all the parts essential to its constituent character, and the end includes the means necessary to its accomplishment. Therefore, as they cannot hear without a preacher, nor preach except they be sent, so they cannot be sent, except they be trained. If others *may* train them, the Church *must* do it, or sin against the fundamental law of the kingdom. If others *may train* them, she alone, in her official character, can *ordain* them for the work of the ministry; and she cannot divest herself any more of the duty to send them forth, than she can alienate, or delegate to another, her ordaining rights, or her love and duty to her risen Lord.

While all the people of God agree that the Church of Christ is thus bound to send forth the Gospel, they differ as to the *form* of doing it. Some prefer the action of the Church, as such, in her ecclesiastical organization; while others choose an association, (unhappily denominated voluntary, since the ecclesiastical is voluntary too,) not officially the Church, nor the ordaining body, nor directly constituted by it, or responsible to it; but formed for the same great end. The most important part is to DO THE WORK, AND TO DO IT AT ONCE; and none but God's people ever will do it. But surely it is also important, that it be properly done, since on it will, in a great measure, depend both the speed and the efficiency of the service. It will not be denied, that the Church, as such, ought to do what

she can in this cause; and we suppose it will be allowed, that if her ecclesiastical action be equally good, it ought to be preferred to any other form. And as the preliminary acts, such as receiving the candidate for the ministry into her communion, ordaining him for the work of the ministry, &c. are peculiar to the Church, so there would seem to be a special fitness and unity in her carrying forward the entire work, from first to last. And as the Church, as such, is, without a question, responsible to God for the universal publication of the Gospel, it would seem to be proper, requisite, and even obligatory, to subordinate to her ultimate direction, the agents and the operations by which it is accomplished. If the organization of any Church necessarily unfits it for the work of missions, in its proper person, then we should think it time to question the authority of that Church, and its conformity to the principles of Gospel constitution and order. Not that mere adaptation to missionary action is an evidence of this conformity; but to be without it, seems incompatible with the very genius of an institution, which has been organized and commissioned for the conversion of the world.

To convince us that the organized Church can do the work, we need not look beyond the very striking specimens afforded to the world in the Methodist Episcopal circuit system at home, or that of the United Brethren abroad. While we consider neither of these schemes a perfect model, yet they stand forth to the view of reprov'd and admiring Christendom, illustrious examples of what the Church, in her organized form can do, to save the world. Especially do we admire, while we gaze upon it, the unparalleled self-devotion and attendant success of the labours of our Moravian brethren. They pitched their

tents in the open plain, like two little flocks of kids, before an enemy that well nigh filled the world.* But God was with them, and they have sent through all the earth the praises of Him in whose name they have prevailed. May they never lose that godly simplicity, that supreme faith, that disinterested self-denial and holy love, which have made the page that records their labours, the most brilliant in the history of missions!

In regard to our own institutions, we freely acknowledge that we have been far from realizing our hopes or our duty in doing good. But the defect has been in us, not in our system. The organization of the Presbyterian Church fits it, in no ordinary measure, for combined and efficient action, to an unlimited extent. The gradation of its various ecclesiastical bodies, through the whole line of which the great principle of representation runs, renders it next to impossible to usurp power, and entirely so to hold it long: and the continued responsibility of its peculiar institutions to the whole Church, gives unity, without consolidation, and secures supervision, without impairing efficiency.

One reason why we are so earnestly desirous that our Church should be occupied in her ecclesiastical character in the conversion of the world is, the happy influence it must exert upon its various official bodies, as well as on the spirit of the people at large. The very name by which we are accustomed to define them, "Church-courts," indicates that they have been too exclusively devoted to conducting business and directing discipline, in contradistinction to the specific work of missions.

Again; if others feed, and clothe, and train, and establish

* 1 Kings xx. 27.

our children, and leave to us only the duty of government and of the rod, our children may give to our authority a cold assent, but their hearts will flow out after their benefactors. The parent's sweetest privilege, which blesses him in blessing them, is to *give* to his children. In its place, discipline also is a duty. But these are relative and inseparable; they are wisely and mercifully blended in the same person; and are necessary to the right support of the respective relations of parent and child. And so it is with the ecclesiastical relations. For the sake of our candidates for the ministry, and of our official bodies, as well as for the sake of the people, these great duties, joined together by God, ought never to be put asunder by man. The bodies who act in these benevolent institutions, both directly and in general supervision, if properly engaged in them, would find it their most pleasant, honoured, and useful occupation; and it would bind our youth and the people in love and confidence to the judicatures of the Church, while it would make every ecclesiastical body an apostolical assembly for doing good.*

* It is due to ourselves, and the noble institutions of our age and land, which have arisen in aid of the various benevolent operations of the day, here explicitly to declare, that we do most cordially approve them; that we think them highly necessary, as well as greatly useful, and that they can no more be dispensed with by the several great families of the Church of God, than each family can dispense with its peculiar institutions and ecclesiastical order. Without interference with the proper action of the Church, as such, they sustain the union, and extend the influence of the people of God, and afford a fine moral demonstration of the truth of Christianity; "that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." John xvii. 17. And we are equally far from intending to assail those valuable sister institutions, which are now carrying forward in our own Church, by voluntary associations, the work of missions, either foreign or domestic, or of education for the ministry. Their existence is called for by the present cir-

But however this question may be settled, as to the *form* of the service, (in the discussion of which we have already been too long engaged,) the work must be done by the Church of the living God. Nothing can be more clear or urgent, than the divine command respecting this duty; and we need rather to be incited, with all speed to obey it, than to be reasoned with in evidence of its obligation. Is it borne in mind by the people of God, that obedience to this standing law is a discriminating test of our fidelity and devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ? If ye love me, keep my commandments, is his own affecting standard of Christian character. And how can we love him, and yet forget or violate his great, his last command? To this, he set the seal of his own blood in death. To this, he added the sanction of divine authority and power, when he arose from the dead. In this, all other commands centre. The service it enjoins is in the direct line of the operation of providence, the work of redemption, and the glory of God. To this is appended, the overwhelming condition of heaven or hell, the decisive alternative of redemption or ruin; and when he ascended on high, he appointed obedience to this command, not only as the test of his people's love, but as the supreme method of doing honour to Him, and good to man. In a word, however our patient and injured Lord may have borne with the ignorance and lethargy of other ages, now that channels for missionary charity and effort

cumstances of the Church; their continuance is necessary to call out its entire resources; and peace will be best secured, by the spirit of an enlarged and mutual toleration. But yet we insist that the organizations of the Church are binding on her and her people; that they are peculiarly adapted to the end intended; and without them the Presbyterian Church cannot long exist in its present form.

are opened to our very doors, from the most distant Heathen lands—all disregard of this great law, is to be esteemed a deliberate and continued sin; and as the effect of disobedience is to prevent Christ's kingdom from being set up in the world, it is no less than high treason against the Son of God.

While the authority of God is the supreme reason for missionary effort, yet there are other and most affecting considerations, which cannot properly be omitted in such an inquiry as this.

Consider, then, in the fourth place,

The spiritual state and prospects of the Heathen, without the Gospel.

We here waive a discussion of the state of those who have heard the Gospel, and rejected its merciful provisions, taking it for granted, that there can be no difference among Christians as to their guilt and exposure to eternal death.

In our attempts to assert the claims of foreign missions, we have too commonly taken for granted, that the great body of professed Christians was correctly informed as to the spiritual condition and prospects of those who have never heard the Gospel. We forget that the objects of their compassion are out of their sight. They seldom hear of them. They seldom think of them. When they do, there is nothing definite or palpable before the mind as to their religious state. They feel a vague pity for distant and endangered nations, whose condition they would gladly better. But they hardly apprehend their exposure to eternal ruin: they scarcely believe it. And while they thus think and feel, perhaps the teachers of religion among them shrink with a false and fatal sensibility from the proper exhibition of the awful subject: or if they are faithful, the

people too often view it with suspicion as a romantic cause, partaking of the nature of a religious crusade, and wasting without profit the treasures of the Church.

But what is in fact the divine testimony on this question? The following propositions no Christian can, we think, consistently reject, viz:

1. That in all ages since the fall, the natural state of every man has been a sinful, and therefore a lost, one.

2. Hence no man in any age or country can reach the kingdom of God, without the interposition of Jesus Christ in his behalf.

3. God *may* interpose for the salvation of sinners, as he does in the case of those saved in infancy, and of those who received immediate revelations, before the written word was given.

4. But the decided intimations of the Bible are, that as a great fact, Jesus Christ is revealed to adult men, through the ordinary means of grace alone. "For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? So then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."* And that this is the clear import of this passage, none can doubt who will look at its connexion. According to the second proposition, all are lost who are not saved by Jesus Christ. And then the prospect of salvation to those who have not the Gospel, is in proportion to the probability that Jesus Christ will save them by direct interposition.

* Rom. x. 13, 14, 15. 17.

5. A holy* man has never been found on earth, so far as we know, since a written revelation was given, who had not been made so by the power of the Gospel. No apostle, no foreign missionary, has ever reported a single case of this character. And yet they have traversed every sea, explored every country, and in some age and form, offered the Saviour to almost every nation under heaven. Now allowing that men are made holy in heathen lands, without the instrumentality of the Gospel, yet when that Gospel is made known to them, would not such persons instantly receive it, and with spiritual relish adopt it for their own, as kindred sunbeams mingle into one? But no such persons have ever been found, since a written revelation was given, unless indeed Cornelius, the centurion, be considered an example. Allowing him to be such, how sadly solitary is the specimen! But the apostle distinctly declares in his sermon on that memorable occasion, that Cornelius and his household were *already* acquainted with God's written revelation to the Jews; with the doctrine and baptism of John; and with the work and ministry of the Son of God.†

The inhabitants of the Sandwich islands made perhaps the nearest approach to this. They abolished idolatry, though ignorant of Christianity. But when Christian missionaries arrived, they found them unholy and degraded men, having no taste for a spiritual religion, and like all other sinners, needing the renovating grace of God to fit them for heaven: and any previous changes had been little more than the wearing out of an obsolete, impure, and idolatrous

* We use this word, of course, in the Gospel sense; not to mean perfect, but religiously dedicated to God, and delivered from the dominion of sin.

† Acts x. 36—39.

religion, which had been outgrown by their wants, and made no response to their cry for succour.

Again; if such cases of salvation *without* the Gospel were numerous enough to justify the pleasing hope of an extensive redemption, surely out of hundreds of millions of men, and through a series of ages, multitudes would be found exhibiting the evidences of having felt its influence. Such cases as Job, and Jethro, and Lot, and Melchisedec, and Abraham, might be looked for in every land. But no missionary or apostle, as far as we know, has been ever cheered by the discovery of a single case. While then the hope still trembles in our breasts, that some may be redeemed by the direct interposition of God through Christ, yet who that loves the Saviour, or the souls of men, would make this the exclusive ground, or in any degree the ground, on which to rest the salvation of the heathen? Or who that believes the word of God, would suspend his own eternal life upon such a condition? With these overwhelming facts full in view, we are in some measure prepared to understand and feel the urgency of those motives which press us to send forth the Gospel, as "on the wings of the morning," to the uttermost parts of the earth. Here we may know the meaning of our Master when he tells us, that he will require *their* blood at our hands, if we neglect our momentous duty to them. Here, with the map of the world before us, we may survey whole continents immersed in Pagan darkness, and count the innumerable millions of heathen population; and looking up into heaven and down into hell, may calculate the worth of all their souls by the value we set on our own. He who can look unmoved at such a spectacle, cannot be a Christian, and is devoid of the sympathies common to all the race.

In fine, there is one view, in which all Christians can meet, and which directly transfers this awful subject from our sympathies, to our consciences, and identifies our personal interests, in some degree, with the state and prospects of the heathen world. It is this, that however we settle in our own minds the question of *their* condition in a future world, our own will, in a degree, depends upon the way we feel and act and give for their salvation: and God has declared, that when we withhold the Gospel from them, He will treat us precisely as if they were lost; and lost by our disobedience.

Consider, in the fifth place, in affecting contrast with the last view, the very limited extent of Christianity in the world. It is not now our place to inquire into the cause of this, but into the fact. It may be proper, however, in passing, to remark, that the cause is chiefly to be sought in the inefficiency of the Christian Church. But that such is the fact, no one can doubt, who is at all acquainted with the history and present state of the world. After the many ages which have elapsed since the command was given to make Christianity universally known, how little has been done towards this result! The Church has always been kept alive in the world: and millions, without number, have been saved from eternal ruin, by her instrumentality. But the great mass of men, in the successive generations which have passed into eternity since the death of Christ, have been strangers to his religion. And even in this age of the world, not one-fourth part of the population of the earth have even heard of the Saviour of sinners. Look at the whole continent of Africa, lying under the thick darkness of Mahomedan delusion, or of pagan superstition: converted by *Christian* America and *Christian* Europe into a field of blood, a market, where *men* are bought and sold! Look at India,

and China, and the Islands of the Sea. What has been done toward giving them the Gospel? The whole force of our missionaries abroad, if distributively disposed, would scarcely afford a *pastor* for a nation; and the points of their impression, on a world in ruins, break at distant intervals on the view,

“ Like sunny islets, in a stormy sea,
Like specks of azure, in a cloudy sky.”

At this moment, the race as such may be said to be still a revolted, lost race; and at the present speed of our efforts for its recovery, though greatly accelerated in latter years, the world will never be saved!

VI. Our next suggestion is, *that the best interests of the Church of Christ at home require her to be actively engaged in the work of missions.*

What we mean to say is, that the Church, as well as the world, gains by this service; and that it is even as necessary to the healthful action of the Church, as it is to the salvation of the world.

One of the most extraordinary facts in the history of the present age is, that a grave attempt had been made, in the name of religion, to prove that the Church and the domestic field are in danger from an excessive issue of foreign missionaries. We regret that we cannot present in a tabular view, the number of evangelical ministers in the world who are labouring in what is called the domestic field, with the amount of their hearers on the one hand, and on the other the number of evangelical missionaries, with the amount of heathen population in the world.

In such a view, the disparity would be made to appear unspeakably great and awful. By the scale it afforded us,

more millions would be assigned to each foreign missionary, than the same number of thousands to each pastor at home. It would be found that the ministers of Christ were crowded into a few corners of the earth, while the wide field of pagan desolations was surrendered to the holy daring and generous self-devotion of a little band of foreign missionaries.* At the *present time*, therefore, there is no ground for the fear that we shall feel too much interest in the foreign field, or send so many ministers abroad as to damage the domestic

* The following remarks, from the pen of the lamented and extraordinary youth, John Urquhart, are so admirable and appropriate, that we cannot forbear their insertion here in a note.

“Let us imagine, that instead of the world, a single country had been pointed out by our Lord as the field of action. And since we are most familiar with our own land, let us just suppose, that the particular country specified was the island of Great Britain: and that, instead of the command to go forth to all nations, and preach the Gospel to every creature, the order had been to go through all the counties of this island, and preach the Gospel to every inhabitant. I find that on a scale which would make the population of Great Britain represent that of the world, the population of Mid Lothian might be taken as a sufficiently accurate representation of the population of our own land.

“In order, then, to have a just picture of the present state of the world, only conceive that all who had received the above commission, some how or other, had contrived to gather themselves together within the limits of this single county. Imagine to yourselves all the other divisions of Scotland and England immersed in heathen darkness; and that by these Christians who had so unaccountably happened to settle down together in one little spot, no effort was made to evangelize the rest of the land, except by collecting a little money, and sending forth two or three itinerants, to walk single handed through the length and breadth of the country.

“I shall be told, however, that illustration is not argument; and so distorted have our views been on this subject, that you will be disposed to think this a perfect caricature of the matter. But I deny that this is an illustration at all. It is merely a representation on a reduced scale; and I believe you will find it to be a correct representation of the state of the world.”

work. The wonder only is, that any one acquainted with the history of missions, should apprehend such a result even in a distant futurity. A blush of shame would seem a much more appropriate concomitant of such a history than idle and ill-omened auguries about the danger of excess in our efforts for the heathen.

It is one of the most striking and merciful features in the constitution of Christian character, that duty and our best interests are inseparably blended. "Do thyself no harm," "do good unto all men," meet in the result, "give and it shall be given unto you." We do ourselves harm, when we refuse to do others good, and wisdom unites with love and duty, in prompting us to seek the salvation of our fellow-men. It is the great law of moral action in the kingdom of grace, "*that it is more blessed to give than to receive.*" It is promised alike to individuals, and to communities of Christians, "they that water, shall be watered also." To be good, is to do good: and to do good is to get good more abundantly. As well might the husbandman in time of spring withhold his seed from the fallowed earth, to rescue it from waste, as for us to look for injuries to the Church from the sending forth of foreign missionaries. "If we sow sparingly, we shall reap sparingly." If we save the seed, we shall lose the harvest!

Did not the Jews lose their birthright in the Church of Christ by refusing to give their religion to the Gentiles? "I say, then, have they stumbled that they might fall? God forbid; but rather through their fall, salvation is come to the Gentiles."*

It is a memorable fact, that the corruptions of the primi-

* Rom. xi. 11.

tive church increased in proportion to the decay of missionary enterprise. Nor is it less true, that, in our day, the revival of religion at home, appeared and grew in perfect harmony, and even exact degree, with the spirit and work of foreign missions. It is not necessary to determine whether this spirit be the cause or the effect of reviving religion among the people. If it be the uniform effect, then its absence denotes religious decay; if it be the uniform cause, then is it a blessing to the Church. The truth is, it is at once the cause and the effect. As Christians awake to an increased regard for God, and for their own souls, they acquire also an increased regard for the well-being of other men: they feel a more tender and holy pity for the perishing heathen. An increased interest in their welfare produces increased efforts for their salvation; and every prayer they offer, every gift they bestow, every effort they make, returns into their own bosoms. Thus, every impression made abroad is felt with electric force at home, as Scipio raised the siege of Rome at the gates of Carthage: and thus a repercussive influence is constantly exchanged. Let those, therefore, who shelter their consciences against the claims of foreign missions, under the idle and fallacious adage "that we have heathen enough at home," henceforth remember that the Church cannot *afford* to do without the foreign field; that the best way to carry on missions at home is to carry on missions abroad; and that all neglect of this great cause not only violates the last command of Jesus Christ, and endangers the souls of innumerable millions of our fellow-men, but impairs the vital energies of the Church itself.

VII. We remark again, *that the world never will be*

converted to God, without the active and intentional agency of the Church of Christ.

It is evident from the word of God, and the past history of Missions, that the world never will be saved without the instrumentality of the people of God. Not that this is necessary on God's part; but it has pleased Him that it should be so. In this way God puts eternal shame upon Satan, and eternal honour on his Son, by using so frail an agency to destroy the kingdom of darkness; and at the same time, as we have already seen, the instrument which he uses to break the oppressor's power, and rescue the oppressed, is prepared for heaven by the service which he performs. This plan of operation is not only determined on, but if we may speak so, the divine veracity is pledged, and the divine honour committed, on the principle that men, Christian men, are to take the Gospel to their fellow men. The divine influence must of course attend and bless human exertion and Gospel means. But human agency is inseparable from the success of the arrangement. "*Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature; and Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world!*"

In all ages, since the apostles closed their illustrious labours, the grand difficulty has been to induce *men* to do their part in this great work. In the propagation of the Gospel by his holy providence, it may almost be said of the Redeemer, that of "the people, there is none with him."* If we subtract from the sum of what has been effected for Christianity, all that the course of human affairs overruled by God has done; all that natural generation has done; all that

* Easter.

emigration and colonizing (with Christian population) heathen lands, have done; all that the bringing of the heathen to the Gospel has done; all that wars and revolutions, inventions and discoveries, and human enterprise have *unintentionally* done; in a word, if we subtract all the *indirect* influences of Christianity, and all the overruled events of the world, from what has been done for the cause of Jesus, then how much will remain?

Now by all these agencies, and indeed by the whole universe of agencies, is the great Head of the Church carrying on the work of Redemption. But the tide of providence, which steadily sets in with the final conversion of the world, is only the *stream* on which the "tall and goodly vessel" of the Gospel floats: and to reach its desired haven, the navigator *man* must take the helm, as well as the Spirit of Jesus fill the sail. Heretofore, if we may so speak, the work of the Lord has been carrying forward the Church; but the Church is required to carry forward the work of the Lord. God demands of us that we give not only an overruled and indirect assistance (for that he extorts even from his foes,) but that we should *co-operate with him in a positive, direct, and intentional instrumentality.*

VIII. We proceed to remark, *that a crisis appears now to have been arrived at, in the history of the world, in which it is peculiarly important for the Christian Church to bear with all her resources on the conversion of the heathen.* In a somewhat inverted application of the apocalyptic symbol, a "voice" seems to "come forth from the temple of God, saying, thrust in the sickle and reap, for the *time* to reap has come; for the harvest of the earth is ripe." The spirit of the age is *ripe* for action, for

it is a spirit of extraordinary enterprise. It is a *public* spirit also, and is ripe, if well directed, not only for action, but for *combined* action, on a scale of noble daring and sublime extent, hitherto unknown on earth. It is an age of revolution; and it is ripe not only for change, but for improvement too. While the God of providence is shaking all nations, the *desire* of nations must be at hand. "While he removes diadem after diadem, and takes off crown after crown,"* *He* must be near whose right it is to rule.

And then our facilities for the universal diffusion of the Gospel, are great and manifold, to a most surprising extent. By all the power of the press, by all the commerce of the nations, by arts, by arms, by the progress of improvement, by the spirit and growth of liberty, by the decay of the great rival systems of religion, and by the general state of the heathen world, as well as by all the provisions of the Gospel, is the way of the Lord prepared before us, and our long delay reprovèd.

And again, every step we take seems to be divinely seconded and sustained. Success beyond our faith, above our hopes, has attended our efforts, and beckoned us on to a more devoted and extended work of missions. That which seemed a rock has sent forth gushing waters, when smitten by the rod of the Gospel herald, in the Redeemer's name. Nations have thrown away their idols to receive us, or have given them up at our bidding; while other nations are inviting us to come, and weep when a Christian sail appears, bringing no Bibles and no missionaries. And a reprovèd providence, opening a way for the Gospel to

* Haggai iii. 7. Ezekiel xxi. 27.

mankind, seems to say, in the voice of all its operations, "go forward, go forward," to the lingering, hesitating Church.

IX. The next suggestion has reference to our own country. It is this: *that the genius of our institutions, and the concomitant spirit of the people, fit them in a peculiar manner to receive with favour appeals in behalf of missions.* There exists in the bosom of the people a constitutional sympathy for oppressed nations, and a fervid desire to impart to others the blessings which we enjoy. It is, in this respect, a nation of philanthropists; a depository of civil and religious liberty for the population of the earth. Here, then, we may successfully approach them as the guardians of the Bible for other lands. Here we have a national highway to the hearts of the people. The transition, though delicate, is not difficult, to a more elevated freedom; to more pure and enduring blessings. We may say to them with a force which it will not be easy to resist, you, the people of this happy land, who, in the noble disinterestedness of freemen and of brethren, exult in the political independence of Spanish America, in the emancipation of injured Greece, and the rising liberties of France; you who welcome with enthusiastic hospitality the arrival on your shores of the oppressed Irishman and the persecuted Pole; you who pant and pray for universal freedom, and delight to impart the blessings of your national republican institutions to an admiring world; will you stifle the convictions which rise up in your breasts to plead for the rights of man? Can you withhold from heathen nations the covenant of their spiritual peace, and bury in your rusting coffers their heavenly citizenship and

their eternal freedom? And if such is the feeling of freemen and the spirit of American citizens, what ought we not to look for from the *Christians* of America, upon whose hearts have been superinduced the unearthly influences and resistless appeals of eternal truth and holy love!

X. Finally; *it is a missionary spirit which we need in the Church of God, in order to give her the proper efficiency in the work of missions.* By this we mean a spirit of supreme devotion to the divine Redeemer; a spirit in unison with the end for which the Saviour died; a spirit which properly estimates the value of the soul; a spirit of enlarged and generous love to man, and of holy pity to the perishing heathen. In a word, we mean the spirit of true religion, and of Jesus Christ. This is the spirit of Christian enterprise, which is attributed in ancient prophecy to a Christian people. "The people that know the Lord shall be strong, and shall do exploits." It is this which burnt with holy and consuming ardour in the great apostle's breast, when he declared, "I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die for the name of the Lord Jesus." "I have strived to preach among the Gentiles, where Jesus was not named, the unsearchable riches of Christ."* Under the influence of such a spirit as this, a new order of men and of movements would arise, altogether above the tame and long tolerated standard of the Christian Church. Such men as Paul, and Luther, and Whitfield would re-appear. The sons of thunder would again fulminate upon the nations, and the sons of consolation again pour into the weary and heavy laden hearts of pagan men, the oil of Gospel joy

* Acts xxi. 13. Romans xv. 20. Ephesians iii. 8.

and gladness. The heroic heralds of the cross, clad in the might of God, and fired with the spirit of missions, would transcend all human calculations; impatient of delay, they would outstrip the tedious and timid expedients of human policy; they would hasten with the Gospel to the dying nations, and fly through the earth as *avant couriers* of the approaching King of Kings.* A few such men as these at home and abroad, would kindle the whole Church of Christ into one broad blaze of light; would call out into action every spiritual energy, and every temporal resource; and cause a resistless enginery of Gospel means, to bear upon the entire destruction of heathenism.

It has been the uniform fate of all great enterprises to meet in their origin with resistance and even with ridicule from the weak, the selfish, and the over cautious. The ancients called profane, and even mad, the first brave mariner who ventured out to sea: Columbus was for almost an age an unheeded suppliant at the feet of European princes, though he asked at their hands the permission to present them with a **NEW WORLD!** Our own glorious revolution was, at its dawning, the wonder of one half mankind, and the derision of the other. So it has been with the missionary enterprise. Even at the present day, it is the by-word of "the wise and prudent" of this world; and a great number of professed Christians, preferring ease to self-denial, and thinking the state of the heathen so good, and the value of the Gospel to them so small, regard every such attempt as in the last degree extravagant and wild.

We are aware that this spirit, like every other, is liable

* "Aut inveniam viam aut faciam," is the true missionary principle, when sanctified by divine grace.

to abuse. We remember the crusades of one age, and the fanatical zeal of several others. We are no friends to religious knight-errants, or crazy cosmopolites, who travel through the world "without wisdom to direct" in quest of adventures. It may be worthy of remark, however, that the very attention which such counterfeits excite, shows the fine impression that the true missionary character is fitted to make, when embodied in the persons of such men as Whitfield, Buchanan and Martyn. But we are no advocates of extremes on either side. The extreme of indifference or of cowardice is criminal in itself; is more common, and perhaps more hurtful, than that of fanatical rashness. The extreme of mere worldly expediency and secular policy in missions is as evil as presumptuous enterprise. The system of the Jesuits was as fatal as the spirit of the crusaders to true religion. The author of the work, entitled "For Missionaries after the Apostolical School," is on one extreme. He would storm the world, and spurn all helps, and outfits, and means, save only the vagrant and unfurnished missionary. This is quite excessive, and is destined to live only in the fervours of his own warm but wild fancy. The work, on the contrary, entitled "Hints on Missions," is quite as extreme on the other side. The plan of operation which it suggests would be more disastrous in its consequences, because not speculative and impracticable like the other, but mainly secular, and requiring only secular men to promote it. The author would civilize and colonize the world into Christianity; he would make a mere business-matter of giving Christianity to heathen nations; in a word, he would so adjust things, that the world should *grow up* into Christianity.

Now, the medium between these extremes is the true Gos-

pel plan. No scheme abounds so much in practical wisdom, and powerful means, directly adapted to produce the intended end, as the Gospel method of converting the world. And the spirit of missionary enterprise of which we speak, is that *divine influence* by which man is at once qualified and impelled to spread this salvation.

The great agents must be the ministers of reconciliation, sent out into all the world, under the supreme dominion of this spirit: the people of the Lord, who cannot, and ought not to go, yet if they possess this spirit will help them in heaven by their intercessions, and in heathen lands by their manifold and abounding charities. On such a spirit God will “shed his selectest influences;” a resistless power will attend every effort directed by this spirit; and to universal effort would succeed universal impression. Thus the promises of the Gospel would travail in the birth of nations, and soon a renovated world would people the Church, and a glorified Church would people heaven.

We have pursued these suggestions so far, that little room is left for the application which we had intended of this discussion.

It may seem in strong contrast to some of our remarks, yet it is in perfect consistency with them, to say, that prophecy, by general consent, represents the conversion of the world as near at hand. When the Apostle Paul assured the crew who were about to flee out of the ship, “except ye abide in the ship ye cannot be saved,” he did not forget or disparage the revelation of the Angel of God, who had said unto him, “There shall be no loss of any man’s life among you; not a hair shall fall from the head of any of you.”* And so the

* Acts xxviii.

world must soon be converted to God; but this must be done by the agency of man. The means are no less necessary and certain than the end; and as in order of time, they must precede, and by divine appointment bring it about, so nothing ever can nor ever will be done without their proper use. When "Daniel understood by the books" of divine prophecy, that a time was set for the restoration of Israel, he at once, and for that reason, betook himself to the work of intercession for the predicted deliverance. If it were not that the conversion of the world is a predicted and promised event, who could believe that it ever will occur! But God has said it, therefore it is true; and we expect it at his word, not only certainly, but soon. In order to this, however, Christians must begin to feel, and pray, and labour, and give and make sacrifices, in far another style; and great events must succeed each other, with a celerity and effect heretofore unknown on earth. The last forty years, compared with the centuries past, have been distinguished by many such events; and may be a type of the years to come. But in these few years just before us, the world and the Church *must live very fast*. The friends of God must be multiplied like the dew of the morning; and they must grow in stature, as they augment in numbers. The irreconcilable enemies of God may expect to perish with accelerated speed, and great terror. As it is written, "*one woe is past, and behold, there come two woes more hereafter; and, behold the third woe cometh quickly.*"

One most cheering characteristic of the present crisis is, the increasing union of the people of God. Another is the spirit of enlargement that now possesses and distinguishes many of our national benevolent institutions. Beginning, perhaps, with only a very distant regard to so

great a work, they have imperceptibly, and even rapidly, been led on by the finger of God, until now the Bible, and the Tract, and the Sunday-school, and the Temperance, and the Mariner's Societies have, in succession, passed the limits of our own country, and taken the *world* for their theatre of action. It is a heavenly token too, *that God is pouring out his Spirit upon our missionary labours and institutions abroad*; thus setting his approving seal to the work, and, by divine interposition, giving evidence of his being the God of the *Bible*, and the God of the *race*. And still the most important of all the tokens for good is this, *that God's method of converting the world, viz. the preaching of the Gospel, has begun to take its true place in the regards of the Church of God*; a great number of devoted youth have dedicated themselves to the honoured work, at home and abroad; and the earth seems preparing to hear the word of the Lord. Who, then, will dare to slumber at such a time as this? Who will dare to shut up his bowels of compassion *now*? Who will hoard God's treasure, when the life of souls may be in it? Who will refuse, when God calls him from on high, to come up to his help? Who will refuse to say, "*here am I, send me?*" Did Christ Jesus pour out his soul unto death for us, and shall we now refuse to give our substance or ourselves unto Him? To every hesitating heart I seem to hear an injured Saviour speaking from heaven, "*If thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise from another place; but thou shalt be destroyed.*"*

The organization, the numbers, the character, and the influence of the Presbyterian Church in the United States

* Esther iv. 14.

have justified the expectation of a noble effort by her in the cause of foreign missions. *She has not met this reasonable hope.* She has not acted on this subject in a way worthy of her avowed allegiance to God, of her professed love to man, and of her pure and powerful witness to the truth at home. Her disregard of foreign missions has been in singular contrariety to the promptitude and effect with which she has sustained each great domestic enterprise in behalf of Christianity, as they have in succession presented themselves before her. At this moment every Presbytery in the Church (and they amount to more than one hundred) ought, on a general average, to provide one foreign missionary, and then to sustain him in the field of his labours. Whether our lethargy on this subject result from the want of missionary organization in the bosom of the Church, or from the still more distressing and criminal want of a missionary spirit, we have all a great public sin to confess and to forsake. The *Church* has sinned; and *we her ministers* have sinned *still more.* It is high time that we had all repented of this sin, and evinced the soundness of our repentance by a due and deep reform. Then let every minister awake, and let every member awake, at the call of the divine Redeemer, to regard the claims of the dying Heathen?

To the youth of our Church who are preparing to preach the Gospel we especially look for that Christian enterprise, which, under God, shall rouse the energies of the Church; shall rescue her venerated name from reproach among men; and bear her heavenly charities to heathen lands. To these young brothers in the Lord, who are standing on the threshold of the most elevated and most awful of human trusts, we would most affectionately say—take not your

standard of action from your fathers and elder brethren in the ministry. Shame covers our faces when we turn them towards the continents, where darkness and death eternal reign. Pause before you select a field of future labour; and survey these wide and awful desolations of many generations! Listen to the groans of dying millions as they ascend to heaven! Count not your own lives dear to you, in comparison of their eternal good! Come forth from your sacred shades of study and devotion to kindle our hearts anew in this great service! Come! not only to point us, but lead us to that field to which the finger of God directs you, and the wail of perishing nations calls you!

Finally. In associating ourselves with the empire of God, as agents in this great work, it is a most affecting consideration, that we are a spectacle to men and angels: that we live in a *public* world, which has been selected by God, as a theatre for the display of the most sublime and awful events in the history of the universe. We allude more especially to the entrance of sin into it, with all its train of death, and ruin, on the one hand—and the method of its destruction on the other, by the death of the Son of God. In the contest which is going forward, all creatures may have a *part*; in its issue all beings have an interest. Our world, which is now its field, is appointed of God, to be the tomb of sin, and the trophy of Divine Redemption. And are we actors on such a stage? Oh distinction full of terror! “SEEING THEN, THAT WE ARE COMPASSED ABOUT WITH SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES, LET US LAY ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT, AND THE SIN THAT DOTHS MOST EASILY BESET US, AND LET US RUN WITH PATIENCE THE RACE THAT IS SET BEFORE US, LOOKING UNTO JESUS.”