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1826

**DR. GRIFFIN'S SERMON.**

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# SERMON

PREACHED SEPTEMBER, 14, 1826,

BEFORE THE

**AMERICAN BOARD OF MISSIONS,**

AT

**MIDDLETOWN,**

CONNECTICUT.



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## SERMON.

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MATTHEW, XXVIII. 18, 19, 20.

AND JESUS CAME AND SPOKE UNTO THEM, SAYING, ALL POWER IS GIVEN UNTO ME IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH. GO YE THEREFORE AND TEACH ALL NATIONS, BAPTISING 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.

**I** RISE to advocate the cause of missions to the heathen and to plead for a dying world. My sole object is to enforce the claims of five hundred millions of perishing men by some plain and simple arguments which have affected my own mind. And I have chosen this text because it contains some of the arguments and suggests the rest. Both the authority of Christ and his personal reward are here distinctly brought to bear on the subject. For his obedi-

ence “unto death” he received the inheritance, including “the heathen” and “the uttermost parts of the earth,”\* with authority to manage the whole estate. This authority he employed in sending forth missionaries to disciple all nations and to bring to him the unnumbered millions promised for his seed.

My first argument then is founded on the authority of Christ. The injunction in the text was not addressed to the eleven exclusively, but to them as depositaries of the divine commands, and through them to the whole body of ministers in every age. This appears from the promise subjoined, “Lo I am with you alway *even unto the end of the world.*” Indeed the eleven were expressly commanded to transmit to their successors all the injunctions which they themselves received, one of which was to disciple all nations. “Go ye—and *disciple all nations,*—teaching them to observe *all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*” This command then is now sounding in the ears of the ministers and churches of the nineteenth century.

And yet some when called upon for their aid are heard to say, I do not approve of such things: just as though they had a right to place themselves on the seat of judgment and decide for themselves what they will approve and what not, when the command of God is in their ear and his sword at their breast. Hark! did you not hear that thunder? “Curse ye Meroz;—curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof;

\* Ps. ii. 8.

because they came not up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.”\*

My second argument is grounded on the example of Christ and his apostles. The Saviour of the world sent out a band of missionaries and charged them to “preach the Gospel to every creature;” “and they went forth and preached every where” “that men should repent.” No one objection can be raised against missions at the present day which will not equally lie against Christ and his apostles. The attempt is no more presumptuous now than then; the prospect is no more discouraging; the difficulties are no greater; the power that is engaged to give success is the same, for the promise remains unchanged, “Lo I am with you alway even unto the end of the world.”

My third argument is founded on what we owe to the heathen. Is the Gospel no blessing to you? And would it not be an equal blessing to them? And are we not bound to extend to others all the happiness in our power? To say that pagans can be as happy without the Gospel as with it, is to say that the Gospel is no blessing to men; and then you do not believe that it came from God. If the Gospel would be no blessing to the heathen, why do you preach or support it at home? Are you universalists? But still you find motives enough to preach or support what you call the Gospel at home. Why then not send it to other nations? If all mankind

\* Judg. v. 23.

are to be saved, and mercy requires that the tidings be circulated with sectarian zeal through Christendom, to dispel the gloomy fears of former generations, why not send the glorious news to Asia? If things are so, let armies of missionaries be collected to stop those bloody rites which guilt and fear have invented to atone for sin and prevent future punishment. Let them hasten to stop the self-torturing pilgrimages, to take down the wretch who hangs voluntarily suspended by a hook thrust through his side, to drag the infatuated victim from under the car of Juggernaut and the widow from the funeral pile, and terminate for ever the destruction of infants in the Ganges. Let them pour upon the ravished ear of Asia the tidings that all guilt was expiated on Calvary; that they have no need of their bloody rites, nor even of a reformation of manners; that they may live in pleasure here without apprehension and enter on eternal pleasure hereafter.

Let it be true that all men will be saved, or even that men are as likely to be saved without the Gospel as with it, is the Gospel of no service in the present life, as a foundation of hope, as a purifier of manners, as a tamer of the passions, as a means of civilization, as a handmaid to science? What nation since the commencement of the Christian era ever arose from savage to civilized without Christianity? If you are the friends of the human family, I call upon you to weep over the degraded and comfortless condition of five hundred millions of people destitute of the light of science and the pleasures of refined so-

ciety, subject, in a large proportion of cases, to all the hardships of the savage state, and in every instance to the horrors of a gloomy superstition.

But what believer in revelation except a universalist will say that men are as likely to be saved without the Gospel as with it? Be it so that *good* heathen will be saved, but the mass of the heathen are not good. They are sunk in the grossest vice. All the passions and all the crimes that ever degraded man, there rage with little restraint. Owing to some defect which nothing but revelation can explain, man is universally inclined to evil. This truth, which every page of history attests, which a thousand poets have mournfully sung, which all the statutes of legislators have acknowledged, is confirmed by every day's experience. It is equally certain to every believer in Christianity, that the grand means to reform the world is the Gospel of Christ. Let nations with all these native passions run wild without this means of reformation, and what can you expect but that they will sink into the lowest depths of vice? Tell me not that their ignorance excuses them. Whence then that resentment with which you contemplate savages breaking into a village at night, burning houses, murdering infants in their mothers' arms, dragging their prisoners to the slow tortures of the stake, and rioting on their groans? Does ignorance excuse all the infernal passions and crimes of the heathen world? They will not plead this themselves. If they are conscious of no fault in these things, whence their resentment against each other?

When they take revenge, do they not give judgment that pagans may sin? Do they not this when they execute their laws on criminals? “their conscience—bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing—one another.”\* But if any doubt remains read the Epistle to the Romans: contemplate the picture of the heathen world sketched in the first chapter, and the inference drawn in the third. And what said the charitable John? “We know that we are of God and the whole world lieth in wickedness.”† The only means to reclaim the world is the Gospel of Christ. What nation since the world began was ever reclaimed without the Scriptures? Talk as you will of the salvation of pious heathen: let it be admitted if you please that now and then a pagan becomes a good man; yet the mass of the heathen are grossly wicked, and will always remain so till reformed by the Gospel of Christ.

But I go further. Show me one instance in which God has ever saved or enlightened an adult without his word and ordinances. But his word and ordinances cannot travel to the heathen alone and there explain themselves. The living preacher must go with them. Even in the days of miracles you never hear of a Bible carried through the air to a distant land and there expounding itself, nor of a pagan taught to read without a human teacher. In the highest reign of miracles and inspiration, prophets and apostles must carry to men the word and ordi-

\* Rom. ii. 15.

† 1 John v. 19.

nances of God or no salvation was accomplished. You may take your opinions from yourself if you will; I will take mine from the word of God. And what does that teach? “The Scripture saith,—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?”\* If this does not absolutely prove that no adult heathen can be saved, it proves at least that no salvation can come to him in the known and ordinary way. Every imagination then that the heathen will come in of themselves if let alone, is a bewildering fancy.

My fourth argument is drawn from the sacrifices of the missionaries themselves and the debt of gratitude which we owe them. To see these interesting youth, with the spirit of martyrs, offering themselves to die under an Indian or an African sun; for the love of Christ tearing themselves from parents and brothers and sisters, to see them no more; taking an eternal leave of the scenes and companions of their youth; abandoning their native shore and their native tongue, to bear the tidings of a precious Saviour to distant nations; to see delicate young females, who have been dandled in the lap of parental tenderness, with a heroism which nothing but Christian principles could support, tearing themselves for the

\* Rom. x. 11—15.

last time from the arms of trembling mothers and speechless sisters, to encounter the dangers of the seas and the still greater dangers of a torrid clime, in order to support their husbands by their smiles and prayers in a foreign land, among sooty pagans ; this is a scene which makes selfishness blush and hang its head ; which shames all the ordinary piety that is couched in ease at home trembling at self denials. I beseech you to follow these precious youth with your prayers and your tenderest concern. They have gone in the service of our Father's family. They sacrifice all for us. Shall we not follow them with the interest of brothers and sisters through the groves of India and the forests of America ? and when we hear of their trials, their dangers, their escapes, their successes, shall we not feel as though we were receiving accounts from our near kindred ? When they tell us of the triumphs of Hindoo converts, or send to our ears the young hosannas of Syrian or Sandwich children, shall we not mingle our souls with theirs and join in the joy as though they were bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh ? Yes, dear missionaries, we will remember you and all the sacrifices you have made till these hearts shall cease to beat. God Almighty go with you and keep you in the hollow of his hand till we meet you in heaven.

Sometimes, in restrained and modest terms, these beloved men hint to us their wants. I fear they do not tell all. I fear they may yet suffer in a foreign land for want of a little more of that wealth which is heaped up in America. Much has indeed been

given ; and I thank you and the American churches in the name of all the poor pagans of the wilderness. I thank you in the name of those blessed men who have forsaken all for Christ. When they lay their heads down far from mother and sister, your charity will spread their couch and cover them from the cold ; your charity will furnish their table and refresh them when they are weary. I wish I could present to your view a thousand pagan children clothed in the garments which you have furnished, and learning to utter the praises of God out of the books which you have given. But many of you, I trust, will have greater joy at last. You will see them clad in brighter robes ; you will see them touch the golden harp, and hear them say, But for your instrumentality we had not come to this. Then, I know, your reward will be full.

I can only say, if you have any thing more to spare we shall gladly receive it. And what you give will cheer the interesting wanderer on the plains of Ceylon and the shores of Owhyhee, who have left all for Christ, and whose sacrifices and prayers, I hope, will prove the salvation of our children.

My fifth argument is, that foreign missions are likely to prove the most glorious means of grace to us at home. While you are feeling for pagan souls and sending your sons to them, I firmly believe that your prayers and bounty will return into your own bosom. Such confidence I have in God, for I have heard him say, " He that watereth shall be watered also himself." I believe that while you are anxious

to raise heathen nations from death, you will be enabled to shake off your grave clothes yourselves; that while you are seeking to draw forth Indian children from their sepulchres and present them alive to their rejoicing parents, your own children will start into life by your side; that while the love of distant nations glows in our hearts, it will melt us all down into love to each other, and burn up all our jealousies and strifes. Some of these effects I seem already to discern. God grant that they may increase, until the joy of America shall respond to that of Asia and in one burst of praise rise united to heaven. May your charities return into your own bosom and that of your children for days and years and an eternity to come.

My sixth argument is, that all the wealth of the world was given to Christ as a recompense for redeeming our souls: and shall the ingratitude of man withhold from him his hire? It will not always be thus. The time will come when "*Holiness to the Lord*" shall be written on all the possessions of men,—on the very "bells of the horses;" and when "the pots in the Lord's house," (those used for culinary purposes in the families of the priests,) shall, in point of holiness, be "like the bowls before the altar," which received the blood of the victims until it was sprinkled; and when "every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts."\* The common vessels used to dress our food, instead

\* Zech. xiv. 20, 21.

of being regarded as instruments of luxury or display, like our Bibles and psalm-books shall be all for God. Men will write *Holiness to the Lord* on every dollar and on every foot of ground. They will no longer labour to hoard but to do good.

That will be such a generation as has not yet appeared. A few scattered individuals have approached towards this character, but the mass of mankind in every age have held their property as their own and not as a sacred deposite. With multitudes the thought of giving to God never entered their minds. Go to them for their proportion to support the Gospel at home, and they will turn you away or deal out a paltry pittance that makes you ashamed. Go to them in behalf of the heathen, and they have nothing to spare. Though their poorer neighbours are giving by handfuls, they have nothing to spare. They are so in debt for new lands and tenements, that they cannot give a cent to save a world from death. It is not more evident that Lucifer himself has a separate interest from Christ than that these men have. Wrapt up in themselves, they mean that the universe shall take care of itself. It is not for them to go abroad to inquire how it fares with other nations; their business is at home. In their own little sordid selves they lie buried, and not a meaner object is to be seen in the universe of God.

There is another class, including by far the greater part of the better sort, who are willing to give to Christ something like one or two per cent of their income, but hold the rest with an unyielding grasp,

It will be otherwise in that coming day. I say not what they will give, for God has not fixed the limit for obvious reasons. In the first place, the wants of men in different countries and ages call for different degrees of charity. In the second place, had God prescribed the exact amount, the contribution would have been no more an index of the heart than the payment of any other tax. As by this part of human conduct he specially intended to draw forth the dispositions of men, he left the proportion to be fixed by themselves, after giving them some general intimations of his will. The only intimations of the kind were contained in the Hebrew law; and even there he left much to the spontaneous motion of the heart. Enough however was fixed to serve as a general guide to the conscience. In the first place, they were to devote the first fruits of their fields and of their flocks: in the second place, they were to give to the Levites a tenth of all the products of both: in the third place, they were to consume another tenth in charity feasts with the Levites and the poor: in the fourth place, they were to offer many expensive sacrifices, some fixed by law and others voluntary. These four items cannot be reckoned at less than three tenths of their income. In the fifth place, the many contributions demanded for the poor, (some fixed by law and others voluntary,) together with all that was required for hospitality, are moderately estimated at another tenth. Indeed under the pressure of all these laws, a conscientious and liberal Hebrew would hardly get through the year without

parting with one half of his income. This page God wrote and hung out of heaven and retired, leaving men to follow their own judgment and inclination to the end of the world. In the day when *Holiness to the Lord* shall be written on all the possessions of men, this page will be read and better understood. Then a law which has slept through so many selfish ages will be revived again, and holy men will feel it a privilege to give something like four tenths or one half of their income to God. And then they will look back on the contracted ages gone by, with much the same surprise as that with which we review the slave trade or the superstitions of the tenth century.

And all these increased contributions will be wanted. A little calculation would surprise you here. The single work of furnishing the people of the United States with Bibles for a century to come, almost exceeds belief. If we increase in numbers as we have done, before this century runs out more than six millions of Bibles must be annually issued to supply our own population. To raise up ministers too for the unnumbered thousands that will inhabit these states, will require perhaps a still greater tax. And among other cares poor forsaken Africa must not be neglected. Her crime of having a sable skin must not exclude her from the kingdom of heaven. Great will be the expense of training up her sons to serve at her altars: and this charge must fall chiefly on America. Here, as in no other civilized nation on earth, materials may be selected from a million and a half of her race. Nor are Bibles and ministers all. Expen-

sive missions, for a great many years to come, must be supported in every part of the pagan and Mahometan world. And this expense must chiefly fall on Christians at home. Missionaries cannot be fed by ravens, nor will the heathen themselves support them. All the disposable wealth of Christendom will be put in requisition. Those hundreds of thousands which are now rusting in the coffers of the rich must be brought forth. Those mighty sums which support wars and theatres must be consecrated to God. No longer must wealth enough sleep in a single commercial city to convert a nation. No longer must any Ananias and Sapphira keep back a part of what they have professedly devoted to the Lord. Let all professors of religion hear this.

Already this reviving spirit of liberality has begun to appear. Princely fortunes have been given by some; thousands and tens of thousands by others. The poor labourer has divided with God his hard earned gains. Women have given up their ornaments. Children have thrust forward their little hands to drop their all into the missionary box. The world are fast waking up to the conviction that the silver and the gold are the Lord's.

My seventh argument is, that these exertions are necessary to bring to Christ the seed and the kingdom, the victory and the triumph, promised him as his reward. This world belongs to Christ. No other being has a right to erect an interest on this ground. And yet after the lapse of eighteen centuries, two thirds of the earth remain in pagan or Mahometan

darkness. Ought so great a part of a world which Christ has redeemed and owns, to continue in the hands of his enemy? If the suffrages of nations were to be collected, what would a redeemed race say? To whom would they assign a world given to Christ for redeeming them? Would they resign it to his enemy, who has despoiled it of its Eden, and covered it with briars and thorns, and turned it into a great charnel-house? or would they give it to him who came to rescue it from the hands of destroying devils, and died to save their souls? What is the vote of a redeemed race on this subject? If human instrumentality is wanted to drive the usurper from his seat, shall not a whole race rise up to the effort? Christ could have conquered his enemy without instruments; but he chose to bring in the nations in a way suited to moral agents,—by instructions, so conveyed as to favour calm reflection, that is, through human organs; and he chose to employ men as co-workers with him that he might train them to benevolent action. He is not dependant on us for his happiness. It is the height of benevolence that he is willing to consider the rescued nations as his reward. It is like one who in the division of spoils selects a captive for his portion, and makes the release of that unhappy one the gain most welcome to his heart. And vast indeed must be the good that can satisfy the benevolence of the Son of God, and be an adequate reward for his wonderful obedience “unto death.” Let him have the infinite joy. And if human instrumentality is wanted, let the whole mass of

Christendom rise up to the work. Is there a wretch so withered and debased that he will not do all in his power to push things forward to this glorious issue?

The Redeemer began his triumph when he ascended from Olivet. At the moment of parting from his disciples he was surrounded with no outward lustre. Perhaps the bright cloud which received him contained the habiliments of glory with which he was ever afterwards to be arrayed. Decked thus in his regal robes, he began his triumphant march; returning in state like a glorious conqueror to his royal city. I see him attended with "thousands of angels" and "twenty thousand" "chariots of God," leading "captivity captive,"\* with death and hell chained to his chariot wheels. I hear them shout, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. [The Lord who has returned with glorious scars, a Conqueror from his wars.] Lift up your heads, O ye gates, even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in."†

Early too he commenced his triumph on earth. In the wonderful campaign he went forth single handed against two worlds. He girded his sword upon his thigh and marched directly into the heart of Satan's kingdom. Wherever he went he con-

\* Ps. lxxviii. 17, 18.

† Ps. xxiv. 7—10.

quered. At his approach temples and altars fell; oracles grew dumb; the Roman empire, the chief seat of Satan's visible kingdom, shook to its centre, and afterwards opened to the Conqueror and fell prostrate at his feet. He marched through the nations, breaking down the prisons which Satan had reared to confine his wretched captives. Millions who had been immured in dungeons from their birth were brought forth to the joyous light. Wherever he came freedom and joy sprung up around him. His trophies were not wasted provinces, but souls delivered from the destroyer. The high minded spirit of chivalry celebrated the feats of disinterested knights, who roamed the kingdoms, as imagination feigned, to deliver oppressed females from enchanted castles, or from the grasp of giants and genii: but how much more benignant a deliverer is here; marching through the nations and rescuing those who had no helper from the tyranny of Satan. God speed thee, thou glorious Conqueror. Go on and prosper: and may the blessing of millions ready to perish come upon thee. We will follow the wheels of his triumphal chariot, and shout as we go, "Hosanna to the Son of David: blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: hosanna in the highest."

His triumphant kingdom commenced among the Jews at Pentecost, and among the Gentiles at the baptism of Cornelius. From that time it spread like lightning through all the countries from Spain to India, and from Scythia to Ethiopia, until in three

centuries it mounted the throne of the Cesars. But after it had breasted an embattled race for three hundred years, and had placed its foot on the neck of a subjugated world, it fell by luxury and pride,—by an assumption of lordly dominion, and by ingrafting upon the simple institutions of Christ the pomp and pageantry of pagan rituals ; until in punishment one half of the dominions which had been rescued from the prince of darkness was given back into the hands of Mahometans, and the rest sunk under the tyranny and mummeries of Rome, until it lay conquered and besotted at the feet of the man of sin.

But this and every other enemy shall be destroyed. To complete the triumph of the Redeemer on earth, Satan must not only be again expelled from the Roman empire, but be bound “ a thousand years,” that he “ deceive the nations no more till the thousand years—be fulfilled.”

And when all his elect are brought home and displayed in one happy family around the throne, with what infinite joy will he bend over his redeemed Church and contemplate their blessedness and hear their praise. And what glory and honour and blessing will their bursting hearts for ever ascribe to him. John had a vision of this scene and makes the following report. “ After this I beheld and lo a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands ; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth

upon the throne and to the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne and about the elders and the four living creatures, and fell before the throne on their faces and worshipped God, saying, Amen: blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.”\* At another time he saw a grand jubilee held in heaven in honour of the Lamb; the redeemed first beginning the song, the angels then striking in, and before it was done the whole creation employed in the bursting praise. “And when he had taken the book the four living creatures and four and twenty elders, [the representatives of the whole Church,] fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and [about] the living creatures and the elders; (and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands;) saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing. And

\* Rev. vii. 9—12.

every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four living creatures said, Amen; and the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.”\*

How delightful to contemplate the honours which encircle the Lamb in the midst of his Father’s throne. After wandering an exile from heaven for more than thirty years for our revolt, how joyous to know that he has found a home. After the crown of thorns, we are happy to see him wear the diadem of the universe. After depending for bread on the charity of his female followers, we are glad to see him the Heir of all things and able in his turn to impart to others. After being so long neglected and despised by men, we rejoice that he has found those who know how to honour his worth; we exult to hear the shout of all heaven in his praise. After the agonies of the garden and the cross, we sing and shout for joy that he has found infinite and eternal delight in the glory of his Father and the salvation of his Church. Let him have his happiness and his honours. Amidst all the sufferings of life it shall be our solace that the despised Nazarene has found his throne,—that the man of sorrows is happy at last. Of all the luxuries that ever feasted the human soul,

\* Rev. v. 8—14.

the sweetest is to see the Lamb that was slain in the midst of his Father's throne. We will embalm his name in our grateful hearts. We will embalm it by our praise, which shall live while we have breath and sink away upon our dying lips. And we will embalm it among the songs of the upper world. If we are permitted to come and stand where the elders bow, how will *we* bow and sing. When we shall look down to hell and see our old companions there, and then back to Calvary, and then look up and read the touching traces of love in those melting eyes and among the prints of the nails and the thorns, we *will* embalm his name if love and songs can do it. We will tell all heaven of his love. If ever new inhabitants should come in from other worlds, they shall hear the story of Calvary. If commissioned in remote ages of eternity to visit other systems, we will carry the amazing tidings to them. We will tell them to all we meet. We will erect monuments of the wonderful facts on every plain of heaven, and inscribe them all over with the story of the manger, the garden, and the cross. While gratitude and truth remain, the name and the love of Jesus shall never be forgotten.

And now, my beloved brethren, I invite you to go with me and look for a moment over the interesting scene which is opening on earth. For many years the Christian world had been sunk in a profound slumber in regard to this duty; but for the last four and thirty years they have been waking up. He who has engraven Zion on the palms of his hands,—who never wants means to fulfil his promises,—

has sent his heavenly influence to rouse the Christian world. He beheld the desolations of Zion and has come to rebuild her ruined walls. He heard the groans of his people as with harps on the willows they were weeping "by the rivers of Babylon," and has come to bring them again "to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." Eternal thanks to God for what our eyes have seen and our ears have heard for the last four and thirty years. Eternal thanks to God for the increasing wonders which are rapidly opening on the world. And O can we restrain the bursting emotion? for ever blessed be his great and glorious name for what we have begun to see in our own land. It is more than thirty years since the Christians in Great Britain awoke; and they have been holding on their way with increasing majesty and glory, until that little island bestows annually more than a million of dollars upon strangers. It is fourteen years since New-England broke her slumbers, and now the mass of her population seems drenched in the missionary spirit. I saw the day cover the plains of Europe. I saw the westward-travelling light spread itself over these eastern states. Nine years ago I saw the rays of the morning tip our Presbyterian horizon. I saw the dawn blush deeper and deeper. I knew it would not all return again to midnight. I knew the sun would rise. At length I saw his golden limb above the eastern woods; and from the course of day I knew that soon the heavenly flood would cover all the plains to Arkansas and the Pacific. Already the influence of heaven has dropt upon the wilderness and

the yell of the war whoop is changed to notes of praise. We must not stop till every Indian tongue has joined the general song. We must not stop till our influence has cheered the whole extent of South America. And then we must go forth to the islands, and hold on our way till we meet our brethren in other fields and unite with them in completing the harvest of the world.

We owe the sincerest gratitude to God for giving us our existence in such a day as this. Many prophets and kings desired to see this day and saw it not. One spirit has seized the Christian world to send the Gospel, with a great company of its publishers, to all the nations of the earth. Missionary and Bible Societies, those stupendous monuments of Christian charity, have risen so rapidly and in so great numbers throughout Europe and America, that in contemplating them we are "like them that dream." These societies have already accomplished wonders, and are constantly stretching forward to future achievements beyond the reach of imagination. On the burning sands of Africa, where Christian feet never before trod, there is the holy band of missionaries, struggling, amidst dangers and deaths, to lead the sable tribes of Ethiopia to stretch forth their hands to God. On the plains of Hindostan, a "consecrated host" are translating the Scriptures into more than thirty different languages, spoken by a population greater than that of all Europe. On the borders of China they have produced a version which will give the oracles of God to one quarter of the population of the globe.

In the southern islands a nation is born in a day. From the hill of Zion,—from the top of Calvary,—they are freighting every caravan of pilgrims with Bibles for all the countries of the east. Certainly the angel has begun his flight through the midst of heaven, “having the everlasting Gospel to preach—to every nation and kindred and tongue and people.”\*

My soul is enlarged and stands erect as I look down the declivity of years and see the changes which these young Davids, under God, will make in all the earth. Countless millions are shortly to awake from the sleep and darkness of a hundred ages to hail the day that will never go down. I see the darkness rolling upon itself and passing away from a thousand lands. I see a cloudless day following and laying itself over all the earth. I see the nations coming up from the neighbourhood of the brutes to the dignity of the sons of God,—from the sty in which they had wallowed, to the purity of the divine image. I see the meekness of the Gospel assuaging their ferocious passions, melting down a million contending units into one, silencing the clangour of arms, and swelling into life a thousand budding charities which had died under the long winter. I hear the voice of their joy. It swells from the vallies and echoes from the hills. I already hear on the eastern breeze the songs of new-born nations. I already catch from the western gale the praise of a thousand islands. I ascend the Alps and see the darkness retiring from the papal

\* Rev. xiv. 6.

world. I ascend the Andes and see South America and all the islands of the Pacific one altar. I ascend the mountains of Thibet, and hear from the plains of China and from every jungle and pagoda of Hindostan the praises of the living God. I see all Asia bowing before him who eighteen centuries ago hung in the midst of them on Calvary. I traverse oceans and hear from every floating Bethel the songs of the redeemed.

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

Come that blessed day. Let my eyes once behold the sight, and then give this worthless body to the worms.