

SUPPLEMENT
TO THE HOME AND FOREIGN RECORD.

A SERMON

FOR

DOMESTIC MISSIONS,

PREACHED BEFORE THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BY APPOINTMENT,
AT THEIR SESSIONS AT ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, MAY 1851.

BY THE

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S E R M O N .

UNTO WHOMSOEVER MUCH IS GIVEN, OF HIM SHALL BE MUCH REQUIRED.—LUKE xii. 48.

It is made my duty, by an order of the last General Assembly, to appear before this venerable court in behalf of the Board of Missions. In undertaking this duty, I propose to apply the sentiment of our text to the cause which I am expected to advocate. This Scripture teaches us, that when God confers on his servants extraordinary advantages for doing good, he demands eminent services at their hands. Where he gives much he requires much.

Nothing need be said here of the rule itself, except one word touching the clearness with which it is stated in the sacred volume; and another word respecting its equity. It is distinctly announced as a principle of the divine government, not only in the text, but in the parable of the talents, where we are taught, first, that God requires returns according to the gifts bestowed; and, secondly, that the final reward will be proportioned to the fidelity of the service. When, again, our Saviour clothed the twelve with miraculous powers, he asserted the same great principle, instructing them to use munificently their munificent endowments—"Freely ye have received, freely give."

Still less need be said vindicating the equity of the rule. It proceeds from God, and is therefore strictly just. It commends itself to our understandings, or rather, to our intuitions, and is therefore seen at once to be reasonable.

In the application of this principle to the subject of domestic missions, two topics are immediately suggested. One of these relates to the means and facilities which God has imparted to our Church, for the prosecution of the work; and the other, respects the arduous duties which he devolves upon us. What has he given, and what does he require? Allow me to enter, at once, on these inquiries.

I. Among the advantages, which God has given to our Church, for the publication of the gospel throughout the country, we mention, in the first place, *our system of doctrine*. This system has two aspects. The one exhibits our substantial agreement with other evangelical churches in maintaining the principles of the common salvation. It is material to observe that our standards teach these truths pure from all traditions and corruptions. Our articles of faith are Protestant and reformed, not only in name, but thoroughly so in fact. None of the old leprosy infests our garments.

A system of doctrine, which is but half reformed, can make no permanent advance among the people of this country. Some may be captivated by downright Popery; the majority will adopt absolute Protestantism; a small minority only can be misled by a system which is partly one thing and partly another. Very few will follow spiritual guides who act the Protestant in giving the Bible to the people, and play the Romanist in setting up the Church as the infallible interpreter of Scripture; who teach, with the Westminster Divines, that justification is by faith alone, and with the Tridentine Fathers, that the Sacraments have an inherent power to save; who hold, with St. Andrews, that regeneration is by the Spirit of God, and yet, with Oxford, teach that this regeneration is baptismal. No church can take root and have life in the hearts of the American people, which borrows its articles of faith from Geneva and its ritual from Rome; which in one breath affirms that grace is through faith, which faith is the gift of God, and in another, insinuates that grace is through the sacraments, of which sacraments, the priests are the sole and indefeasible trustees. Our Protestant population will not receive the dogma of sacerdotal absolution, however disguised, nor will they submit to the exercise of sacerdotal power, however it may be masked. They will not consent to the opinion, that the Reformation was carried to an unwarrantable extreme; and that, in order to restore religion to its apostolical simplicity, the minister must be deemed a priest, and the communion table an altar; that this table, misnamed an altar, must be set to the east, as by divine command; and the minister, misnamed a priest, must place lighted candles upon it, and pray with his back to the people, and make the sign of the cross as parts of worship. Such an incongruous system, Popery in every thing except its logical coherence, and Protestantism in nothing except in hollow pretence, is not suited to the work of missions in this country.

In this respect much is given to us in common with our brethren of other thoroughly reformed communions. We have a pure faith; it comes fresh and vivid from the word of God; it is a doctrine uncorrupt; it carries with it always the promise, and often the power of the Eternal Spirit. Suited to the nature and wants of men every where, it has the most precise and varied adaptation to the Domestic Missionary enterprise. From this aspect of our doctrinal system, we now turn to that which is peculiar to it.

This is known to some in honour, and to some in dishonour, by the name of Calvinism. It is undoubtedly the true inner life of our system, and the law of its development. Calvinism appears in our Confession of Faith, not only in two or three celebrated passages of that instrument, but it impenetrates and pervades our standards through and through. If you were to expunge the whole chapter of "God's eternal decree," and that of "Effectual Calling," you would not even then eliminate the Calvinism. It would still be dogmatically stated or logically involved in every mutilated page. Even so, were some supernal power to remove from the mountain range its central mass of granite, the huge boulders, and even the rock dust scattered over all the adjacent plains, will still show that it is a region of granite, and not a region of sandstone. Still further, our system is not only undeniably Calvinistic, but it is avowedly, and its enemies say, boastfully so. Our standards are printed, and receive the widest possible circulation. The definitions of our Shorter Catechism, presenting the five points in their sharpest outlines, are made household words in our families, and are incessantly repeated by our children in the Sunday School and the class room. These doctrines give tone and spirit to our method of

public prayer, they are published from our pulpits, and though deemed by some harsh and rigid, they fall not ungracefully into metre and melody, and are sung in ten thousand sanctuaries and in ten times ten thousand families.

Now this is one of the elements of power in our Church. We do not assert that our peculiar doctrines will be immediately acceptable to the whole population of the country. But we know that there are not a few who are disposed to embrace them. Of such, there are at least three classes: those who are Calvinists, first, by education; secondly, by inevitable conviction; and thirdly, by a spiritual discernment of the truth. Every region contains those who have been educated in Calvinistic families and congregations in Scotland, Ireland, and in our own Atlantic States. The definitions of the Catechism, early graven on their minds, have settled their religious belief; and all the associations of early life, the home and the school, the church and the sepulchre of their fathers, control irresistibly their affections. These scattered children of the Covenant will cordially receive no ministry which does not hold by these opinions. Even though they are not yet religious, our Church is endeared to them by the very doctrines which are supposed to repel others from its communion.

Nor is the number inconsiderable, of those whose intellectual condition is exactly met by the Calvinistic faith. Either by original constitution, or by the force of truth triumphing over whatever opposes it, some men are compelled to believe this doctrine, when its grounds are stated to them. They may dislike a system which so much exalts God and abases man, but they cannot escape from the conviction that it is true. To their minds its premises are self-evident, its arguments unanswerable, and its conclusions as irresistible as the Heavens. Necessity—the necessity of a complete and cogent demonstration—is laid upon this class of minds to bow to the doctrine of a sovereign God, and of a dependent creature. They cannot, if they would, break away from the iron bands by which their reason and conscience are held under captivity to the truth.

There is yet the third class of persons, to whose spiritual wants, if not to their modes of thought, our peculiar doctrine is alone adapted. These can find rest and refreshment here, and nowhere except here. They rejoice, not in the persuasion that they have chosen Christ, but in the hope that Christ hath chosen them. They discover the original of man's condemnation in the imputed sin of the first Adam, and the ground of his recovery in the imputed righteousness of the second Adam—the Lord from heaven. They find the sure foundation of the believer's salvation in God's fixed and eternal decree to save him, and not in his own recent and wavering purpose to be saved. They recognise redemption as commenced in the wisdom of God, foreknowing the sinner, and consummated in his power, glorifying the believer; and yet more, they see that the end, glory, is linked to the beginning, foreknowledge, by the chain of the divine predestination, calling, and justification.

Now these three classes of persons are widely scattered through the land. There is not, this day, nor will there be in any day, an intelligent community in the country where our doctrines will not find congenial spirits. Nor do these compose an inconsiderable or obscure portion of our fellow citizens. Many of them are of high intelligence and extensive influence. They are found among our leading lawyers, our enterprising merchants, our largest landholders, our most skilful physicians. They control largely public opinion, they share in the legislation of the country, they dispense justice and equity from our highest tribunals. Nor will the number of those, to

whom our doctrines come with convincing and saving power, diminish with the growing intelligence of the people. Every school and college, every well written book and newspaper, every learned lecture and eloquent speech; in short, every instrument in the educational apparatus of the land, is disciplining intellects, whose conditions will be met by the philosophy of our system. Every Sabbath School, every copy of the Bible, every sound religious tract, every well prepared and uttered sermon, will develop spiritual necessities, which can be met only by the consolations of our system.

We shall do well, my brethren, to consider the power of the Calvinistic faith over the human mind. He commits a most unhappy mistake, who forbears to preach that, under the apprehension that it is inevitably unpopular. Not a few are attracted to our churches by the expectation of hearing it expounded; and they depart in disappointment and weariness if we shun to declare it. It is not only itself an element of power, but it is fruitful in other elements. It disciplines the mind of the preacher, it strengthens his faith, it gives him force of character, it renders him, at once, conservative in principle and aggressive in effort. It is most fruitful, too, in its results. Wherever accurately preached, it asserts the mastery over a multitude of minds. It is a treasure which both multiplies its hoards, and purchases a wide spiritual domain. It is like the pound committed, by the master in the parable, to his servant; if faithfully occupied its increase will be ten pounds, and its reward, a dominion over ten cities.

2. *Our mode of worship* is eminently adapted to the work of Domestic Missions. The exigencies of this enterprise require for divine worship, forms at once simple and susceptible of easy adaptation to every phase of frontier life. The martyrs, of whom the world was not worthy, carried no set forms of prayer or speech to the dens and caves of the earth. The old Puritans, in their conventicles, or in their tents pitched on the edge of the battle-field; the Pilgrim Fathers on the snows and sands of Plymouth beach; the Covenanters on the desolate moor, where they hid themselves from the rage of the wicked, or on the bleak hill side, where they encamped in the sight and in defiance of their enemies, holding down against the wind the leaves of the Bible, by laying the broadsword across them; these all sang praises, and made supplication to God, as the Spirit gave them utterance. On this Spirit must the domestic missionary rely. He is required to perform the offices of religion in the log cabin, in the rude school room, or court house, under the shade of the beech or sugar tree, in the edge of the prairie grove. While some of the people are standing, and others sitting on rude benches or the trunks of fallen trees, he must appear as best may in his plain dress as a citizen, but in his character as an ambassador of Christ, and with all freedom and boldness declare unto them the gospel. He must be allowed to sing without the organ, to pray without the lawn or prayer-book, and preach without gowns, or bands, or written sermons. He needs no chancel, but, as Gideon Blackburn is said to have done, he may, if necessary, administer the Lord's supper from the stump of the forest tree. When he penetrates the wilderness, he need not wait till the widely scattered settlers can build a house of worship, but he may at once gather them to the camp-meeting near the cool and copious spring, as John the Baptist went into the wilderness of Judea and preached, baptizing at Enon, because there was much water there. He need not carry with him a marble font, or a silver bowl, but he may baptize the converts and their children, as Philip did the eunuch, in the running stream. But I need not state to you at length our principles touching the

worship of God. It must be decent and solemn; it must, likewise, be adapted to the necessities of the saints who are scattered abroad. Nor need I spend a sentence in showing the importance and power of this element in our constitution, as a missionary church.

3. The *polity* of our church, no less than its doctrines and ritual, is eminently adapted to the work now contemplated. This argument rests, among other grounds, on the resemblance betwixt our ecclesiastical and civil polity.

If, for example, treating the subject historically, we go to the Westminster Assembly, where our standards of government as well as of doctrine were framed, we find ourselves in a period most memorable in the history of civil liberty. That venerable assembly was convened just after the civil war and revolution broke out in England, and was continued for almost six years, until near the time when the Commonwealth was established. In the first year of its sessions, the Solemn League and Covenant was adopted. During the second year, the battle of Marston Moor was won to liberty: and soon after, the battle of Naseby gave a decisive blow to monarchy. While Milton, Sydney, Cromwell, and their illustrious compeers, were, by pen and sword, laying the foundations of a free State, Henderson, Gillespie, Twisse, and their brethren in the Assembly, were deducing from the word of God, the principles of a free church. Our Form of Government was substantially the work of their hands. We call it our standard of order. It is like an old battle standard which has been borne aloft in many a hard fought field. It has never trailed to the enemy—though its staff is hacked and its flag torn by shot and sabre; and it is at last laid up in the archives of a free people, the venerable monument of public liberty; and the chosen banner under which other victories shall be won—as often as other dangers impend.

A century after the adjournment of the Assembly finds our Church planted on this continent, ready to take part in the approaching struggle for our independence. Two of our ministers in Virginia, Francis Mackemie and Samuel Davies, have sown broadcast the seeds of civil and religious freedom. One of these, in a sermon preached twenty-one years before the Revolution, has pointed out “that heroic youth, Colonel Washington, as designed for some important service to his country.” In North Carolina, Hezekiah Balch, another of our ministers, with a company of nine ruling elders, has taken the lead in publishing the celebrated “Mecklenburg Declaration” more than a year before the Declaration of 1776; the former serving as the model of the latter immortal instrument. In the Congress of 1776, John Witherspoon, also a Presbyterian minister, with an eloquence not inferior to that of John Adams, urges the immediate declaration of independence, and summons Washington to make good the prediction of the Virginia preacher. The part which our ministry and ruling elders and people sustained in the war that followed, is known to all mankind. In the single State of South Carolina, no less than ten ruling elders served with great distinction, as officers, on the field of battle. The old Synod of New York and Philadelphia expressed from year to year their unflinching allegiance to the country, from the beginning to the end of the war.

And, yet further, as if the development of our Church polity were in some profound sympathy with the progress of the country, the old Synod of New York and Philadelphia met in Philadelphia to form our present Constitution, only two days after the Convention for framing our Federal Constitution assembled in the same city. Both of these bodies consummated their labours, and our first General Assembly was held in May,

1789, a few weeks after the first Congress of the United States was convened at New York. On the fourth day of its session, that Assembly adopted an address to President Washington, breathing the very spirit of religion and patriotism. From the very beginning, our Church has been identified with the liberty and the union of these States. Blessed be he who prays for the peace of the Church and the perpetuity of the Union!

Our constitutional principles, moreover, like our constitutional history, correspond with those of the Republic. The Church, like the Republic, is governed by a written Constitution, and the instrument is, in each institute, interpreted by a tribunal of its own. The Church, like the State, zealous for the liberty of the citizen, propounds as one of its organic laws, the truth which is the fundamental principle of all liberty: "That God alone is Lord of the conscience." In our Church, as truly as in the State, the people elect their public servants; and in all our judicatories the people sit by their representatives. And further, as a precaution against any possible usurpation of power by the clergy, our Church Sessions are usually composed of a single minister with three or five or ten ruling elders. Our Presbyteries and Synods, with few exceptions, contain, when full, a clear majority of the elders; and then the Presbyteries, thus controlled by the popular element, constitute the General Assembly. And, further yet, our Church courts, as well as our civil tribunals, deliberate with open doors. And, as if jealous of the least suspicion of metropolitan influence, our Church has no Jerusalem nor Geneva, neither a Rome nor a Lambeth. This, our supreme tribunal, visits, from year to year, the waters of the Delaware, the Chesapeake, the James River, the Ohio, the Mississippi, and the Ashley and Cooper.

In brief, ours is both historically and constitutionally, a free Church in the bosom of a free people—a republic within a republic. So far as it is of the earth, our Church is native to the soil, not established elsewhere, and then, with difficulty, naturalized among our institutions. It is identified at once, with all that is glorious in the history of the country, and with all that is far more exceedingly glorious, in the hopes of another and better country, even an heavenly. For this reason it has a precise adaptation to the work of spreading the gospel throughout the land. It is in sympathy with the common people, with all their patriotic sentiments, their passionate love of liberty, their most cherished institutions. Our missionary on the most distant frontier, or in the remote wilderness, where a few hardy settlers are just letting in the sun upon the soil, may captivate at once their understanding and republican sympathies, by laying open the principles of our ecclesiastical polity; demonstrating that Presbyterianism, though so long maligned, is but another name for truth and liberty.

Our polity is still further adapted to the work of Domestic Missions. So soon as three of our ministers penetrate the most distant western wilderness, and establish churches within its borders, they may be constituted into a Presbytery, and Presbyterianism, as complete and vigorous as in Edinburgh itself, is planted. This Presbytery, though sitting on the frontier of civilization, or even beyond it, in an Indian lodge or along a buffalo trail, is fully authorized to do all that the Church of God is authorized to do on earth. Its powers are as plenary as those of any council of bishops or college of apostles. It may form or dissolve churches; ordain or depose ministers, install pastors, and appoint Evangelists to go forth and preach the gospel in regions yet beyond. Our Church system is no less capable of this rapid and indefinite expansion than our civil institutions. Indeed, there was a Presbytery in California before there was an organized State

government, and another was formed in Texas before that commonwealth belonged to the Confederacy; and even now, our roll shows the name of the Presbytery of Nebraska, in anticipation of a State yet to be founded along the course of the river Yellow Stone, up to the gates of the Rocky Mountains. Indeed, it would almost seem that our Church polity had been framed with a profound foresight of the exigencies of our Western and Southern expanding population.

4. *The character of our ministry* gives to our Church another important advantage in the furtherance of the work.

Our theory pre-supposes, and our Constitution requires, that the ministers shall be pious men. The tribunal to which it belongs to judge of candidates for the ministry, must, first of all, be satisfied of their piety. To this end, "it must examine them respecting their experimental acquaintance with religion," and "this examination must be close and particular." The necessity of regeneration, in order to the work of the ministry, is a fundamental principle in our system.

They must also be men of sufficient learning. Whether they are to be installed over our most important churches, or are to depart for the most recent or remote settlement, they are all subjected to the same training in the schools, and then to the same examination and parts of trial in the Presbytery. Our standards pronounce it "highly reproachful to religion and dangerous to the Church, to entrust the holy ministry to weak and ignorant men." To this rule there is no exception with respect to the domestic missionary. He is able to enlighten the ignorant, and when they become instructed, "because the preacher is wise he is still able to teach the people knowledge." He has learning enough to confront the cunning sceptic or false teacher, and if he cannot silence his adversaries, he can at least put them to shame. We expect that he will not only preach the gospel, but that he will be a centre of light, and that he will impart an upheaving impulse to the mass of mind around him. We expect that his labours will, in due time, result in the erection of the house of God, in the establishment of the Sabbath school, the common school, the college—and all the permanent monuments and appliances of civilization, high-toned morality, true refinement, and vital piety.

Our missionaries, again, are ordained to the whole work of the ministry. They need no visitation of an order higher than they to confirm the disciples; but are themselves fully authorized to administer all the sealing ordinances. The missionary in Pembina or Utah carries with him from the hands of the Presbytery the highest orders in the Church, and he may do all that any Archbishop on earth may do; and, miracles excepted, all that any Apostle ever could do in planting the gospel, confirming the souls of the believers, and using for their salvation the keys of the kingdom.

Our ministry, moreover, adjusts itself to all the exigencies of a scattered population. One minister to one church, is a leading conception of our polity. But this polity bends, by an easy adjustment, to the condition of feeble churches; installing one minister over several congregations, and distributing his labours among them all. And it bends yet again with equal facility to the condition of wide regions, where no churches are established. To these it appoints the "Evangelist," in the true sense of the word—a minister "ordained to preach the gospel, administer sealing ordinances, and organize churches in frontier or destitute settlements." According to my best understanding, the "Evangelist" of our system is a travelling missionary; and the itineracy for destitute regions is as truly a feature of our system as is the pastoral office for the well-established con-

gregation. The fact that our itineracy is, as yet, comparatively feeble in numbers and efficiency, is to be referred to our own remissness, and not to any defect in our polity. Indeed, we have every arm of power needed for the work; the evangelist for remote and scattered settlements, the single pastor for several feeble churches, and the single pastor for the single vigorous church. Our system, where fully developed, combines the prodigious energy of the itinerant with the advantages of the permanent ministry—the enterprise of the husbandman who sows by all waters the precious seed, with the care of the reaper who builds a hedge about the field and waits to gather the sheaves and garner the grain.

Once more, our ministry in theory, and mainly in fact, is separated to its peculiar work. We install one as a pastor when the people engage to give him such support as may set him “free from worldly cares and avocations.” When we send forth another, as a missionary, we engage to supply his wants from the funds of the Church, that he may give himself, without embarrassment, to the ministry of the word. Such is our standard of ministerial qualification. It includes piety, learning, a complete ordination, permanence as pastors, or itineracy as evangelists, and consecration to the work. These brethren compose a Missionary Order, the superior of which, for efficiency, is not to be found on earth. If this land is to be given to Christ, these are the men who are furnished for making sure the imperial gift to that eternal and blessed King.

5. The Church is still further qualified for the undertaking of Domestic Missions by its *position in the country.*

The ministry and churches of our order are widely diffused. They are upon the borders of the Atlantic and the Pacific. We have two Presbyteries in New England, and three in Texas. In all the vast regions lying between the Hudson and the Rio Grande, through all the degrees of latitude which separate the Northern Lakes from the Southern Gulf, there is no commonwealth in which our Church is not permanently established. We are not bound or straitened. No surveyor's line, no mountain or river, no peculiarity of political institution or domestic life, limits our religious enterprises. The whole unbounded continent is open to us. Our missionary is at home in New York and in Georgia. He visits the narrow clearing of the settler in Michigan, or that of the Hungarian exile in Wisconsin; he carries the gospel to the native of Norway, who has found a congenial home among the Norwegian pines of Minesota. He finds an easy access and an equal welcome to the mansion of the planter and the cabin of the negro, in the rice swamps of South Carolina, or the sugar fields of Louisiana. We are thus brought into contact with the entire mind and conscience of the country. We may share in every good work which is undertaken in all parts of the confederacy, in every religious impulse which moves upon our wide-spread population. Like the merchantman whose ships are widely scattered over the sea, so that some one of them spreads its sails to every breeze, our Church is prepared to enjoy every descent of the blessed Spirit. We are ready, too, to obey providential calls to increase our efforts in any quarter of the land, or among any portion of our population. We are ready to meet Antichrist in all his wide dispersions. Where his priests are found, our ministers, too, are found. Where they erect a confessional, we are there to build the house of prayer; where they establish the idolatry of the Virgin, we may at once set up the worship of God; and abolish the sacrifice of the mass, by exhibiting the one eternal offering for sin;—confronting every where the Church of Rome with the Church of God.

There is still another course of remark which might be pursued under

this division of our argument. This relates to the position of our Church in respect to the topics by which the land has been so long and so deeply agitated. As to these topics, the course pursued by this venerable body has commended itself, and the Church for which it legislates, to the confidence of the wise and the prudent, in all quarters of the country. Our position here is an element of immense power in all that we undertake for the spiritual welfare of our countrymen.

6. Our Church is blessed with frequent and *powerful revivals of religion*. An examination of the narrative of the state of religion, adopted by the Assembly for a series of years, will show, that on some parts of the Church, the Divine Spirit is continually descending with his saving power. Now in one region and now in another that Spirit is carrying on his work, until every part of the Church shares his gracious presence. The showers that water the earth, do not descend simultaneously on every plain, but they journey from land to land, until every pasture, and vineyard, and garden, is refreshed; so all our churches, not one, perhaps, excepted, receive, each in its turn, the blessing from God. We hear the good tidings from the city and from the wilderness, from the older congregations on the Atlantic border and from those just gathered on this, the western side of the Mississippi. I need not attempt to show in this presence how great is this element of power in furthering the work of Domestic Missions. Our Saviour hath said—how striking the words—how glorious their fulfilment—“Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.”

II. We advance to the second inquiry, suggested by our Scripture, *What work is required of us?* “Much is required.” We must preach the gospel in every part of this broad land. *This broad land!* How inadequate are our conceptions of its vast extent! Standing here in this great central city, on the western margin of this mighty midland flood, surrounded by boundless prairies and boundless forests: what arithmetic shall enable us to comprehend this wide expanse? As Moses sent the twelve fathers from the people to search the land of Canaan, so I may imagine this General Assembly engaged in distributing its members in separate bands to measure the length and breadth of our Domestic Missionary field. One of these bands, taking its course to the East, makes the voyage of twelve hundred miles to the source of the Ohio, and thence the journey of four hundred to the whitening surf of the Atlantic. A second band descends twelve hundred miles towards the perpetual summer of the tropics. A third, makes the Northern voyage of the Mississippi to its upper springs in the rice lakes, thence far down the Red River of the North, and thence deflecting, sails eastward on the bosom of our mediterranean lakes, until these gather up from their vast expanse and silent depths, all their resounding floods for the anthem of Niagara;—harmonious thunders pealing behind their misty shroud. And yet another band adventures the upward voyage of the Missouri, then the weary journey of the western plains, through the gates of the Rocky Mountains, across the great central valley, climbing the mountains of snow, and gazing at last upon the waters of the Pacific, whose golden sands, while I speak these words, reflect the golden sunset. When these faithful bands shall return, let their tongues, and not mine, describe this goodly land; its wastes of waving woods; its wastes of blooming prairies; its genial climate; its vital air; its glowing sunshine; its crimson and alabaster clouds; its soil, yielding to the magic touch of labour and of day and of shower, sugar and maize, the finest of the wheat, and the most delicious of fruits; its forests, and quarries and clays, transformed by the art of man into ships on the sea or cities on the shore; the hoards of min-

eral wealth; the valleys covered over with corn; the cattle on a thousand hills; the ocean on the east and the ocean on the west; commerce discharging the wealth of every land on the eastern seaboard, and enterprise gathering new treasures along the golden shores of the west; our stupendous rivers, refreshing every shore they run by; our mountain ranges, their foundations laid in the deep places of the earth, and their summits clothed with white raiment for the fellowship of the sky.

Nor can I so unfold the power of arithmetical numbers, as to speak to any just effect of our prospective numbers. We can say, indeed, that the present population of twenty-three millions will swell in twenty years to forty, and in fifty years, to a hundred millions. We can add, that when the West is settled with the present density of population in Ohio, it will contain nearly ninety millions; and when we shall reach the proportion which population bears to territory in Massachusetts, the West will number no less than 210,000,000. We use these numbers, we pronounce the words—millions and hundreds of millions—but who shall teach us to realize their meaning? Who shall marshal these multitudes into ranks, and display them before the doors of this Assembly? And if so displayed, whose eye could gaze without fatigue upon the endless procession? Such is the land and such the people that are to occupy it. We must fill this land with the knowledge of the Lord, and preach the gospel to all these swelling millions. Surely "much is required."

It is impossible, so near the close of this discourse, to enter into the details of our great work. But I take leave to mention, briefly, a few topics which are of great interest at the present moment. The first relates to the inadequate support afforded to our missionaries. These brethren are generally without property, men labouring among a people unable to support the gospel. Emigrants are, for the most part, persons of enterprise, and yet, of small resources. Indeed, these two conditions, enterprise and limited means, usually determine them to become emigrants. Their means are exhausted by the journey and the purchase of their lands. Not a tree is cut, not an acre of prairie sod is broken up, the cabin is not built, the fences are not set up, no mills or bridges are built, no roads are laid through the forest, no school-house or place of worship is erected. Still further, the sickness, incident to every new settlement, prostrates the energies and impairs the resources of the people. Your missionary, therefore, must be supported for a season by the Church at large. He is required to devote himself exclusively to the ministry. The rules of the Board do not allow him to engage in lucrative employments. He can hardly cultivate a garden, for he must be often absent from his home, carrying the gospel from prairie to prairie, from cabin to cabin. We expect that the missionary, especially on the frontier, will endure hardness as a good soldier; that he will cheerfully sacrifice the elegancies and many of the comforts of life; that he will put aside the love of ease, of literature, and of scholarship, and submit to the labours and perils of the wilderness. He must be able to ride all day without food, and to spend the night in the open cabin or under the open sky. Where there are no roads, he must follow the bridle path or Indian trace, and where these fail, he must strike boldly into the untrodden prairie or forest. He must ford the rivers where there are no bridges, and swim them where there are no fords. He must sleep on a blanket when he cannot find a bed, and on the ground when he cannot obtain a blanket. These are the unavoidable conditions of the enterprise, and we expect the missionary to accept them. But our doctrine respecting the ministry does not require its incumbent to suffer unnecessary severities and mortifications, to

spend his life in a single log cabin without a closet for study or prayer, without books or papers, subjecting himself and his family to all the privations and sickness incident to a new country, and then be compelled to declare, from year to year, what is the smallest amount on which he can exist; to be incessantly tortured by the fear of want at home, or the fear of debt abroad; to be tortured again by seeing his children uneducated, and his wife worn out by incessant toil and wasting disease. Our doctrine is, that the ministry, whether pastor or missionary, should be so maintained as to be "free from worldly care and avocations." The measure of support for the pastor is the measure for the missionary. Our Church has ever maintained that a penurious system of ministerial support is most unjust, because the labourer is worthy of his hire; that it is unequal, requiring the ministry, by their self-denial, to contribute far more than the whole Church, to the support of the gospel; that again, it is derogatory, compelling the pastor or missionary to live in such penury as to degrade himself and his family; that it is permanently hurtful, establishing in the popular mind mean conceptions of duty, touching ministerial support; that it is in violation of every high-toned and generous principle, and, what is far more, it is in opposition to the teachings of God's word.

Such are the sentiments of our Church. It now remains that we apply them in the broadest sense to our missionary brethren. When we reflect that a single dollar annually contributed by each of our communicants, and no more than a dollar by any, would increase more than twofold the appropriations of the Board to all its missionaries, and place the whole matter on its proper basis, a case is made which, I humbly submit, may well engage the maturest counsels of the Assembly.

The second topic relates to the spiritual condition of the German emigrants. The importance of this population results from its numbers, its intelligence, its thrift, and its social position. Its numbers, already immense, are swelled by an accession from the fatherland of eighty or a hundred thousand annually. In intelligence, their whole body will compare most favourably with our own countrymen; while many bring from the German universities the highest intellectual culture. They are enterprising also, since none but the more energetic and adventurous execute the purpose of foreign emigration. They bring with them no inconsiderable wealth, and the elements of greater wealth in habits of industry and economy. They take the most lively interest in all our public affairs; they become naturalized at the earliest moment, and their weight is constant and powerful in all our popular movements and elections. Such, indeed, is their conscious strength, that some of their leading minds have conceived the purpose of planting, in the bosom of our German population, the germ of a distinct nationality, by maintaining their native language, habits, sympathies, literature and religion, wholly uninfluenced by our American life. This strange and impossible conception, confirms the opinion just expressed of the importance of this class of our fellow-citizens.

Nor is the difficulty of reaching this mass of mind to be overlooked; it can hardly be overstated. About one half of them are Romanists; of the remainder, many are avowedly atheists; others are infidels after the school of neology; others are formalists to the death; the smallest minority only are evangelical. Further, their education and proverbial tenacity of opinion enables them to adhere to false doctrine with the utmost obstinacy. Their language, again, separates them from our ministry and public worship, from our Sabbath schools and religious publications. The news-

papers, still further, in circulation among them are, in large measure, conducted by open scoffers and infidels. And further yet, they desecrate systematically and habitually the holy Sabbath. The origin of this pernicious habit is to be traced, partly to the influence of Romanism in Europe, where the Lord's day is lost among the saints' days, just as the Lord himself is lost in a rabble of mediators; partly by the imperfect teachings of Luther, and even Calvin, in respect to the fourth commandment, and partly to the incessant wars of central Europe, by which the Holy Day has, for a long series of years, been devoted to military parade and slaughter. There is not a city in our country which does not feel, in its streets and suburbs, the unhappy influence of this population on the sacredness of this institution.

These considerations, setting forth at once the immense importance and the formidable difficulties attending their conversion to the truth, suggest the necessity of immediate efforts to that end. And it is submitted to the wisdom of the Assembly, whether there be not a call for a ministry to these people, able to speak their language, and the publication of our standards of doctrine and order, and a book of Psalms in the German tongue.

Another subject of immediate interest is the spiritual condition of our coloured population. It has pleased God so to order events that the most thoroughly Pagan continent on earth has discharged upon our shores an immense and swelling multitude of its degraded children. In the progress of events questions have arisen of the greatest complexity touching all the relations of the two races, personal, social, civil and religious. The discussion of these questions has involved the most intricate problems, and occasioned the fiercest disputes, in almost every department of inquiry, in ethnology, political economy, philanthropy, the science of government, and ethical philosophy. But our Board of Missions extricates itself most thoroughly from all these fearful controversies. Its simple object respecting those people, its design, surmounting high all the aims of political sagacity, and all the counsels of the wisest patriotism, its sublime purpose is to preach Christ unto them, and if possible to save their souls. The principles which underlie all our efforts in their behalf are at once indisputably true and of controlling power. First, these people are of one blood with us, made in the same image, involved in the same ruin by the apostasy of our common parents, and redeemed by the blood of one Saviour—and he a God incarnate in the one human nature—both theirs and ours. Again, the Master bids us to offer to them this gospel. They are the poor of the land, and to the poor the gospel is ever to be preached. "For I am a debtor," said the Apostle, "both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and the unwise." Further, they are accessible to us. We cross no sea or mountain to reach them, we acquire no barbarous jargon, we visit no inhospitable shore to bear to them the unspeakable riches of Christ. They are here; they are all around us; they speak our language; they cultivate our fields; they sit with us in the house of God; they wait in our houses; they come even into our bedchambers. Thousands of them are under service to the communicants or worshippers in our congregations, and our ministry may have access as easy to the servants as to their masters. Further, they are wholly dependent on the American Churches for the gospel. Our brethren in Britain or France may send missionaries to Africa, but not to the many children of Africa on this continent. They are committed in trust to us—to us alone. If we give to them the gospel, they are saved; if we forbid it, they are lost.

There is, for them, but one key of Heaven—that key we hold. And further still, the Head of the Church has greatly blessed our labours in this direction. Some of our Presbyteries in Mississippi and Alabama report to the Assembly from three to five hundred coloured communicants. One Presbytery in Virginia embraces nearly six hundred; and one in South Carolina nearly thirteen hundred. In short, every motive of love to God and to man requires our Church to enter zealously and faithfully upon an enlarged plan of missions for these people.

Let us, in the close of these reflections, advert to the encouragements we gather from what we see around us to prosecute this work. From this place and from this point of time, let us look abroad upon the country, and back upon its religious history. Nearly one hundred and seventy years ago, the brave La Salle, having followed the Mississippi from the mouth of the Illinois to its confluence with the sea, took political possession of the whole country in the name of Louis the Great. At the same instant, he took spiritual possession of the land in the name of the Church of Rome, by erecting the crucifix, and singing before it the *Vexilla* and the *Domine Salvum*.

A few years after La Salle had descended to his grave on the banks of the Brazos, the French attempted the magnificent enterprise of establishing a line of military posts from Detroit, through Peoria, Vincennes and Kaskaskia, towards the distant South West. At all these posts the missionaries of Rome built their rude chapels and instituted the sacrifice of the mass, to realize, if possible, the dreams of La Salle, by bringing this whole western world under subjection to their faith.

About eighty years ago the city of St. Louis was founded, and became at once the seat of the Roman Catholic power for this boundless region. Thirty-two years later, near the beginning of the present century, when the Assembly, for the first time, appointed its Standing Committee on Missions, there was probably no other religion here than what was common to the French and Spanish settlements in the West,—a religion, indicated perhaps by the tinkling of a few convent bells, and here and there a crucifix surmounting a dilapidated chapel. Sixteen years afterwards, our Board of Missions was instituted, and in the same year, Salmon Giddings planted in St. Louis the standard of Presbyterianism. Thirty-five years more brings us to the present time. And now at last, in the ancient province of Louisiana, so early seized by the Church of Rome; here, far in the rear of that old line of military and missionary posts; here, in the stronghold of Roman Catholic power, we find in session the General Assembly of a Church whose faith, order, and worship are as thoroughly repugnant to those of Rome, as those of Rome are to the word of God. This, our supreme tribunal, has been drawn hither through fifteen degrees of longitude from its original seat, to the western side of the Mississippi, to this beautiful city, sitting so queenly upon its mighty waters, to the emporium and heart of the grandest missionary field which God hath given to his Son for a possession. And now, at this time, the midway point in the nineteenth century, made illustrious by the progress of the Kingdom of Christ, here, at this place—midway from ocean to ocean—midway from our arctic latitudes to our tropical seas—here, and now, let the members of this venerable court, and let the people with whom we worship God to-night, lift up heart and voice in the solemn strain of the old Hebrew melody: “Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that ledest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth. Before

Ephraim, and Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up thy strength, and come and save us. Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt; thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river. Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts; look down from heaven, and behold; and visit this vine, and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself.'