

SUPPLEMENT

TO THE

HOME AND FOREIGN RECORD

FOR JULY, 1850.

A SERMON,

Preached by appointment before the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, at Cincinnati, Ohio, during the sessions of the General Assembly, May, 1850; by the REV. WILLIS LORD, D. D., Pastor of the Seventh Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia.

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."—John xii. 32.

THE speaker was the Incarnate God; his theme the Cross: its place and power in the economy of salvation.

Let us ponder this divine sentence. Let us trace out and apply its ideas. Let us mark its aspect in reference to the holy and sublime work of Missions.

"If I be lifted up." But that "if" suggests a contingency—a contingency, too, as to an event, than which none could be more sure—which God had resolved on from eternity—on which was based and did absolutely depend the whole enterprise of saving men. The original, therefore, should be expressed, as it rightly may be, thus: "*When I shall be lifted up.*"

Doubtless, indeed, the cross was divinely efficacious from the moment of the fall. Nay, conceived of according to its effect on the divine government, it seems to rise up out of the depths of the eternity that is past, and, like some beautiful bow of promise, overspanning earth and time, and revealing the before unre-

vealed perfections of Godhead, to embosom itself in the depths of the eternity to come. In view of it, God suspended the full penalty of his broken law, and began, in Eden, the overture and the triumphs of mercy. Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah, the uncounted multitude of patriarchs, prophets and saints of the ancient dispensations, who were saved, were saved by the cross. They exercised faith in the atonement then to be made, as we exercise faith in the atonement which now has been made; so that, amidst the scenes of the coming glory, they and we alike shall sing, "Unto Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, unto Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever!"

It is true, however, that the actual erection of the cross, and sacrifice of the divine Victim on it, formed an epoch in the government of God. The wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles was then broken down. The eternal Spirit descended with plenipotent and glorious power. The purposes of sovereign love began to be evolved and accomplished on a scale of enlargement and unexampled magnificence. We have no reason to think that such scenes as crowned the day of Pentecost with beauty and glory, and as have been so often repeated in the subsequent history of the Church, had ever before occurred; we mean, in such extent—with such power and results. When Christ was "lifted up," the old economy, with its distinctive limitations and institutions, passed away, and a new and nobler economy began.

"If I be lifted up." This term has a twofold sense. The one is literal. It means to elevate, as on a cross. It is so used in the memorable

comparison of Christ, (John iii. 14:) "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." So also in these words, (John viii. 28:) "Then said Jesus unto them, When ye shall have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am He." In both these passages, the obvious reference is to his being lifted upon the cross: they intimate the manner of his death—by crucifixion.

There is, too, a figurative sense of the word. In this, it means to lift up from a low condition; to raise to prosperity, dignity, honour. It is thus used in Luke i. 52: "He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree." So in the Acts, xiii. 17: "The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they were strangers in the land of Egypt." So in the 1st Epistle of Peter, v. 6: "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." So also in James iv. 10: "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up."

Could we adopt this as the immediate sense of the text, as indeed many do, it would be as if the Saviour had said, "When I shall be lifted up, not merely on the cross, but from my humble condition; when, after my obedience unto death, I shall be recognised and honoured as the Son of God, being exalted to the right-hand of power and glory, then I will draw all men unto me."

Nor is it improbable that this idea was intended by the Saviour, as involved in the first. Certain it is, that his condescension to the cross was the ground and root of his subsequent exaltation. "Being found in fashion as a man," testifies Paul, "he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." Certain it is, also, that this exaltation of Christ was immediately and causally connected with the mission of the Spirit, by whose divine power the victories of mercy are actually won.

But, notwithstanding this, the first sense of the expression is the especial and true one here. It is so determined by the Evangelist, when he adds, "This he spake, signifying"—not the fact nor the greatness of his coming glory, nor its moral influence upon men, but "by what death he should die." On this ground we said, that his theme was the cross. He intended to set forth his *atonement sacrifice* there, and to assert its vast power in the matter of salvation. "When I shall be lifted up," he cried; "when on the bloody tree, in pursuance of the eternal compact, I shall make my soul an offering for sin, I will draw all men unto me!"

"All men," you observe, is the unqualified

affirmation. But is it so? Has this been the effect of the cross? Has it drawn all men unto Him who died upon it? Alas! by no means. So far from this, that the great proportion of those who have lived since his death, have not even heard the name of Christ; while many, who are called Christians, do not pretend to be renewed or controlled by his grace. It is a truth, most clear and melancholy. Innumerable and immense as are the benefits, personal, social, political, and religious, which have flowed and are flowing to men from the cross, it is but a little flock that has been drawn to it; has reclined in its light; has been washed in its blood; been guarded by its protection; been fitted by it for eternal glory.

We must interpret the text, then, in harmony with this fact. It must be understood, either as more strongly expressed in our version than the original permits, or as awaiting a more signal and complete fulfilment in the future.

Both these solutions are requisite in order to the truth.

The text is more strongly expressed in our version than the original permits: The word "men" has been supplied. The Saviour said thus: "I will draw all unto me." If we must supplement his words in this place, we are bound to do it from that precisely analogous declaration of his, "All that the Father hath given me shall come unto me." In other words, the saving results of the cross to men, shall be commensurate with the purpose of God in rearing it. They cannot be less; they will not be more. Divine power will secure the one; human depravity will prevent the other.

But let not this truth be misconceived, as if it were in conflict with the unsearchable riches of grace. The intrinsic adequacy of the cross to save men is not to be measured by the number who shall be actually saved: just as the resources of creative wisdom and might are not to be measured by their actual creations. As one universe arose at their bidding, so, in equal magnitude and beauty, might another, yea, and many others. A feast may be ample to satisfy the wants of multitudes who refuse to partake of it, and who, because they refuse, will perish with hunger. We hold the sacrifice on the cross to be absolutely infinite in its worth, and therefore sufficient for the spiritual and eternal necessities of every sinner. We hold, too, that God offers its blessings to the race, without respect of persons, or variation of terms. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," is the heavenly averment, "and thou," of whatever nation, language, climate, colour, sex, or age—"thou shalt be saved!" If by any, or by all, this munificent offer is rejected, that is a result for which God is not responsible, and which in no wise affects the divine worth or power of the cross. And the purpose of God sovereignly to interpose and save some, who

else would persist in the rejection of mercy and die, does not affect its worth or power. The atonement is free, and, in its moral value, illimitable. If any one, whom we might suppose not embraced in the especial purpose of God, will receive it, rest on it, cleave to it, be controlled by it, he shall be saved; and God, and holy beings through the universe, will rejoice over him with eternal joy.

This is one solution of the difficulty. There is also another. The text awaits a more complete and signal fulfilment in the evolutions of the future. The moral and spiritual are more sure and enduring than the material. Heaven and earth may pass away, but the word of God will remain: in every iota it will be verified.

We may differ as to the relative time of certain great events, now enwombed in futurity. We may differ as to some of the agencies and circumstances in which and by which those "scenes surpassing fable" shall have their perfect realization; but we cannot and do not differ as to this; that at some time and by some means, the whole sweet, rapture-giving word of prophecy will be fulfilled; that "the stone which was cut out of the mountain without hands, shall break in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold;" that "unto one like the Son of Man shall be given dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him;" that "the moon shall be confounded and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously;" that the vast system of imposture and impiety, whose head is "the man of sin, shall be consumed by the Spirit of his mouth, and destroyed by the brightness of his coming;" that "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; and He shall judge among the nations; and they shall beat their swords into plough-shares and their spears into pruning-hooks, and learn war no more;" that "in that day this song shall be sung in the land of Judah," and the Gentiles joyously respond to the strain, "Lo, this is our God: we have waited for him and he will save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him; we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation;" that "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea;" yea, that "there shall be new heavens and a new earth, in which shall dwell righteousness;" and a great voice out of heaven shall be heard, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men; and He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people; and God himself shall be with them, and be their God!"

All these magnificent assurances, and the many more which glow in celestial beauty and brilliance on the prophetic page, faith firmly holds as sooner or later to become still more magnificent realities. There is no uncertainty

here. We as much look for the wreck and ruin of God's throne, as for the failure of God's word; and when that word is fulfilled, the universe will see how vast and glorious was the intent of Christ, when he said, "And I, when I shall be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto me."

But these remarks touch only the accessories of the text. We proceed to its main thought.

The Cross of Christ has power. It draws men. It is effective in reference to that great and gracious purpose of God for which it was reared. In unexampled grandeur and glory, it stands in the sight of the universe, reconciling heaven to men, and winning men to heaven. Let us gaze at it for a while, as do the adoring angels.

Reconciling heaven to men, is the first and chief result and demonstration of the power of the cross. It sends up its sweet and mighty influences into the very pavilion of Godhead, and sheds them around the everlasting throne. He that sits upon it is moved. Justice holds back the avenging sword. Mercy assumes the sceptre. How—why this wondrous result? It is by the power of the cross. It furnishes a perfect satisfaction to the violated law and dishonoured attributes of God; a basis on which God can act, in suspending the penalty of the law and in the dispensation of pardon, without sullying his perfections, without abandoning one essential principle of his government, without compromising the interests of the universe. What seemed the insuperable difficulties in the way of saving the lost, were not those which pertained to the creature, they were those which pertained to God. *The question was, "How can He be just, and yet justify the ungodly?"* The moral sense of all created beings revolted at the thought that one attribute of Jehovah should be sacrificed in this matter. That were a sacrifice more terrific than the perdition of a world of sinners. The question could be answered, the emergencies of lost-men could be met, only by a divine person. By such an one the question was answered, and those emergencies met. "Lo, I come," said the Eternal Son; "lo, I come to do thy will, O God!"

We need not recite the marvellous history. We need not trace the Divine One, descending from the adornings of the angels and the bosom of the Father. We need not mark his earthly course, so beautiful and beneficent. We need not depict those closing scenes, so passing strange and awful! We seek now only the result. It was a perfect obedience! It was an atoning sacrifice! It was an infinite righteousness! It was the cross! And because of the obedience, the sacrifice, the righteousness, the cross has power over God!

But, while it reaches thus to heaven, it throws out sacred and mighty energies upon men.

The cross has power over the intellect of men.

It commends itself to their reason, as a wise and effectual measure for the *exigencies of guilt*.

In the popular apprehension, indeed, when no sense of sin is pressing on the soul, "the cross is foolishness." It was so to the cultivated Greek, to the sensual and warlike Roman, to the exclusive and blinded Jew. It is so to all men who will not look at it. But let the sense of sin intervene; let it become deep and urgent, so that the cry of the soul, "What shall I do to be saved?" is sincere and earnest, and then the cross will begin to be discerned as the noblest device of infinite wisdom.

The logical process in such a case is direct and obvious. It is clear to any intelligent mind, Christian or Pagan, that no creature can repair a law which he has broken, and which requires from him an absolutely perfect obedience.

It is equally clear to such a mind, that no sinless creature, subject to such a law, can acquire a surplus merit, by which to cover the guilt of those who have fallen. Gabriel can do no more than obey for himself that divine law, which, because it is divine, exacts all his powers.

A qualified mediator for sinners, therefore, one able to save, cannot be found throughout the ranks of created beings. Each one of them, and all alike, are subject to a perfect and immutable law. You must be able to point men to a *divine* Saviour,—one who is above the law, and the source of it,—before you can meet that demand in the case, which reason pronounces imperative. When you do this, reason has nothing more to ask. It is satisfied. Despite the mysteries which may still spread their awful splendors and their like awful shades around the pathway of Jehovah, it can see how He is just, while He justifies the ungodly.

This is the great and signal characteristic of the cross. In this is its demonstration and appeal to the intellect of men. It reveals a divine Saviour, Emmanuel, God with us; in the verdict of reason, therefore, able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him. Men see this, so soon as they look upon the cross with the convictions and the desires which awakened guilt originates. The poor Pagan sees it as quickly and clearly as we can, when the sense of guilt is oppressing and overwhelming his soul. You remember the case of the anxious Burman. "What must I do to expiate my guilt?" he cried. "Walk four hundred miles, with the point of a spike piercing through each of your sandals!" was the reply of his priestly teacher. We shudder at the cruelty. But the untaught man knew no other way, and guilt was urgent. It was pressing upon him like an armed man; and guilt is hard to bear—harder than bodily pain. He began the journey. He travelled over many a mile. Each step was marked with blood,

and forced a groan. He reached at length a spreading tree, beneath whose shade a Christian missionary was telling of the cross. He paused. He listened. They were strange words, most wonderful words; but guilt helped him to understand them. "Ah!" he cried, "that is just what I want!" and, throwing from him the instruments of torture, he became a disciple. It was not a mere impulse. It was no transient gush of sympathy. It was rather a strong and abiding conviction. The glorious truth flashed upon his reason, as well as beamed upon his heart, that the cross could meet the appalling exigencies of guilt!

The cross also has power over the *sensibilities of men*. With whatever force and clearness it may address the *intellect*, it is equally fitted to impress, allure, expand, ennoble, satisfy the *heart*. Every thing that is touching, beautiful, sublime, holy, has its divinest existence and manifestation in the cross. Nor can we restrict its power, in this respect, to them who are sanctified. Doubtless they feel it most deeply. Nor do they resist it like other men. It sweetly yet powerfully constrains them, as it did blessed Paul. But not these alone are susceptible to its influence. It is adapted to act upon man, savage or civilized; in his ruin, or by grace restored. Go with it to the refined Saxon, or the degraded Hottentot; go with it, where all other means of moral impression and culture have been tried and failed, whether in Christendom or among Mohammedans and Pagans, and it will be seen to embody and exert power, vital, sacred, transcendent; not that cannot be resisted, but which will be felt. In this respect, it stands unparalleled, alone. There is nothing like it.

Have men reverence for what is divine? Brightness of the divine glory, and express image of the divine Person, is He who died upon the cross!

Have they admiration for heroic self-sacrifice, and lofty devotion to the welfare of others? Where is there another instance of such sacrifice and such devotion as those of the Son of God?

Have they love for what is pure in character, for what is beautiful and ennobling in instruction, for what is beneficent and sublime in action? Who so pure as Christ? Whose thoughts and precepts so beautiful and transforming? Whose life so godlike?

Have they gratitude for blessings? Whose hand bestows so many, so constant, so great, so costly, so undeserved, as his who was nailed to the tree?

Have they sympathy for suffering? Whose suffering so intense as the Man of Sorrow's? What agony comparable to that in the garden? What dying cry like that on the cross?

Have they fear, to be restrained and awed by the mandates and sanctions of power? Who has power like Christ? Who reigns in such glory?

Who sits on such a throne? Who wears such a diadem? And how terrific the doom of them who finally reject him!

Have they hope, to be awakened and allured by the attractions of infinite beauty and enjoyment? Where are such attractions but in the cross, revealing and leading to a blessed immortality in heaven?

Thus the cross has power over all the strongest and best susceptibilities of men. Through these, it often draws them to Christ, when all the convictions wrought in the intellect by other revealed truths have proved unavailing. You remember that notable instance of this in the missionary annals of Greenland. The devoted Brethren began with the doctrines of God, of the creation, and the fall. They proved his existence. They first set forth his natural attributes. They traced the adaptation, beauties, and all the wonders of this immense materialism. They showed that sin had entered the world, and death by sin. The listless natives heard them; but it waked no warm emotion, it fixed no salutary conviction. They were unimpressed and unimproved.

The Brethren turned then from the sphere of formal dogma to the morality of the Bible. They proclaimed the commandments. They said, Thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not commit adultery! They exhibited the sanctions by which the holy law was environed and enforced. The effect was as before. Their words fell to the ground. Those whom they sought to save were still frigid as the everlasting ice around them.

Thus six years passed away. The Brethren were discouraged, but did not give over. They began to translate the Gospels. One evening, in their work, they read the narrative of the Passion in Gethsemane and on Calvary. "Read that again," cried Kayarnak, one of the natives who had overheard them. "Read that again, for I also wish to be saved!" They read it again. He was deeply moved. He gave himself to Christ.

The incident was not only interesting, but suggestive. They saw where they had been deficient. They changed their manner of preaching. They concentrated their affections and energies around the cross. The effect was perceptible and immediate. They had access now to the hearts of the people. From that day the moral scene began to change, and showers of blessings descended upon Greenland. They were the rich and glorious result of the power of the cross.

The cross, moreover, has power over men as the great instrument of the Holy Spirit. His presence and energy are in intimate association with it. Nor is this association casual, fluctuating, arbitrary. It is an essential, corporate feature in the method of grace. It augments the power of the cross to the highest conceiva-

ble degree. It clothes it with omnipotence. It makes it literally the power of God.

That power is imperative in the salvation of men. We utter no thoughtless or empty word. If to the influence of instruction and argument, which may convince the intellect; if to the influence of persuasion, made powerful by all those motives which can mightily move the heart; if to the whole array of means which Heaven has prescribed for the impression and conversion of sinners, there were not added the illimitable power of God, then salvation were a dream—the cross itself, with all its sacred and wonderful adaptation and energy, a splendid failure. There may be many auxiliary and most befitting preparations and accompaniments; but, in the last analysis, the power which vivifies the dead is divine power.

And men are dead. The millions in heathen lands, whom our missionary efforts contemplate, are dead. It is not metaphor; it is fact.

We know indeed they have physical life. They breathe. Their pulse beats. Their blood circulates. They stand erect. They eat, drink, toil, sleep!

They have, too, mental life. If the masses are ignorant and imbecile, it is not from want of faculties, but of culture. They can understand. They can reason. They can give wings to the fancy. They can construct ideal forms of surpassing beauty. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, masters in philosophy, were Pagans. Old Hesiod and Homer, princes in song, were Pagans.

But they have no spiritual life, the highest and most divine species of existence. Of that life, there is not in their souls the feeblest pulsation. It is utterly extinct; as much so as is animal life in that beloved form you have just covered in the grave. They are "dead in trespasses and sins."

The fact is appalling, as sure. It invests the work of missions with a difficulty of achievement, equal to the grandeur of its design. If it were only to the bodies of men we must minister, or if it were but requisite to pour the light of knowledge upon their minds, it were, in comparison, an easy labor. We could build hospitals among the heathen, send them physicians, and multiply their physical conveniences and comforts, until love itself could ask no more. And we could diffuse knowledge among them; we could found the institutions of literature and science, and renew more than the ancient glories of Academus and Parnassus. And, doing this, we could undermine and overturn some of the huge and hoary systems of idolatry.

But this is not the work to be done. Great as it were in itself, it is trivial in comparison. It is one thing to mould into form and beauty that which is; it is far another thing to call into being that which is not. Men arrange, combine, construct. God alone creates. In

the case before us, the vital heat, movement, force of a new and divine life, are to be originated and communicated. The dead are to be made alive. There is to be a vivification, a resurrection!

Who then can give life to the dead? Who can cause them to stand up in forms of beauty? Can we? Can our beloved missionaries? Can the combined Church? Yes, do you say? Try it then. Try it. Go forth into the valley of vision. Uncover the graves, in the islands and over the continents. Speak to the ghastly mass. Exhort, argue, implore. Ply the arts of rhetoric, the resources of logic. Appeal to reason, to hope, to fear. Call in the aid of others. Concentrate all human power. In every conceivable form of combination and application, bring it to bear on the vivification of these dead.

Do they hear you? Are there symptoms of life? Do they move in their sepulchres? Do sinews come upon the bones? And flesh cover them? And breath enter into them? And all the appropriate functions of organized and living men begin?

Alas! they are still dead. The only power in the universe that can quicken them, is the power of God. It is so in nature. It is equally so in grace. It will be so, while grace and nature last.

But this power is associated with the cross. God has firmly, beautifully, for ever interlinked them. The cross is the chosen and beloved instrument of his power, in all the processes of spiritual creation and life. It therefore draws men, as nothing else, on earth or in heaven, can. It draws them to Christ.

Such is the place, fitness, efficiency of the cross, in the economy of salvation.

We turn to the practical bearing of these truths.

They disclose what we may term *the essential law of missions*. It is, that we preach the cross; that we go with it to every island and over every continent; that we proclaim it to Jew and to Gentile, and to Jew as well as to Gentile. All doctrines and institutions besides are inadequate to the necessities of men. The methods of human legislators and reformers are superficial. They do not reach the central and fatal sore of humanity, whence issue social diseases and spiritual death. They are exhausted in their attempts to shape and beautify the outside, while there is most distressing need of deep probing and thorough cleansing within. The almost numberless associations external to the Church, which characterize the age, and whose object is somehow the reconstruction and regeneration of society, or at least its amelioration, all testify to the existence of immense and pressing evil; but they are all alike impotent to remove it. They all leave out of sight what physicians would call the true *diagnosis*. Political equality cannot touch and purify the corrupt

and corrupting heart of the world. Agrarianism, in all its forms, is but a most shallow specific. It can kill, but it cannot cure. Even social regeneration can be effectually achieved only by the cross; while, past all debate, the life of God in the soul of man is the product of it alone. It is obvious to reason. It is verified by fact. The testimony of the past is clear and conclusive as that of the present.

The men who lived before the Flood,—lived, we mean, in the divine sense,—who, amidst the social and civil violences and crimes which then filled the earth, maintained their integrity and walked with God—were men of faith, who felt the power, and rejoiced in the light of the cross.

It was so after the Flood, until the Incarnation. Spiritual life was found only within the range of one sweet, sacred, mighty influence, the influence of the cross. The Hebrew patriarchs, the prophets, those to whom God made known, chiefly by institutions and symbols, the scenes of Calvary, before they actually transpired, they lived. The rest of men were dead.

We know, indeed, that some of the most intensely interesting events and characters in the history of the race, belong to the period we now advert to. But the fact does not impair the truth of our representation. It gives it rather enhanced clearness and power. In Assyria, Egypt, Greece, Rome, contesting with or succeeding each other in the empire of the world, there was doubtless a high degree of civilization. Science had its enthusiastic devotees, and made no inconsiderable progress. Some of the mechanic arts reached a perfection which has since been lost. Poetry, music, painting, sculpture, have had no greater masters; rhetoric, logic, eloquence and philosophy, none more accomplished, acute, or profound. While the Israelites were still in bondage, Athens was founded. After the Exodus, but during the times of Joshua, Cadmus introduced letters into Greece. Three centuries later, while Jephtha was Judge in Israel, occurred the memorable siege of Troy. Almost a thousand years before Christ, and contemporary with Asa and Jehoshaphat, Bœotia resounded with the harp of Hesiod. In the next century, while Elijah and Elisha fulfilled their office, Lycurgus gave laws to Sparta, and Homer was winning his immortal name. Still later, though centuries before the Christian era, Æsop, illustrious among fabulists, Solon among legislators, Cyrus and Cambyses among kings, and Thales, Pythagoras, and Confucius among philosophers, were contemporary with the prophets, Daniel, Ezekiel, Haggai, and Zechariah. The century following is full of world-renowned names. With those of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Malachi, the last of the inspired men under the old economy, are those of Miltiades, Aristides, Themistocles, and Pericles, among statesmen; Eschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, among poets; Herodotus, Thu-

cydides, and Xenophon, among historians; and Socrates, whose wisdom, doctrines, and method formed an epoch in philosophy. Subsequent still, but yet from two to three hundred years previous to the Incarnation, were Philip of Macedon and Alexander the Great; Plato, called by his admirers, the divine; Diogenes the cynic, Zeno the stoic, Euclid the geometrician, Demosthenes the orator, and Aristotle, of a genius universal as profound. These were followed, during the flow of two centuries more, by the most illustrious names in the annals of Rome.

This glance serves to indicate some of the great characteristics of the period. It shows that during it, the human mind wrought many of its most brilliant achievements; that unaided reason culminated then to the very zenith of its power and glory.

Yet look at the moral aspect of the world. Without that little sphere, enlightened and made sacred by the cross, where its rays were reflected and its power felt, "darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people." Civilization did not mature into piety. Genius devised no method of escape from guilt. Science worked out its problems, and the arts adorned the temples of idolatry, but the souls of men were debased and polluted. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools; and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things; and changed the *truth* of God into a lie, and worshipped the creature more than the Creator!" They pressed on to eternity in the dark!

It is needless to extend this induction from history. Every page of every century, from the first day to this, presents, on this point, the same testimony and the same result. Spiritual life, holiness, salvation have flowed everywhere, always, exclusively from *the cross*. There, and there only, all experience cries, is the power to save! There is no ground, in nature or in reason, to suppose that, in future time, any other instrument or influence can produce these specific, vital, glorious results.

We repeat, then, it is the essential law of missions that we preach the cross. We must hold it up in the sight of the nations, and of all nations. We must exhibit it in its simplicity, purity, glory, infinitely surpassing all human means and institutions;—the wisdom and the power of God!

These truths, moreover, involve the *entire success of missions*. In the true conception of it, the cross is self-efficient. It has in it power adequate to every purpose of infinite wisdom and love. We have only to lift it up, and it will draw men. It will draw all unto Christ, in that sense of the term which he himself has defined. We do not hesitate to say, that sense is ample and glorious enough. We do not as-

pire to a benevolence purer and larger than that of God and his redeeming Son. When their designs are accomplished, the holy universe will have nothing more to wish. They will be ready, with one heart and voice, to raise the rapturous and majestic song, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever!"

Our ideas of success in the work of missions, will indeed vary with our ideas of what is the purpose of God. In some respects we may misinterpret that purpose. It is possible that, in the intense brilliance of those beams which pour upon our sight, when we gaze at the future, we have become subject to some indistinctness of vision, and unconsciously transfer to the dispensation now passing, scenes of bliss and glory which may belong to a dispensation to come. We think it might be useful to the Church, carefully to review the grounds of her prevailing expectations; with a cautious and exact eye, to go over and re-inspect the prophetic panorama. It would do her good to be reassured that she is right in her current views, if she be so. It would be equally advantageous that she become aware of it, if in any important respect she errs.

Her great triumph and glory are yet in the future, and it cannot but be for her present benefit to read the future aright. Trials and reverses may still await her, more extended and fearful than hope and love are willing to believe. The slaying of the witnesses, whatever that may be, may still remain to be accomplished. Most certain it seems, that they yet prophesy in sackcloth. And as we closely trace these delineations of the Spirit, there seems at least some ground for the impression, that this dispensation is destined to close amidst scenes of darkness, fire, and storm.

The diversities, however, which may obtain in our conceptions of the divine purpose, as to its details, or the time, order, and subsidiary means of its accomplishment, cannot affect the success of missions. Our mistakes detract from the cross none of its power. They neither change nor frustrate the great designs of God. Those designs will all be gloriously realized, through the cross. Truth, holiness, heaven will at length prevail. The universe shall see the triumph of the blood-bought Church:—

Triumph, in the *subjugation of all her foes*. "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee, shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. The sons of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow down at the soles of thy feet, and they shall call thee the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel."

Triumph, in the *exercise of universal dominion*. "The Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the

brightness of thy rising. I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back. The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee; the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee." "And the kingdom, and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High!"

Triumph, in the *possession of perfect peace, purity, and blessedness*. "I will extend peace to thee like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream. Thy people shall be all righteous. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down, nor thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended!"

Triumph, in the *presence of her gracious and glorified Lord*. "I go," he said, in view of the cross, "I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself; that where I am, ye may be also." And He will come again. It is determined in heaven. It is revealed to faith. It is "that blessed hope" which wrought so mightily in Paul. It is that for whose realization the souls under the altar wait, and cry, "How long, O Lord?" It is the pole-star of the Church, in this night of her wandering and sorrow. What the advent in the flesh was to the ancient saints, the advent in glory is to us. They looked for the bloody sacrifice; we look for the sublime coronation. It will presently take place. He will come again. The Church will hail him with songs and everlasting joy. He will reign in the midst of her, the acknowledged "King of Kings and Lord of Lords!"

This triumph of the Church will be by the cross; because of its matchless power over men, and its equally matchless power over God! No other instrument or influence can achieve it. It is a triumph which eternal wisdom and love have irreversibly ordained to be the triumph of the cross!

Our duty then, Christian brethren, is clear, simple, imperative. If we would save men and honor God, we must go forth bearing the cross. We must rear it upon the hill-tops and in the valleys throughout this apostate world. We must uncover it in the sight of every creature.

Our encouragement, too, is perfect. In no other labor can there be so sure or glorious results. The cross is the device of God. There is essentially incorporated in it, or associated with it, every element of power, in kind and in degree, requisite to the fullest consummation of all that grace designs. It is the magnet of souls. It draws them, when all other means and influences are powerless. It will continue to exert its mighty and holy force, until all of God's hidden ones are drawn unto Christ. If they are in America or Europe, in Asia or Africa, in the isles or on the ocean, the cross will sweetly, wondrously, resistlessly

draw them. Whether they are young or old, ignorant or learned, bond or free, prince or subject, Gentile or Jew, Papist, Mohammedan, or Pagan, the cross will throw around them an influence of divine sacredness and invincible strength; it will enlighten them, impress them, quicken them into spiritual life, transform them into the likeness of God, exalt them to the crowns and thrones of heaven.

Be this then our work, our constant, earnest, holy work, to make known the cross. To this, let us give our prayers, consecrate our wealth, devote our bodies, our intellects, our hearts. We ought to do it. It is to us an honor and a blessing that we may do it; the richest of all blessings, the noblest of all honors, to live and to die for the cross. It brings us into association, sympathy, labor with God. It makes us benefactors indeed to men. It gives peace to our own hearts. It clothes us with the beauty of Christ, as with a garment. It throws a serene and joyous light around our transit from this world. It opens heaven for our entrance and for our immortal abode. And there, in the "great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues," drawn unto Him who was lifted up, we shall at length see, ay, and feel, the *infinite wisdom, beauty, and power of the cross!*

DOMESTIC MISSIONS.

EXPLORING MISSIONARY AGENCY.

Early in March the Board of Missions appointed the Rev. J. N. Shepard, pastor of the church of Utica, Ohio, on an exploring missionary agency, in Iowa and Minnesota. A leading object of this agency was to obtain full and definite information in regard to these important missionary fields. Mr. Shepard set out on his tour early in April. We have received a long and exceedingly interesting letter from him, dated May 10th, from St. Paul, Minnesota. This letter contains much valuable information in relation to the wants of Iowa, urges the necessity of greatly increased effort to strengthen the Presbyterian interest there, and makes some important suggestions as to the best plan for enlarging our missionary operations in that State, and through the whole West. We publish his thoughts on this subject, and ask special atten-