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REMARKS

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTENDING ON THE MONTHLY CONCERT IN PRAYER.

BY SAMUEL MILLER, D.D.

In the heart of every real Christian there is no sentiment more firmly fixed, or more habitually recognised, than that of his entire dependance on God for every blessing, and the necessity of unceasing prayer for all that he needs. Man can, in his own wisdom, devise nothing aright; he can, in his own strength, accomplish nothing. It is not by human might or power, but by the Spirit of the living God that anything truly good is ever done towards promoting the spiritual interests of individuals or of mankind. In his hands are the hearts of all men, and "he can turn them whithersoever he pleaseth, as the rivers of waters are turned." We may devise the most promising plans for doing good; we may gather round us the most ample means for carrying our plans into effect;—and yet, after all, unless He with whom is the residue of the Spirit shall add his blessing, and make the means effectual, all will be vain. "Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but God alone can give the increase. He that planteth is nothing, and he that watereth is nothing; but God that showeth mercy."

This sense of our dependance for all good, on the power and grace of God, is essential to the spirit of true religion. Until we have some real, practical impression of it, we cannot either sincerely or rationally approach God in prayer, or cherish those sentiments which become us as sinners indebted to free and sovereign grace for every blessing. Hence we are exhorted to "pray without ceasing;" to "pray always with all prayer and supplication, in the spirit;" and, "in everything by prayer and supplication with

thanksgiving to make known our requests to God." And, accordingly, we find the pious, in all ages, acknowledging their dependance; imploring with humble importunity the blessings of which they felt their need; and confessing their utter inability to gain them by their own wisdom or strength. But further, not only do we find the pious represented, throughout the Bible history, as importunately praying for the supply of their own wants, but also as *interceding* for their friends and brethren, and indeed for the whole Church of God, and for the world of mankind. This duty is founded on the divine injunction; and also on the fact, that every human being is bound to seek the happiness of his race, and of course, is every Christian peculiarly bound to desire and endeavour to promote the welfare of the whole human family, and especially of all who belong to "the household of faith." And it shows the wisdom as well as the benignity of our God, that the discharge of this duty is always adapted to carry with it its own reward. The more we feel and pray for our fellow-men, and above all, the more we feel and pray for the enlargement of the Redeemer's kingdom, for the return of our revolted world to God and happiness, the more our benevolence is increased; the more we resemble our Father in heaven; and, of course, the more our own spiritual improvement and happiness are promoted.

But not only is *intercession* a duty incumbent upon every Christian, and a duty adapted to carry a rich benefit along with its discharge; but it is equally evident that UNION IN PRAYER is at once commanded,

reasonable, and delightful. We are expressly commanded to pray for one another, James v. 16; and, if all who belong to Christ are "one body in Him;" "and members one of another; if, when one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; and when one member rejoices, all the members rejoice with it;" it follows that all who really belong to that body, must and will delight in social, united prayer; prayer in which the flame of love, kindling from heart to heart, shall rise to the mercy seat with a brighter and warmer affection.

Accordingly our Master in heaven, in a variety of instances in his word, has recognised both the duty and the encouragement of this union in prayer on the part of his people. "I say unto you, that if any two of you shall agree on earth touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." Matt. xviii. 19. And not only have we this explicit promise, but the example of such prayers; and the remarkable success with which they were crowned, in the inspired history, are as numerous as they are striking. When the ancient Church was threatened with destruction by the conspiracy of wicked *Haman*, the pious *Esther*, being warned by *Mordecai* of the impending danger, sent word to the whole body of the Jewish people to spend three days in united fasting and supplication to God for deliverance. They did so; and by the most wonderful dispensation of Providence, they were delivered from the power of their enemies. When *Daniel* was called upon by the king of Babylon to interpret that king's forgotten dream, he engaged a number of his pious friends to unite with him in prayer that he might be enabled to comply with the king's order; and that was revealed to him, which all the wise men and astrologers of the Babylonish court sought to find out in vain. So when the prophet *Ezekiel* predicted that the house of Israel was "about to be cleansed from all her iniquities, to have her waste places built up, and her ruins to become like the garden of Eden," he subjoins in the next chapter, "yet, thus saith the Lord, I will be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." *Ezekiel* xxxvi. 37. In the same strain does the prophet *Isaiah* call upon the people of God to

be importunate in praying for spiritual mercies: "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth," lxii. 7. In like manner, when the apostle *Peter* was thrown into prison by *Herod*, the bloody tyrant, unceasing prayer was made by the Church for his deliverance; and while they were actually engaged in supplications on his behalf, he was miraculously brought out of prison, and happily conducted to the very place where his friends were engaged in interceding for him. It was evidently in answer to extraordinary and united prayer that the Israelites in the wilderness were made victorious over the army of *Amalek*. It was in answer to extraordinary and united prayer that the immense army of the haughty king of Assyria, which threatened the destruction of God's people in the days of *Hezekiah*, was destroyed in a single night. It is declared by the prophets *Jeremiah* and *Daniel*, to have been in answer to extraordinary and united prayer that God's ancient people were restored from the Babylonish captivity to their own land. And it is equally evident that it was in answer to special and united prayer, in conformity with the Saviour's command, that, after tarrying in Jerusalem a number of days, and spending their time in fervent supplication for the Holy Spirit to be poured out upon them from on high, the day of Pentecost brought enlargement and glory on the persecuted and struggling Church.

It was a deep persuasion of the reality and importance of these considerations which led to the commencement of that concert in prayer, on the first Monday of every month, which has been so long observed by a large portion of the Protestant churches in this country and in Europe, and which it is a leading object of these pages to recommend to the attention and observance of those who profess to love the Redeemer's kingdom.

This plan of stated union in prayer for the revival of religion, and for the spread of the gospel, was commenced in the Church of Scotland, almost exactly one hundred years ago.

In the month of October, 1744, a number of Ministers in Scotland, taking into

consideration the state of God's church, and of the world of mankind, "did judge, that the Providence of God, at such a day, loudly called such as were concerned for the welfare of Zion to united and extraordinary supplications to the God of all grace, suitably acknowledging Him as the fountain of all spiritual benefits and blessings in his church; and earnestly beseeching him, that He would appear in his glory, and favour Zion, and manifest his compassion to the world of mankind by an abundant effusion of his Holy Spirit on all the churches; that he would revive true religion in all parts of Christendom; that he would bless all nations with the light of the gospel, and fill the whole earth with his glory."

The authors of this plan, after seeking by prayer for divine direction, determined on the following method of carrying it into effect:—viz. to set apart such time on Saturday evening, and Sabbath morning, every week, for the purpose before stated, as other duties might allow; and, more solemnly, the first Tuesday of each quarter, (beginning with the first Tuesday of November, then next ensuing,) either the whole day, or part of the day, as persons may find themselves disposed, or think their circumstances will allow; the time to be spent either in private praying societies, or in public meetings, or alone in secret, as shall be found most practicable, or judged most convenient, by such as are willing to join in this service. It was expressly understood by those who entered into this agreement, that they were not to consider themselves as rigorously bound to the particular days or hours specified, whatever their circumstances at the time might be; nor yet to regard those days as holy, or set apart by divine authority, but that specified seasons should be agreed upon, chiefly for the purpose of guarding against that influence and forgetfulness to which all are so prone; and securing that concurrence and union in the divine exercise, which are so adapted to warm the heart, and to enlist the social principle in the best of all causes."

This original agreement was limited to two years. At the expiration of that time it was agreed to continue it for seven years longer. In the mean time, so many praying associations were formed, and such a spirit

of prayer for the effusion of the Holy Spirit was so excited, and extended in various parts of Scotland, that the friends of religion became more and more satisfied that their agreement was both wise and useful. Nor was this pious union confined to Scotland. A large body of ministers in New England concurred in the measure; and, among the rest, the venerable Mr. Edwards, afterwards President of the College of New Jersey, and whose praise is in all the churches, laboured with no small success to recommend and promote the great plan. There is reason to believe that this laudable concert in devotion, though it sometimes languished, has never been wholly abandoned since the original agreement.

In 1784, soon after the close of our revolutionary war, this union in prayer received a new impulse, and commenced a new progress. About this time, also, it received another modification as to time, being, for the most part, observed only once in each month, viz. on the evening of the first Monday. One church after another, and one denomination after another, not only in the United States, but in various parts of Christendom, fell in with it, until we may safely say, it now pervades the greater part of the evangelical world. Even in Asia, in Africa, and in the Islands of the Sea, when the first Monday of each month arrives, the voice of united prayer is heard, ascending to the King of Zion, beseeching Him to pour out his Spirit on the nations; to revive his work where the gospel is enjoyed; to hasten the conversion of a fallen world to God.

A few years since, our General Assembly, observing that this service was thinly attended by many of our congregations on the evening of a week day, recommended to such of our churches as might find the change more convenient, to attend upon it on the first Sabbath afternoon of every month, for the purpose of securing a more full attendance. Accordingly, in a number of churches, this plan has been adopted.

Is it not easy to conceive of a service better adapted to arrest the attention and engage the cordial co-operation of the people of God than that described in this plan? It has often appeared wonderful to the writer of these pages, that, on the monthly

returns of this season of united prayer, there should not be more feeling, and more deep interest directed toward this solemn service. Were we left to calculate what might be expected from the nature of the case, we should be ready to say, surely, on the return of this season, every member of the Church of Christ will be found in his seat uniting in the common supplication. Surely, every one who claims to be a Christian will be seen bowing before the throne of grace, and pleading for mercy to the Church and to the world. But, is it found in experience to be so? Alas! would that it were! But no, in many cases not half; and in some not a third of the communicants of our churches make their appearance in these exercises of special devotion. A considerable number of those who are never absent from their seats in the ordinary services of the sanctuary on the Lord's day, are seldom drawn to the place where special prayer is wont to be made for the revival of religion, and the enlargement of the kingdom of Him whom they profess to regard as the only hope of the world. How shall we account for this melancholy fact? Is the Spirit which bears the disciple of Christ to the House of God on the holy Sabbath, a different Spirit from that which he is called upon to exercise at the monthly return of the concert in prayer for the revival of religion, and the spread of the glorious gospel? This will hardly be maintained. How shall we account for it, then, that so many professors of religion, in other respects deemed exemplary, allow themselves habitually to neglect a service which might be expected so strongly and peculiarly to interest every Christian heart? The indication is, undoubtedly, anything but favourable to the Christian character of such individuals. Those who love the Saviour, will, infallibly, love his kingdom; and those who sincerely love his kingdom, will, of course, take an interest in it; will be disposed, in proportion to the sincerity and strength of their affection, to pray for its prosperity, and to exert themselves, according to their ability, to promote its advancement. How, then, shall we estimate the spiritual character of those who manifest little or nothing of the interest and the disposition which have been described? They are certainly wanting in one of the best evidences that they belong to the kingdom of

Christ. I would seriously caution all such persons against indulging the confident hope that they really belong to the spiritual Kingdom of the Redeemer.

Let none say, as an excuse for neglecting the monthly service in question, that it is a mere human appointment, and therefore not obligatory on the conscience as are the Christian Sabbath, and the ordinances connected with that holy day. True, indeed, it is a human appointment in regard to the time and the frequency of its occurrence; but so are all the lectures and prayer-meetings which occur on any of the secular evenings of the week; so are the special services preparatory to the administration of the Lord's Supper, which are observed without scruple in a large number of Christian churches. But what should we think of any one professing to be a Christian, who should turn his back on these services under the pretext that they are not specifically enjoined in the word of God? Surely we should regard such an one as giving miserable evidence indeed of Christian character; and should consider his professed reverence for the word of God, as a hypocritical cover for the absence of all spiritual taste, and of all real concern for the prosperity of the Redeemer's kingdom.

But the plea of not having an express commandment for the observance of a particular day at the beginning of every month to unite in praying for the revival of religion, and for the spread of the gospel, is altogether delusive and unwarranted. That we are bound by divine authority, to pray without ceasing for these objects, is abundantly evident from passages of the word of God almost numberless. That we are bound, not merely to pray *in secret*, but to *unite* with our Fellow Christians in interceding for the enlargement of Zion, is equally evident. How frequently, and at what particular times and places they shall come together for this purpose, must be matter of agreement among those who unite in the service. How shall they ever stately come together without agreeing on some *time* and *place* for that purpose? And does this voluntary agreement, as to the *time* and *place* for the performance of a commanded duty, destroy its character as a duty? Surely it were unreasonable to suppose this. But when such a union is, either formally or ta

citly, agreed upon,—and is afterwards neglected by those who do not really unite in the duty in any other social form, or at any other time, it is not possible to acquit them from the charge of turning their backs on a plain and obvious Christian obligation.

Bear with me, then, my dear friends, if I venture to expostulate with those who claim to be the disciples of Christ, and yet are seldom seen to attend on this solemn monthly service, observed by the churches with which they are connected. Do you profess really to love the kingdom of the Redeemer? Do you profess to believe that the human race is in a lost and perishing condition; that there is no salvation but in Christ; and that the prevalence of his religion in the world is the only method by which men may be made truly happy here, and happy forever? If you are really sincere in this belief and in these impressions, can you refrain from fervent prayer that the kingdom of Christ may prosper and be gloriously extended? Can you stand aloof, or hold your peace, when thousands around you are uniting their supplications for the spread of the gospel? Can you hear of the people of God assembling, from month to month, in your neighbourhood, to pray for this object, without feeling an inclination to join them? Can you receive intelligence, from time to time, of the darkness, corruption, and misery, of a large portion of our race while destitute of the gospel, without having your spirits stirred within you to pray and labour for their relief? If you can, where is the evidence that you love the Saviour? Where the ground of hope that you have any "part or lot" in his great salvation?

It may, indeed, be sometimes inconvenient to attend on this monthly service, and now and then highly inconvenient; just as an occurrence of adverse circumstances may frequently render it difficult to reach the house of God on the Lord's day. Where there is little taste for spiritual things, and the prevalence of a cold worldly spirit, these difficulties are often found to prevent all attendance. But where there is a cordial relish for the service of the sanctuary, and an ardent zeal for the glory of God, and the welfare of perishing men, ordinary hinderances give way, and the desired opportunity is attained and enjoyed. We

may apply here, as well as in a multitude of temporal things, the old proverb, "Where there is a *will* there is a *way*." And O! where there is a heart which knows anything of sincere love to Christ, and fervent love for the souls of men, this way will generally be found by those who have bodily health to allow of their enjoying the precious privilege.

Let me ask those who are seldom seen at the monthly prayer-meeting, how their excuses will appear in a dying hour, and at a judgment seat? I am very sure that many of the causes which are now admitted as an apology for staying at home, or devoting those evenings to mammon or to pleasure, will not be regarded as sufficient when we come to those honest and solemn seasons which are before us all, and which will try every one's work of what sort it is. Then, O then, it will be seen that a *want of interest in the service* was the real and only reason of the absence of multitudes; and that it has, indeed, little attraction for those who have no more of what belongs to the Christian than the venerated name.

Do you forget, my beloved friends, that, in making it our duty to pray and labour without ceasing for the spread of the gospel, and for the conversion of the world to God, the great Head of the Church is consulting our own good, as well as that of the poor heathen, and of all those portions of our race which are destitute of the means of grace which we enjoy? But is it not demonstrably so? Is not love to God, and love to man, the sum and substance of all religion? Is not everything which serves to direct our thoughts and our affections to the temporal and eternal benefit of our species, and to the kingdom of Christ, conducive to our growth in grace; to the attainment of higher evidence that we belong to Christ; and to our most solid and permanent scriptural enjoyment? The truth is, the less our hearts are occupied about the Redeemer's kingdom, the less our attention is drawn to it; the less our concern for it; the less our zeal for its enlargement; the less our sense of the value of the gospel, which will always be proportioned to our sympathy for those who have it not; the less religion, of course, we have, and, consequently, the less enjoyment of it. Surely, then, those professors of religion who

neglect the stated exercises under consideration, forget their own mercies, and wrong their own souls. They cannot but fail of that spiritual enjoyment which is so truly desirable and precious in itself, and which forms so large a part of that evidence that the grace of Christ dwells and reigns within us, and is preparing us for that holy and happy kingdom in which "that which is in part shall be done away, and that which is perfect shall come."

Do you desire, then, to receive a benefit from time to time in your own souls? There is not a more direct method of making this attainment, than to turn away from all earthly idols to the cause and glory of Christ. Do you wish to enter more deeply than you have ever yet done into the interior and the glory of the Redeemer's kingdom? Would you feel more for the wants and miseries of your fellow-men, and cherish a stronger desire for the promotion of their temporal and eternal happiness? Then embrace every opportunity of going where the people of God are assembled to implore a blessing on the Church and the world. There, and only there may you expect to feel your hearts warmed with love to your Master in heaven, and with love to his people. There, and there only, may you expect the flame of sanctified affection to kindle from bosom to bosom, and to make your spirits as it were "the chariot of a willing people." Alas! if the professing people of God could be made to feel how

much spiritual benefit and enjoyment they deprive themselves of by abstaining from that precious union in prayer for the conversion of the world, which has been for so many years the practice of millions of the disciples of Christ in every quarter of the globe;—nay, if they could lay to heart as they ought, that their negligence of the precious privilege in question, and of similar privileges, is among the causes of their leanness, their spiritual darkness, and their retrogression in the divine life, they would no longer regard this negligence as a small affair in the life of a traveller to the Zion above.

It is common, and it is just to say, that *nothing done for Christ is lost*. But it is equally just to say, that *nothing done with a proper spirit for ourselves is ever lost*. Every sincere attempt to perform duty, leaves a blessing behind it to the performer. Every throb of gratitude for mercy, as it were stamps on the soul a new lineament of conformity to God, and imparts a new element of spiritual joy. Every prayer in which we cordially unite with the people of God, gives a new impulse to the spiritual life, a new ardour to its vital warmth. They who forget the season of prayer, and the assembly of God's people, shall become "weaker and weaker;" "but they who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up on wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

To be continued.

GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

EXTRACTS

FROM THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF EDUCATION: MAY, 1844.

Number of Candidates—Receipts.

THE number of new beneficiaries received since the last report has been *ninety-nine*, making the whole number aided by the Board from the beginning, fourteen hundred and twenty-nine. The whole number upon our funds during the past year has been *four hundred and eight*.

Of these there were in their theological course, either in Seminaries or under private tuition,	-	-	135
In twenty four Collegiate Institutions,	184		
In twenty-nine Academies,	-	-	55
Under private tutors,	-	-	9
Teaching temporarily to increase their funds,	-	-	25
Total,			408

These numbers would have been increased considerably, if the remoteness of the present Assembly had not obliged

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FOREIGN MISSIONS.

REMARKS

ON THE METHOD OF CONDUCTING THE
MONTHLY CONCERT IN PRAYER.

BY SAMUEL MILLER, D.D.

No. II.

(Continued from Vol. XII. p. 270.)

In the preceding remarks on the Monthly Prayer Meeting, I have endeavoured to show the importance of that exercise; its value as a means of grace; and how much it is to be lamented that attendance upon it is so much neglected by many professors of religion, belonging to those denominations which acknowledge the general duty of paying respect to it. This neglect was traced to a declining state of religion in the individuals who indulge it, or to erroneous views of the character and claims of the exercise. But it is probable that the entire blame in relation to this matter ought not to be laid at the door of the private members of our churches. Do our pastors in all cases conduct this exercise in a manner adapted to attract and interest those who attend upon it? Thin assemblies on the Lord's day, in many of our places of worship, are, doubtless, to be ascribed to the want of attraction on the part of the officiating ministers. Can it be any marvel, then, if, when the monthly exercise of which we speak fails to secure that large and general attendance which its nature demands, we should feel constrained to lay at least a portion of the blame at the door of pastors, who will not take the pains to engage in it the attention and the hearts of their people? So far from such a supposition being improbable or marvellous, it would seem that nothing can be more natural or consistent with the strictest justice.

When I have gone to the house of God, at the beginning of each month, and have there found assembled three or four dozen hearers,

out of, perhaps, three or four hundred communicants; when I have seen everything wearing the aspect of chilling coldness; the prayers formal, dull, and full of vain and spiritless repetitions; the pastor manifesting no zeal, and giving no information respecting the cause of missions, or the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom; and nothing adapted to enlighten, to warm, or to edify,—I have felt as if it was impossible to wonder that the attendance was so small, or that those who did attend seemed to look and feel as if they should care but little ever to attend again.

Perhaps one of the greatest faults in such meetings, as now too often conducted, is their continual dull *sameness*. We are commonly called to unite in a succession of prayers, comprising the same topics, couched in the same or similar terms, and adapted to confine the minds of those who join in them to a narrow field of desires and requests. We justly regard it as one of the advantages which we, as Presbyterians, enjoy, that we are not confined to a liturgy, but are at liberty to enlarge and diversify our plan of social prayer, so as to accommodate it to the various circumstances in which we are placed. There is a love of *variety* inherent in our nature, which may not be, in all cases, unhallowed, and which, undoubtedly, ought to be, to some extent, consulted and gratified. That this principle is not sufficiently remembered and consulted in conducting the monthly concert in prayer, has, no doubt, been often lamented by most of those intelligent Christians who have had frequent opportunities of attending on its exercises. Of course, the introduction of an improvement in these exercises, in this respect, would add materially to their attraction and their usefulness.

Let it be remembered that the objects of prayer contemplated by the original proposers and founders of this monthly service were many and highly interesting. They are such as these:—That the kingdom of God may come—that every obstacle to the spread of the Gospel may be taken out of the way; that more labourers may be raised up, properly qualified, and sent forth into the great harvest; that the labourers already in the field may be protected and strength-

ened, and made to speak boldly as they ought to speak; and that the word of the Lord proclaimed by them may have free course and be glorified; that the beloved brethren and sisters who have left homes as dear to them as ours can be, for the sake of bearing the word of Life to the benighted pagans, may be inspired with wisdom, girded with strength, aided in every difficulty, and comforted in all their sorrows; that the millions throughout the world who have never heard the glad tidings of salvation, may have them preached to them in purity and power; that those who have the direction and management of selecting and sending forth missionaries, and of providing means for their support, may be counselled and guided, and their work crowned with abundant success; that the schools established among the heathen, and other destitute parts of the world, for training up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, may be multiplied and greatly prospered; that the Holy Spirit may reach the hearts of young and old among those who are sitting in the region and shadow of death; that those who call themselves Christians may feel their obligations to send the Gospel to "every creature" who is destitute of it; that the sleeping Church may be roused to a sense of her duty in regard to this great concern; that the triumphs of evangelical truth may be great and glorious wherever it is sent; that the great Lord of the harvest would go with his ministering servants wherever they go to preach his blessed Gospel; that the pagan heart may be everywhere enlightened and softened, and the way of the Lord be prepared for the spread of his name among all nations.—These are among the great and precious objects of prayer which ought to fill the hearts, and dwell upon the lips of the assembled worshippers at every monthly concert. Here is, surely, matter enough for enlarged, rich, and ever varying petitions. Here are topics sufficient in number, and in immeasurable importance to occupy the fixed attention and the absorbing desires and zeal of every Christian. Surely, wherever there is a spark of love to the Saviour, or to the souls of men, such objects as these cannot leave an indifferent heart.

Not that all these topics are to be considered as essentially making a part of every prayer offered up at the monthly concert; but that the objects contemplated, and the topics of petition employed, on such occasions, are such as have been mentioned, and are, of course, various, grand and interesting in a high degree, and such as may well engage the whole hearts of all who love the Saviour and his cause. Who would not expect that an occasion when such objects as these are appointed to claim the attention and the prayers of an assembly of Christian men and women, would prove an occasion of

peculiar solemnity, and draw to it every heart that had the smallest desire for the glory of God and the happiness of man?

What means, then, ought to be taken by every pastor to render this occasion in the highest degree interesting and profitable, both to himself and to the people of his charge? I answer,—let him, first of all, by meditation and prayer, labour to keep his own mind in a state of lively interest in regard to this great subject. To this end, let him, through the whole of the preceding month, labour to keep awake, and on the inquiry for every kind of missionary information adapted to engage, instruct and edify the Christian people. Let him gather from every channel of public intelligence, everything bearing on the state of the heathen world, and on the condition of all the dark and destitute places of the earth, whether in our land or elsewhere; everything adapted to give the people of his charge a distinct and strong impression of the real situation of those who are without a knowledge of the Gospel—their blindness, their vices, their misery, and their prospects for eternity. Let him collect and exhibit, in the most clear and lively manner that he is able, the recent intelligence from the missionary field—the new plans and efforts of missionary associations—the glad tidings of their success, or the mournful information of their failure. Let him be laying up in store for the whole preceding month for this solemn occasion. Thus beginning, the moment one such occasion is over, to prepare for another. Let him carefully make a written memorandum of every particular; and be prepared, when the time for the meeting arrives, to make as lively and affecting an exhibition of the whole as possible; not by reading long and tedious articles, as is sometimes injudiciously done, from missionary papers, but by presenting a rapid outline—a condensed *synopsis* of what has been doing for the whole month, in such a manner as to keep up and reward the attention of an audience for twenty-five minutes, or, at the utmost, half an hour at a time.

How can a minister and his people be expected to *feel* aright, or to *pray* aright, if they do not *know* the state of the missionary field, its wants and its difficulties, as well as the signal blessings, on the one hand, with which it has pleased the God of grace to favour it, and on the other, the adversities with which he has seen fit, in his sovereign wisdom, to visit it. A pious minister was once observed by a Christian friend, during a period of remarkable public anxiety and trouble, to be peculiarly intent on reading the public papers, secular as well as religious. Upon being asked, why he was so much employed in this manner? he replied, "I do it that I may know how to pray." The answer was a wise one. Every line of important information that he read, was an addition-

al guide in imploring those blessings which were needed by the Church and by the world.

But while the pastor is careful, in every service of this kind, to give rich information to his audience respecting the state of the missionary field; while he considers and treats this as a primary object of the monthly exercise, let it not be forgotten that *prayer* forms a prominent and vital part of the whole service. Its *name* imports no less; and its *object* is equally decisive in calling for a predominance of that element. Let no plan, then, for its management, be suffered to shut out, or even to abridge the proper amount of prayer. Let there be generally *three* prayers, and never less than *two*. And let there be an endeavour to have these *strictly appropriate* from beginning to end. There is often a great lack of this character in the prayers in which we are called to join in the service before us. It is not uncommon to hear those who lead in it employing a large part of their time in common-place topics, in general and extended confession of sin, and in a minute detail of thanksgiving for the common mercies of providence as well as of grace. The consequence is, either that those parts of their prayers which belong to the occasion are crowded into the latter part of the exercise, and hurried over in too hasty and superficial a manner; or that the successive prayers are so *inordinately protracted* as to become tedious, and to extend the whole service to an inconvenient length. The prayers on such occasions ought seldom, very seldom, to exceed *seven or eight minutes* each, especially when there are more than *two*. And I know of no better method of securing the proper brevity in our social prayers, than that of charging ourselves to be *strictly appropriate* to the occasion from the first sentence. If this plan were adopted, we should be better able to judge of the length of our own prayers, and be much more seldom led away by those endless repetitions and wanderings of request, which, though good and edifying in themselves, do not properly belong to the occasion. How much more suitable and happy, when all the prayers are truly appropriate; and when, (as all that is appropriate cannot be comprised in any one prayer,) those who succeed each other be careful to take up and present what those who went before omitted, so as to exhibit something like a comprehensive view of all the objects of petition that ought to be brought forward in the whole exercise.

And here it may not be improper to suggest what I have often thought worthy of more consideration than it has commonly received. No one can be more friendly to the practice of inviting the lay members of our churches to take the lead in social prayer than the writer of these lines. Such a practice is adapted to diffuse a spirit of prayer more widely in the church, and

to cause a spirit of more active zeal in conducting the affairs of the Redeemer's kingdom, to take a firmer hold of the professors of religion than they would be apt otherwise to possess. There is much in the principle of *employing* men in the service of Zion—giving them something to *do*, if we would engage them to take a deep and practical interest in her affairs. But there can be no doubt that this has been sometimes done prematurely and unwisely. In some congregations it is not unusual to call upon young and inexperienced converts to take the lead in prayer, in social meetings, in less than a week, sometimes even in forty-eight hours after they have been hopefully brought into the kingdom of grace. This is neither prudent nor safe. It is introducing into the place of a leader and guide in sacred things, one whose knowledge is small and crude, who has no suitable experience, and who may give utterance to that which is not "good to the use of edifying." And if it be not productive of this painful effect, it may result in injury to the individual himself; it may become the means of "puffing up" a "novice" so soon called into public view.

That the intelligent and warm-hearted converts to experimental religion among the laity ought, as before stated, to be trained gradually and discreetly to the work of leading in social prayer, there can be no doubt. But let a moderate and reasonable time elapse, after they are united to the Church, before they are called upon to take a part in this service. Let them not be called so publicly into the view of the religious community, until their religious knowledge is more mature, and their new character, as professors of religion, better known and established. And even then, let them be first called upon for this service in the smaller and more private meetings for prayer, that they may, by little and little, gain the confidence and self-possession, and form the habit necessary to an edifying performance of such a duty.

It has appeared to the writer of these lines that frequently by far too little sound discretion is exercised in selecting persons to lead in prayer in the monthly exercises now under consideration. In an exercise so important to the interests of religion, on which so much depends, and in regard to which every effort ought to be made to conduct it in an impressive and edifying manner, surely those who are not qualified thus to appear, who have little either of the gift or the spirit of prayer, ought to be invited to take a leading part as seldom as possible. The object of inviting any to take such a part is, not to pay a compliment, not to minister to personal vanity, but to edify the Church of God, to promote that great cause which the whole service is intended to subserve—the diffusion of a spirit of love to the Redeemer, and of zeal for the extension of his kingdom throughout the world. Can it be

necessary to employ argument to prove that every instrumentality employed on such an occasion, when a portion of the worldly as well as of the pious may be assembled, ought to be well adapted to answer its great end? It is true, indeed, that, with respect to all the means which we use, our sole reliance ought to be on the power of the Holy Spirit vouchsafed to render them effectual; still, in spiritual, as in temporal things, "wisdom is profitable to direct," and our constant aim ought to be, as far as possible, to make use of those means only which are adapted to promote the great purpose in view.

From all that has been said, it is easy to see what a weight of responsibility rests on every pastor in conducting this monthly service in such a manner as shall tend most effectually to answer its great end. What a precious opportunity it affords for calling the attention of his flock, *twelve times a-year*, to the great duty and the appointed means of converting the world to God; keeping them constantly and faithfully informed of the state and the wants of the missionary field; leading them to the throne of grace to implore a blessing on that field; and stirring them up, by all the means of argument, exhortation and entreaty in his power, to a faithful discharge of their duty in causing the Gospel to be sent to every creature.

Perhaps it will be said, that if the monthly prayer meeting be a matter of so much consequence, it fit bring with it so much duty, and ought to be prepared for with so much care; then, instead of being regarded, as it too often is, as a sort of bye-business, which may be despatched without material preparation, it must in reality prove one of the most laborious services in the whole month. This consequence is not denied. It ought indeed to be so regarded, and every effort made to render it the most instructive, the most thrilling, the most solemn exercise during the month. And can any faithful pastor, any one who loves his Master in heaven and the souls of men, be unwilling to meet such an exercise, and to make all the preparation for it in his power? Can any service, during any ordinary month, be more precious, or more worthy of employing all the time, and all the labour which can be bestowed upon it?

The complaint, that the monthly prayer meeting is not well attended in most of our churches, is, as before observed, an old complaint, and I would that we could say it is not well founded. In many cases, not one half even of the communicants are present; and, in general, very few indeed of those who are not church members ever think of attending, unless it takes place in the afternoon of the Lord's day. And, in truth, this was probably the main reason for the recommendation issued by our General Assembly, a few years since, to transfer the observance

from the evening of the first Monday of each month, to the afternoon of the first Sabbath. Until this transfer was adopted, only a small portion of our congregations were usually present at this service, and of course only a small part contributed to the pecuniary collection commonly made in connection with the service. But is it probable that, if the service itself were made what it ought to be, if indefatigable pains were taken to render it the most instructive, interesting and deeply exciting service in the whole month, that it would be thus neglected? There would be no risk in answering this question with the most decisive negative. No, the moment it ceased to be the heavy, monotonous, common-place exercise which we too commonly find it, it would draw the earnest attention, and the full assembly which generally follow ministrations of an elevated character. If every member of each congregation were taught by experience to expect to find this service rich in information, animating in Christian duty, and in every respect adapted to promote Christian edification, can any one doubt that it would be well attended? The writer of these lines would be very far from encouraging in any minister of the Gospel the indulgence of a spirit of indolence for a moment, in any service; but he would say, with deliberate solemnity, if such a spirit be ever indulged, let it not be at the monthly concert in prayer, when his own soul, and the souls of all who hear him, ought to be led out of themselves to the largest concern for the kingdom of the Redeemer; when the desolations of fallen man rise in solemn array before his mind; when the wants and miseries of our lost world ought, with concentrated and unusual force, to move every heart; and when every feeling of love to the Master who died for us, and to the souls of perishing men, ought to fill the heart of every listening attendant with peculiar and unwonted sympathy, and the most fervent zeal for sending to them the only cure for their misery.

Nor is it difficult, in a variety of ways, to draw the special attention of a Christian flock to this monthly service. Let not only a specific notice of it be given on the preceding Sabbath, if it be observed on Monday evening, or in the morning of the day, if observed on Sabbath afternoon; but let the notice be couched in such language, accompanied with a sentence or two of such brief and comprehensive remarks, and preceded or followed by such pointed prayers as may be adapted to rouse the attention, and, in some measure, touch the feelings of every hearer.

Let the pastor encourage all who attend on this service to bring their *children* with them. Is it not desirable that our children, from their earliest years, should be habituated to the company and the language of *prayer*, and that they

should be accustomed to the work of contributing something of their little savings for the benefit of those who are "perishing for lack of vision?" If we ever expect them to feel right on this subject, we cannot begin too early to imbue their minds with benevolent sentiments, and to teach them to feel what it will be their duty to practice when they reach mature age. O how large a portion of Christian parents are deplorably delinquent in this, one of the primary elements of Christian education—leading their children to a throne of grace, and to the house of God, and leading them also early, by the united force of precept and example, to remember that, young as they are, they are debtors, deep debtors, to the kingdom of that Saviour in whose name they have been baptized.

When shall we have monthly concerts con-

ducted in the spirit of these suggestions? When shall we see them bearing a character which shall warm the pastor's own heart, draw around him the mass of his stated hearers, as well as of his church members, and constitute a little monthly era among his people? When that period shall arrive, it will mark a season of prosperity and joy in the Church. It will be both the effect and the cause of better days, and will mark the purpose of our covenant God to have mercy on Zion. Come, Lord Jesus, O come quickly, thus to bless our half awake and struggling Church!

Some remarks on the *contributions* for the support of missions, which ought ever to accompany this monthly service, must form the subject of a future number.

To be continued.

Board of Foreign Missions.

Allahabad Mission.

EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER OF REV. J. WILSON.

This Mission has but one station, the city of Allahabad, at the junction of the rivers Ganges and Jumna, about 500 miles above Calcutta. The population of the City was estimated in 1843, at 65,000; of the District, at 774,000. The importance of this missionary post is greatly increased by its being the place where an annual *mela*, or fair, is held for the purpose of performing religious obligations in the Ganges—this fair being attended by very large numbers of people, sometimes amounting to hundreds of thousands, many of whom come from distant parts of the country. The population of the provinces, to which there is easy access from Allahabad, is also very large, and several important cities might at once be made stations in connection with this Mission, if the men and the pecuniary means were at the disposal of the Board for that purpose.

Allahabad was first occupied as a missionary station in the autumn of 1836, by the Rev. James McEwen and his wife, who had reached Calcutta in the preceding April. After prosecuting their important duties with much zeal, Mr. and Mrs. McEwen were compelled to return to this country in 1839, by the failure of Mr. McE.'s health. To prevent the station being left unoccupied, it had been deemed advisable for the Rev. James Wilson and his wife to remove to Allahabad, where they arrived in the beginning of the same year. In the course of this year, 1838, Mr. Wilson was joined by the Rev. John H. Morrison, who had been lately called to mourn over the death of Mrs. Morrison; she departed this life

on the 28th of April, soon after reaching Calcutta. The Rev. Messrs. Joseph Warren and John E. Freeman, and their wives, joined the mission in 1839, the Rev. Joseph Owen in 1840, and the Rev. John Wray and his wife in 1842. In 1843, the Rev. J. H. Morrison was obliged to return to this country, on account of his health.

Preaching the Gospel; the superintendence of schools—boarding and common; an efficient printing press and book-bindery; translations and the preparation of tracts, occupy the brethren of this mission. From his being the oldest member of the mission, and otherwise well qualified, a large share of duties in the last mentioned department of labour has devolved on Mr. Wilson. This remark will introduce the accounts inserted below.—The Mohammedan controversy is in some respects a difficult one, and it is one which missionaries in India cannot avoid. These notices present one of its aspects—its travesty of some parts of the sacred records. Mohammedans claim indeed that the Christian Scriptures favour their system, and the Mussulman version of David's repentance and of Jonah's mission to Nineveh are often brought forward to prove that God accepts a sinner on mere repentance, without any atonement. We may here state that an important work in its bearing on this controversy has been lately published at the mission-press, *The Koran in Urdu, with Notes*. The translation was made by a learned Mohammedan, Abdul Qadir, and the Notes were added by the missionaries. This work will excite considerable interest among the Mohammedans, on account of its revealing to the common people the true character of the Koran, and exposing clearly its errors and absurd revelations.

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REMARKS
ON THE MODE OF OBSERVING THE
MONTHLY CONCERT IN PRAYER.

BY SAMUEL MILLER, D.D.

No. III.

(Continued from last number.)

As the Monthly Prayer Meeting is an observance devoted to the great interests of the revival of religion, the spread of the Gospel, and the conversion of the world to God, it must, of course, be considered as including every thing that is necessary to the great work of evangelizing the population of our globe, and preaching the Gospel to every creature. Among these it is evident that CONTRIBUTIONS for sustaining the expense of Missions must ever be comprehended. This accompaniment of the exercise, is, by many churches, wholly omitted. This omission, however, ought never to be allowed. Prayers and alms ought ever to go together. When we assemble to implore a blessing on the means employed for sending the Gospel to the dark and destitute nations, what can be more obvious and reasonable than the duty of furnishing our proportion of the means for carrying on a work at once so expensive and so precious?

We sometimes hear surprise expressed, even by some of our pious people, that so much is said at our Monthly Prayer Meetings about *money*. That we scarcely even pass such a meeting without hearing the duty of *contributions* at least hinted at, if not urgently pressed. But does not this surprise result from the want of consideration? Is any Christian man, however heavenly-minded—however weaned from the world, able to live himself, or to feed and clothe his family without expense? If the Pagans knew the value of the Gospel, they would be willing to sustain and even liberally to compensate those who carry it to them. But they do not know its value; and of course, those who bear to them the bread of life, must

be sustained by those who send them. And is this to be done without funds; and if the number sent be considerable, without *large funds*? Can Missionaries and their families live upon air? Or can we expect them to be supported by miracle? We don't expect our own families to be sustained without money, and we are willing to bestow it for their comfort. Ought we not to be quite as willing, nay more cordially zealous in aiding to support families who are devoting their time, and all their powers to the advancement of the kingdom of Christ? What strange forgetfulness and want of practical consideration blind the minds, and affects the judgment of thousands who seldom fail of judging correctly where their supposed interest is not concerned! Alas! that the children of this world are apt to be so much wiser and more considerate in their generation than the children of light!

If we examine the annual statistical reports of our Church, the mortifying and wonderful fact is disclosed, that nearly, if not quite ONE HALF of our congregations contribute ABSOLUTELY NOTHING to the treasury of the Board of Foreign Missions; and quite as many, if not more, who contribute nothing to Domestic Missions. How many of these churches pay any attention to the Monthly Prayer Meeting is altogether unknown to the present writer. How much they may *pray*, either in public or private, for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, no ecclesiastical records within reach manifest. But, surely, they give little evidence that their *hearts* are in these prayers, even if regularly offered up, when so little practical fruit of love and zeal are permitted to appear. This is what the spirit of inspiration calls "loving in words only, and not in deed and in truth." We contended, for a long time, and against much opposition, for the privilege and the opportunity of conducting Foreign Missions, as a Church. Now that we have gained our object, shall we give occasion to the religious public to suppose that we were more anxious to gain the victory over opposers than to be empowered to perform the great work for which we professed to contend? Surely the history

of the conflict by which, under the blessing of God, we attained the position which we now occupy, is deeply interesting, and greatly increases our responsibility. Our opposers in that conflict predicted, that it would be found that we had neither life nor zeal enough to carry on to any advantage the work which we undertook. How unhappy if this prediction should be verified! Surely every consideration of worldly consistency, as well as of sanctified principle, calls upon us to arise in all the strength that God may give us, and to pursue in good earnest the object which we profess to love, and which we have solicited the power of pursuing.

It is not uncommon, indeed, to hear the remark, that some congregations are so small and so poor as to be scarcely able to support a pastor; and that such ought not to be called upon, or expected to contribute to the missionary treasury. This doctrine I am bold to say, has no foundation or countenance in the word of God. No church was ever so feeble or impoverished as to make it improper to call upon its members to contribute to the cause of Missions. If I were asked how a church, however small or poor, would be most likely to rise and grow; what would be the surest means of attaining edification and strength, I would say with confidence—Let it begin in good earnest to pray and exert itself for sending the Gospel to the benighted and perishing. However small its strength, let it rouse that little, such as it is, and engage with fervent prayer, and with heartfelt love for souls, in contributing to the Lord's treasury, and the very effort would tend to enlarge and build it up. A small church, or a sickly Christian, may fitly be compared to an individual long enfeebled by disease, who is beginning, in the commencement of convalescence, to employ muscular effort in exercise in the open air. Every effort adds to his strength. He may be so feeble as to feel as if he could scarcely move a limb; but every movement is salutary and invigorating. So that instead of saying, his weakness forbids him to take exercise; he may rather say, that he cannot regain his health without it. In like manner, a small and feeble church, instead of being able with propriety to say—"We cannot afford to give alms with our prayers for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom,"—ought rather to say—"We cannot afford to live without *doing something* as well as *praying* for the salvation of the benighted and perishing." There is no case in regard to which the proverb of the wise man is more applicable than here—"There is that withholdeth, but it tendeth to poverty."

Nay, if I were a pastor, and were engaged in collecting the contributions of Christian liberality toward the missionary cause, I should never think of passing the door even of a *pauper*,

whose whole support was derived from the charity of the church. If, indeed, I were soliciting donations for completing the salary of the pastor, or for repairing or rebuilding the house of worship, I should never think of applying to such for aid; but if the object were to send the Gospel to the poor and perishing, as an accompaniment of prayer on their behalf, I would not deny, even to the poorest, the opportunity of contributing their cent or half cent per month, which if they had a proper spirit, would be regarded as a precious privilege, and which, when pious wishes and prayers went along, would be accounted, in the sight of the great Searcher of hearts, a more truly acceptable offering than thousands of gold and silver from the overflowing abundance of the rich. The poor widow commended by our Lord, who cast "two mites which make a farthing," into the Lord's treasury, is represented as having cast in more, in the divine estimation, than all the other contributors, however liberal. A pious, but deeply indigent widow, in handing her *suspence* to the collectors for the missionary fund, said, with a starting tear—"This is all I have to give; but I give it with my whole heart, and am desirous it should go, with my hearty prayers, to the poor heathen."

There are those who are heard to complain, that collections taken up every month, for the support of missions are too frequent; and especially when taken in connection with the contributions for other purposes called for at intermediate seasons. Surely such complainers have read the records of the people of God, at different periods of the churches' history, with little profit. Under the Old Testament economy, every member of the Jewish commonwealth was required to pay two tythes, or one-fifth part of all his income, for the support of the ministers of religion, and the expense of the daily sacrifices. And, indeed, little, if any less than one-half of each individual's income was required to meet all the demands which arose under the theocracy. What would be thought of requiring such a proportion of income for the support and spread of the Gospel now? and yet that amount of contribution was fixed by infinite Wisdom, who perfectly understood what was reasonable and for the good of the people. Let us also call to mind the large and almost boundless charities of the early Christians. The system of *tythes* was done away when Christ came. No specific assessment was proclaimed by his inspired teachers. The "law of love" seems to have been made the rule for its almost limitless liberality. Let the advocates of modern parsimony read the record of their contributions and sacrifices. Think how they braved dangers and denied themselves, and poured out their property, and even their

blood, "like water," for spreading the Gospel. Yes, amidst all poverty, and privations, and persecutions under which they laboured, they brought offerings for sending the Gospel of salvation to others, truly wonderful in the amount. Nay, they not only gave their substance—sometimes to the last farthing—to this object; but they counted not their lives too dear to be made an offering for the promotion of the Redeemer's kingdom and glory. In short, for several centuries after the resurrection of Christ, they devoted themselves to the support of the missionary cause with a universality, and to an extent, to which, as far as I know, there is now no parallel. Let the professing believers in Christ of the present day read this record, and then say, whether those who talk of giving only what is "convenient" for the spread of the Gospel, nay, who appear to grudge the sacrifice even of the smallest luxury, either in unnecessary dress, or in injurious feasting, can be considered as belonging to the same body, or as animated with the same spirit, with those primitive disciples?

I know one church (not in our connection) by no means wealthy, which has been long in the habit of contributing *fifty dollars, every month* for the support of Missions, besides all other claims for the work of benevolence. I am acquainted with another church, also of medium character as to wealth, and I am sorry to say, not belonging to our body, which never fails to raise one hundred dollars every month for the same cause, in addition to large liberality toward other objects of charity. Happy should we be if a similar spirit pervaded *our churches!* If all the members of our churches could be prevailed upon to contribute *twenty-five cents* at each Monthly Prayer Meeting, or even *half that sum*, in addition to the aid which hundreds, not members, would be ready cheerfully to give—the Boards to whom we have entrusted the missionary work, would have great sufficiency for carrying into execution all their wise plans. But how distressing to know that even this pittance is more than the great majority of our members can be prevailed upon to give: and that many even of those who profess to come together to pray for the spread of the Gospel, while in their addresses to the throne of grace, they say to the heathen, Be ye warmed and filled, yet contribute nothing toward sending to them the bread and the water of life.

Let every professing Christian be asked—Does any month in the whole year pass without bringing many *mercies* to you and yours? Health, reason, food and raiment, domestic comforts, and above all, the privileges of the Gospel are among the number which unceasingly call for a grateful acknowledgment and return. Do you owe nothing to the king of Zion for these mercies? Do you owe nothing

for your Bibles, your Sabbaths, your open sanctuaries, your sacramental tables, and all the humanizing, regulating and sanctifying effects which these things are constantly diffusing around you? You are not slow to confess that all these institutions exert an influence to make your children more orderly, your families happier, and the whole aspect of society more regular and blessed!

When the Monthly Prayer Meeting returns, have you the heart, O Christian, to turn your back upon it; and, if you go, to grudge at least a few cents as a thank-offering to God, and for imparting the same privileges which you enjoy to those who are perishing for lack of them? Think—think again of your own mercies; and then if you can trample on the obligations which bind you to plan and provide, as well as pray, for the temporal and eternal welfare of those who are destitute of these mercies, how can you dare claim to be the disciples of Him who has said—"It is more blessed to give than to receive," and who came to "seek and save that which was lost?"

We cannot reasonably expect *every one* who is friendly to the cause of Missions, to be *always* present at every Monthly Prayer Meeting. Bad weather—sickness—domestic cares—and many events, incapable of being specified, alas! perhaps, at some times, even spiritual indifference, will keep *some* at home. But there is no need that obstacles of this kind should prevent any one from forwarding his monthly contribution. He may send it by a son, or daughter, or neighbour. And if, for the accomplishment of this object, he should employ one who has no taste for attending, and who is not accustomed to be there, he may be the means of putting a beloved friend, without seeming to design it, in the way of receiving the richest of all blessings: a new heart and a right spirit—an introduction to that kingdom which is "not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Are any ready to ask, How much is it the duty of each one, on the return of this monthly service, to give for the great purpose of spreading the Gospel? "It has been frequently wished by Christians," says the excellent Dr. *Payson*, "that there were some *rule* laid down in the Bible, fixing the proportion of their property which they ought to contribute to religious uses. This is as if a child should go to his father, and say, "Father, how many times in the day must I come to you with some testimonial of my love? How *often* will it be necessary to show my affection for you?" The father would, of course, reply—"Just as often as your feelings prompt you, my child, and no oftener." Just so Christ says to his people—"Look at me, and see what I have done and

suffered for you, and then give me just what you think I deserve. I do not wish any thing forced.*

Perhaps a better answer could not be given, when addressed to a gracious and truly grateful heart. But, alas! how inadequate a rule when presented to the mass of Christian professors! If *present inclination* were the only guide, what stunted and miserable results would, in a multitude of cases, appear! An indication of the divine will still more definite and intelligible to all must be summoned to our aid. True, the demand of a *tenth* part of our income, as before stated, is no longer in force, in so many words, under the New Testament economy. And yet, can any one read the New Testament without perceiving that all this, and even more is virtually demanded?—That, as the Christian dispensation is one of more light, less servility, and much larger privilege; so it brings with it more extended obligations, and offers excitements to spiritual enterprise and usefulness incomparably greater. I should say, that every Christian, if he duly contemplated his privileges and his obligation, would feel himself bound to go beyond rather than fall short of that which was binding under the system of tithes. Under this system, the pious Jew, in the scope of his benevolence, was confined to the limits of his own nation. It appeared to be the will of God that up to the coming of the Messiah in the flesh, a single nation only should be the depository of his truth, and the conservators of his laws. But now, the Christian, with a vast enlargement of his own mercies, privileges and hopes, beholds a world lying in sin and misery before him, to every part of which he is commanded, as far as his ability extends, to send the glorious Gospel. Will not every enlightened believer, in these enlarged circumstances, feel himself called upon for greatly enlarged desires, efforts, and contributions for the relief of a dying world, committed as it were, to the care of each member of the Master's body, and for the extension of the kingdom and glory of that Master?

Each individual Christian must of necessity be left to himself to decide how much he will contribute, from year to year, towards sustaining the Church in her efforts to convert the world to God. It is in this case as in a multitude of others. The precise path of duty cannot be prescribed to each individual in every case without encroaching on the province of miracle. It is plainly made our duty by the word of God to "visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction;" but *how much* of our time shall be devoted to this object must, of course be left for each one of us to judge for himself; and it is evident that the *same portion* of time is not, and cannot be required of all. Again;

it is the duty of all to spend a portion of every day in prayer and reading the Scriptures. But *how many hours* of each day ought to be thus spent, must, of course, be left to the occupation and the circumstances of each person. Some ought, undoubtedly, to spend more time thus than others. In like manner, what shall be the annual amount of the contributions of each one who calls himself a Christian to the cause of Religion, must be left to his own conscience. No other mortal has a right to decide it for him. But is there no other tribunal where his decisions on this subject are to be reviewed, and, if erroneous, condemned? Certainly there is; and therefore, the parsimonious giver, and he who refuses to give, under the impression that he is left at liberty by the Head of the Church to judge for himself, is placed, in the new economy, in circumstances of responsibility which he too often forgets. There is such a thing, O professing Christian! as ROBBING GOD under the New Testament dispensation as really as under the Old. The difference is, that *now* the duty of paying what he demands is not fenced round with the same rigor of servility as it once was; but that *delinquency* is attended with more resistance of light and mercy, and is, of course, likely to be visited with a severe penalty.

The great subject, then, of which we speak is by no means left in that indefinite posture in the word of God, which many imagine. When, therefore, he who is in the receipt of a comfortable income for the support of his family, is reluctant, and thinks it hard to devote a *tenth*—or a *twentieth*—nay even a *thirtieth* of his revenues for the spread of the Gospel:—when he who is master of great wealth, and lives in the enjoyment of every luxury, is unwilling to lop off any portion of his vain show, or to abridge a single luxury, for the sake of promoting the kingdom of Him who gives him all that he enjoys, and to whom he professes to be indebted for every hope: when he who, on the recurrence of *hard times*, which call upon him to retrench—begins retrenchment first with his God;—these individuals, and many like them, may confidently call themselves Christians, and may imagine that there is none to review and set aside their judgment. Of their fellow-men, indeed, there is none. No man, or body of men, has a right to say to such an one—"Why doest thou so?" But there is ONE who has this right, and who will assuredly exercise it. The God who made us, and who has given us all our possessions, has declared, that we are not our own; that we ourselves, and all we possess, are *his property*; that we are bound to "seek FIRST the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;" that the love of Christ ought ever to "constrain us to live not unto ourselves, but to Him who died for us, and rose again;" and

* FAYSON'S Memoirs, p. 361.

that "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" ought to be inscribed upon every article of our property, as well as upon every affection of our hearts. This is the law of Christ—not of the ceremonial economy—but of his New Testament kingdom; and he will hold us to it. If we entirely reject this law, it only shows that, whatever name we may bear, we have "no part nor lot in his salvation." But if we acknowledge and desire to be governed by it, and yet frequently altogether lose sight of it, the probability is, that judgments *in kind* will be sent upon us for our correction. There is reason to believe that many a man who refused to answer the claims of his heavenly Benefactor has had that taken away from him which he thought to lay up. A venerable minister of the Church of England, long since deceased, used to say—with as much justice as precision—"Let me proportion my giving to my income, or God will proportion my income to my giving." The late *John Thornton*, of London, of the same church, so eminent for his religious charities, on hearing of the loss of one of his ships, by which many thousand pounds were unexpectedly taken from him—said—"It is because I have lately given less than I ought to the Redeemer's kingdom; I must give more while I have it to give." But what is more conclusive still. The Spirit of God, speaking by the prophet *Haggai*, teaches the same doctrine. Remonstrating with those in his day, who neglected the building of God's house for the sake of attending to their own houses—he says:—"Ye have sown much, and bring in little; and he that earneth wages, earneth them to put into a bag with holes. Ye looked for much, and lo it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste; and ye run every man to his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit—and I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the corn, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon all the labour of your hands."—*Haggai*, i. 6. 9. Ah! God is the most fearful of all creditors. We may

defraud other creditors, and they may have no remedy: but when we are deaf to the claims of Omnipotence, we forget our own mercies, and are in Hands from which there is no escape.

There is *wisdom* as well as *convenience* in *stated, systematic* giving. An inspired apostle enjoined on the Christians of his day to lay aside something on the *first day of each week*—something for the Lord's treasury; and the measure of their contribution which he assigned was—"according as the Lord had prospered them." Most people give at random; without calculation; without a plan. This is attended with multiplied evils. Whereas, if the Christian, under a deep sense of his obligation to that God who has given him all that he possesses, deliberately settles in his own mind what he ought to give to the Redeemer's kingdom, and conscientiously lays it by as a sacred deposit;—he will know *how much* he gives, which many, for want of this arrangement, greatly mistake. He will come to this fund, when each successive application is made, and take out of it *without a prejudice* and *without a grudge*. He will no longer be harsh to those who crave his liberality. He will not be so ingenious, and much on the alert as many now are, to evade an appeal. He will allow to every case which presents, the amount of support which it seems to demand; and he will meet the claim, not with reluctance or with frowns, but with the promptitude and cheerfulness becoming a Christian giver. How sweet the privilege of, every week or month, devoting something to the kingdom and glory of Him to whom we are indebted for all we enjoy, and that we hope for!

O, if our Monthly Prayer Meetings were strongly marked with this spirit; if we came to them with hearts filled with love to the Saviour and his cause; if, while we pray in word—that "the heathen may be given to Him for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession"—our whole souls sincerely responded to our petitions, we might expect to see the Lord's treasury filled to overflowing, and a blessing poured out upon all her churches, until there should be no more room to receive it." To be concluded.

Board of Foreign Missions.

Furrukhabad Mission.

FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PUTTEHGURH ORPHAN ASYLUM. ALLAHABAD: PRESBYTERIAN MISSION PRESS, 1844.

The Missions of the Board in North India are three, and they are designated by local names, agreeably to the

common and scriptural usage of our Church as to the names of churches and church courts. The Lodianna Mission in the north-west, and the Allahabad Mission in the south-east of what is rather vaguely called Upper India, have been already noticed; see pp. 5. 37.

The Furrukhabad Mission occupies the country lying between the provinces in which the other two missions

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R E M A R K S

ON THE MONTHLY CONCERT IN PRAYER.

BY SAMUEL MILLER, D.D.

No. IV.

(Concluded from page 35.)

HAVING, in former numbers, briefly traced the history of the Monthly Concert in Prayer, and endeavoured to show the duty and importance of attending upon it; and having made some suggestions respecting the best method of conducting the exercise, and the obligation to accompany every season of prayer for the conversion of the world with contributions for carrying on the work; it only remains that I close with some serious exhortations to fidelity and perseverance in this important duty.

We are now prepared to reflect on what has been said, and to make the whole matter of serious consideration and of practical appeal.

Is it so, then, that the children of men without the Gospel, are in a state of deplorable destitution and misery; deprived of the best and only effectual means of temporal comfort, and without hope for eternity? Is it so, that we are all bound to feel for those who are in this situation, and to pray for them; and that, if we have no heart to do this, we can have no scriptural evidence that we are Christians? Is it so, that it is in the power of the members of the Presbyterian Church to send this glorious Gospel to millions, both in our own country, and foreign lands, who have it not; and that, notwithstanding this, only a small portion of them have ever made any serious effort to fulfil this important duty? Is it true, that, in a majority of our congregations, ministers, and elders, and deacons, and people, after every exhortation and entreaty to the contrary, are still slumbering over this delinquency; that our prayer-meetings for the revival of religion, and the conversion of the world,

are thin and cold; and that our Boards of Domestic and Foreign Missions, are left to struggle with all the embarrassments arising from stinted means, and restricted plans of action? and is it also true, that all this has been stated, and again and again proclaimed to the Church, in all her length and breadth, without exciting anything like a general and cordial response, and still leaving a large part of our nominal body to all appearance indifferent and inactive in regard to these high claims, which address themselves so solemnly to every Christian feeling?

That there is a distressing lack of interest in this great subject on the part of multitudes among us who bear the Christian name, can be doubted by none who have eyes to see, and ears to hear. To what are we to ascribe this deplorable delinquency? Not, surely, to the want of importance and of interest in the great object recommended; for it is, beyond all comparison, the most solemnly important, and the most interesting object that can be presented to a thinking mind. There can be none greater; none more adapted to rouse the attention and captivate all the sensibilities of the Christian's heart. The temporal and eternal welfare of unnumbered millions of men—the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom—and the glory of the eternal God—can any objects be greater than these, or more worthy of our supreme regard? Neither does our deplorable delinquency in regard to this object arise from ignorance of our duty; for it has been set before us, explained, and pressed upon our consciences with a frequency, a clearness, and a force which leave no individual among us who has been willing to be informed, at a loss to understand what the Lord would have him to do. Nor yet, again, does the lack of zeal and effort on this subject arise from want of power to discharge the duty in question; for we have abundant time, and means, and power, for attending to far inferior objects. Nor yet, once more, can we plead that the discharge of the duty in question is not accompanied with an

appropriate and encouraging reward; for, when discharged from proper motives, and with a proper spirit, there is no work in which a rational creature can engage with sweeter enjoyment, and of which the performance as well as the retrospect is productive of richer or more abundant fruits.

To what, then, are we to ascribe the delinquency in question, so disreputable to our character as a Church, and so distressing to all who take a cordial interest in the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom? Must we be driven to the mortifying conclusion that the melancholy fact indicates that religion is at a low ebb in our beloved Zion; that the greater part of those who externally belong to our communion, have only a nominal attachment to the great cause which they profess to love; and that the great work of spreading the knowledge of the Gospel holds a place in their affections far below that which relates to the gains and honours of the world? Surely from a state so deplorable and criminal as this, every one who is concerned for his present peace or his eternal welfare, would wish to be roused.

Permit me, then, in the name, and in the fear of the Lord, to reason with those who lay claim, in any sense, or in any degree, to the Christian character, and are yet conscious that they are, in any measure chargeable with this delinquency.

My dear friends, can any thinking person doubt that the situation of those who are without the Gospel, whether in heathen lands, or in lands nominally Christian, is a situation truly deplorable, and attended with circumstances in the highest degree unfriendly to their present enjoyment, and still more fatal to their eternal welfare? Can any one doubt that for rational, immortal and accountable creatures to be placed in circumstances in which they can know nothing of the Bible; nothing of the means of grace; nothing of those principles and teachers which lead men to present happiness and to eternal salvation,—is, of all situations on this side the abyss of perdition, the most perilous and gloomy? Can any doubt that the Gospel is the greatest, richest, best treasure that can possibly be sent to any portion of our ruined race that is destitute of it? Can any really doubt that it is the duty of the Church of Christ, as such, to take effectual measures for sending this Gospel, far and wide, in all its purity and power, to those who have it not? And if this be the duty of the Church, as a living, active body, does not every member of the Church participate in this obligation; and is not every one directly or indirectly connected with the Church, under a *personal responsibility* in regard to this matter; a responsibility weighty and solemn, and from which it is impossible to escape? Let me ask you, then, beloved reader of these lines—if you call yourself a Christian—

how will you escape from this obligation? Nay, whether you call yourself a Christian or not;—whether you bear the relation of formal membership to the church or not—how can you escape from it? If, indeed, you *have* publicly and formally united yourself with the Church, this act *adds*, no doubt, to your obligation;—makes it more strong and tender. But if you have never taken this step, still if you have heard the Gospel; if you have the Bible in your hands, you are bound to impart a knowledge of them to others. To whomsoever much is given, of them shall much be required. Let none say, then, we have never made a profession of religion, and therefore, are not under obligation to take an active part in spreading the Gospel. You are bound, O reader, whoever you are, to believe and obey the Gospel. But, if you fail of performing this duty, this failure does not release you from the obligation to perform another, that is, to send it abroad to others. Every one to whom the Gospel comes is bound to believe it; and, believing it, to confess Christ before men. But if he believe not, though he ought not, remaining in unbelief, to profess a lie; yet, surely, his not making a profession of religion, in these circumstances, does not, cannot release him from the obligation to repent and believe. All the weight of responsibility arising from his character as a sinner to whom the offer of mercy comes, still lies upon him. In all our contributions to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, or, in any way, to promote the happiness of our fellow-men, it is our duty to give, from proper motives, and with a proper spirit, from a disinterested principle of love to God, and a sacred regard to the temporal and eternal well-being of those to whom we give. But suppose a man supremely worldly, who knows nothing of holy love either to God or man, to know of a destitute family hungry and starving at his door, while he has bread enough and to spare; is he not bound to contribute to their relief? If he should, unfeelingly, refuse to afford relief, when it was in his power, should we not consider him as a *brute*? and if he should plead, as an apology for not doing it, that he was not a Christian, should we not regard him as *insane*; as one who had entirely lost sight of the real nature of moral obligation?

The obligation, then, of all who bear the Christian name, and of all who even possess the Gospel, to do their part for spreading it abroad, being so plain, let me entreat you, beloved reader, to bring this question home, without partiality, and without evasion, to your conscience and your heart, and to ask,—Am I faithfully discharging this obligation?—am I fulfilling my duty in regard to the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom?—am I acting as if I verily believed the Gospel to be the most precious of all gifts of God to fallen, lost man; and that there

can be no real happiness, temporal or eternal, without it?—am I, in a word, habitually acting toward my destitute fellow-creatures as I should wish them, if I were in their situation, to act toward me? Which of us, dear reader, can honestly answer these questions without a consciousness of deep delinquency? And if any of us are compelled, in candour, to reply, that we are entirely, or in a great measure, neglecting the duty to which they refer, how can we dare to take the name or the seat of Christians?

Fear there is a large amount of self-deception in the minds of many professing Christians in regard to this subject. If they were asked, Can any one be a disciple of Christ who does not sincerely desire the spread of the Gospel, and the enlargement of the Redeemer's kingdom? they would promptly and decisively answer, No. If they were again asked, whether it is possible either for the Church, or for any individuals, to prosecute any extensive plan for evangelizing the world, without a large expenditure of funds? they would with equal promptness and decision reply, No. If further interrogated, how these funds were to be obtained, they would, without hesitation, say, The members of the Church ought, doubtless, to furnish them. But if one question more were addressed to them—Have you contributed your due proportion of what ought to be furnished for this great object? they would probably respond—“Not, perhaps, fully, but we have contributed as much as was *convenient*, and we trust that the great Head of the Church, whose is the power, will provide all that may be necessary for the accomplishment of the object.” Is this the spirit of those who would deal honestly with conscience, and with God? Did the Redeemer do no more than was *convenient* for our salvation? Did the Apostles do nothing more than was *convenient* for bearing the glad tidings of great joy to the benighted and the perishing? Will those poor, stinted contributions, made without self-denial or a sacrifice, and which you feel, at the time, to be falling below what they ought to be, give any satisfaction in a dying hour, when you come to review your course, and examine the evidences of your sincere discipleship? “O that we were wise, that we understood this, that we would consider our latter end!”

We look back with sorrow and shame on the want of zeal and energy on the part of those who have gone before us, when we recollect that eighteen centuries have passed away, since the full light of Gospel knowledge and privilege has dawned upon our world; and yet not more than one quarter part of the population of our globe has ever heard of the glad tidings of redeeming love. Our fathers quieted their consciences with one plea or another, while they were doing so little to send the light of life to

those who were sitting in the region and shadow of death. We are quieting our consciences with pleas quite as insufficient for our indulgence. But how long will it take to evangelize the world, if the work should go on no faster than we are now conducting it? Alas! at the end of eighteen centuries more, so slow is the present rate of progress, that, if we proceed no faster than we are now doing, and if the earth's population goes on to increase as we have reason to expect, we shall be found to have gained but little, if any thing, on the wants and miseries of our fallen world.

What Presbyterian is there who loves his Church, and who, above all, loves his Saviour, who is not grieved and humbled, when he learns how meagre is the support, and how embarrassed the movements of our Boards of Missions, in sending the Gospel to the destitute and the perishing? When he reads in the various channels of public intelligence, that all our missionary stations, abroad and at home, are calling for more labourers, and entreating us to extend our plans, to enlarge our schools, so as to comprehend the hundreds of children who are waiting to be taken in to them, but cannot be received for want of more means? Who is not, I say, grieved and humbled, when he finds that the funds placed at the disposal of our laborious and faithful Boards are more likely to be *diminished* than *increased*; that these funds are so inadequate, that, instead of *enlarging* their plans, they are likely to be obliged to *contract* them; that, instead of sending more labourers, there is danger of their being compelled to *call back* some who have been sent? O that the friends of Christ would be persuaded to arise as one man, and to say, with a zeal and an emphasis never yet put forth, “These things must not be so! and, God being our helper, these things shall no longer be so!”

Our blessed Saviour long ago said, “The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.” Of the truth of this fact, we have testimonials so numerous and striking, that they cannot escape observation, and ought most deeply to humble us before God. The lovers of worldly gain, of carnal pleasure, and of secular show and honours, are ready to bestow treasures without stint on their favourite objects. Who does not know that millions on millions are freely, nay eagerly bestowed on intoxicating poisons, which, if devoted to the hallowed work of evangelizing the world, would suffice for sending the Gospel to every heathen nation now accessible to the religion of Christ? Who does not every day see the votaries of this world submitting to privations, and making sacrifices for promoting temporal objects, which, if they could be devoted to our missionary boards, would furnish the most ample means for executing their largest

plans? And shall we be compelled to sit down under the mortifying conclusion that the mass of Christians cannot be excited to pay equal attention, and to take an equal interest in the kingdom of Christ, though they acknowledge it to be of infinitely more importance than all the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them? Remember how busy the enemies of religion are, in circulating their corrupt opinions, their infidel tracts, and all those destructive influences which unbelief and impiety are so zealously engaged in scattering abroad. Remember, too, how active and unwearied the followers of "the man of sin," "the son of perdition" are, in spreading abroad their miserable superstitions and idolatries; how they compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when they have gained him, make him tenfold more the child of perdition than themselves. The foreign votaries of the Papacy find it easy to collect from a hundred thousand to a quarter of a million of dollars annually, for sending to our country to propagate their unhallowed system of superstition and idolatry among us. And shall those who profess to be animated with the pure love of Christ, have less concern for the spread of the glorious Gospel, and the salvation of their fellow-men? Shall those who are blessed with the knowledge of a pure Gospel, and who profess to have felt its power, be unwilling to take the same pains, and to make equal sacrifices for sending to the destitute and the perishing, that Gospel which is the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth? Alas, alas! what shall we say to the cavillers who exultingly recite these things, and who allege that the system of Romanism is more benign, and more abundantly productive of beneficial fruits than that of Protestants?

Nor ought we, in our meditations on this subject, to forget the noble example of our brethren of the FREE CHURCH of Scotland, since their separation from the national establishment, and their assertion of "that liberty wherewith Christ hath made his people free." Though, by the disruption of their secularities, they have given up all their public endowments, and consigned their congregations to poverty, and to a struggle with all those difficulties which poverty brings with it; though, from that thrilling hour, they were compelled to take upon themselves burdens and responsibilities to which they had been altogether unaccustomed; yet they have not only replaced, substantially, national endowments, by the abundance of their spontaneous contributions, but they have also contributed more for missionary objects, during the short time that they have stood alone, than the whole endowed church ever raised before the disruption! How was this? Their affliction gave them a deeper sense of the value of the Gospel, and their obligation to send it, as far

as they could, to the oppressed and the miserable. We are accustomed to speak of their achievements with applause; O that we may catch something of their spirit, and learn, like them, as the demands on our Christian liberality rise higher, and become more abundant, to open our hearts with cheerful and ever increasing enlargement!

Dear reader! when you enter into your closet, and ask the blessing of God on your own soul; when you thank him that your lot is cast in a land of Christian light and knowledge; when you pray that your Bible, your Sabbaths, and all the means of grace with which you are favoured, may be blessed to your own spiritual benefit; do you never suffer your mind to turn toward those who are destitute of all these spiritual privileges? and if you ever think of them, in all their darkness and misery, can you divest yourself of the conviction, that you owe them something—more than you have ever done for them? And can you ponder this debt in your mind, without rousing from your lethargy, and resolving that, by the grace of God, you will endeavour to do more than you have ever yet done for their benefit? And oh, in that solemn place, and in that tender and solemn season, when you extend your views forward a little; when you think of a dying hour, and of the responsibilities connected with your appearance before the judgment seat of Christ, can you reflect without pain on the millions sitting in the region and shadow of death, for whose temporal and eternal benefit you have contributed far less than for some of the veriest luxuries, which you would have been as healthful and as happy without as with?

Ministers of the Gospel! suffer an aged brother, who feels himself to be on the verge of his great account, to speak to you with freedom and affection. I cannot divest myself of the impression that a large part of the delinquency in zeal and effort in this great cause, in many of our churches, may be traced, in some measure at least, to the want of that deep interest, and those corresponding indefatigable labours in behalf of this cause, which ought to characterise their spiritual leaders and guides. I recollect too well, beloved brethren, my own delinquencies as a pastor, to admit of my pleading with you in any other than the most respectful and affectionate language. It is presumed you have made up your minds, that it is not *your* duty to engage in missionary work, either in the foreign or domestic field. But is there, therefore, nothing incumbent on you in relation to the great missionary cause? I answer, just as much and as solemnly as if you were yourselves labourers in that great field. If you were missionaries, you would be bound to do *all in your power* to CARRY the Gospel to those who had it not. But, being pastors, or labourers at home, you are bound

by equally strong and solemn ties to do all in your power to send the Gospel to those who are without it. You complain, perhaps, and express regret that your people are torpid and backward in fulfilling their duty in regard to the cause of missions. But, beloved Brethren, is no share of the blame for this delinquency to be laid at your door? Have you done all in your power to enlighten, stimulate, and urge them forward to the discharge of their duty? Have you taken care to inform yourselves of the wants and miseries of the heathen, and of those in our own land, who are destitute of the Gospel? Have you carried a deep impression of these wants and miseries with you into the pulpit from Sabbath to Sabbath, and into the family visitation from house to house, and have you laboured faithfully to impart this impression to all who listen to your voice? Are you careful to keep all whom you either statedly or occasionally address, awake and alive, from time to time, to the claims of God upon them, as workers together with him in spreading the Gospel? Are your habitual preaching, your public and social prayers, and your daily example a constant memento of their duty, and a powerful stimulus to its performance? If the leaders and guides of the people have not done this, are they free from the guilt of their people's delinquency? O, if pastors really performed their duty with fidelity and zeal, there would be little need of public Agents to go from church to church to remind those pastors of their duty, and in fact, to take it out of their hands, and do it for them. It is because so many who bear the sacred office appear to take so little interest in the missionary cause, and either forget or neglect to bring it before the minds of their people; and, when they do attempt to speak of it, do it with so little apparent feeling, that they permit the subject, if I may so express it, to die away in the memories and hearts of those committed to their charge.

Elders and Deacons of the Church of God! allow me, before I close, to address a word of exhortation and entreaty to you! You are set to be counsellors and helpers of your pastors in attending to the temporal and spiritual wants of the flock. Of course, if your pastors, from feeble health, or failing memories, or depressed spirits, become at any time, delinquent in attending to the claims of the missionary cause, it is your privilege and your duty to interpose and

to prevent its being neglected or forgotten, so that you may be every day saying or doing something to impart knowledge, or awaken zeal in regard to this great cause. By doubling your own exertions, and endeavouring, each one, to excite some friend and neighbour to do the same; and by labouring, in all your intercourse with the members of your respective congregations to excite and extend a missionary spirit; by urging every one who can read, to take the missionary publications of our Boards, you may accomplish an amount of aid to the cause which you cannot now anticipate.

Finally, let us all endeavour to rouse ourselves to deeper sensibility, and more active zeal on this great subject. Let the language of the evangelical prophet be sounding in our ears wherever we go, and whatever we undertake, *Awake, awake, put on strength, O Zion!** O that it might please the Lord to raise up another *Isaiah*; another like him in spirit and in eloquence, to go forth through the length and breadth of the land, proclaiming in the name of the Lord, *Awake, awake, put on strength, O Zion!* Or rather, O that it might please *Isaiah's* God to pour out upon all our churches, and upon all our ministers and elders, a spirit of awakening, and of active zeal for the salvation of souls! What object in the universe, let me ask, can more emphatically or more worthily call on us to put forth all our strength, than that of extending the Redeemer's empire, and promoting the everlasting benefit of millions of immortal spirits? and for this purpose sending them that glorious Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Surely here is an object worthy of every effort, and of every sacrifice that can be made by intelligent and accountable creatures.—Again, then, I say, in the language of the Prophet, to every minister, every member, and every well-wisher of our Zion, *Awake! Awake!* Pray and labour without ceasing, until there shall be a general and united movement of our whole Church to carry the glorious Gospel to every kindred, and people, and nation, and tongue; until the knowledge and glory of the Lord shall "cover the earth, as the waters fill the sea." Amen!

* *Isaiah* lii. 1.