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Bm-Sermon
1814
MISSIONARY SERMON,

PREACHED

IN THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

IN

PHILADELPHIA,

On the twenty-third of May, 1814.

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BY ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER.
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PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED BY WILLIAM FRY, PRUNE STREET.

1814.

SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

May 24th, 1814.

Resolved, That the standing Committee of Missions be requested to present the thanks of this assembly to the Rev. Archibald Alexander, D. D., for the missionary sermon, which, by their appointment, he had preached the preceding evening; and that the Committee request of Dr. Alexander a copy of the sermon for publication.

Attest,

JOHN E. LATTA,
Perm. Clerk.

BY THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF MISSIONS,

May 24th, 1814.

Resolved, That the thanks of the Committee be presented to the Rev. Dr. Archibald Alexander, for his missionary sermon, and that the Committee request a copy for publication.

Extract from the minutes.

EBEN. HAZARD,
Secretary.

SERMON, &c.

Mark xvi. 15.—*Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.*

THE promulgation of this command marks a new and important era in the history of the church and of the world. These words may be considered as the public and formal abrogation of the Mosaic economy; and the authoritative annunciation of the new order of things under the gospel.

The first communications of divine truth, through Adam and Noah, were made indiscriminately to the human family; but, in both instances, the precious deposit was generally adulterated, and nearly lost. The wisdom of God, therefore, saw it to be necessary to select and separate from the idolatrous world, a particular family which might serve as a repository of the divine oracles and institutions; until that '*seed of the woman*' should come, of whom it was predicted, that he should '*bruise the serpent's head*;' and that '*seed of Abraham*,' in whom *all the families of the earth should be blessed*.

During this period, the church of God was, for the most part, circumscribed within the limits of the elect nation. Its institutions were not designed, nor calculated, for general use; but were local, temporary, and burdensome in their nature, yet well adapted to the

purposes for which they were appointed. It is true, a permission was given to the Israelites, to receive proselytes from other nations, of such as resided among them, or should choose, for the sake of the worship of the true God, to come to them; but they never received a command to propagate their religion among the surrounding nations. They were not authorised to send out missionaries to convert the world. These were *the times of ignorance, which God winked at*. He would leave the world to make a fair experiment of its own wisdom, and to exhaust all its own resources; that it might ever afterwards appear evident, that the world by wisdom did not know God; and that a divine revelation was absolutely necessary for its instruction.

But *now* the middle wall of partition was broken down; *the law of commandments contained in ordinances, being abolished in the flesh of Christ*; that is, this law received its accomplishment, when the body of Christ was lifted up on the cross, as a propitiatory sacrifice for sin. By this means, those who *were far off are made nigh, by the blood of Christ*. That the kingdom of God, or gospel dispensation, was not fully introduced until after the death of Christ is evident, because the Mosaic institutions until that time continued in full force, and Christ himself rendered obedience to the ceremonial law until the very day of his passion. The kingdom of Heaven, indeed, was preached; that is, it was announced to be at hand, by John the Baptist, and by our LORD and his disciples. The nature of this kingdom was unfolded, and its future condition in the world predicted; but no new laws were promulgated, nor any new institutions set up, which in the least interfered with, or superseded the ceremonial liturgy of the Jews.

But when JESUS CHRIST, our great high priest of good things to come, had, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God to bear the sins of many; and had by this one offering of his own body, perfected forever them that are sanctified, the service of the first tabernacle was set aside, and as to any utility, or divine authority, ceased forever; as an emblem of which, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, at the very moment of expiation; when Christ our high priest, by shedding his vital blood and pouring out his soul unto death, offered his one great sacrifice for sins.

At the rising of the sun, the feeble light of the stars is lost in the superior splendour of his beams. When a living person is before us, we no longer want an obscure delineation of his features. The shadow may serve to give us a faint idea of the substance; but when the substance is come, we may be content that the shadow should flee away. The restrictions, tutors, and governors, requisite in a state of minority, are not needed by the man of mature age. So, when Christ was manifested as our priest and sacrifice, the twinkling of the types, and the obscure sketch of the ceremonies of the law, were wanted no more.

THE KING MESSIAH, had already, by a series of stupendous miracles, and by completely fulfilling the prophecies which related to him, established his claim to the high character and office which he assumed; and having laid an ample foundation for the kingdom which he was about to establish, HE now issues his commission to those, whom he had chosen to administer and act in his name, and by his authority, upon earth, and says, "*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*"

As his kingdom was not of this world, he would not avail himself of the powers of the earth in its establishment: as it was his purpose that his religion should not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God, he rejected the aids of human learning and eloquence; and selected, as his ministers, rude and illiterate men, taken from an unimproved part of the country, and from the lowest occupations in society;—men totally unversed in the policy of the world, and incapable of speaking even their own vernacular tongue with propriety. To such ministers did Christ commit the management of his kingdom, and sent them forth into all the world, to preach, without any earthly protection or patronage. This little band of heroes went forth to achieve the conquest of the world, with no other aid than the help of God, with no other armour than the panoply of the gospel. *Their weapons were not carnal but spiritual, yet mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.*

But we are not to suppose that our Lord Jesus Christ sent out these men to instruct and convert the world, without qualifying them for their work. Whom he sends, he calls; and whom he calls, he qualifies. The apostles were therefore directed to tarry at Jerusalem, until they should be *endued with power from on high*. Accordingly, on the day of Pentecost, they were thoroughly baptized with the *Holy Ghost* and *with fire*. The effects of this baptism were, that they were enlightened to understand the sacred scriptures of the Old Testament.—They were enabled to recollect distinctly and comprehend generally the meaning of all the discourses, which they had heard from the lips of Christ.—Their faith, love, fortitude, patience, and assurance of the favour of God, were wonderfully strengthened and increased.—They were endowed with the extraordinary

faculty of speaking with perspicuity and propriety, languages, which they had never learned, nor heard;— and with the power of healing the sick, dispossessing the demoniac, and raising the dead. There was moreover given to them a mouth and wisdom which none of their enemies could withstand; and a presence of mind and promptitude of utterance, which enabled them to defend themselves with composure and dignity, and plead the cause of their Lord with convincing force, however suddenly called upon, or however august and imposing their audience.

So great, however, was the power of early and national prejudice, that the apostles did not, for some time, understand the extent of their commission. They had, before, been sent on a short mission, on which occasion it was ordered, that they should not go *into the way of the Gentiles*, nor even *enter into any city of the Samaritans*; and they seem to have thought, that by going *into all the world*, and *preaching to every creature*, no more was intended, than that they should go to the seed of Abraham now widely dispersed among the nations. But this veil was soon removed, by a particular revelation made to Peter in a vision; and by the calling of Paul to the apostleship, who, from the beginning, received commission to go to the Gentiles, and was, in a peculiar manner, designated and directed, *to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ*.

We read in history of many persons travelling into foreign countries to acquire curious and useful knowledge, and of their imparting their dearly purchased treasure to a few chosen disciples on their return; but I believe this is the first instance on record of any persons leaving their own country, and visiting foreign parts, with no other than the benevolent purpose of

communicating important information to their fellow creatures. The very novelty and sublimity of the project of reforming a world lying in wickedness, bespeaks a divine impulse; but the success of these first missionaries stamps the gospel with such a seal of authenticity, as neither the lapse of ages, nor the sophistry of its enemies can ever obliterate.

The apostles divided the world amongst them, and whilst some went to the East, others directed their course to the North,—the West,—the South. They turned their back upon all their earthly friends and prospects, and went forth to meet sufferings and death in their most frightful forms; but they were supported by the conviction that they forsook nothing, but what was perishable; and by the confidence that Heaven was *before them*, whichever way they turned their faces; and *near*, wherever they might breathe out their souls. Discouraged by no difficulties, and appalled by no dangers, they penetrated into countries not described by the geographer, and whose story has not been told by the historian: and even the record of their own labours is only in heaven. Suffice it to say, that they proved faithful unto death, and have gone to receive a crown of life. Most of them it is believed, received also the crown of martyrdom: but *where*, or *how*, or *when*, we cannot with any certainty say.

In further considering this subject, it shall be my object—

I. To show that this commandment imposes an obligation on the ministry and on the church, now existing, to propagate the gospel among the nations, who are not yet blessed with its light.

II. Endeavour to answer the question, “What is the present duty of the American churches, and particularly of our own, in relation to this command?”

III. Conclude with some considerations and motives to stimulate and encourage us to exert ourselves in carrying our Lord's will into effect.

1. In the first place then I am to show, that this command imposes an obligation on the ministry and on the church to propagate the gospel among the heathen.

The proof of this proposition is so plain, that few remarks will be necessary to establish the point.

It is evident from the tenor of this commission, that it did not respect the apostles only, but their successors in the ministry; for the work here prescribed was too great to be completed by so small a number of labourers. What could be done by zeal, diligence, and perseverance, they effected: but the world was too wide, and the life of man too short, to admit of a few persons preaching the gospel to all the tribes and nations, scattered over the surface of this globe. As our Lord intended that this work should be accomplished, we may conclude, that the commission to execute it, extended to the successors of the apostles, as well as to themselves.

Again, every authorised minister of the gospel, derives his authority to preach and baptize, from this commission which Christ gave to his apostles. He has received his office, it is true, immediately from the hands of others, already in the ministry; but all the authority which they possessed to confer such an office, is derived from the original commission. Otherwise the office of the gospel ministry would be merely of human, and not divine, appointment. But Christ is king in his church, and is the fountain of power as well as honour.

Now, that instrument which gives authority, must be allowed to regulate its exercise. If we receive the office, we of course take upon us the obligation to fulfil its duties. But the commission says, "*Go ye into all the*

world, and preach the gospel to every creature." The conclusion therefore is inevitable, that every minister is bound, by the very nature of his office, to use his best efforts to propagate the gospel through the whole world.

To this it may be objected, that that part of the commission, which directs the conversion of the nations, was peculiar to the apostles and other extraordinary ministers of that age; but of this there is no proof: and if it were true, the consequence would be, not only that other ministers were not bound to execute this work, but it would be unlawful for them to attempt it. And, conversely, if it be lawful to preach the gospel to the heathen, it must be because it is included in our commission; and if comprehended in our commission, then we are bound to its performance.

But a more plausible objection is, that, according to this view of the subject, it would follow, that every preacher of the gospel must become a missionary, and go to preach to the heathen. But this difficulty will vanish, if we consider the commission as given to a body of men, that is, to *the ministry of reconciliation*, who are to act in concert in carrying it into effect: and also if we interpret it agreeably to the great end which was designed to be accomplished.

Suppose a literary society were directed by authority, to communicate the knowledge of some art or science to the whole world, and also to preserve a lively recollection of the truths communicated on the minds of their disciples; it is plain, that, whilst it would be expedient for some to go into foreign parts, others should commence their work at home; and whilst some were engaged in teaching those who had never learned, others would be as properly employed in keeping up, and increasing, the knowledge of those already initiated.

Such is the state of the case with the ministry, who are commissioned to preach the gospel to all nations.

The ground which has been gained, must not be abandoned for the hope of gaining more. The knowledge of evangelical truth must be preserved; and those, who have heard and believed, must be further instructed, and their children, as they become capable, must also be taught. This requires a stationary ministry. And so we read that, when Christ ascended up on high, he gave not only *some apostles, prophets, and evangelists*, but also *pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the body of Christ*. Accordingly, the apostles ordained elders in every city, where they collected churches. But all are comprehended under the general commission; and however it may fall to the lot of some to be stationary, they are, nevertheless, as a part of the body, bound to promote the diffusion of the light of the gospel, by every lawful and practicable means.

But to establish the point under discussion beyond all possibility of doubt, I will adduce the promise of our LORD, which he annexed to the commission, for the support and encouragement of those appointed to execute it. The command of Christ, on this occasion, is not expressed in the very same words by the evangelists, *Matthew* and *Mark*; or rather, they have recorded different parts of the discourse, which the risen Saviour delivered on this occasion. In *Matthew*, Christ says, "*Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world.*" Now these last words clearly ascertain the extent of the commission. Christ well knew that none of those persons then in his presence would live to the end of the world; but he addressed the apostles as standing at the head of a long succession of preachers, which

should not cease, until he should come again, when the world would be at an end.

Now it is plain, that the promise and command are of equal extent: for they are addressed to the same persons, at the same time, and the one was intended to encourage those, who should obey the other; but the promise reaches through every age *to the end of the world*; therefore so also does the command. We think OURSELVES authorized to plead this promise; but as surely as we do so, we recognize the obligation of the command: for, those with whom Christ hath promised to be *always*, are such as are engaged in propagating his religion over the world.

If more were needful to be said on a subject already sufficiently plain, I would argue from the circumstances of the case. The work commanded to be executed is not yet completed. It is agreeable to the will of God that it should be done. It is predicted that it shall be accomplished. Those therefore who manage the affairs of Christ's kingdom, are bound, by every lawful means, to comply with the revealed will of God, and to fulfil his unchangeable purpose, of giving the heathen to his Son for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.

The only thing which remains under this head is, to show that the obligation of this command extends to the private members of the church as well as to the ministry. Not that they are bound to preach the gospel; *for no man taketh this honour unto himself but he that is called of God, as was Aaron*. The nature of the duty incumbent on the church, in relation to this object, can easily be made apparent. If a king should send forth heralds through the whole extent of his dominions, to announce some important intelligence to his subjects, it would be the duty of all not only to avoid throwing

any obstacle in the way of the royal messengers, but to facilitate their progress by every means in their power, and to give them every encouragement and support whilst engaged in the king's business. Well, Zion's king, who is **THE KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS**, hath sent forth his heralds, and commissioned them to go to the ends of the earth, announcing every where the glad news of salvation: are not all the subjects of this King, then, under obligations to promote this object? And how will **THEY** answer for it, to the Great King, who throw obstacles in the way of the preachers of the gospel, or who are negligent about affording them assistance? This is a great work which is undertaken, deeply involving the honour of God, the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the salvation of souls. The call is loud for every one to come *to the help of the Lord against the mighty*. Every thing which can contribute to the accomplishment of the important end in view, is put in requisition. Power, influence, talent, learning, wealth, navigation, commerce, medicine, ought all to lend their aid in propagating the gospel.

How much might a christian government effect by friendly negociation with heathen powers for the introduction of the gospel, and for the liberty and security of missionaries! What a blessing to the world, if commerce, so often stained with injustice and cruelty, should be sanctified to this glorious end! What a noble return for the precious commodities of the East, to send them **THE WORD OF GOD AND THE PREACHERS OF SALVATION!** What a change in the affairs of men, if our merchants esteemed the diffusion of truth, and the salvation of the heathen, *a merchandise better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof preferable to the gain of fine gold!* Thanks be to God! some such merchants there are on both sides of the Atlantic! But oh! may he increase their numbers an hundred fold!

But not only those possessed of power and wealth may promote this great work, but every humble, pious Christian, is permitted and enjoined to bring his offering. If they cannot make large contributions in silver and gold; or if they do not possess talents, learning, and power, yet they have access to a throne of grace, and may employ humble, fervent prayer, the most effectual of all means, in promoting the cause of God.

II. I come now, in the second place, to inquire, What is the duty of the American churches, and particularly of our own, in relation to this command?

1. I have had occasion, already to observe, that this command does not oblige us to abandon the vineyard which has been planted in this western world, and that it is as much the duty of one portion of the ministry to feed the flock of Christ, already gathered unto the fold, as it is of another to go in pursuit of the lost sheep, which are still wandering in the wilderness. Nay more; this is our first duty. To leave the churches without any regular supply of the means of grace, for the sake of planting new churches among the heathen, would be no less absurd, than for the husbandman to relinquish a field already inclosed and cultivated, to clear and plant new ground in the wilderness. Besides, it ought to be taken into serious consideration, that in the increasing and widely expanded population of this extensive country, there are multitudes destitute of the regular administration of the word and ordinances: and this is true, not only in regard to our frontier settlements, but to the very suburbs of our largest cities. How many thousands, in this land, scarcely hear the sound of the gospel once in a year! Without the most energetic exertions, there is much reason to fear, that some large districts of our country will sink into a state of ignorance and indifference on the subject of religion, equally as fatal as paganism itself. The souls

of our neighbours and countrymen are as precious as those of the heathen; and they are more within our reach; to these, therefore, we should first devote our attention and exertions.

The blacks and people of colour also, in a peculiar manner, demand our attention. They have been a highly injured people, and justice, as well as humanity, demands, that we should in some way, afford them redress; and what better can we do for them, than to convey to them the knowledge of a crucified Saviour, in whose precious blood they may find a balm for all their bleeding wounds, and in whose gracious promises, a cordial to revive their fainting hearts, under the various afflictions which they are destined to endure. These people are amongst us, understand our language, are easily accessible, and willing and desirous to hear the gospel. Let us not, therefore, overlook them because they are a degraded people, but let us rather pity their miserable condition, and provide for them the rich consolations of the grace of God.

2. Again, it must appear obvious to all, that the heathen of our own continent, and on our own borders, have a peculiar claim on our benevolence. Without a divine warrant we have driven them from this land. The fine country which we now occupy was theirs, as much as any country can be ours. But what have we given them in return? The gospel, the richest treasure which we could communicate, and the communication of which would not have rendered us the poorer, we have in a great measure kept back.

How little have we, as a nation, been concerned for their conversion to Christianity, although the propagation of this religion was made the ostensible reason, by the governments of Europe, for taking possession of all these countries. This is a national sin, the guilt of which

is, probably, at this moment, imputed to us, by HIM, who weighs the actions of men, and renders righteous retribution unto nations as well as individuals.

Let it not be said, that the savage habits and roaming life of the western Indians render their conversion impracticable. The gospel, accompanied by the power and blessing of God, has a thousand times triumphed over obstacles equally as insurmountable. Obstacles as formidable existed in the case of our own heathen ancestors, before the gospel was propagated among them. Had those men of apostolic spirit, who preached the SALVATION OF CHRIST among them, been as easily discouraged as we are, how miserable might our situation have been at this moment!

Let it not be said, that they must first become civilized, before they can receive the gospel. This is a mere refinement of modern times, totally unsupported by historical testimony. What, in fact, has been the great means of civilizing Europe, but Christianity? What, in the nature of things, has such a tendency to subdue the ferocious passions of savages, as the doctrines and institutions of our holy and benevolent religion? Have not the *Caffres* and *Hottentots*, the *Greenlanders* and *Esquimaux*, the most degraded of all savage tribes, embraced the gospel in our own times? Let us then hear no more of waiting for the civilization of the Indians, before we attempt their conversion. Let us rather believe, that the truest, and most effectual instrument of civilization, is the word of God; and that the renovation of the heart, which it produces, will do more to mitigate savage ferocity, than all the arts in the world.

If, therefore, we possess any zeal for the salvation of the heathen, let us endeavour to propagate the gospel among the Aborigines of this continent.

3. But, is it the duty of the American churches to send missionaries to the East? This question has of late engaged the attention of the Christian public; and is of great importance. Previously to expressing an opinion, I would premise, that, if there existed any proportion between the labourers and the harvest, according to every principle of judicious distribution, the heathen on this continent, would, undoubtedly, fall to the lot of the American churches; and would furnish a field sufficiently large, for all their zeal and exertions. But at present, *the harvest truly is great, and the labourers are few.* As in a great field, which cannot all be reaped, it matters little where you thrust in the sickle. The only question of any importance is, in what part will our labour be likely to produce most fruit? Or, what part of the harvest is most ripe for the sickle? Such is the present state of the great harvest of souls, which lies before us. The little band of missionaries, who have gone forth, or who are likely to go forth from Christendom shortly, to labour in this field, are not adequate to the thousandth part of the work to be performed. They should, therefore, commence and prosecute their labours, wherever the harvest is richest and ripest. When I turn my eyes to the East, two considerations strike my mind with great force. The one is, the multitude of people who inhabit those regions, most of whom are still *sitting in darkness, and in the region and shadow of death.* Hundreds of millions of immortal souls, hastening to eternity, without any knowledge of the only name given under heaven, among men, whereby we must be saved. How overwhelming the thought! If our object be, according to the tenor of our commission, *to preach the gospel to every creature;* HERE, HERE is the place to publish the glad tidings, where millions, in a short time, might be made to hear the joyful sound.

The other consideration is, that there appears to be a great and effectual door opened in the East, at this time, for the propagation of the gospel.

For many years past, Providence seems to have been preparing the way of the Lord. The Bible has been recently translated into many Eastern languages; and **THE WORD OF LIFE** begins to be extensively circulated among the heathen. The attention of the Christian world has, after a long sleep, been awakened, and directed to this portion of the globe: and by the gracious interposition of Providence, favouring the exertions of the pious and benevolent, those odious and disgraceful restrictions, which prevented the introduction of missionaries in the East, are now, in a great measure, removed.

The loud call, which the present dispensations of Providence seem to send forth, to all Christian nations in behalf of the millions of Asia, is, *Go over and help them*. Some of our sister churches have not been disobedient to the heavenly call. Our brethren in the eastern states have made a magnanimous beginning, and have set us a noble example, worthy of imitation. Another large Christian society seems to have felt the divine impulse, and are at this moment in motion. Many sober Christians are of opinion, that the awful darkness of a long night begins to break. Undoubtedly, a new era has commenced, in regard to the propagation of the gospel. And shall our church, as numerous as any in the Union, remain idle spectators of the exertions of others? Shall we only, pay no regard to *the signs of the times*? Can we be contented, to prosecute the great business of missions, in the same cold and circumscribed manner as we have hitherto done? I trust not. I sincerely hope, that the General Assembly, which constitutes the Missionary Society of our church, will, at their present sessions, take the subject of foreign mis-

sions into serious consideration; and that they will resolve to co-operate cordially and energetically, in carrying on this glorious work.

To this, I am aware, there are some plausible objections, the principal of which I will now endeavour to obviate.

✓ The first is, the want of funds. If our efforts hitherto have been barely adequate to collect sufficient funds to defray the expense of missions to our frontier settlements, how can we expect to carry on, successfully, an expensive foreign mission?

To which I answer, that our churches have proportioned their contributions to the object which we have held up to their view. But, if we should determine on a foreign mission, it will excite the attention of many, who have never yet been pervaded by a missionary spirit; and will bring into operation a liberality, which only waits for an opportunity to discover itself. But, whether sufficient funds can be obtained for this purpose, is a problem, which experience alone can certainly solve. But, if I am not deceived, there is, at present, a disposition in the people of this country to promote this object. It has been evinced, in every instance, in which any call has been made on their liberality, for the dissemination of evangelical truth in those populous regions. The success of our brethren in the eastern states, in collecting funds, is calculated to afford ample encouragement. Only let the people know that you mean to send missionaries to the East, and many will be forward to contribute.

If this respectable audience were assured, that the collection of this evening would be appropriated to a foreign mission, I have little doubt that their contributions would be doubled. Nay, I believe I should not

misrepresent the sentiments and feelings of some of my hearers if I should assert, that with this object in view, they would increase their contributions tenfold. Many have begun to taste the refined luxury of beneficence. Experience has taught them the truth of that saying of our Lord, "*It is more blessed to give than to receive;*" and of the aphorism of Solomon, "*There is that scattereth and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.*" For the liberal soul has been made fat, and those who have lent unto the Lord have been repaid with large interest. It seems to be a principle in the conduct of Providence, that they who give most liberally, shall have the more to give.

Wealth has acquired a new value with those, who have learned this exquisite mode of enjoying it; for no treasures ever afforded such delicious gratification, as those, which are dedicated to the Lord. That surplusage of wealth, which has commonly been employed in feeding vanity and gratifying ambition, would be abundantly sufficient to promote all the important objects of real benevolence. Indeed, if only the one hundredth part of the money expended in dissipations and luxuries hurtful to health and morals, were reclaimed for missionary purposes, it would be more than adequate to all our wants.

One resource may, I think, be depended on, if others fail. When the expensive work of the Levitical Tabernacle was on hand, the fair daughters of Israel, not only performed much by the labour of their hands, but with a willing heart brought their most valuable jewels of gold, and precious stones, and dedicated them to the service of the Lord; and we read that, THE LAVER, a very costly

and important part of the sacred furniture of the Court of the Tabernacle, was made out of the looking glasses, or brazen mirrors, of the women who were accustomed to assemble at the door of the Tabernacle. The dignity, happiness, and usefulness of the female sex, are intimately connected with religion. It has often been mentioned to the praise of Christianity, that wherever it has been received, WOMAN has arisen from her degradation, and assumed her proper rank in society. To which we may add, that in proportion as the genuine spirit of this religion is prevalent, the importance of the exertions of the female sex become evident. Not to detain you with accounts of their frequent instrumentality in the introduction and propagation of the Christian religion, which are recorded to their honour, in the early history of the church, I will only advert to their recent exertions, in this city, which furnish a noble pledge of what may be expected from them in this glorious cause.

But another objection is, that we cannot obtain missionaries willing to go among the heathen, in lands so distant. A few years since, this would have appeared an insurmountable obstacle; but a great change has taken place. We have not only heard of some of the inhabitants of Europe leaving their native shores, but we have seen the youth of America willingly offering themselves, to go and preach the gospel to the heathen, on the other side of the globe. And even delicate females, influenced by the love of Christ and the ardent desire of promoting the salvation of the heathen, have broken asunder the tenderest bonds of human nature, and have deliberately forsaken affectionate parents and beloved brothers and sisters, to go into the remotest lands, never, never to return.

The same hallowed flame by which they were inspired, glows, at this moment, in many a youthful bosom. The language of their hearts is, *Here am I, send me.* Open the way, provide the means, and missionaries will not be wanting.

But the most formidable objection is, that by sending missionaries abroad, we will rob our own vancancies, and retard the propagation of the gospel, among the Aboriginal inhabitants of this country. If I believed that this consequence would follow, I should feel myself bound to protest against foreign missions. But, before this objection be admitted. let it be considered, that the number of preachers, who might be expected to go on a foreign mission, would be too inconsiderable to produce any sensible effect on the churches here; but whilst the labours of less than half a dozen persons would scarcely be missed at home, they might perform the most important services as missionaries in the East. But this measure would not diminish the number of faithful labourers in our churches. There is the strongest reason to believe that the effect would be exceedingly beneficial in many ways to professing Christians. It would excite a missionary spirit, which is the true spirit of Christianity. It would raise the tone of religious feeling many degrees. It would tend to the destruction of bigotry and of a narrow sectarian spirit. It would promote peace and harmony in the churches. If Christians had their minds properly occupied, and their hearts suitably expanded, with this noble object of propagating the gospel among the heathen, they would not, they could not, spend their lives in petty contentions.

The adoption of this measure would excite a spirit of prayer for the heathen among God's people. If they had missionaries labouring in the East, they would fre-

quently and earnestly be endeavouring to hold up their hands by prayer. And so far will our sending missionaries to the East be from diminishing the number of preachers, for the supply of our vacancies and churches, that I sincerely believe, it would be the best measure which we could adopt for the increase of candidates for the sacred ministry. One successful missionary sent to the East, would also enable us to do something more effectually for the conversion of the heathen on our own borders, than has hitherto been done. It would produce that very ardor, which is necessary for the commencement and vigorous prosecution of such a work. It would not be long before enterprising missionaries would explore our Western wilds, and visit the many tribes of Indians who are scattered over this vast continent: and the labourers in the West would soon begin to emulate those in the Eastern parts of the vineyard.

III. But in whatever way, or among whatever people, we may think it most expedient to propagate the gospel, let us without delay be active in the fulfilment of this most important duty. The motives, which should urge us to activity and combined exertion, are of the most forcible kind. The honour of our GOD and REDEEMER, are deeply concerned in this matter. The consideration of so many millions, giving that worship to dumb idols, which is due to God only, ought deeply to affect our hearts, and will, if we really love his name. Our bosoms should glow with inextinguishable zeal to overturn, by the artillery of the gospel, those monstrous temples, and hideous idols, on whose altars such multitudes of our degraded fellow-creatures are daily offering their polluted worship, and their sacrifices of cruelty.

And is it no dishonour, think ye, to CHRIST, that, although he offered himself a propitiation, for men of

every nation, that so many have never yet heard his name. When oppressed with a sense of sin's desert, when wounded and stung with remorse, they pine away and die in their sins, and no messenger of mercy comes near, to speak to them in words of consolation. Did not Christ come to destroy the works of the devil, and yet are not four-fifths of the population of the world under the baleful influence of this Prince of darkness? Consider, I beseech you, the value of one immortal soul; which nothing could redeem from death, but the precious blood of THE LAMB OF GOD; and which is destined to an immortal existence, in glory and happiness, or in darkness, disgrace, and everlasting misery! Calculate how many souls are, every year, perishing for lack of that knowledge, which, by sending the gospel, we might convey to them. I have no wish to enter into the discussion of the question whether the salvation of some of the heathen be possible without the knowledge of a Saviour, in some extraordinary way unknown to us. In whatever way this question may be decided, it will have little or no influence in altering the motives which should impel us to seek the conversion of the heathen; for it will be admitted by all, that they who are abandoned to gross and abominable idolatry, or to enormous vices against the law of nature, cannot be saved in that state. If they could, it would be a great blessing for multitudes in Christendom to be converted back again to paganism, because under the gospel, it is plain, that *He who believeth not shall be damned*. What then, I would ask, is the condition of the heathen in regard to religion and morality? Are they not almost universally either idolaters, or enslaved to the most degrading vices? No words are sufficient to describe the abyss of depravity, into which most heathen nations are sunk. Their moral condition is wretched and disgusting beyond any

thing that the imagination can easily conceive. All those encomiums which philosophers of a certain school, and for a certain purpose, have lavished on distant savage tribes, are proved to be false—utterly false.

Now, prejudice and system aside, I appeal to your good sense—I appeal to the benevolent feelings of your hearts—I appeal to your conscience to decide, whether it be more charitable, to neglect the conversion of the heathen, on the supposition that they may possibly be saved without the gospel; or to carry to them *the word of God*, which we KNOW, *is able to make them wise unto salvation?* The apostles certainly acted under the belief that the knowledge of Christ by the gospel, was *ordinarily* necessary to the salvation of sinners; otherwise they would never have sacrificed their lives in endeavouring to bring the heathen to the knowledge of the truth. They believed that there was but one name given under Heaven, by which men could obtain salvation; and therefore they exerted themselves to the utmost, to spread abroad, in all lands, the savour of this precious name, knowing that men could not believe *on him, of whom they had not heard; and that they could not hear without a preacher.*

O ye ministers of the gospel! the successors of the apostles! imitate their praise-worthy example. To you now, are the treasures, and the keys, of the kingdom of Heaven, committed. Have compassion, I beseech you, on your fellow creatures and brethren, in whose veins the same common blood circulates, and who are destined to the same immortal existence. O pity their wretched condition, and endeavour to rescue them from impending ruin.

And ye people of God! who have tasted the sweetness, and experienced the power of the gospel, you know how dreadful a thing it is to stand exposed to the

sentence of a broken law; and how inexpressibly delightful, by faith, to view *The Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world*. Your feelings have been made alive to what concerns the glory of God, and the honour of your Redeemer, and the welfare of immortal souls. Can you therefore remain at ease? Can you cease from exertion? Can you restrain your prayers? Will you suffer your silver and gold to canker in your coffers? Or will you any longer lavish your treasures on inferior and unnecessary objects, when you enjoy such an opportunity of applying a portion of your wealth to the most excellent of all objects? God, in his providence, is, in our times, wonderfully opening a door for the propagation of the gospel among the heathen. The long, dark night of superstition and error, we trust, is drawing to a close. The morning star already appears in the Eastern horizon; and ere long, we hope, that *the Sun of Righteousness* will arise on the millions of Asia, *with healing under his wings*; and will extend his benign influences over the whole habitable world. The sound of the trump of Jubilee, proclaiming *the day of salvation and acceptable year of the Lord*, is now heard on the plains of *Hindustan*, in the deserts of *Africa*, and in the remote and far separated *Isles* of the Southern Ocean. The *Indian*, the *Negro*, the *Hottentot*, and *Otaheitean*, begin to emerge from the dismal darkness of barbarism, and to assume the dignity of man, and enjoy the privileges of the Christian. They begin to taste the sweetness of redeeming love, and sing the praises of **THE PRINCE OF LIFE**, in their own native tongues.

The **BIBLE**, which contains the words of eternal life, has been circulated of late to an extent, and with a success, which fills the world with astonishment. A few years ago, we would have deemed incredible, that which we have lived to witness;—and if an angel from heaven

should declare the events, which will occur during the next half century, perhaps our faith would stagger at the wonderful report. But however great and glorious the events, which may be evolved by the revolutions of the great wheel of Providence, they will probably be effected by the means, which God has already appointed, and which have been commonly employed. The churches will be roused to exertion. A spirit of prayer and supplication will be granted. A liberality, unknown to former ages, will be called into exercise. Many will be stirred up to offer themselves as missionaries. Christians, agreeing in the great fundamental doctrines of the gospel, will become more united in spirit, and more harmonious in operation. The aspect of the nations will be changed. Wars will cease, and the sword be turned into the plough-share, and the spear into the pruning hook. National animosities and antipathies will be extinguished or mitigated. Kings will then esteem it their highest honour, to become *nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers to the church*. There will then be no occasion for pathetic addresses to the passions to extort a scanty pittance from the pockets of the avaricious. The people will offer to the service of the Lord, as of old, when they were obliged to tell them to stay their hand—that it was enough.

Whether any anticipation of the spirit of these future times, is possessed by my present audience, will now be put to the test. The object is now before you. Funds are needed for missionary purposes—Perhaps, to send missionaries to the East.—I will not urge you to give, nor attempt any appeal to your passions: *The Lord loveth a cheerful giver*. Let every one then, according as the Lord hath prospered him, and according as he hath purposed in his heart, bring his oblation to the treasury of the LORD. The ponderous gift of the

man of wealth and the widow's mite will both be acceptable. Of one thing however you may rest assured, that no one will become ultimately the poorer, for giving liberally to such an object. And this I believe would be the result, if your contributions should be increased tenfold. Finally, remember that the principal fruit of your liberality will be enjoyed in heavenly blessings. *He who soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he who soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully.*

And now may God make all grace abound toward you, that ye always having all-sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work; being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.

THE END.

