

THE HOME MISSIONARY.

Go,.....PREACH the GOSPEL,.....*Mark, xvl. 15.*
How shall they PREACH except they be SENT?....*Rom. x. 15.*

VOL. I.

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NO. 1.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

The design of the American Home Missionary Society is to promote, not the interests of any one section or denomination of the church, but the religious benefit of a great and growing nation. The business of such an institution cannot be conducted properly, nor can its appeal be effectually presented to the public, without a vigorous and active correspondence with the citizens of every State. Facts must be gathered from every portion of the field of the Society's operations, and these must be communicated to every other portion, before a common and national sympathy can be expected to be awakened.

But these communications can only be made through the periodical press. For this purpose, the Executive Committee have hitherto used with advantage the columns of the *New-York Observer*. But since the action of the Society has been much enlarged, and the increasing importance of its object more generally known, we have felt, in common with our friends abroad, the difficulty of extending sufficiently the circulation of a weekly paper not entirely our own, in distant sections of the country, and where the field was already occupied by other publications of the same general character.

After much deliberation, therefore, the Committee are deeply convinced that they owe it to the cause of Home Missions, to issue a new Periodical, adapted to promote the great national object of the Institution which they serve, and which, while it shall not interfere with local publications, may be circulated, in every part of the country, as the authentic vehicle of the Society's communications.

THE HOME MISSIONARY, AND AMERICAN PASTOR'S JOURNAL, is designed to occupy a similar place, in connection with the *Home Missionary Enterprise*, to that which has been so long and so successfully held, in aid of *Foreign Missions*, by the "*Missionary Herald*." It is to be principally composed of original matter of a specific character, and to be conducted on an original plan. It will bear none of the local characters, which belong to most publications devoted to the interests of particular sections of the church, but, like the Society, in whose name it is issued, is intended to be truly national. It will plead the cause of no sect nor party, but offers itself, for the sake of Christ and our country, as the servant of all, who agree in essential doctrines, and who desire to see an able christian ministry established and sustained, and christian temples erected, and christian sacraments enjoyed, in the length and in the breadth of this great republic.

That part of the work, denominated "*THE HOME MISSIONARY*," is designed to furnish a faithful record of the doings of all Domestic Missionary Societies, in the United States, and of the labors of all Missionaries employed by this Society and its Auxiliaries; and thus to present a medium, through which they, who are stationed in the different and distant portions of this wide field, may correspond with each other and provoke one another to love and good works.

The plan of the "*PASTOR'S JOURNAL*" is added to that of the *Missionary*, for the purpose of introducing ministers and churches to each other, all over the land,

that whatever, in the experience of each, is sufficiently remarkable to merit such a record, may be reported for the instruction of all. Contributions to this department of the work have already been pledged by several clergymen and others extensively known, and it is confidently believed that it will be ably sustained.

In offering this work to the public, the Editor has consented to assume responsibilities, which he would gladly devolve upon an abler hand, were it not for his official connections with the Society, in whose name, and on whose behalf it is undertaken. But in this connection, he dares not shrink from any enterprise, which, *for Zion's sake*, may be required of one, who is permitted to stand at the confluence of so many streams of knowledge, and at the focus of so many rays of light. If he may be instrumental of reflecting and dispensing this light and knowledge over the field from which they are gathered, in such proportions as to animate the nation with the spirit, in which the Society has its being, he will feel that he has magnified his office, and served his country and the church of the living God.

AN ADDRESS,

ADAPTED TO THE MONTHLY CONCERT FOR PRAYER.

Furnished by ARCH'D. ALEXANDER, D. D. Prof. of Theol. in the Seminary at Princeton, N. J.

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN—

On a certain occasion, the prophet Elijah exclaimed in the bitterness of his soul, *I, even I only am left, and they seek my life to take it away.* But, through the wonderful goodness of God, how widely different are our circumstances! While we are far from oppression and from the fear of molestation, we feel that we are not left alone in the service of God.

It is indeed a pleasing and animating thought that so many of the friends of Zion have agreed to approach the mercy seat this day, and, in concert, to lay the same petition at the foot of the throne of the Most High. Yes; at this moment, thick clouds of incense ascend from a thousand altars. Prayer is offered in many different languages, and the circle of suppliants, who now appear before God, extends almost entirely round the globe. The four quarters of the world and the islands of the sea are united with us in prayer. And that which, above all, should inspire us with confidence in coming to the throne, is, that we have the authority and encouragement of our Lord and Saviour for that work, in which we are now engaged. His gracious declaration is, *That, if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* And our glorified Mediator, not only encourages us to pray in concert, but he condescends to unite with us in our petitions, and is now officiating as our great High Priest, in the most Holy Place not made with hands, where *he ever liveth to make intercession for us.* Standing before the altar, He offers much incense, *with the prayers of all saints. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascendeth up before God.* We may, therefore, *come boldly to the throne of grace; but let us draw near with a true heart, in the full assurance of faith.*

We come, indeed, to make large requests. Our desires, this evening, are circumscribed by no limits, less than those of the habitable globe. We come to ask for the conversion of the world; and surely no prayers can be more acceptable to Jesus Christ, than those which seek the same object, which he made so prominent in that model of prayer, which he gave to his disciples, and for which he prayed

himself, in so sublime and fervent a strain, just before his passion. Has he promised, that, if only *two disciples* shall agree, as touching *any thing*, it shall be done for them? How much more, when *thousands* have agreed to ask for *that very thing*, which was the object of our Saviour, in all his bitter sufferings even unto death?

There is something demanding our gratitude and admiration, in the existence and universality of this Concert for Prayer. It has not been introduced and extended by human contrivance and effort, but doubtless, by the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, operating silently on the hearts of christians, and disposing them to join together in supplicating for the blessing of God to descend upon the church and on the world.

Such a concert was an object of desire with many pious men, for a long time. About the middle of the last century, an attempt was made by some godly ministers in Scotland, to originate a concert for prayer. The plan was communicated to Jonathan Edwards, whose enlargement of mind led him to take the most comprehensive views of the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, and whose deep piety prepared his heart to respond to every proposal for the advancement of religion in the world. He not only approved and recommended the plan, but actually wrote and published a book to obviate objections which he foresaw would be raised, and to persuade christians to engage cordially in observing it. But, notwithstanding all the zeal which was enlisted and the exertions which were made for the promotion of this object, it did not succeed. The concert never became general, and was of short duration.

Again, within our own recollection, another effort was made in this country to establish a general concert for prayer. The plan was recommended by the General Association of Congregational Ministers in Connecticut, and by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church in the United States. But neither was this successful. It would seem that the church was not yet ripe for such a measure. That impulse, in relation to the universal extension and reformation of religion, which has, of late, inspired so many hearts with new life and energy, was not then given.

Of the commencement of the existing Concert the credit is due to the churches of the Baptist denomination in England. They agreed to observe the first Monday in every month, as a season of prayer for the conversion of the heathen, and for the success of their missionaries in the East. They seem not, however, to have formed any plan for a general concert among all christians in the world. But other churches, having engaged in the missionary enterprize, followed the good example; until, by degrees, and without effort, it has been adopted wherever any lively interest is felt in the great work of evangelizing the world. It was adopted because it was congenial with the feelings which had begun to warm the hearts of many, and has been observed with a zeal and interest proportioned to the missionary spirit which has pervaded the breasts of christians.

By the Missionaries, stationed in heathen lands, this Concert is highly valued. They anticipate its arrival with lively hope, and hail it with heart-felt joy. It is to them, like the new-moon to the Jews, the most interesting day of the whole month. On this day, they are assured that they are not left alone, nor forgotten by their fellow christians. They know that we have agreed to meet them at the throne of our Heavenly Father, and that our prayers will have a special respect to their work and their success; and exposed, as they are, to difficulties and discouragements, and feeling, as they do, the need of the fervent, united prayers of all christians.

tians, their emotions, on these occasions, are often unutterable. Imagine a small company of these devoted men, separated many thousands of miles from the dear home of their nativity, and exiled from all civilized and christian society, meeting to-day in their simple temple, or in the open air; and surrounded by the little group of their swarthy converts, and with a flock of their dear scholars, on whom their hopes and affections are fixed—They lift their eyes to heaven from whence their help cometh—they raise their supplicating voices, and they are conscious of renewed strength, because their hands are held up by the united prayers of thousands and tens of thousands!

Dear Brethren, we do not sympathise, as we ought, in the various feelings of these disinterested men. We do not bear them on our hearts before God, so frequently and so tenderly as our duty demands.

And, our Home Missionaries, stand often in as much need of our prayers, as those who are in foreign lands. Their personal difficulties, dangers and privations are often greater than those of the men who go to the East. Yet they are but little thought of, and too seldom aided by the prayers of the churches.

Is there a heart present which has not experienced a bitter pang, tending perhaps even to discouragement, occasioned by the premature decease of so many of our missionaries? Just at the time when they have become qualified for extensive usefulness, and when the field appeared white before them, ready for the harvest, they have been cut down, and all our animating hopes of their increasing and extensive usefulness, have been blasted in a moment! These mysterious dispensations must, I know, be resolved into the sovereignty of Him, whose ways are unsearchable, and whose throne is enveloped in clouds and darkness; but will it be impertinent to ask, whether the reason may not exist in ourselves? Yes; christians, the loss of such men, as Mills, Parsons, Fisk, Hall, Newell, and others, may be chargeable to us; because we have too much forgotten them, while they were painfully wearing out their lives in the midst of appalling difficulties. God, in displeasure towards us, and in love to them, has called them away from labour and from suffering.

This Monthly Concert was instituted expressly, that prayers might be offered, by many in unison, for missionaries; but what a melancholy spectacle is often witnessed in many of our churches! A few individuals are seen to assemble while, by a large majority even of professors, the day is forgotten, or no disposition is felt to join in its devotions. The fact is, that the importance of this Concert has not been duly estimated by any of us. It is already becoming, with many, a formal service. We join in it without desire and without expectation of a blessing. No proper pains are taken to prepare our hearts for its exercises, by fixing our minds intently on the special blessings, which we ought to ask of God. Our confidence in the divine promises is not firm and unwavering; and we provoke God to reject our petitions, by our coldness and the weakness of our faith. Our hearts are not enlarged to pray for great blessings; and our spirits are not stirred up to that degree of importunity which will take no denial, like the patriarch Jacob, who said, *I will not let thee go except thou bless me.* If our hearts were duly affected with the perishing conditions of the hundreds of millions of heathens, now on their way to eternity, we should scarcely be able to rest day or night. Then should we come to the Monthly Concert, oppressed in spirit, and almost overwhelmed with our own feelings. And if we contemplated, believingly, the forlorn and miserable condition of the "cast off seed of Abraham," like Paul, we should "have great heaviness and continual sorrow in our hearts," because these natural descendants of the Father of the Faithful, have been, for so many ages, broken off from their own olive tree, and are still concluded in unbelief.

The situation of those regions also, which were in the beginning beautified and enriched with apostolic churches, but have for a long time been desolated by the deluded and infuriated followers of a vile imposter, ought to make a deep impression on our minds. That land is in a manner consecrated. It received the blood of martyrs, and now contains their sleeping dust. There the saints once prayed in fervency and faith, and we trust, that God is now about to answer those prayers, by breaking the rod of the oppressor, and resuscitating from the ashes, a multitude of evangelical churches.

And can the christian, who feels as he ought, cease to weep, when he casts his eyes over Christendom and beholds how the house of the living God has been deformed by the inventions and traditions of men, corrupted by error and gross idolatry, broken by dissensions, and defiled by the open indulgence of sin? How can any heart, which has had experience of the love of Christ, feel indifferent, when his divine dignity is denied and blasphemed? When his authority is usurped? When his cause is betrayed by professed friends? When his commandments are violated?—And when every object of worldly ambition, avarice or selfish gratification, is preferred to the honor of his name and to the interests of his kingdom? This is no time for wise virgins, to slumber and sleep. They ought speedily to arise and trim their lamps, and be ready for the coming of their Lord.

As we have met to pray for the conversion of the world, we ought, in an especial manner, to remember those benevolent institutions and associations, which have of late sprung up, and are the glory of the age. These are like lamps shining in a dark night; and have doubtless been kindled by a spark from heaven. There is no spirit of rivalry among them. They all aim at the same object. They are sister institutions, between which there is no collision;—but mutual love and respect. Indeed, so nearly are they allied, that an injury to any one of them, would be a wound to all the rest. Some persons, for want of due consideration, are apt to imagine, that there is some sort of interference between Foreign and Home Missions. But this is a great mistake. The same persons are the active and zealous friends and supporters of both. These Societies are engaged in building up and extending the same kingdom. The same gospel is preached by both; and the instruction, conversion and salvation of lost men, is equally the object at which they aim; and it is hard to conceive, how any man can be the sincere friend of the one, without wishing for success to the other. They are the two great divisions of the army of the Lord of Hosts, which is now on its march to pull down the strong holds of the enemy; and the only reason why they move in separate columns, is, for the sake of order, energy, and despatch. Let us then pray for the success of Foreign and Home Missions, without a feeling of invidious distinction. It is characteristic of all these associations, that they powerfully tend to bring brethren, who have been long separated, by walls of prejudice, bigotry, and ignorance of each other, into the sweet bands of unity and love. There is not in their nature the smallest germ of discord. If they ever occasion dissension, it is (like the perversion of christianity itself) owing entirely, to the evil passions of men.

My dear Brethren, the harvest before us is exceedingly great, but alas, the laborers are comparatively few. When we anxiously enquire, "Who will go for us," to gather the lost sheep of Christ's flock, both at home and abroad? there are few found to answer, "Here am I, send me." Let us then remember the exhortation of our Saviour, "*Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he would send laborers into his harvest.*" He can raise up servants from the dust. He can call them from the ranks of his enemies. But we know the fountains

from which usually issue the streams that make glad the city of God, and that all these fountains must be replenished from heaven. Let us pray then especially for the rich effusion of the Holy Spirit, on all our churches and colleges, and seminaries, and all benevolent societies, and missionary stations. It is a fact, that most of our candidates for the ministry, and almost all our missionaries, first felt the constraining love of Christ, which led them to this office, in the midst of revivals of religion.

I beseech you, christians, to reflect upon the means and facilities which God hath granted to the American churches, for diffusing the light of the gospel over the world, and remember that our responsibilities are in proportion to what has been given. Who can say, that God may not have destined this favoured nation to achieve this glorious object? The work shall be done; but it will depend on herself, whether she shall have a share in it. Undoubtedly, it would be the most brilliant star in her banner. May God give the right impulse, and guide its direction.

American Home Missionary Society.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Up to the 8th of March last, extracts from the Correspondence of the Committee were regularly published in the New-York Observer, to which our readers are referred for a history of the doings of the Society during the previous portion of the current year. From that date to the 15th of April, no less than 150 letters were received and laid before the Committee, and 33 appointments of Missionaries and Agents made. Many of these communications are of a highly interesting and encouraging character, but too much in detail to be given to the public entire. We have only room in the present number for the following, most of which are brief and condensed extracts.

Blatchford, Esq. of this city, accompanied with a note, dated March 25, 1828—in which he says.

“ My father's extreme feebleness would not permit him to write it with his own hand, and although he commenced the dictation of it, last month, he was not permitted to complete it until the 14th instant, three days before his death. It was the last act of his life, and comes to you without his signature. He would not allow that to be put to it by any other hand than his own; but that hand was destined never to take a pen again. It was among his last requests, that the letter should be delivered to you unaltered, as a feeble testimony of his interest in your most excellent Society.”

A MESSAGE FROM THE GRAVE.

The letter recorded below comes from a source, and has been received under circumstances, which clothe it with peculiar interest. Its author, the late Dr. Blatchford of Lansingburgh, was long and extensively known and highly esteemed in the churches. It is given to the public, with great satisfaction, not only as exhibiting a tone of feeling on the subject of the missionary enterprise, which it is delightful to witness in the exercises of the dying christian; but also because it contains notices of early Missionary efforts in this country, which come properly within the design of our work. And his remarks on the “ *Western and Southern Fraternity*,” are too precious to be lost. If the movements of the young men in our Theological Seminaries, when they meet together to “ *look on the field*” and inquire what the Lord will have them to do, are regarded with so much interest by dying saints here, how much more interesting must they appear to saints in glory?

The letter referred to has been obligingly furnished us, since the author's decease, by his son, R. M.

REFLECTIONS ON THE MISSIONARY CAUSE, in a letter from the REV. SAMUEL BLATCHFORD, D. D. three days before his death, to the Corresponding Secretary.

Lansingburgh, February, 1828.

My Very Dear Brother:—

When I received your communication announcing my having been unanimously elected to a Vice-Presidency in the American Home Missionary Society, I felt grateful to my brethren, that my name should be recorded an officer in a Society so pre-eminently splendid in its design. Missionary Institutions, in the hands of the Holy Spirit, have been peculiarly blessed for the promotion of the Redeemer's Kingdom; and are directly within the meaning of our Lord's instructions when, to his disciples, he handed the commission “ *Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.*” What triumphs has not the gospel of Christ effected since the commencement of missionary efforts? “ *Solitary places have been made glad, and the wilderness hath blos-*