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REV. DR. MAGIE'S SERMON

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

1847.

OUR TRUE ENCOURAGEMENT.

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S E R M O N ,

PREACHED AT BUFFALO, NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 8, 1847,

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR

FOREIGN MISSIONS,

AT THEIR

THIRTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL MEETING.

BY REV. DAVID MAGIE, D. D.,

ELIZABETHTOWN, N. J.

B O S T O N :

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# S E R M O N .

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ISAIAH, XXXII. 15.

UNTIL THE SPIRIT BE Poured UPON US FROM ON HIGH.

As regards the final and universal triumphs of the gospel, no believer in the Bible can entertain a doubt. Glorious things are spoken of Zion, the city of our God, and we are assured, explicitly, that the kingdoms of this world shall one day become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ. That light which now shines on our path, is yet to lighten all the Gentiles, and be the glory of the people of Israel.

Thus it is written, and thus it will be. But what is to secure the ultimate coming of this happy period? Our hope all hangs on one single thing—the promise of the Spirit—and occupying the position we do in the annals of time, we can look neither backward nor forward, without being convinced how dependent we are on such aid. What has been done, teaches us this; and what is still to be done teaches it with even greater emphasis. Every past conquest has been the effect of union and communion with the divine Comforter; and our ability to

carry on the enterprise in a way at all commensurate with the grandeur of the object before us, must be derived from the same source. Even more than former assistance will be needed. Instead of occasional drops of mercy, water must be poured upon the thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.

The text refers to this; and it is too well understood to require any particular explanation. Suffice it simply to say, that the chapter begins with a cheering account of the approach of a brighter day; but it goes on to tell us that, in the meantime, a season of gloom and depression would ensue, to be terminated only by the pouring out of the Spirit from on high. This would work a delightful change. Then the wilderness would become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.

No language could be more appropriate to us, in the relation which we, as a Missionary Society, sustain to the conversion of the world. Large as are our resources, numerous as are the laborers we have sent forth, and strong as is the hold which this blessed cause has taken on the affections of the people, we were never more dependent on help from heaven, than at this very moment. Without special divine aid we can do nothing. God must plentifully imbue our hearts with the influences of the Spirit, that we may use *the right means for effecting our object*, that we may *prosecute the work with proper energy*, and that we may see *our efforts attended with success*. These are the points which I wish to illustrate and enforce.

I. *The Spirit of God must be with us, or we shall not use the right means for converting the world.*

Our undertaking is a vast one, and we are not left in uncertainty as to the way in which it is to be accomplished. That gospel, which God has given us to spread, as well as to enjoy, was made for man; and though there is in it no independent efficacy, it does possess an adaptedness to the renovation of his moral nature. No matter where you meet him, or whatever be the depth of his depravity, this is the remedy for his ruin. There is here an ordained channel through which the Spirit of God operates to change the heart, make the poor pagan a new creature, turn the desert into a goodly land, and fill a world of crime and sorrow with righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Sending the knowledge of Christ abroad through the nations, is the appointed method of saving men. We know of no other means—having thus the seal of heaven upon them—for subverting the kingdom of Satan, rooting idolatry out of the earth, and restoring our race to fellowship with their Maker.

The commission under which we act runs thus—to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified. To bring about this result, we are confined to a single instrumentality—the pure, unadulterated gospel—that gospel which we ourselves have received, and wherein we stand. This we are

pledged, as far as in us lies, to send abroad to all them that dwell on the face of the earth, assured that nothing is wanting to cause the truth to triumph everywhere, but the accompanying power of the Holy Spirit. Our great business is to teach men that they have ruined themselves by sin, to lead them to disclaim all righteousness of their own, and to bring them to a cordial trust in the blood of the cross. We must give the heathen that very gospel which was preached on the day of Pentecost, which the Reformation carried into the heart of Germany, which was found in the caves and mountains of Scotland when she was faithful to her covenant, which our Puritan Fathers brought with them from the old world, and which glowed with divine life in the bosom of an Edwards, a Brainerd, and a Davies. This is the panoply in which we are to wage war with the powers of darkness. We have no other armor.

This gospel we are to send, in simplicity and godly sincerity, to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. It must be our determination, at every stage of progress, not to know anything save Jesus Christ, and him crucified; and so long as we pursue the work in this way, we may be cheered with the conviction that an instrumentality on which God has a thousand times made his impress, will not be employed in vain. This can save a soul from death, and it can save a world from death. If we ever forget that there is a principle of vitality in the genuine gospel—the plan of salva-

tion, the story of the crucifixion—when thus applied, we shall find the very sinews of missionary effort all cut at once. The words that I speak unto you, said the Great Teacher, they are spirit, and they are life. There shall be a handful of corn in the earth, upon the top of the mountains, the fruit whereof shall shake like Lebanon.

It is more faith in God's instrumentality that we need. We look at the gospel, and what is it, if left to itself, but the declaration of a fact—the narration of an event—the revelation of a doctrine? How can it change the heart of a heathen, and create new sensations, and lead to new solitudes, and awaken new joys there, to tell him that in Christ we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace? The cause seems unequal to the effect. But when there goes, along with the statement of such facts, an unseen agency, more powerful than that which makes the mountains tremble, all difficulty is removed. The gospel is not the breath of man—it is the power of God. It is not a feeble weapon, it is the sword of the Spirit. It is not a mere tale of wonder, it is a message of life. Nothing that the world has ever seen descends so deeply into the seat of human sympathies, or works such revolutions in the character of man.

The kind of duty we have to perform is obvious. We but go forth, in the persons of our missionaries, to declare, in the school, along the way-side, and at the temple of idolatry, that which we ourselves have



seen, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life. There is no necessity for our being told, that this is God's method for working salvation in the midst of the earth. Never can it be matter of surprise to us, that the bare reading of the story of the crucifixion, in the lonely tent of a man of God in Greenland, should be attended with such power as to strike the mind of a half-sleeping heathen at the door, and prompt him to exclaim, "Those are precious words, let me hear them again." We must forget our own conversion, before these things can appear strange.

It is no part of our business to make experiments for the relief of human wo, or the removal of human guilt. We have a Saviour to speak of; whose blood we know cleanseth from all sin; we have the invitation to give: whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely; and then, to complete our resources, we have the promise, Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. This is our reliance. Thus equipped, we go out to fight God's battle among men. And sad will be the day when our compassion for sinners begins to dig for itself a channel different from that in which the Saviour's flowed, or our impatience to get the work done leads us to the use of means such as he has not authorized. All we can do—all we are allowed to do—is to take our stand at the foot of the cross, and point the heathen to its bleeding victim. Our sole expedient for saving men from hell, is the atonement of Calvary, the expiatory sacrifice of the Son of God; that

righteousness which is unto all, and upon all them that believe. These constitute the glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. When our sons and our daughters leave us to cross oceans, and climb mountains, and journey over valleys, we must charge them to repeat everywhere the story of the apostasy, and of the death of Christ to remove the curse. We must exhort them to say, God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life.

These are the means by which we are to accomplish our object, and we need to be kept to them without deviation or faltering. But this can be done only by such a measure of divine influence, daily exerted upon our hearts, as shall cause the gospel to loom up largely and gloriously before us, and inspire us with a perfect confidence in its divinely appointed efficacy. As a missionary organization, the presence with us of the Good Spirit, is indispensable. No resolutions, however stringent, to require an orthodox creed in those who enter the foreign field—no well adjusted frame work of ecclesiastical supervision—no votes of councils or synods to commission only good men and true, will secure the giving of real, vital Christianity to the nations. These things may be useful and important, but they are not sufficient. The moment we ourselves become indifferent to the doctrines of total depravity, justification by faith, and regeneration by the Spirit, the trumpet we blow on the other side of the

globe, will give an uncertain sound. We shall plant no better religion than we possess.

There is a downward tendency in man—in the best of men—and in the best of men engaged in the holiest work,—which nothing can effectually counteract, but a constantly exerted divine influence. Charters, subscriptions, pledges, will not do it. These, when the heart gets wrong, are weak as a thread of tow. God, the Holy Ghost, must be with us at every step, or we shall even lose those things which we have already wrought, and never receive a full reward.

Let me add : this view of the gospel, as the wisdom of God, and the power of God, will impart such an aspect of simplicity to our aims, and give such a type of homogeneousness to our efforts, as will help us to move forward with harmony in our great work. We shall not then lay out our strength on extraneous matters, or matters which, though valuable in themselves, do not properly belong to us as a missionary society. Our object, be it never forgotten, is not to make any direct attack upon forms of civil government, however cruel and despotic, or to carry a crusade into the arrangements of social life, however inconsistent they may seem with the highest degree of human happiness. These may be great evils here, and they may lie very much in our way, but the first assault is not to be made on these out-works. If we feel as Paul felt, or as Martyn felt, or as Christ felt, our chief desire will be to secure, for the real

gospel, a lodgment in the heart, assured that this is the divine method of reforming the life. We need not fear. Truth is like chain-shot—give one link its direction, and it will draw after it the entire charge. Make the heathen Christians, and they will not fail to become men.

Such is our work, and such are the appliances with which we are furnished for carrying it on. The gospel, preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, is all we need to recover men from their sins, and make this world of ours vocal with the high praises of God. This comprises the length and breadth of our duty. Our service is performed when, in reliance on divine aid, we have testified in the face of all nations repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. But,

II. Unless the Holy Spirit be with us, *we shall never prosecute our work with proper energy.*

No missionary enterprise can be expected to flourish, which does not take fast hold on the hearts, and deeply move the sympathies of its friends. This is a cause of too much import to be carried on lukewarmly. Some years ago, a number of young men, candidates for service in foreign lands, in the papal church, pledged themselves to God and to each other to be faithful, by each opening a vein in his arm and writing his name in his own blood. I plead not for this. It may have been superstition. But if covenanting in blood can bind man to his duty, then we are bound with ligatures which can never be broken.

It is easy to see that one of the main purposes of the Church on earth, is her own self-extension. We learn, on every page of the history of the early propagation of the gospel, that the apostles did not ordain elders in every city, chiefly, much less exclusively, to keep ground already gained, or to rejoice in conquests already made. With them the field was the world. Their plan was an out-going, an aggressive one. But this is a kind of work which we shall never follow up with a full heart, except as our desire to spread the gospel, as well as our individual appreciation of it, is quickened by the Spirit of God. Neither of these things is natural to us, and unless supplied, as was the oil in the prophet's vision, they will grow weak and vanish away. We know, by sad experience, that our persuasion of a personal welcome to trust in Christ, becomes indistinct, whenever we are left to ourselves; and we also know that when thus left, we forget the claims of a dying world.

The church, every one admits, ought to place the sending of the gospel to the heathen among the most solemn and clearly ascertained of all her duties. It belongs to her to see that her members are kept apprised of the aspects and wants of this vast undertaking, cheerfully providing the means for every newly projected occupation of the enemy's country, and carefully watching over young Christians of promise, to mark the developments of their character, as to any special fitness for such service. These are points in relation to which there can be

no doubt. Who can hesitate to believe that the bringing forward of candidates for this high employment, should be an object of the deepest interest to every minister of the gospel, every professor of theology, and every ecclesiastical judicatory? Parents ought to prize such a post for a beloved son or daughter, above one in the retinue of an ambassador to the mightiest potentate on earth. Daily should prayer be made that the Holy Ghost would separate our Barnabases and our Sauls to the work of Christian Missions.

But how are we to get up to this state of feeling, and this standard of action? We shall but practice an imposition upon ourselves if we merely compare what is now doing with what was done a few years ago, instead of summoning courage to ask what the opening providences of God require at our hands, or what our own good hope through grace should prompt us to undertake. All seems bright and animated enough, when mingling in an immense congregation like this to exchange Christian salutations, and to sharpen each the countenance of his friend, by the rehearsal of some striking incident. We might almost suppose that the tribes of the Lord had assembled to decide which should have the honor of going up first to possess the land. There are ministers enough, and friends of the Redeemer enough to move the world. But let us beware how we take this as the actual gauge of missionary zeal among us. We can attend anniversaries, and make speeches, and indulge in the

luxury of pleasant feeling, better than we can go into our closets and pray, "Thy kingdom come," and better than we can write, "Holiness to the Lord," on all our possessions and enjoyments. Alas! we have very little of the mind that was in him who cried out in relation to this work, "How am I straitened till it be accomplished!" Never shall we act with energy until we have more of the Spirit of God.

This is no time for self-felicitation. If we are in advance of some by-gone ages, we fall most reproachfully behind the feeling and effort of primitive times. The records of the struggles of the early disciples of the Saviour with the paganism of the world, brief as these records are, furnish proof of the most conclusive kind, against us. How they toiled and suffered, we well know, for the statement is, that to their power, yea, and beyond their power, they gave of their substance, praying the Apostles with much entreaty, to take upon them the ministering to the Saints. No wonder that the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed. Calamitous as the times were, we find the religion of the crucified one triumphing, in a few centuries, over ten violent persecutions, and then, instead of being shorn of her strength, putting on the purple, and sitting down on the throne of the Cæsars.

But now, alas, half our strength has to be expended in trying to keep our enterprise up to lines already reached. Instead of onward move-

ments, enlarging year by year, to correspond with the calls, which an open world, and fields everywhere white to the harvest, are addressing to us, we seem, so far as men and money, and new stations are concerned, to be almost stationary; and this too, at a time when every branch of secular business is borne forward on such a tide of prosperity, as the land has never known before.

Why this falling off from the zeal and self-denial of the first disciples? Only give us the same implicit faith in the realities of the world to come, the same abiding conviction of the value of the soul, the same unshaken reliance on the blood of the cross, and above all, the same accompanying influence of the Spirit of God, and we can work as well as primitive believers. As for external means and resources, we are better off than they ever were. Not only have we wealth on our side, which they had not, and science, which they had not, and the countenance of civil governments, which they had not, but we have the Bible translated, and the means of translating it, into almost every language under heaven. We can do what they did—carry the gospel to every city—and then we can do what they did not, and could not do—leave copies of the word of God in every city.

So far as resources are concerned, and acquaintance with the condition of the world, and rapidity of communication with lands afar off, we have advantages over all the friends of the Redeemer, of past ages, inspired and uninspired. But in one



thing, many of them excelled us. They felt, as I fear we do not, their need of power from on high, and go where they might, they seem to have carried with them a never failing assurance that, when they planted and watered, God would give the increase. This was their grand distinction over modern times. It was not simply that they could speak with tongues, having never learned them—it was not that it was given them in the same hour what they should say—nor was it that they could confirm their testimony by signs and wonders following. These things did not change the hearts of honorable men and women not a few. It was not thus that a great company of the priests became obedient to the faith. There must be along with all this, and in addition to it all, the working of that same power, which wrought in Christ, when he was raised from the dead, to give the truth any saving effect. This they sought, and this they enjoyed. Oh, had we the same confidence in divine aid, we should go forward with energy, and a voice would soon be heard, saying to the North, give up; and to the South, keep not back. Bring thy sons from far, and thy daughters from the ends of the earth.

For my part I despair of ever seeing the church come up to any suitable standard of praying, and giving, and doing, until the Spirit is more copiously poured upon us from on high. Nothing else can reach the secret place of feeling in these cold bosoms of ours, or indite those effectual, fervent supplications which avail much, or open the purse of

this money-loving generation. We are shut up to this single resource. It only remains to say,

III. That the Spirit must be given us, or we shall never see *our efforts crowned with success.*

In no other way can one chase a thousand, or two put ten thousand to flight. There is something in a simple dependence on divine help, which will not fail to impart to our labors a character so earnest and decided as to betoken a favorable result; while, at the same time, it will be sure to invest them with a becoming air of sobriety and self-distrust. We always work best ourselves, when we feel that God is working in us both to will and to do. This is an infallible cure for despondency. How can difficulties, be they what they may, depress the man who really believes that the heart of the imperious Brahmin, the fiery Druze, or the degraded Zulu, is in the hand of the Lord, as the clay in the hand of the potter? This is encouragement enough. The floods may lift up—the floods may lift up their voice—yea, the floods may lift up their waves, but thou, O Lord, on high, art mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.

If we only use the right means, in the right way, failure is impossible. Long ago was the matter settled that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head; and how can we entertain a doubt, as we trace this promise on, and find it amplified and rendered more distinct by successive prophets of the Most High, until at length God is

manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up into glory. It is no more an open question whether nations shall come bending to him, and kings bow down before him. This point is fixed, and all misgiving is sinful. Once it was sublimely said, Fear not, you carry Cæsar and his fortunes; but now it is said, in language of far higher and nobler sublimity, Fear not, for God is with you, and sooner or later your work shall be rewarded. Confidence in an invisible arm is, of itself, an element of prosperity. Read the history of men who have been strong, and done exploits in the world, and you will find that they were carried steadily forward by a confidence, which scarcely ever forsook them, in supernatural aid. It was so with that remorseless tyrant who styled himself the Scourge of God—it was so with Cortes, as he trampled unoffending nations under his bloody feet—it was so with Cromwell, when he bound kings with chains and princes with fetters of iron—it was so with Washington, as he lifted up his head serenely above the clouds and storms of the Revolution—it was so, in a better, higher, nobler sense, with Luther, and Whitfield, and Paul. Nothing so nerves the arm and strengthens the heart, as confidence in God. Who art thou, O great mountain! Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain.

This is a point which we ought to ponder again and again. I grant that the gospel which we are

laboring to send out over the world, is so little after man, as well in the doctrines it inculcates, as in the duties it enjoins, that we can have no hope of its ultimate and universal triumph, but in the belief of an accompanying divine operation. This is true everywhere. Even here, among ourselves, where a general Christian sentiment exists, where the laws and usages of society favor a profession of godliness, and where the labors of the preacher are enforced by living epistles for Christ, known and read of all men—we have nothing else to depend upon. What, then, shall we do without the Spirit of God in a work which carries us out far beyond the range of all evangelical influence? Those who go forth to convert men in lands where every train of thought, and every prejudice of education, and every habit of life, are cast in a pagan mould, must find themselves weak as babes, except as they are girded with strength from on high.

But here light breaks in upon us. No antecedent preparation is necessary to encourage our hopes, when we carry the gospel to the dark places of the earth. The footsteps of Revelation do not require to be preceded by the march of science, nor does the efficacy of the story of the Cross need to be prepared for by any previous culture of mind or manners. So far as respects such auxiliaries, the gospel is competent to go alone. We may safely give it as a first lesson. The simple recital of God's plan of saving men, attended by that almighty influence which we are fully justi-

fied in expecting, meets the savage and tames him, the barbarian and civilizes him, the Hottentot and elevates him, the Dyak and subdues him. An omnipotent energy goes along with the oft-repeated tale. We may liken it to the silent and noiseless influence of the sun, visiting us with his morning beams, and rejoicing as a strong man to run a race—or to the quiet and serene efficacy of the dew, as it descends with the shades of the evening, to spread fertility abroad over the earth. These energies are so mild in their movements, as not to awaken infancy in its cradle, or disturb old age on its weary bed. But quiet and potent as are such operations of nature, they are only emblems of an equally quiet, though infinitely more potent operation of grace which, in the manifold wisdom of God, is made to attend the simple annunciation of the gospel.

We rest with confidence here. It is the purpose of the Father thus to give the Son a seed to serve him. On the strength of a prediction so encouraging, we may press forward, assured that God will take out of the nations a people for himself, and that in no tribe or city, where the gospel is faithfully preached, will there fail to be a remnant, according to the election of grace. What if our efforts are powerless in themselves? We have only, in obedience to the divine command, to fill the valley of Edom with ditches, and the water to supply them will, in due time, come, either from the clouds, or the bowels of the earth. Moses hesi-

tated about attempting to deliver his brethren. But he, at length, went on, and the Nile was turned into blood, and hail stones and coals of fire descended, and darkness covered the land—and the first born died—and Pharaoh let the people go. Nothing is too hard for the Lord.

Jesus is to see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied, and the Spirit, in the hearts of believers, is to secure to him this reward. We anticipate the time, when France, with her little remnant of true faith revived, shall build again her long since dilapidated Huguenot temples—when the active penetrating mind of Germany shall work out a second Reformation, more glorious than the first—and when all Europe shall inquire after the old paths, and recover the precious doctrine of justification by faith. India too, with her idolatrous sons, including the kingdoms which have gone after the false Prophet, with his crescent, his battle field, and his sensual Paradise—and China, at whose walls we were so long and so anxiously waiting, with all her uncounted millions shall welcome the gospel of the blessed God. Yes, and even Africa, poor Africa, steeped in crime and sorrow at home, and everywhere abroad goaded and peeled by the bloody whip of the taskmaster, shall come forward and lift up her head among the ransomed nations, and rejoice in the liberty wherewith Christ sets his people free. These lands are all to join our own, with her noble rivers, her extensive lakes, her beautiful prairies, and her lofty mountains, in placing the crown upon

the head of Immanuel. Blessed prospect! May God hasten it in his time!

Nay more—reality already begins to mingle with prediction, and accomplishment follows upon the heels of anticipation. When we reflect upon the steady and long continued blessings which have descended upon our labors at Ceylon—the wonders of mercy wrought in the Sandwich Islands—almost renewing the days of old—the solemn movement among the Armenians, bringing forth in such lovely forms all the fruits of the Spirit—and the convictions and conversions now occurring in the midst of the Nestorians, it seems to me, if we should altogether hold our peace, the very stones would cry out. With all that has thus been predicted, and all that has thus been achieved spread out together before our eyes, can it be deemed premature to say: O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain. O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid—say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God.

Such, fathers and brethren, are some of the views which it seemed to me important to present, on this occasion. Called to the discharge of a duty, which no one can expect to perform a second time, it has been my heart's desire and prayer to God, to be led to suggest such trains of thought, as might benefit myself and my fellow laborers in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. This object I have sought to gain, by fixing our minds on the Holy Spirit of

promise, as our good hope in seeking to convert the world.

Now, as we sit here, and contemplate all this, what is the first feeling that springs up in every pious bosom? I speak for you, disciples of the Saviour! It is one of gratitude to God—gratitude that we ourselves have heard the joyful sound, and been brought to bow to the sceptre of King Jesus; gratitude that to us is given the privilege of being almoners of salvation to a lost world—a privilege which Gabriel before the throne might covet—and gratitude that we have the pledge of an influence to accompany our efforts, which shall eventually cause the truth everywhere to triumph. It is for this, among other reasons, that we are kept a little while out of heaven. Christ will have us suffer with him, and labor with him, that we may, at length, be more fully glorified together. Our business then is, not to sit down content with the fact that we have been begotten again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; or to rejoice in trophies already won; or successes already gained among the heathen, but to gird up our loins anew for a further onset upon the kingdom of darkness.

For this we have special encouragement in the times in which our lot is cast. Never is it to be forgotten, that we are not only living under what the apostle calls the ministration of the Spirit, but we are now approaching that period of it, when developments of mercy are to be expected, more numerous and striking than have distinguished any



past age. The great promise of the Old Testament was fulfilled eighteen hundred years ago. Then it was that wisdom built her house, and hewed out her pillars, and killed her beasts, and mingled her wine, and furnished her table, and ever since she has been sending out her maidens, and crying in the high places of the cities. But we want one blessing more; the promise of the New Testament, the pouring out of the Spirit. An atonement has been made, commensurate with the exigencies of the world, and all that we can need additional is, the coming of that blessed Comforter, whose presence in the church is more than a compensation for the departure of the Saviour. This is the gift in which are wrapped up the destinies of the race.

Nothing else can keep alive the missionary zeal of the church. It will not do to rely upon such highly wrought descriptions of the sorrows of those who hasten after another god, as the talents and eloquence of the friends of this good cause may now and then give. Emotion may, in this way, be excited in our breasts, and tears drawn from our eyes. But we cannot calculate upon feeling thus awakened; the fountain is not full enough. The impression is not abiding enough. Besides, the oft-repeated looking upon the miseries of heathenism, apart from all divine influence, like familiarity with any other miseries, must tend to harden rather than soften the heart. We need to be impelled by a higher motive. To hold out in such a work as this, we must have the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

Hence, too, arises all our encouragement. Faith in the efficacy of the gospel, when preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, is the mainspring of every effort to save the heathen. Man's utter ruin is a fact, written so clearly upon every page of the Bible, and portrayed so vividly in the whole history of the race, that it cannot be gainsayed. That the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin is also a fact, which no believer in revelation can hesitate for a moment to admit. Now, all that is necessary is for the remedy to be applied to the disease, and that is done, done effectually and gloriously, when the Spirit takes of the things of Christ, and shows them unto men. This is the agency, which can render our dead and dark world instinct with the presence, and radiant with the beauties of holiness.

But alas, we have very little of the special presence of the blessed Spirit. The discouragements, which press upon us, and weaken our strength in the work, come not, I am sorry to say, from the other side of the globe, but arise from the state of the churches in our own land. There is nothing disheartening in the intelligence which reaches us from abroad, but we are grieved with the lukewarmness at home. We are not straitened in the promise, or providence, or grace of God, but we are straitened, most sadly straitened, by the apathy, and worldliness, and declension of the church. Oh, for a general and powerful revival of religion! We must have it. The work cannot advance in any other

way. It is impossible for the stream to rise above the fountain.

A permanently flourishing state of personal religion furnishes the only soil, in which such a plant as this can strike its roots so deeply, as to live and grow. Secure for us more vital piety here at home, more communion with God, more sympathy with the Saviour in his great work, and a more cordial reliance on the aids of the good Spirit—month by month, and year by year—and there need be no further fear that the cause of Christian missions will be forgotten. We cannot labor, with any heart, for those in foreign lands, while we feel no concern for our next-door neighbors. We cannot offer earnest prayer, and give cheerfully of our substance, to save the heathen, while we are careless about the prospects of our own children and friends. Only let the Spirit be shed upon us, in copious measure, and from those very churches among us, which now seem like a wilderness, shall waters break out, and where all looks now like a desert, streams of salvation shall go forth.

Our duty, Christian friends, all converges to a single point. It is prayer, prayer—prayer for the Spirit that we need. Such prayer as was offered by that little band that waited at Jerusalem for the promise of the Father. Such prayer as Brainerd offered on the banks of the Susquehanna, and Martyn on the plains of India. Such prayer as was offered by the dying Backus, when he asked for the privilege of getting out of his bed, to lift up his soul

once more to God. This is a blessing which we cannot do without. I would call, then, upon every blood-bought disciple of the Saviour here this evening; I would lift up my voice in notes loud enough to reach every Christian in the land; I would send out an affectionate exhortation to our brethren and sisters abroad, and say, 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.

Go ask your Father in heaven, that the coming twelve months may be signalized everywhere, among the churches here and at all our missionary stations in nominal Christendom, and in lands of pagan darkness, by the pouring down upon us of the Spirit of God.

I feel emboldened to press this point, because I know that if that voice could reach us again, to which we loved to listen on these hallowed occasions, and which was heard in tones of such sublime serenity, amidst the ocean's roar and the work of death, it would be lifted up with more than all its former pathos and power, to charge us to pray for the Spirit of God. Two things, that beloved brother never forgot—the atonement of Christ, and the work of the Spirit. I knew him well from the time when his face was first irradiated with the smiles of a newly cherished hope, until the Master came, in the midst of storm and waves, and darkness, to call him to himself; and I can testify, that never, at home or abroad, in the repose of his own

fireside, or the fatigues of journeys, did he forget his indebtedness to Christ and the Spirit.

Blest saint ! His voice is hushed, but his example shall not be lost upon us. His presence is no more seen here, but we will remember the cheerful and confiding features of his face. We miss him from our assemblies, but we know that he still loves the heathen.

That good man is gone, and we shall never all meet again. Whatever acquaintance most of us can hope to have in this world, we are forming now in this holy convocation, while deliberating on the great interests of the Redeemer's kingdom among men, and renewing our pledges of fidelity to him over the symbols of his broken body, and shed blood. Oh, may our intercourse be such that we shall review it with pleasure, when we come to cast our crowns at the feet of Immanuel.