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DR. BEMAN'S SERMON

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR

FOREIGN MISSIONS,

1840.

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THE GOSPEL ADAPTED TO THE WANTS OF THE WORLD.

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A

SERMON,

PREACHED IN PROVIDENCE, R. I., SEPT. 9, 1840,

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR

FOREIGN MISSIONS,

AT THEIR

THIRTY-FIRST ANNUAL MEETING.

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## S E R M O N .

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PSALM 72: 17.

*“ His name shall endure forever : his name shall be continued as long as the sun : and men shall be blessed in him : all nations shall call him blessed.”*

THIS divine song has a primary reference to the kingdom of Solomon, the son of David ; but was intended, at the same time, to typify the kingdom of Jesus Christ, David's more exalted Son. With this single explanatory remark, I would leave the general structure of the Psalm, and the exposition of its various parts, to your own reflections. The passage to which I particularly invite your attention, asserts the extent and duration of the reign of Jesus Christ upon the earth ; and presents a glowing picture of its prosperity and happiness. In relation to its extent, it is to embrace “all nations,” and in duration, it “shall be continued

as long as the sun.” In other words, the kingdom of Jesus Christ—the gospel kingdom—shall embrace all the nations of the earth, and endure, with undiminished power and glory, while the world itself shall stand. It is clearly asserted, too, that the happiness of the human family will be greatly increased under the predicted reign of the Son of God. “Men shall be blessed in him : all nations shall call him blessed.”

Nothing can be more obvious than that this prediction asserts, that the religion of the Gospel will hereafter become, and will continue to be, the prevailing religion of our world. This fact is fully settled in the Bible. It was, for ages, the grand theme of the Old Testament prophets ; and the truths which they committed, in strains of exalted poetry, to the sacred lyre, have been taken up and expounded with such clearness by their New Testament successors—by the Son of God and his apostles—that not a shadow of a doubt can rest upon their import. The same fact, that is, that Christianity will become the religion of the world, might be inferred, with equal certainty, from the admission, that God is its Author, or that the Bible contains a revelation from heaven.

But waving these considerations, there is another important truth intimately associated with the universal spread of the Gospel, to which I would invite your attention on the present occasion. The truth to which I refer is this : that the relig-

ion of the Bible is adapted, in its nature, to become the exclusive religion of our world. This sentiment, it is apprehended, is more than intimated in the text. Jesus Christ, the appointed King of Zion, shall not only reign as long as the sun shall shine upon the earth, but “men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.” The Gospel is adapted to man as such—to all men. It contemplates, not a specific class or order of men, but *man* in the large and generic sense. The Son of God has “received gifts for men.” His empire embraces and secures the best interests of our fallen race. “Men shall be blessed in him.” “All nations shall call him blessed.” The Gospel is adapted, not to the Jew, nor to the Gentile alone; not to the civilized, nor to the barbarous exclusively—but to “all nations.” And one nation after another, under the agencies which God has ordained, shall welcome the Gospel, as adapted to their common circumstances and their common wants, till an entire world of nations shall mingle their voices and send up the homage of their hearts in one universal song.

The single sentiment I shall attempt to illustrate is this: *The religion of the Bible is adapted, in its nature, to become the exclusive religion of our world.*

1. It is accommodated to every *stage of human society.*



I shall not here enter upon any nice speculations respecting the natural state of man, considered merely as an intellectual and social being ; nor attempt to settle the question whether that state is savage or civilized. The apostasy of our race occupies so early a page in the history of the world, that it may be difficult for us even to picture to ourselves, with any degree of certainty, what our condition would have been, as it regards social habits, intellectual progress, or the arts of cultivated life, had sin never marred this once lovely heritage of God. What is now called the state of nature—the wild and savage state, to which we may easily trace back the most refined and polished nations—would probably never have existed ; and the more elevated conditions of society, which are now altogether adventitious, and which are superinduced by much care and culture, might have been perfectly natural to man. But these speculations apart, it is sufficient for my present purpose to refer you to the social condition of nations as it is, and remind you of the diversified forms of human society which the world actually presents. These are not less marked and various than the geographical surface of different countries, or than personal form, the color of the skin, or the features of the human face.

A single glance at the world as it is, and this the intelligent eye has already taken, will save the speaker the necessity of entering into detail. We

have on the surface of this globe a population almost infinitely diversified: the polished European, and his descendants not less elevated, in almost every land; the wild Arab, the wandering Tartar, the inert southern Asiatic, the bigoted Jew, the proud and self-confident Turk, the fierce cannibal of Australia, the debased Hottentot, the ignorant Greenlander, and the rude and savage tenant of our own native forests:—and these furnish but a mere specimen of the human race. Nations differ in almost every thing—in their modes of obtaining a livelihood, in civilization and intellectual culture, in moral habits and religious rites.

But the Gospel makes an appeal which men, in all these diversified national circumstances, are capable of feeling. This appeal they have felt. In the days of the apostles, the truth of God overleaped the frame-work of national caste, and evinced, in every land where its truths were announced, its power to save. And facts of the same character are interwoven with the whole history of modern missions. Such have been the triumphs of the Gospel in our day, that the foolishness of infidelity, which has loudly asserted that Christianity cannot be propagated among the nations who differ in their habits and religions from those who have long been under the influence of this system, has been rebuked and put to silence. The religion of the Bible is just such a scheme as

is demanded, in order to accomplish the great objects which it proposes. As it is designed for a world, so it is suited to the exigencies of a world. It has a universality of purpose, and a universality of character, in order to carry out and perfect that purpose. It takes the world as it is, and goes about the work of making it better. It can reach men just where they are, notwithstanding their national peculiarities, and make them the friends of God and the heirs of heaven. It needs no pioneer. It asks for no herald to invoke other agencies to prepare the way for its coming and reception. It is itself the pioneer of Jehovah—the herald of the great King.

These things can be affirmed only of the Gospel. Were we to examine all the systems of ancient and modern philosophy which have proposed to make men wise and happy, and submit them to a critical analysis, we should perceive that they are all strongly tinged with the spirit of the age and nation in which they originated; and were, at the same time, capable only of a limited application. Carry these systems across a few lines of latitude or longitude, and they become exotics in an ungenial clime and perish of themselves. Protract their existence a single century, upon the very soil which gave them birth, and among the very people who originated and cherished their dogmas, and they become superannuated and die of old age. The same is true of



the religions of the world. They are all local and temporary, and well they may be, for they are dependent on circumstances for their very existence. It would be a thing next to impossible to bring the Turks and the Greenlanders to exchange religions; and yet Turkey and Greenland may be made to feel the truth of God, and submit to its power. No system of false philosophy has ever been universal—no single form of paganism has established its dominion over the nations of the earth. But the Gospel is indigenous in every soil where it is planted. It is at home in every land. It accomplishes its own appropriate work wherever it goes, for God is in it.

I would not intimate in these remarks, that different states of society may not be more or less favorable to the propagation of the Gospel; nor deny that auxiliary agencies may be employed to unfold, diffuse, and enforce the truth of God; and least of all would I affirm that the Gospel will leave a nation as it finds it. Civilization and the useful arts of life, letters and refinement, in one word, all that can elevate man in the scale of being, promote his happiness, or adorn and beautify his social character, have never failed, other things being favorable, to follow in the footsteps of this revelation from heaven.

2. The Gospel is suited to the *common wants of man*.

This system was not contrived to relieve us from some factitious evils, nor to minister to our artificial wants; but it contemplates the world in its true light, and undertakes at once to mitigate, and ultimately to root out, all suffering from the kingdom of Christ.

And here we may see the difference between the Gospel and every antagonist and conflicting system. It is the difference between what is particular and what is general—between what is limited to individuals, and what is common to all men—between what is restricted to one country or one age, and what may be applied with equal propriety and practical effect to every country of the globe, or to every period from the beginning to the end of time. The Gospel overlooks, as unworthy of its high and heavenly aims, that which is circumstantial, local, and temporary; and selects, as the object of its benevolence, that which is essential, unlimited, and enduring. Among the pagans, many a deity has derived his existence from a mountain, stream, or forest. Altars and forms of worship have been called into being to avert some impending calamity, to stay the ravages of famine, to mitigate the rage of pestilence, or to turn aside the bloody scourge of war. The form and productions of a country, the customs of domestic and social life, the prevalence of certain types of disease, the peaceful or warlike habits of a people, and an endless catalogue of like circum-

stances, have not only shaped and modified, but have actually created systems of religious belief and practice.

But the Gospel is constructed upon another principle. It professes to supply what is most needful for man, upon a nobler and more magnificent scale. It never attempts, as most false religions do, to remove the trivial and incidental evils of life; to guard men against the disabilities which belong to their specific circumstances; nor to ward off disease or death by charms or talismanic power; but regarding all these as light afflictions which endure but for a moment, it settles down at once upon the common wants of men, as pilgrims on the earth and the heirs of eternity.

A few of the common wants of our dying world, for which the Gospel effectually provides, may very properly be enumerated in this place.

Man, in relation to all kinds of knowledge, is the subject of instruction; and in nothing does he more imperatively demand it than in religion. The lights of this world have become so dimmed, that he never clearly sees, nor fully performs his duties to God or his fellows, till a purer and brighter orb in heaven shines upon him. Sin has well nigh obliterated the perceptions of God and duty from the human mind. The world is perishing for the want of spiritual knowledge. This is seen and felt every where. Not a soul on earth can find the way to heaven without the special



interposition of God; and whether he communicates himself silently and mysteriously, in here and there a solitary case, without a written revelation, we are not informed, and it is a problem which we are not required to solve. But this we do know, for God has taught it, that the Bible is the grand source of religious instruction. The nations are in midnight without it. It is a darkness without the prospect of a dawn. It is deep, dense, central, visible; and not a star of promise has been seen in the heavens, as the harbinger of an opening day, by any telescope which nature or art has been able to construct. Without the Gospel, men are every where destitute of that knowledge necessary to the well-being of the soul; and with it, they have every thing which God himself deemed essential when their salvation was the grand object to be accomplished. This fallen world needs an infallible guide, and that guide is to be found alone in a written revelation. No decrees of popes or councils can supply its place. No tradition, though it were to descend from heaven, and emanate from the throne of God, can become a substitute. The Jew, the Pagan, the Mohammedan, the Catholic, the Protestant, all need this volume. It is adapted to the common wants of a world; and the nation, whether refined or barbarous, that is destitute of it, is living without the sun.



But man needs not only an infallible instructor, but support under the nameless evils which sin has inflicted upon him. In every country under heaven, on every continent and every island of the sea, he is hardly less miserable than he is sinful. And yet the religion of the Savior can mingle the ingredients of comfort in every bitter cup. Passing over a long list of ills which flesh is heir to, I would fix your attention on two, to which all men are subject in whatever state of society or condition of life, and for which the Gospel provides a perfect remedy. I refer to remorse of conscience and the sting of death. These are co-extensive with the fallen race. Sin is an evil of so malignant a character, that it reveals itself in the present life : it is followed by a present retribution. Verily, there "is a God that judgeth in the earth." The poor pagan feels this, and hence his sacrifices and his self-inflicted tortures. It is on this principle that penance and pilgrimages belong to most systems of false religion. But the Gospel alone can calm the troubled spirit, pluck away the deep-seated anguish of the heart, and inspire that hope which prophesies of heaven. And not only are the great evils of life provided for by the religion of Christ, but death itself—that event every where dreaded in our world—that event which may, in itself, be considered the sum and concentration of all earthly ills—the primeval curse of God upon a world of rebels, may be divested of all its unlove-

liness, and disarmed of all its inflictions, and be converted into the richest blessing. The christian victor's song is, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

3. The Gospel is adapted *to every order of mind.*

In this respect it differs from all human systems. Among the most distinguished ancient nations they had one religion for the learned, and another for the illiterate. This was true in Greece, and probably, to some extent, in Rome. Their great men, and especially their sages and philosophers, gave little or no credit to the doctrines of polytheism admitted by the vulgar; but on the other hand approximated to something like a pure theism in their religious belief. I would not affirm that this was universal, possibly it was not even general; but, in many cases, it is an unquestioned fact. As to their systems of philosophy, they were too refined and subtle to be received by common minds. I do not say *understood*, for it may be fairly doubted whether they were understood by any. They were marked by intellectual caste; and this stamp had been put upon them intentionally, in order to protect the prerogatives of great minds, and to show the common mass of men that they had no right to think. Neither the system of the Stoics nor of the Epicureans could have become universal. They were limited by their very nature; the former to a certain order of

mind, and the latter to a certain moral or physical temperament ; and both of them entirely inapplicable, in all their parts and ramifications, to the society or population of any country. Were we to examine the speculations of any or every ancient philosopher, trace out the various systems, examine their origin, scrutinize their purposes or intentions, and follow their progress to their final results, we should arrive at this conclusion, that they were never designed for the world at large, and being adapted to a particular order of intellect, their influence, whether good or bad, would be restricted to a small number of individuals wherever their doctrines might be embraced.

By the side of these intellectual and moral schemes, contemplate the character of the Gospel in relation to the single feature of its adaptedness to every order of mind. While some religions are suited to the unlettered, and some to the cultivated, and while the same may be affirmed of certain systems of philosophy and morals, the Bible scheme is adapted to the intellect of every man. No elevation of mind can rise above the sublimity of its truths, no stretch of thought can go beyond the vast reach of its purpose, no analytic powers can detect a discordant element in its grand and complicated system. It teaches the great man, and makes him wiser and better. Time would fail me, were I to attempt to enumerate the men of mighty minds, the giants of the earth, who have



towered above their fellows, as the oak above the saplings of the forest, who, at the same time, have acknowledged themselves indebted for their best lessons of instruction, to the Bible. Boyle, of whom it has been said, "To him we owe the secrets of fire, air, water, animals, vegetables, fossils, so that from his works may be deduced the whole system of natural knowledge," was in the habit of reading this letter from heaven upon his knees; and Newton, that child-like sage, investigated the wonders of revelation with an intensity not less excited and profound, than that with which he scanned the starry heavens, or passed his measuring-line around the earth, or unbraided the complicated tissue of light.

Nor was this communication from God made for the instruction or entertainment of great minds alone, but is equally adapted to the humble and the unlettered. It is in revelation as in nature: sublimity and simplicity are always united. The same volume which furnishes the richest instructions to the sage, can be understood and enjoyed with as fine a relish by the husbandman who follows the plough, by the mechanic in his workshop, or by the child in the Sabbath-school. What a vast variety, with respect to mental power and acquirement, may be found in the ranks of believers; and yet, gathered as they are from the four winds of heaven, they all entertain essentially the same views of the way of salvation, and have



manifestly imbibed the same spirit. Indeed I may add, what no one who has studied this subject can have overlooked, that the Gospel, being designed for a world as it is—a world in which the great majority of its inhabitants are ignorant and uneducated, has been formed for the very purpose of meeting this case. It is a revelation to the benighted and the lowly. It teaches the sublimest truths in such a manner that babes may understand them, and inculcates the simplest with such a heavenly elevation and pathos, that minds of the largest compass and the profoundest thought are instructed and delighted.

4. The Gospel counteracts sin in *every possible condition*.

Sin is the source of all the other evils which prevail under the government of God; and the object of the coming of Christ, and the introduction and propagation of the Gospel, is the extermination of this great evil from our world. The Bible describes its nature, and tells us of its present and future consequences. It holds up, in the sun-light of eternal truth, its malignant features, and, for an illustration of its fruits, points us to a bleeding earth and a burning hell. The introduction of this evil into our world was the work of Satan; and “for this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil.” No other system of morals or religion

has made an attack upon sin as such. Some particular sins have been denounced, and to a certain extent, no doubt, counteracted by their practical influence; but it was reserved for the Gospel alone to proclaim war against every sin, great and small. It spares no man; it has no protecting shield for the transgressor. It has no mantle of charity to inwrap the sinner, and thus cover up his true character as the enemy of God. It lays the axe "at the root of the trees," and hews down the tall cedar as well as the withered bramble. It condemns the sinning monarch in terms as unsparing and uncompromising as it does the sinning beggar. For the city and the country, for the refined and the ignoble, for christian and for pagan lands, there is but one law—"Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." It has no respect to age, station, learning, country, kindred, sex, family, or profession in life, but bears testimony against all who love and practise sin.

But the Gospel does something more than describe the nature of sin, and point out the present and future woes which hang around a wicked heart and life. It proposes a remedy. It would relieve our sinful and suffering world from its accumulated evils by striking a death-blow at the very root of all mischief. The Gospel is a scheme contrived of God and revealed from heaven for the removal of sin. It undertakes to make men happy only by this process. It provides for the pardon

of sin through the blood of the atonement ; and by the instrumentality of truth, and the agency of the Spirit, carries on, in the heart of the penitent and believing sinner, a work of progressive sanctification, which will be rendered perfect and triumphant in heaven. And unless this effect can be produced, of what use is any scheme of religion for such a world as this ? A man may pass through a thousand changes, and till he pass from death to life, from sin to holiness, he wears his chains, and is on the way to execution. The great curse is still on him, and he must be miserable. Sin is uncanceled, and he cannot be happy. Of what avail are the stripes and lacerations which are self-inflicted by the poor pagan ; or the austerities and penance of the Romanist ; or the fine speculations of the unitarian or the deist on the beauty of virtue and the benevolence of God, while no radical change is effected in the character ? Man is every where a sinner ; and in all these human schemes and devices there is no provision for the removal of this fundamental evil. No system of religion, whatever name it may wear, whether christian or pagan, can supply the moral demands of such a world as ours, unless it commence with sin. Spare this and you ruin the world. Leave this unprovided for, and you shut forever the gate of heaven. Omit this single item, and you open wide the door of perdition. Strike out from your scheme the provision for pardon and the power of sanctifica-



tion, and you have a religion which can never become universal, and would be of no use were it to become universal, for it would bring no relief to a sinful world. But such is not the Gospel of the Son of God.

5. The Gospel is not dependent on any system of *human philosophy*.

The Bible teaches "as one having authority, and not as the scribes." In narrating facts, it records them as they are, and in their proper relations; in the revelation of doctrines, it presents them as fundamental truths which are to be accredited, and makes no explanations of the former, and enters into no reasonings respecting the latter. It discloses facts and principles of which all men, or the generality of men were before ignorant, or in which, at least, they were but imperfectly instructed; and there it leaves them. And there these truths stand stereotyped forever, without change of form or feature. The Gospel borrows nothing from the reigning philosophy, for it has nothing to decorate that it may attract the eyes of men; nothing to render palatable by courting the popular taste; nothing to explain, nothing to reconcile. From the commencement to the close of its communications to our world, though these extend through more than fifteen centuries, and were furnished by a large number of sacred penmen, it never loses sight of one fixed purpose, and that is to tell men what *truth* is. And when this



is done, its work is finished. It never comments or philosophises upon its own production. Hence the Bible, like its Author, has a kind of ubiquity, and can live every where ; and, like him, it has a perpetuity of existence, and is the same in every age. Systems of human philosophy may rise and fall, and yet Bible truth flows on in a steady and majestic stream, and not its surface is rippled by the change.

In the interpretation of revealed truth, and in the construction of human creeds and symbols, as well as in all the systems of false religion, the philosophy of the age, both intellectual and moral, and perhaps I might add in some cases, natural philosophy too, has exerted a very perceptible influence. This is what we might expect. If men construct a religion, it must be of course a human religion, and it will partake of human thoughts and qualities. Men cannot beget angels. We can hardly look upon one of these earthly productions without being able to detect its parentage ; and to tell the age and country of its birth. The same is the case, to some extent, of all human symbols of the true religion. The creeds and commentaries of each particular age and nation embody much which belongs to that age and nation. Indeed, we cannot expect it should be otherwise ; for they are the productions of men, and fathers generally live a second life in their children. But the Bible occupies an independent

position. It is the production of God. It depends on no other system. It borrows nothing from any other. Other systems live, flourish, wane, and die; but this remains the same. It has already survived, amidst the changing theories and speculations of the world, almost six thousand years; and it is yet clad in all the freshness of its glory, as it was in the day when it was born in heaven, and sent down to the earth for our instruction. Time has not whitened its locks, or palsied its hand, or chilled its heart. Systems of philosophy and modes of interpretation, one after another, have gone down to the sepulchre, and are known only in their epitaph; but the Gospel lives, and is powerful to save. Other systems which are founded in error will in like manner pass away; but the religion of the Bible will never cease to exist and act upon the world till all that God has greatly purposed and kindly promised shall be fully accomplished. Its truths may be tinged or obscured by a false philosophy, or by human speculations, but this effect is local and temporary. These things are no part of the system. The Bible remains the same; and, at another day, or in another country, all is restored. Clouds and mists may, in one hemisphere, or for a few days, cover the face of the sun and shut out the light, but the sun is not extinguished. He is always shining somewhere; and the clouds and mists of all human theories will by and by be dissipated,

and he will break forth, and in full-orbed radiance shine every where.

6. The Gospel has no necessary connection with any form of *human government*.

The Bible acknowledges the right and sanctions the powers and prerogatives of civil government; but it does not prescribe any particular form. The most that is said on this subject in the New Testament, is rather incidental than direct; and is addressed principally to Christians, enjoining it upon them to be peaceful subjects of whatever government may happen to exist. The following are specimens: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be, are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation." And again: "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor." It is also said, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well."

This language is accommodated to the existing governments of the apostolic age; but the spirit of these precepts may be applied with equal propriety to any and every form of civil and political



institutions. Had the Gospel assumed any other ground than this, it would have been fatal to its prospects as designed for a universal religion. If any one form had been selected and approved, and others condemned, it would have converted the message of heaven into a political proclamation, and all nations, except those whose institutions might have received its approval, would have armed themselves against its approach. It would have been met and repelled with the same spirit with which men are accustomed to meet and repel invading fleets and armies.

That the Gospel is friendly to the rights of man and the liberties of the world, is a proposition too obvious to need proof. The influence of this system, wherever it is cordially received, is felt upon every great interest of society—upon the people and upon the government. It will show itself upon the legislation of a country—upon the character and the execution of its laws—and in various ways, and by pervading and controlling influences peculiar to itself, destroy oppression, and diffuse and protect equal rights among men. It makes good citizens and good rulers, without interfering directly either with the form or administration of government.

It was owing to this characteristic of the Gospel that the first heralds of the cross gained access with their message to every country, notwithstanding the peculiar jealousies of the age respecting



international communication; and though often accused of treason, they were never convicted of the charge. And it was on this principle that, without an attack upon any political institution, they introduced a train of moral causes which have greatly modified and well nigh revolutionized the governments of the civilized world. And it is on the same principle that modern missionaries might be permitted to go every where, and freely and fully proclaim their message, without any alarm on the part of existing governments. Indeed, this is the prevailing temper of the reigning powers of the earth at this moment. And in those cases where christian missions are excluded by the laws of the land, their enactments are either founded on ignorance of the real objects of the enterprise, or, as is more generally the fact, are designed to protect some false system of religion, which has become publicly wedded to the state, and which, every one must know, would inevitably fall before the powers of the Gospel.

#### REMARKS.

1. The religion of the Bible must be *true*.

It cannot be the product of the human mind. Its adaptation to the complicated circumstances—to the wants, the sins, and the miseries of the whole world, and that, too, through every period

of its existence, is peculiar to itself, and has a parallel in no other system. This one property of the Gospel would require a greater compass of thought and stretch of ingenuity, a more intimate knowledge of facts, a clearer perception of causes and effects, and final results—of existing evils and their infallible remedies, than belong to the finite mind. You have only to compare the religion of the Bible with other systems, and you discern the difference between God's work and man's. The one undertakes only to provide for what is limited to time and place; the other, dispensing with ages and localities, takes a broad sweep, like the mind of its Author, and actually provides for what always exists, and is every where to be found.

There is not an individual religion of paganism among the nameless varieties that fill the world; not a speculation of ancient or modern philosophy; not a thought in the vedas or shasters of the Hindoos; not a disclosure in the koran, the pretended revelation of Mohammed; not a system of error, or any part of a system, in any age or country, but might be the production of the human intellect and heart, and would ever be likely to be, in the same existing circumstances. But I ask, who but God could make the Bible? I speak now only of its adaptedness to the purpose for which it was intended. What eye but that which surveys the world at a glance, and beholds all nations, with their multifarious ills and complicated wants,

as they are, and reads with intuitive certainty the moral pulsation of every heart, could see far enough, and wide enough, and deep enough, for such a work? What but the all-comprehensive mind could devise a religious system, humble in its grandeur and majestic in its simplicity, which should be equally applicable to men in every nation and every age: which has power to reclaim the heart and control the life; to disarm the world of its enmity against God; to restore the wanderer; raise the disconsolate; and light up a smile on the pale cheek of death? Surely this is no common undertaking? There is but one Being who ever thought of doing it; and the volume that reveals this purpose has, written deeply and indelibly upon its sacred page, *the signature of God*.

2. The Gospel will finally *prevail*.

This might be inferred with great certainty from the fact, or the admission, that God is its author. If he constructed the scheme, it was with some object in view; for some great and worthy purpose. The sins, and tears, and death-groans of our world had gone up to heaven, and God had fixed his heart on man's redemption. For this he formed the plan, sent his Son, accepted the sacrifice of his blood, and made, in his name, proclamation of pardon and peace to this great family of rebels. And shall not this plan go into full effect? Will the great Architect leave his noble edifice



half finished? “God is not man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent. Hath he said it, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” Hear his own declaration; “The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all nations: and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.” His purpose is clearly expressed, and every jot and tittle shall be accomplished.

For the renovation of this world, we are not to forget that God has adopted a system of agencies suited to the object to be accomplished. The Gospel is not a dead letter, but “the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” It embodies in itself the most effective moral influences which operate any where in the vast empire of God. It was contrived for a world in the ruins of sin, and it is the master-piece of Jehovah—the concentration of all that is wise and magnificent in heaven. It is just what the dying millions of our world need. It can reach and save them. Its appeals are such as human minds and hearts can comprehend and feel. It comes home to “the business and bosoms” of men with a conviction and pathos with which no other system is armed. Every blow it strikes in our world, is felt upon some interest, and tells upon its final destiny. And securing, as it does, in the hands of a faithful ministry and a praying church, the presence and power of the Spirit of God, it will go forth in its



strength to the conquest of the world. And what shall stay the progress of that scheme of grace and restoration which God has constructed—which is adapted to man any where and every where—which has already gathered the first-fruits of the coming harvest—which has saved its millions in ages past—which is saving its tens of millions in the present age, and in reference to the faithful administration of which by his devoted servants, Christ himself has said, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world?”

3. They who possess the Gospel should do all they can *to communicate it to others.*

This subject makes an appeal to Christians which they must not, cannot resist. The Gospel, my brethren, has been committed to us, and there is no aspect in which this matter can be viewed which does not urge, in the tenderest and most powerful manner, our duty and our responsibility upon us. We have the very scheme of mercy which the world needs, and without which the world must perish. And this dearest gift of heaven was put into our hands, not that we should imprison or chain it, but that we should, to the very last stretch of our power, give to it “the wings of the morning,” and bid it fly to the uttermost parts of the earth. The wants of our dying world, the nature of the Gospel, the command of heaven, the principle of benevolence, the pledge of success, the seal of God upon all past efforts, and the

cheering aspect of this heaven-born enterprise of missions, all—*all* urge us to stand up like men upon whom the vows of God rest, to whom the eyes of perishing millions are directed, and whose hearts have taken hold on the interests of eternity, and then do as Christ and conscience would have us. God has opened wide the door of the world before us. The unevangelized millions of the earth feel, at this moment, more deeply than they ever felt, their need of the Gospel and its attending institutions, and its consequent moral, literary, social, and political blessings. And can we go back, or even stand still, when we contemplate what God has already permitted us to do, or has kindly done by us, in the work of making the world what he would have it? Let the American Board and American Christians look at things as they are—at their eighty missionary stations, which appear as so many cultivated spots scattered here and there through the deep and dense wilderness of paganism—at their 478 foreign and native laborers, whose toils have already beautified these gardens of God—at their 10,810 reclaimed wanderers who have taken shelter in the bosom of the church the last year—at their twenty-four boarding-schools, with their 807 pupils—at their 415 free schools, with their 21,606 little inmates praying for instruction,—and then ask, shall this work cease? Shall another midnight succeed this dawning day? This is the time and this the place

to settle this question. Oh, let us lift our streaming eyes and bleeding hearts to heaven, and, with a simple reliance on God, say this work must not cease.

We, my christian friends, are engaged in an enterprise that honors God and blesses men; an enterprise in which the angels might wish to bear even an humble part—the progress of which is intensely gazed upon by all the good on earth and all the perfected in glory, and the completion of which will fill the world with songs of blessedness, and heaven with shouts of endless triumph.

May God inspire us for this work, and take the glory to himself; AMEN AND AMEN.