

# THE HOME MISSIONARY.

Go,.....PREACH the GOSPEL.....*Mark* xvi. 15.

How shall they PREACH except they be SENT?...*Rom.* x. 15.

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## AN ADDRESS, ADAPTED TO THE MONTHLY CONCERT FOR PRAYER.

[Furnished by the Rev. Samuel H. Cox, D. D. Pastor of the Laight-street Presbyterian Church, N. Y.]

We are assembled, my brethren, with the thousands of Israel, "with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, both theirs and ours," to pray that his cause may prevail in the earth. What an interesting contemplation! The commonwealth of Israel, the body of Christ, the spouse of the Great Bridegroom, "his own elect that cry day and night unto him, the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood," constitute but one community, however diversified in circumstances, or disguised to the recognition of others or themselves. They have a common cause, though they so seldom feel it; and this evening presents them to our thoughts as gloriously united in the unearthly and most excellent service of *prayer*. To one Father do they speak; in the name of a common Saviour have they "boldness, and access with confidence by the faith of him;" one Sanctifier and Comforter inhabits their bosoms and feeds the flame of their devotion; their creed is substantially the same; their interests, motives and desires tend to one centre. Other communities are more alike in appearance than in reality. Precisely the reverse is true of the disciples of Jesus Christ; they are more one than they appear, or than many of them know, or, through imperfection, are willing to admit. But there is a single aspect of identity which often reveals itself through all the mists and disguises that too often surround and disfigure the proportions of Christian piety—it is *the common characteristic of prayer*. They all pray; they pray alike; they value the privilege and practice the duty of prayer; they all agree in fixing prayer in the definition of a Christian, and in signaling its lustre as a star of the first magnitude in the constellation of the Christian graces; and what is more, they offer the same petitions to God. In prayer they can act in *concert*. Is it not fair to infer that if they loved prayer more, and contention less, they could proportionately more co-operate in other offices of the kingdom?

But what is their common petition, their joint errand of importunity, this evening, at the throne of grace? Is it not that dictated memorably by the lips of their common Lord, *Thy kingdom come*? Yes! with all these identities of character have the children of God assembled; and with due allowance for longitudinal difference of habitation, they convene at the same hour, in every district of the world, "which morning visits, or which spring adorns." Some hours since, our brethren in England closed their devotions, and retired to rest; now night first rests on our meridian, which the eye of God pierces, with delight, to witness the prayers of thousands, and tens of thousands, of our American Zion; and in a few hours our Missionary brethren of the Pacific Isles, with their swarthy myriads of native converts, shall bend before the majesty of Jehovah, and say, "Our Father who art in heaven; hallowed be thy name; *thy kingdom come*; thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven!" O what a spectacle for angels and for God!

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From every clime they come  
To see thy beauty, and to share thy joy,  
O Zion! an assembly such as earth  
Saw never, such as heaven stoeps down to see.

Nor ought we to have forgotten those intrepid men, who, like Barnabas and Paul, have, in the farthest East, "hazarded," and are still hazarding, "their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus." There the heats of eternal summer are wilting and pestilential; the thrones of Satan are established in darkness and blood; and the impediments to the kingdom of "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," are plainly insuperable to an arm of flesh. But God can vanquish them—and he will do it, in honour of his own name, and in answer to the prayers of his people. All these provinces belong to Christ as his reward, and will soon be reclaimed as his possession. But when?

Without sounding the depths, or measuring the heights of prophecy; without collecting and computing the signs of the times, all which taken together are indisputably encouraging, I would affectionately inquire, my brethren, how this question is answered among ourselves by the degree of our zeal and engagedness in prayer? Can we doubt that our rational ground of hope for the world ought to be, in some sort, proportioned to the active piety of the church? What hope for the world that is not, in the divine economy, deposited with the church, and, under God, dependent on the church? "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. And they shall say, this land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste, and desolate, and ruined cities, are become fenced, and are inhabited. Thus saith the Lord God; *I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock. As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts, so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall know that I am the Lord.*"

Without usurping the decision of the question in regard to ourselves, let me inquire, as the mildest way in which my fears may find audience,

1. If we have not all witnessed a diminished zeal, and a lessened attendance, even among Christian professors, in honour of these interesting meetings for monthly and concert prayer? The most steady and observant Christians are the most competent to answer. How was it with you afortime? Did not these meetings interest and refresh you? Did they not endeavor to you the privileges of the sanctuary, the blessings of the Sabbath, and the light of the scriptures? Were not your feelings tender, and your compassions moved, and your efforts ready, to help the heathen? Did not the sublimity of the design of such a concert, the piety that prompted it, and the benefits it promised, affect you with noble and holy emotions? Was it not formerly anticipated with desire, and hailed and crowded, at every return? What, then, has dimmed the gold, and changed the most fine gold? "Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the way? Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee. And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." Why, my brethren, has our zeal declined? Has prayer lost its efficacy or its obligation? Are not the souls of men as precious, and the wants of men as great, as when they formerly affected us more? Or have we ascertained some other way

of salvation for sinners, than that revealed and sanctioned in the gospel? Shall I remind you that the only Saviour in the world is our Lord Jesus Christ? "Neither is there salvation in any other." Are we not ourselves, too, more needy, more unworthy, more circumscribed for time, "while it is called to-day," and nearer to eternity, than formerly, when we felt more, and prayed more, and gave more, and cared more, for the kingdom of God? O let us rouse from this cruel and unreasonable lethargy, and sympathize with the philanthropy of Christ! Let us remember him, who came "to seek and to save that which was lost. And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." Nor let us think that we are safely cased in that celestial panoply, until we have familiarized to our use the incomparable weapon of *all-prayer*.

2. Admitting the fact that our zeal, as connected with this monthly exercise, has been waning and reduced from its original fervour, may we not trace the cause, at least partially, in a want of distinctness and definitude touching the object of the concert? That object is—the *progress of Christianity in the world*. For this identically we pray, in the petition, *thy kingdom come*. The kingdom of God, providentially considered, is his sovereign rule, as the invisible Agent of nature, and the Supreme Disposer of events. In this sense, however, his kingdom is invariable and eternal; it can neither "come" nor go. Here he is "God over all, blessed for ever." But there is an included circle, within the wondrous range of his providential rule, which, with respect to men, is his "kingdom," in the sense respected in the petition. This kingdom, in its exterior, is constituted by the gospel, with its light, its ordinances, its worship, its ecclesiastical state, its collateral blessings, its facilities of virtue and its means of grace; while its interior comprises all "the fruit of the Spirit;" all the moral excellence and piety in our world; all the "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," that grace the person, or purify the character, or console the feelings of sublunary man. Now it is a known law of the divine moral empire, I should rather say of the Mediatorial rule, that the exterior of the kingdom of heaven ordinarily precedes the internal and spiritual sway. Hence, where the means of grace are not sent, we have no reason at all to apprehend the existence, much less the continuance and increase, of grace itself. When therefore we pray for the progress of Christianity in our world, we pray that the scriptures may be translated into all the languages of the peopled earth; that ministers of the gospel may be multiplied; that the sacredness of the Sabbath may be universally realized; that the knowledge of the truth may overspread the world; that the cause of temperance may triumph gloriously; that the thrones of Antichrist may be prostrated, the altars of paganism subverted, the orgies of infidelity repressed, the blight of Mohammedism done away, the delusion of the Jews sobered into the piety of the cross, and the misrule and misery of sin be superseded by the universal sway of "the blessed and only Potentate," become "the King of nations," as he is "the King of saints."

What a conception is this of a universal religion, destined to a universal conquest! And have we kept it distinctly and steadily in view, my brethren, on these monthly occasions? You see how intimately it is associated with the missionary system, and with all the pious efforts of the age to evangelize the na-

tions. The object is so excellent, it possesses such magnificence, it belongs to such lofty and holy inspirations, that our devotion can never lose it without damage, nor our character entertain it without improvement. But how often has it been supplanted, seen in a maze, disfigured in a mixture, or totally neglected! and this at our *missionary* concerts: for thus may they be termed, since they are the offspring of missionary ardour, the tributaries of missionary service, and the thermometers of missionary feeling.

Say not, as an apology for delay, that we must first look to and pray for our personal and parochial religion, and then attend to the salvation of the world; for, true as is the sentiment when applied to the mere order of duty and the proper progress of religion, it is utterly false when abused as an argument for intermitted action in the missionary cause. The sentiment of the lamented Ward resounds from his missionary sepulchre, and ought to awaken all Christendom to a crusade of spiritual achievement; it is in substance this, that *the spirit of mission must evangelize the church*. Courage, then, my brethren, courage and action be our watch-words! Let us pray, and let us act, for the kingdom of Christ. We owe it to our missionaries abroad. We owe it to the nations of the world. We owe it to the generations of posterity. We owe it to the glory of God, the love of Christ, and our own present and eternal happiness.

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## AMERICAN HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

### CORRESPONDENCE.

#### REPORTS OF MISSIONARIES, AND NEW FIELDS OF PROMISE.

##### MISSOURI.

*From the Rev. H. Chamberlin, Franklin, Howard Co., Missouri, June 17, 1829.*

The western counties on the Missouri have been explored to the frontier settlements; and the result is such as calls for the attention of the Home Missionary Society. The fact is now known to me, from personal observation, that there are *members of Presbyterian churches* in all of the *six counties* west of Franklin. They have left their pastors and brethren in the older states, and placed themselves on the rich lands washed by this king of rivers. Your missionary has followed them to the last limit of civilization, and found them without pastoral labours—without church privileges. To my surprise, when I arrived at Liberty, a small but flourishing town near the territory, I was requested to *form a Presbyterian church!* Want of time and other considerations prevented me from complying with the request; but I was assured, that fifteen or twenty communicants could be collected for that purpose. Such facts exist on the frontiers of Missouri; while at Franklin, in the central part of the state, is the most western Presbyterian church now organized. In going and returning, I travelled between two and three hundred miles, preaching the gospel almost daily; and often was I

told that I had preached the *first* Presbyterian sermon ever preached in that region. I was received with kindness, and heard with interest; and on the very borders of civilization I found intelligence and refinement.

A missionary is wanted at Liberty this very hour: there are Christians there who desire it. The place is important in many respects. There is a military post near it in the territory. Several tribes of half-civilized Indians have been sent into the neighbourhood by government; they occupy small portions of the territory, and must cultivate their lands or starve. The man who has the *fortitude* and *self-denial* to go there, and take his stand in the spirit of a good soldier of Jesus Christ, may benefit future generations of *red men* and *white men*. The place is healthy; the land is rich; the people are intelligent. But the man you send must count his cost, and be prepared to meet some privations and difficulties—in a word, he must be a Paul in spirit and in action. Send them such a man, and he will not lose his reward. Independence, on the south side of the river, and opposite Liberty, is much in the same condition: Rev. Mr. Dodge has preached there a few Sabbaths. The other counties also have strong claims to your consideration. Other denominations are supplied with ministers; but the scattered members