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FOR

PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,

AT

THEIR ANNIVERSARY MEETING

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A SERMON, &c.

1 TIMOTHY, ii. 4.

—WHO WILL HAVE ALL MEN TO BE SAVED, AND TO COME TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH.

GOD is love : and we have but to open our eyes, to receive conviction of the interesting and delightful truth. Its evidence is spread over all nature. It pervades the whole economy of providence. But in the sacred volume, it shines with surpassing splendor.

Here the great Jehovah opens his heart to man. Here he appears not only as the august Sovereign, but as the compassionate Father of the human race. Here he shows how low infinite Majesty can stoop, to raise the wretched and the guilty. Having, from the vast resources of his mind, and the exhaustless stores of his bounty, provided a sovereign remedy for all our sins and miseries, he offers the mighty blessing, free as air. He even presses it on our acceptance. He manifests a sacred reluctance that any should reject it ; a benevolent concern that all should know and enjoy it.

Such is the intimation of the inspired passage just recited. Correctly to understand its meaning and scope, we must view its connection. The Apostle had exhorted that *prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings be offered for all men ; especially, for kings, and for all*

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in authority. To Christians tinctured with Jewish prejudices, this injunction would appear too broad. They imagined that salvation was scarce possible, out of the pale of the ancient church. How then should they pray for magistrates who were heathens? How should they pray for all men without exception?—But says the Apostle, “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, *who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*” The partition wall was now broken down. In Christ Jesus, the distinctions of Jew and Gentile, of high and low, were lost. The God of mercy offered a free salvation to his whole human family. Its immortal blessings he was infinitely ready to bestow on all who were ready to accept them, of whatever nation or rank, or condition, or character. As then, through the boundless benevolence of Deity, and the universal invitation of the gospel, there was *hope* for all, there was reason to *pray* for all.

Further: in declaring that “God will have all men *to be saved,*” the Apostle refers less to the divine *purpose,* than to the divine *command.* It is the sovereign pleasure of Jehovah, his solemn and repeated injunction, that his ministers go forth, and *teach all nations;* that they *preach the gospel to every creature.* And wherever the gospel comes, it not only invites, but *commands* men to be saved. “God commands all *men every where to repent,*” and to “believe in the *name of his Son, Jesus Christ.*” *All his authority* unites with *all his mercy,* to urge the sinners of mankind to flee from the wrath to come, to the Savior’s protecting wing.

Viewed in this light, the passage impressively exhibits the boundless benevolence of Jehovah; the overflowings of divine compassion to the guilty, perishing race of man. It affectingly displays the readiness of God to save—his delight in saving—his infinite complacency in the conversion and salvation of sinners, rather than in their impenitence and destruction.

But to infer from this, that all will actually be saved, would be unauthorized and dangerous in the extreme. True, some have argued from the infinite benevolence of Deity, the impossibility that any of the human race should be finally lost. But by a similar process of reasoning, it might just as plausibly be proved, that neither sin nor misery exists in the *present* world. Thus we should have a *theory* against fact, against universal observation, and universal experience. On a subject so awfully interesting, and on which to mistake, is at once so easy, and so fatal, we should distrust our own reasonings. We should listen, with implicit deference, to the word of God. To whom can we give our confidence, in this case, if not to the Supreme Judge himself? That unerring and unalterable Judge has already declared, that in the great day of decision, he will place some of the human family on his right hand, and others on his left. To the former he will say, "Come ye blessed, inherit the kingdom." To the latter, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire."

It is remarkable that those passages of scripture which most strikingly portray the benevolence of Deity, are frequently accompanied with the most explicit declarations that the impenitent shall not escape his wrath. While the Most High proclaims himself "THE

“**LORD GOD**, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin,” —He declares, in the same moment, that he “will by no means clear the guilty.” While he solemnly swears by himself, that he has “no pleasure in the death of the wicked,” he calls aloud to the wicked, “Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die:” —plainly signifying, that if they turn not, they must assuredly die.

But the text is a comment on itself. “God will have all men to be saved,” says the Apostle; “and to *come to the knowledge of the truth.*” Here arises a question of fact. Do all men actually come to the knowledge of the truth? No, most certainly. Thousands, millions, live and die in the grossest ignorance. If, then, God may *will* that all men shall come to the knowledge of the truth, and yet not effectually bring them to the knowledge of the truth; it follows, by necessary consequence, that he may *will* that all shall be saved, without actually saving all.

The text, then, my respected hearers, presents us with two points of instruction; both deeply interesting; both adapted, I would hope, to the design of the present solemnity. Let us meditate, a few moments,

I. On the compassionate concern of the Deity for the salvation of men.

II. On the necessity, in order to their being actually saved, that they should *come to the knowledge of the truth.*

The God of heaven has manifested his compassion for fallen men, and his paternal solicitude for their sal-

vation, in methods too numerous to be recounted: but first and preeminently, in the rich and expensive provision he has made for their recovery. That the door of hope might be opened on a perishing world; that a channel might be cut, through which eternal blessings should flow to the guilty and the lost, he spared not his own Son. He gave his best beloved from his bosom. He gave him to humiliation unparalleled, to sorrows inconceivable, to a death at once agonizing, ignominious and accursed.

“ Oh! for this love let rocks and hills
 Their lasting silence break;
 And all harmonious human tongues
 The Savior's praises speak.”

Do any ask: For whom was this astonishing provision made? The answer is: For sinners of the human family, of every character, and every clime. Whatever special objects were accomplished by the death of Christ, this unquestionably is one of its grand, general results: that salvation can consistently and sincerely be offered to all. None are now shut up in hopeless despair. None are excluded from salvation, but those who exclude themselves. If any perish from under the gospel, this will be, not through a defect of merit, or of mercy, in the Savior, but through their impenitent rejection of the Savior. Here, my brethren, here is LOVE! “Not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.”

A second unanswerable proof on the same subject, we have in the gift of the holy Scriptures. This wonderful book unfolds that plan of human redemption which employed the thoughts of God from eternity;

a plan in which the divine perfections are exhibited in all their lustre, and all their harmony. Here is revealed the Redeemer himself, in the divine glories of his person, in the unsearchable riches of his grace, and in his mediatorial offices. Here is offered, "without money and without price," that great salvation which embraces pardon for all our guilt, purification from our moral pollutions, and the richest supplies for our spiritual wants. All the invitations, encouragements and promises of God's word, what are they, but so many expressions of his love and pity for a perishing world; of his desire that sinners would not obstinately rush on their own destruction, but consent to be saved for ever? Nor are the solemn denunciations, the awful threatenings of his word, at all less kind in their intention. These are but "the louder rhetoric of his mercy." They are the warnings of faithful friendship, of fatherly solicitude. They are mercifully designed to make the sinner know and feel his danger—what *must inevitably* come upon him, if he persists in impenitence—and thus excite, persuade and *constrain* him to flee from that wrath and ruin which he cannot bear.

A third evidence of the divine concern for the salvation of men, appears in the institution of the Christian ministry. He who knows our frame and our depravity, knows how prone we are to neglect the great realities of religion and eternity; to forget them; to suffer a thousand engagements, a thousand anxieties, and a thousand *trifles*, to exclude or efface them from our minds. He has therefore instituted an order of men whose duty it is to go forth in his name; declaring his truth; proclaiming the *mercies* and the *terrors* of the

Lord in the ears of their fellow-creatures ; distinctly pointing out to them the way of life ; and faithfully warning them of that broad road which leads to the regions of endless despair. In a word, God has made it the duty of his ministers to assail the consciences and hearts of men by every argument calculated to influence rational and thinking beings ; and by all that is valuable in the soul, by all that is solemn in eternity, by the ineffable transport or terror of the great rewarding day, to intreat them to be reconciled to their Maker and their Judge.

Fourthly. God manifests his tender concern for the salvation of men, by the monitions and strivings of his Spirit. Few, if any, who live under the gospel, are wholly unacquainted with these merciful visitations. Most can recollect seasons in which conscience has been peculiarly roused, and convictions of guilt and danger have pierced their hearts with anguish. They have paused in the career of sin ; they have dropped some tender tears over past impenitence and transgression, and perhaps have formed some serious resolutions of repentance. These salutary convictions they owe to the Spirit of God. This merciful monitor would thus snatch them from ruin, and reclaim their wandering feet into the path of life. How unspeakably important are these seasons ! How indescribably dangerous, to suffer them to pass by unimproved ! Wo to the guilty mortal, of whom the Spirit of God, long disobeyed and resisted, has taken a final adieu !

Fifthly. The wonderful patience and long-suffering of God toward sinners, proves his concern for their salvation. How many breathe his air, and feast upon

his bounty, yet pay him no homage ! How many trample on his authority, and steel their hearts against his love ! How many with impious breath blaspheme his name, and pour contempt on his religion ! He sees their guilt in all its crimson colors. With infinite ease, he could frown them to perdition in a moment. Nor would it be either unjust, or unmerciful. But he spares them. He continues the mercies they forfeit. He suspends the wrath they provoked. He repeats the often neglected call. He waits. He waits to be gracious. O the astonishing ingratitude and stupidity of mortal men ! And O the still more astonishing grace and goodness of God !

Let me invite your attention to a single instance more. In the sovereign dispensations of his mercy, God has been sometimes pleased to arrest and to save some of the most guilty of the human family. Of this description was Paul ; once a blasphemer, and a persecutor ; but changed, in a moment, by the mighty power of grace, into a humble, pious believer. Reflecting on his wonderful conversion, the Apostle himself remarks : “ For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first, Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on him.” He seems to say : Since Paul the persecutor was made a trophy of victorious grace ; was plucked as a brand from the burning ; let no sinner ever despair. Especially, let no humbled, heart-broken sinner doubt the compassion of Jesus. Have you never, my hearers, known an instance in which some poor mortal, apparently bold and hardened in sin, perhaps grown grey in iniquity, has been remarkably transformed into a

penitent, meek, affectionate Christian? Such cases have arisen, though rarely. Such miracles of mercy have been actually wrought in our world. How affecting! How instructive! How powerfully do they echo the language of the text! How eloquently do they teach us that *the Lord is long-suffering; not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance!*

But notwithstanding the boundless love of God to men, and his tender concern for their salvation, it is yet necessary, in order to their being actually saved, that they should come to the *knowledge of the truth*. This proposition directly emanates from the text under discussion; it is familiar to the scriptures at large; and it needs little more than to be candidly considered, to be received as fact. Not that we suppose that the greatest portion of mere speculative knowledge, even in religion, can sanctify and save the soul. A sound creed, and a heretical, vitious practice, have been but too frequent companions. A clear, distinguishing mind, and a cold, depraved heart, have been too often united; though it must be confessed, the union is unnatural and shocking. On the other hand, *that the soul be without knowledge, is not good*. It is dangerous, and may be fatal. The maxim that *ignorance is the mother of devotion*, is worthy a religion at whose doctrines reason and common sense revolt. Who, that seriously reflects, can fail to discern, that without the knowledge of the truth, at least in its *first lines*, its grand and leading principles, neither the heart nor life can be right. Let me particularize in a few prominent instances.

How evident is it that all right regards to God must

commence in just, though necessarily imperfect conceptions of his real character. It has been remarked by a great, but eccentric genius, and the observation has truth, that *mankind have ever been prone to make God in their own image*. But can this be either innocent or safe? What if, in the exercise of a harsh, malevolent spirit, we are imperceptibly led to imagine a Deity of this description—austere, rigorous and unlovely? What if, through a natural facility of disposition, through superficial views of the evil of sin, or a determined attachment to vitious or worldly gratification, we form a God of the same easy character; a “God such as guilt makes welcome;” a God who will be as indulgent to us, as we are to ourselves? What if we give our love, our homage and our praise to these idols of our own creation? Can this recommend us to the true God? Must it not rather be highly offensive and provoking? Must it not decisively prove the disaffection of our hearts to the real character of the true and living Jehovah? Must it not effectually prevent our acceptably worshipping him now, and our enjoying him forever in the world to come?—O my hearers! Would we know what is our present temper and state, and what we have to expect in another world, let us open the bible; let us behold the God who reveals himself there; and then demand of our hearts, Do we love that God? Is that BEING, so pure, so just, so invariable in his displeasure at sin, as well as so boundless in his benevolence and grace, the Being whom our inmost souls esteem and adore? Does it pour joy into our hearts, to think that there is such a Being at the head of the universe? Do we desire no other heaven than

his presence and his love?—Or do we love our fellow-creatures? Would we contribute our humble part to make them holy and happy? Let us proclaim aloud to all within our reach, **KNOW THE LORD.** Open your eyes to his transcendent glories. Bow your souls in adoration of his excellencies. Acquaint yourselves now with your Maker, and your Judge: and thus prepare to meet him with transport amid the conflagration of worlds.

The Apostle Paul has told us that by *the law is the knowledge of sin.* It is by carefully studying the divine requirements, the unalterable rule of our duty, and by faithfully bringing our hearts and lives to the standard, that we learn our defects, our transgressions, our deep depravity, and just condemnation. The importance of this knowledge is inestimable. Destitute of it, men live secure, and die impenitent. How should *they* prize the Savior, who feel not that they are lost? What charms can the great spiritual Physician have for those who know not their spiritual maladies? Alas! we preach the gospel of heavenly mercy to “unwilling ears,” and to drowsy congregations, because men know not, and will not know, the purity, the spirituality, and the tremendous sanctions of the law.

Of what importance likewise, that the awakened and convinced sinner should *come to the knowledge of the truth* respecting the Lord Jesus Christ. His is the only name under heaven, given among men, whereby the guilty can be saved. His atonement, and merit, and grace constitute the only foundation of human hope. And they are a foundation broad and deep enough to support the loftiest superstructure which can be raised

upon it. Why? They are the atonement, and merit, and grace of an *infinite* and *almighty* Savior. Conscious of having abandoned every other refuge, and cast his soul at the foot of the cross, the penitent sinner may confidently exclaim : “ I know whom I have believed, “ and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which “ I have committed to him, against that day.” He is *able*, because he is God, and *with God nothing is impossible*. On such a Savior, the soul may rest secure.

“ Here is firm footing ; here is *solid rock*.

“ This can support us ; all is *sea* besides.”

In fine : it is inexpressibly important that men should come to the knowledge of the truth, as it respects the distinguishing nature of religion. Here, gross ignorance, or gross error, must necessarily be dangerous and fatal. We may not expect to find those born of the Spirit of God, who understand neither the nature nor necessity of a *new birth*, and who perhaps have scarce made up their minds *whether there be any Holy Ghost*. We may not expect to find those exercising genuine repentance and faith, Christian humility and meekness, love to God and love to man, who know not in what these dispositions consist. So long as men continue ignorant of the nature and distinguishing evidences of vital and practical religion, their case must be melancholy indeed. They will either treat eternal realities with gross disregard ; or, what is still more dangerous, they will cherish the hope that all is well with them. Perhaps there is not a more prevailing and operative cause of security and irreligion, than this very ignorance. Nor can we act a kinder part to our fellow-creatures slumbering around us, than by endeavouring to banish it.

It is true, as before suggested, that mere speculative knowledge, in its highest degrees, will never save the souls of men. In order to this, religion must be perceived in its beauty, and felt in its power. It must enter the heart ; it must incorporate with all its affections, and exercise a controlling influence over the temper and conduct. Effects like these are beyond the power of man. They are produced only by the Almighty and All-gracious Spirit of the living God. Still, that glorious and sovereign Agent works not by miracles, but by means : and his grand instrument is the truth. It is by powerful impressions of the truth on the minds and hearts of men, that he accomplishes his merciful designs. By the truth he awakens and humbles. By the truth he converts and sanctifies. It is then the high and benevolent office, and the imperious duty, not only of ministers, but of private Christians, to employ all practicable methods to diffuse the truth around them, and to present it in its most alluring and impressive forms to the minds of men. Thus they contribute what in them lies to enlighten, to bless and save the immortal souls of their fellow-creatures. And upon these divinely instituted means, they may with reason not only implore, but expect the divine blessing.

In this view, it is difficult to appreciate too highly the importance of the Society now convened in the house of God. Its members, in associating for the purpose of *promoting Christian knowledge*, pursue the noblest object, by the best adapted means. Of all the forms of charity, that which respects the *souls* of human beings, is at once the most tender, and the most sublime. To minister to our fellow-creatures the *bread of life* ; to

furnish medicine for their spiritual diseases; to seek them out in their wanderings, and reclaim them to a Savior's arms; this is beneficence indeed. These are employments worthy the tender, generous, exalted sensibilities of CHRISTIAN WOMEN. Yes, my highly honored friends; you have looked around you with pity on fellow-beings pierced with the woes of life; and have aimed to distil into their hearts the balm of heavenly mercy. You have seen them slumbering on the brink of eternity; and have attempted, by a friendly violence, to arouse them. To these sublime objects, you have deemed it a privilege to devote your time, your substance, and your exertions. Nor have you been dismayed, either by the peculiar embarrassments of the crisis, or the still more disheartening circumstance of wanting a spiritual guide to patronize and aid your designs. But I will not wound the delicacy of your feelings, by expressing even a small portion of that lively approbation which your beneficence excites. Let me rather call on myself, and my hearers at large, to adore the GOD OF LOVE, who has inspired your hearts with these noble aims, and honored you as the instruments of his own mercy.* May the same All-gracious Being animate you to renewed and persevering exertions, sustain your hearts amid every discouragement, and crown your efforts with the happiest success! And may he recompense your benevolence a thousand fold into your own bosoms!

* Who that contemplates the ardor and extent of pious *female* exertion, in this age of wonders, can doubt that Heaven designs for this sex a conspicuous and efficient part in enlightening and saving the world?

Doubtless, my respected friends, the effects of your exertions will fall far short of your wishes. Disappointed hopes, and efforts apparently abortive, may cost you many a bitter sigh and tear. But you have no occasion to despond. The seed you now sow, though apparently lost, may spring up in an abundant future harvest ; perhaps when you are no more. Think what a train of immortal and happy consequences follow, when *a single soul is saved from death*. And who can tell that *many* souls may not be given as the reward of your prayers and labors? Or should it please Heaven, by your instrumentality, to awaken in many around you, a livelier sense of the worth of gospel truths and institutions, and thus prepare the way for the introduction of a pious and faithful minister, what a precious and ample recompense would this be!

In selecting pious books and tracts for distribution, permit me to remark, your choice can scarce fix upon those which are too plain. Many adult persons, in almost every place, are as ignorant of the first principles of religion, as children ; and need to be taught them in the utmost simplicity: Let the instructions you diffuse be likewise purely *evangelical*. Let them be those which consider man as what he really is—fallen, wholly fallen, from God, and from rectitude ; needing an infinite atonement, and a radical change of heart ; and which thus point him to a divine Savior, and a divine Sanctifier, as his only hope. These are the truths which, in all ages, the Most High has employed to convince and convert, to sanctify and save the souls of men.

Proceed then, my honored friends, in your pious and noble designs, with ardor, with courage, with confidence: and receive your high reward in the luxury of doing good, in the sweet whispers of approving conscience, in the blessing of many ready to perish, and (O may divine mercy grant it!) in the final plaudit of your Redeemer and your Judge.

* This anniversary, however auspicious, excites some sad and painful reflections. Since the last, you have sustained a loss unutterable. She who, more than any other, gave existence to your society, and who was so much the head and soul of its operations, is no more. But in recurring to the beloved and lamented Mrs. OUTEIN, it is not my design to open anew the deep wound you have felt in her departure. Far rather would I console your minds, and animate your pious exertions, by the recollection of what she was. You knew her well. You saw her, with a mind of the first order, and with rich intellectual accomplishments, humbly bowing at the foot of the cross, and counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. You saw her, with dispositions naturally sweet, and with manners highly polished, rendered a thousand times more amiable, by the charms of religion. Fitted as she was, to shine and be admired in the highest circles, you have seen her, like her Savior, domesticating herself with the poor, comforting the distressed, instructing the ignorant, and raising up the wretched. You have seen her devoting her time, her strength, her substance, all the energies of her mind, and the ardors of her heart, to the promotion of the highest interests of her fellow-crea-

tures. Her plans on this subject were deep and extensive; deliberately laid, cautiously matured, but executed with a singular promptitude and vigor. She wisely appreciated the importance of the rising generation, and was unwearied in her personal exertions to instruct them, especially in religion. It was one of the precious delights of her life, to seek them out amid the haunts of poverty, and ignorance, and furnish them with the means of knowledge and comfort.* The interests of this Society she cherished with the fondest solicitude, and promoted by the most indefatigable and persevering efforts. Ladies! You can never forget this distinguished woman. Much as you valued her in life, many of you have probably, since her departure, been ready to exclaim,

“ How blessings brighten, as they take their flight!”

In the full career of usefulness, she was summoned to her reward. And now, methinks, from her more exalted sphere of exertion and enjoyment, she looks down, to witness your labors, and partake in your benevolent delights. O follow her—follow her in the path of Christian piety and beneficence; of ardent love to God, and tender pity for the souls of men; and *you* too shall soon share in *her* sublime and immortal felicities.

But the loss is universal; and universal the regret. The poor have lost their benefactress; the afflicted,

* She devoted herself, for three successive summers, in company with a friend, to the instruction of a sabbath school. She likewise took a leading part in a Society which, with the religious improvement of its members, by reading, conversation and prayer, combined the object of working for the poor, and furnishing teachers for sabbath schools.

their comforter ; the sick, their sympathizing visitant ; the young, their counsellor ; the aged, their solace ; the pious, their delight and ornament. Yet may it not be hoped, that in this favored town, the fruits of so much Christian exertion, will long be manifest ? May it not be hoped, that so bright an example will continue to instruct and to animate for years to come ? Let me particularly commend to those present who loved and revered Mrs. OUTEIN, the great and useful designs in which her heart was absorbed—the pious and benevolent associations, the charity schools, the distributions to the poor. By cordially cherishing, and actively patronizing *them*, they will best manifest their affection for *her*.

In a word : let the rare and bright examples of virtue which Heaven, in its mercy, exhibits in our degenerate world, engage not only our notice and love, but our sedulous and unwearied imitation. And, my hearers, if such be the image, *the imperfect* image, what must be the ORIGINAL ? To God, then, be all our honors ultimately paid. To God, the source, the standard, the perfection of all goodness, let us give the glory of whatever is amiable in his creatures. And Oh let their excellencies irresistibly allure, and everlastingly rivet our hearts to the glorious CREATOR !

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[The notice of Mrs. NANCY C. OUTEIN, attempted at the close of the foregoing sermon, the writer feels, is extremely imperfect. Partly to supply its defects, and partly to furnish her numerous friends with a *memento* of what she was, he takes the liberty to add a few extracts from her letters. She wrote with great rapidity. Yet it is impossible not to perceive in these unstudied effusions, a vigorous and highly cultivated intellect, a mind ever active, and habitually grasping at the greatest objects, as well as a heart "tremblingly alive" to the best interests of her species.]

"Let me thank you for your interesting book [Buchanan's Researches] which ought to have been returned perhaps before now; but trusting to your indulgence, I shall keep it a little longer, for I am reading it the second time. Its fame had reached me, but I had not been able to procure it. It has opened a new world to me. If I had not met with a few missionary magazines, I should have remained, to this day, in utter ignorance of the various societies that have been established in England and America, for the diffusion of Christian knowledge, and the noble exertions that are made in the East, by the disciples of Jesus Christ, for the extension of his kingdom. Books that treat on these subjects, are not to be found in our libraries; nor are discussions on such subjects to be heard in our circles. Perhaps it is a want of knowledge of these things which causes the silence with regard to them. If so, we have need of a missionary to enlighten us. Above all, we need the light from above. May God give it to us! Mr. ——— fears the "Researches in Asia" will inspire the ladies with a missionary spirit. It undoubtedly will. It has inspired me with one; and it is to produce this effect, that I wish to have this work generally read. I do not think such an effect, if it was even universal, would disturb the order of society, or the peace of families. By a missionary spirit, I mean nothing more than a lively interest in the success of missions, which would lead those whom it animated, to cooperate with their prayers, and their contributions, if in their power. What friend of the gospel would not wish to aid the glorious designs that Buchanan presents to our view? I admire the catholic charity of this man, who though evidently tenacious of his own religious opinions, is ever ready to unite cordially with individuals of any sect, who are, like him, desirous to promote the glory of God, and the good of mankind. I think, with him, that the only criterion by which we can distinguish the true believer, is a

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change of heart. If we can perceive the fruits of the Spirit in the life of one of our fellow-creatures, we may be certain, without inquiring if every article of his faith agrees with ours, that God has set his seal upon him."

"I hope that _____ has juster views of her beneficent Creator, than she has hitherto had. You must caution her against the sin of despair; and recommend prayer, daily, earnest prayer to her, as the most efficacious means of obtaining that peace of mind which the world can neither give, nor take away."

"In reading some of the sermons on missions, I am ready to say of the writers,

"Not touch'd, but rapt; not waken'd, but inspir'd."

How cold must that heart be, that such a cause cannot warm!
How spiritually blind must that person be, who does not perceive a new "Era of light!"

My friend, the great object of converting the heathen fills all my heart. During the day, my thoughts are continually occupied with it; and in the night, my imagination pursues the same track. It has that effect upon me, which Professor W. said it would have upon Christians collectively. The little vexations and crosses which daily occur, appear unworthy of attention, or are lost in the magnitude of the object that fills my mind.

I am desirous to exert all the energies of my soul in the cause of my Redeemer. By some, I should be thought extravagant; but I know to whom I write. Considering the circumstances of this town, I had concluded that it was not our duty to give any thing to the support of missions, but our prayers. During my journey to A. I gained more light and my mode of reasoning was changed. I found the fallacy of it, by reflecting on the arguments which I had used to silence similar objections, when applied to the N.E. States. I am now solicitous to form a female missionary society. If I should be successful, it will be but a collection of "mites." If, however, we can afford but little aid to missions, we may be kindling by God's blessing, a holy zeal among ourselves. It seems as if the wish to do something in this cause possessed a converting power."

[The following was addressed to a particular female friend, while the writer was absent from home.]

"You must write me about our Reading Society, which is very dear to me. My thoughts are employed about another Society which I wish to see formed, and which may associate hundreds in

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the cause of Religion. Were my views known they would be tho't presumptuous and visionary, and it might justly be said, "Physician heal thyself."—I know my own unworthiness; but God may, notwithstanding, bless my sincere endeavors to do good. Besides, I hope to feel some *influence* in the work; for it is reasonable to suppose that one cannot strive with all the heart to make others better, without being better one's self. If I should fail, it will not be a subject of regret to me, that I made the attempt. If all that I have done, or expect to do, in this matter, could be concentrated into one act, I should be willing that act might be the last of my life. What sweeter consolation could I wish for in the hour of death, than to reflect that I had been the humble instrument of turning one soul to God? I depend on your advice and co-operation in my designs."

"The great exertions which are making in the Christian world, the various and multiplied societies which have been formed, and are daily forming, to ameliorate the state of mankind, to convert the Jews, to give the gospel to the heathen, to make it known in the uttermost parts of the earth—are indeed extraordinary, and for which no parallel can be found in the history of the human race. These things powerfully impress my mind.—They have given a stronger impulse than it ever yet received, the effects of which I trust will not be transient. With pleasure I read these things, and I only want ability to go and do likewise. I hope you will be impressed with the same feelings. Do not fear the charge of *enthusiasm*; but remember a lukewarm Christian is displeasing to God, a burden to himself, and useless to his fellow-creatures. The great and glorious efforts which are making in every quarter of the globe, and in which Christians of every denomination unite, and forgetting all distinctions of sects or names, determine to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified, are doubtless the harbingers of his second coming. It is the decided opinion of all who mark the signs of the times, that the prophecies are rapidly fulfilling, which are to precede that all-important event. What can awaken supine Christians, and arouse them to exertion, if this prevailing belief does not? Let us disseminate a knowledge of divine truth, as far as we can, and let us declare what great things are carrying on in the religious world, for many (as observes a late writer) do not know that there is such a world. I do not approve an ostentatious piety; but there are times and situations in which it is necessary to come forward, and declare on whose side we are. And such a time is this. Let us not be ashamed of Christ, lest he be ashamed of us. Let us live *preparatory* lives; for wretched are those who have their peace to make with God, when sickness and death seize them. We should devote our best days to our Creator, that when flesh and heart fail us, he may be the strength of our hearts, and our portion forever. Oh, may we work while it is day, for it will soon be night with some of us. May thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we hope in thee!"

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[The following paragraph records a fact extremely interesting. And while it furnishes a signal instance of the divine blessing on the exertions of the Gloucester Female Society for promoting Christian knowledge, affords the most powerful encouragement to all, whether individuals, or associations, engaged in similar designs.]

"A strongly marked case of conversion has taken place here, which I cannot but hope was in answer to earnest prayer. The subject was upwards of 80, and had been through life profane and irreligious; but a man of strong intellect, and fond of reading. He has been confined to his bed for some months; but his mind evidently retains all its vigor. I went to rejoice with him, and heard him converse an hour. It was a new scene to me. I almost fancied myself in another world. I beheld a man who once would have thought it a crime to drop a tear, now shedding tears profusely at the retrospection of his past life. I heard him ascribe glory to God for his unmerited grace. His faith appears genuine, from his great humility, resignation, and fervent desire to spend the little remnant of his life in "bringing forth fruits meet for repentance." He is by profession a Pilot; and, unwilling to be useless, he now wishes to pilot souls into the haven of eternal rest. What renders this instance of conversion a source of great joy and thankfulness to us, is, that the tracts circulated by our Society, have been blessed, by his own confession, as one great cause of it."*

* *The particular tract by which his mind was first awakened, was one contrasting the death-bed of a Christian and an infidel, in the instance of Dr. Finley and Hume the historian. The piece first appeared in the Christian's Magazine.*

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