

PAUL ON MARS HILL :

OR,

A CHRISTIAN SURVEY OF THE PAGAN WORLD.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED AT NEWBURYPORT, JUNE 21, 1815,

AT THE

ORDINATION

OF THE REVEREND

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TO THE OFFICE OF

Christian Missionaries.

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S E R M O N .

ACTS xvii. 16.

NOW, WHILE PAUL WAITED FOR THEM AT ATHENS, HIS SPIRIT WAS STIRRED IN HIM, WHEN HE SAW THE CITY WHOLLY GIVEN TO IDOLATRY.

THE history of the first propagation of christianity eminently deserves the attention of all men. Singularly interesting in its subject, it is replete with various and momentous instruction. It furnishes ample and most decisive evidence, that the gospel is from God ; it affords opportunity for bringing many different and discordant opinions to the test of fact ; and it shews in a strong light the fallen condition of mankind, the necessity of a special interposition of Heaven for their recovery, the wisdom and the benignity of the divine dispensations, and the sovereignty and the plenitude of divine grace.

The Apostle of the Gentiles, after planting the gospel in many provinces of Asia, passed over into Europe, and preached with success in Macedonia, particularly at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. In each of these places flourishing churches were planted ; but in each, he met with determined opposition, and violent persecution. Driven from Macedonia, he directed his course southerly into the province of Achaia, and came to Athens ; whence he

sent back an order to his two assistants, Silas and Timothy, to come without delay, and join him there.

Athens was the light of Greece, and the glory of the gentile world. Her heroes, statesmen, and sages—her poets, orators, and artists were renowned in all nations; and their renown has descended to our day, and will descend to latest time. Though, when visited by the apostle, she had passed her meridian; yet even then she was the mistress of science, the model of taste and refinement, the acknowledged and venerated preceptress of the Roman empire. To a literary, philosophic, or curious mind, no place on earth could have been more interesting. Monuments of other times, and works of late production; temples, statues, and paintings; schools, books, and musea; scholars, artists, and connoisseurs, come from different countries for improvement or amusement, and enjoying the luxuries of learned or of polite leisure:—all these would solicit attention, and offer rare and diversified entertainment. Paul is universally allowed to have been a scholar, and a man of taste; and from the vigour of his faculties, the warmth and culture of his mind, he must have been eminently susceptible of the impressions of the objects and scenes around him at Athens. He knew well where he was, and his mind was awake; but his observations and his feelings were widely different from those of the mere philosopher, critick, or man of the world. He knew that he was at the very centre of earthly glory, amid the proudest monuments of the human faculties: but in the light of that glory, and by the aid of those monuments, he saw human nature in most deplorable degradation and wretchedness: without God, without holiness, without happiness;—following after vanities, feeding on wind, and perishing in its own deceptions and corruptions. He observed that, with all its dazzling splendours, that far famed city was wholly given to idolatry; and *his spirit was*

stirred in him. His emotions were such as not to be repressed; his holy zeal was raised to a fervour, not to be restrained.

It cannot, my brethren, be unsuitable to the present occasion, to consider more particularly the cause of the strong emotions, which the apostle when at Athens felt; and then to contemplate what he was impelled to do, and the effects which ensued.

I. His spirit was stirred in him, *because he saw the city wholly given to idolatry*; or, as some would choose to read, *filled with idols*. Either of these renderings is good, and neither of them disagrees with well established fact. Greece at large was famous for the immense multiplicity of its gods, and its excessive devotedness to idolatrous superstitions; and in both the one and the other, Athens was scarcely less preeminent, than in arms and arts. By one classic author,* she is said to have “had more images than all the rest of Greece,” and to have “exceeded all other people in her assiduities towards the gods:” by another,† to have “had twice as many sacred festivals as any other city;” and by a third ‡ she is called “the Altar of Greece.” With these testimonies the voice of all antiquity agrees.

Athens, in addition to the gods peculiarly her own, adopted those of Egypt, Phenicia, Syria—of the pagan nations indeed, generally, in Asia, Africa and Europe. These deities were the luminaries of heaven,—the elements of nature,—dead heroes, and other men and women, distinguished in their days,—animals of various kinds,—human faculties, virtues and vices,—and imaginary beings of monstrous form and character. For these gods, images were made, temples were built, altars were erected, and rites of worship were instituted. To some of them the worst of passions, and the worst of vices were attributed; and cor-

* Pausanius.

+ Xenophon.

‡ Ælian.

respondent to the attributes, with which they were invested, were the rites with which they were worshipped. Their images were symbols of enormity; their temples were high places of abomination; their festivals were scenes of licentious revelry. Such were the gods, and such was the religion of renowned Athens.

The city was *wholly* given to idolatry: all classes of the people were idolaters. For ages, indeed, this city had been the seat of philosophy, and the residence of sages; and for several hundred years some correct and sublime ideas of the One Supreme God were to be found in her schools. Many of her philosophers saw great defects in the established religion, great absurdities in the customary superstitions, great corruptions in the general manners; but those defects their wisdom did not remedy, those absurdities their philosophy did not correct, those corruptions their virtue did not withstand: with all their fine sentiments, their vaunted reasonings, their imposing pretensions, they themselves worshipped lords many and gods many, communicated in the abominations of the mysteries and of the temples, were influenced by the reigning delusions, and contaminated with the prevalent enormities. All this, and more, St. Paul, who had the best opportunities for knowing the facts, and wrote as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, most forcibly declares. He does not deny that those celebrated wise men, had some correct knowledge of the Supreme Being; but he affirms that "when they knew God, they did not glorify him as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." Though they had attained to some just notions of the one True God, and could discourse sublimely concerning his existence, his attributes, his providence, and the homage and service, due to him from his creatures; yet they did not supremely love and reverence him: did not pay even their external homage,

exclusively, nor principally, if indeed at all, to him—did not openly avow and endeavour to propagate what they knew of him ; but, alienated from him in their minds, they contented themselves with curious speculations upon his nature and character, gloried in their fancied preeminence in wisdom, and made a merit of joining themselves, and inculcating upon their disciples to join, in the established worship of the innumerable idols of their city and nation. Thus, “ while they professed to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.” This is true even of Socrates and Plato, as the most authentick records of antiquity attest. Socrates, when arraigned before the high court of Athens, and accused of innovating in religion, expressly pleaded in his defence, that he had always, both in private and in publick, worshipped, and taught his disciples to worship, the many gods of his country ; and for the truth of his plea he confidently appealed to those who had best known the course of his practice, and the tenour of his instructions. If such was the practice of the best of the philosophers, we should rationally conclude, and the conclusion is supported by abundant evidence, that the practice of the rest was certainly no better.

Of this enormous inconsistency and impiety, the consequences were most deplorable and fatal. As with all their knowledge, “ they changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature, more than the Creator ; God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts ;” “ to vile affections,” the very vilest, indeed, which have ever polluted and disgraced our fallen nature ; “ to a reprobate mind, to do those things which were not convenient : being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, mali-

ciousness, envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who, though they knew the judgment of God, that they that commit such things are worthy of death; yet not only did them, but had pleasure in those who practised them." Is this, my brethren, high colouring? Let it be remembered, it is a picture sketched by the pencil of God. Though shocking in the extreme, we may rest assured, it is faithful and true. Of its truth, they, if any such there are, who place more reliance on classical than on scriptural authority, may find sufficient proof in the most unquestionable classical records. If, indeed, reliance is to be placed on those records, the very best of the sages were chargeable with some of the very vilest and most abominable of the enormities, which the apostle so solemnly charges upon the wise men in general. For the rest of them, that they *were* "given up to a reprobate mind," the monstrous doctrines which they invented, the endless mazes in which they were bewildered, and the flagitious impieties and vices which they practised themselves, and approved in others, most decisively evince.

If such was the character of those who held the highest pretensions to wisdom and virtue—of the philosophers, legislators, and magistrates—what must the character of the great mass of the people have been? It appears, indeed, from the phrase, "*given up*," repeatedly used by the apostle, and with particular application to the wise men, that they, for atrociously perverting their wisdom and knowledge, were judicially left of God to spiritual blindness, and to "their own hearts' lusts;" and, no doubt, in the sight of God, whom they would not glorify, and by whose direction their character has been so strikingly depicted, they were in a state of deeper corruption,

in the highest veneration for wisdom and authority, not by the Athenians only, but by all the Greeks, and even by other nations, and had cognizance of all important causes, especially of all matters pertaining to the publick religion. It was at this bar that Socrates, four hundred years before, had been arraigned and condemned, for alleged innovation in religion, and contempt of the gods. Paul, however, was brought thither, not so much, probably, for judicial trial, as for curious inquiry.

“May we know, said they, what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know, therefore, what these things mean.” They seem to have been partly in raillery, and partly in earnest. They regarded the apostle and his doctrine with scorn; yet they would have the court hear and judge concerning the new deities: but their principal motive was curiosity. “For,” says the sacred historian, “all the Athenians, and strangers who were there, spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing:” some new doctrine; or some philosophical, or literary, or curious novelty.

Too many, alas! are the *Athenians* of our own age: too many they, who attend upon the preached gospel to hear what the babbler will say; who listen to the momentous truths of salvation, and of eternity, from no higher motive than the gratification of an idle or vain curiosity; and who, when they have heard these truths, are ready to treat them as old things, and to seek for something newer.

Paul, however, though beset with triflers, was himself serious: and though pressed, impertinently, to deliver and explain, his new doctrine, he was ready to do it; but for purposes infinitely higher, than that of gratifying an idle curiosity, or affording matter for vain speculation. “He stood in the midst of Mars Hill,” in the very centre and on the highest tower of gentile religion and philosophy;

and his audience, composed of the members of that august court, and of others, senators, statesmen, philosophers, rhetoricians, and professors and students of various learning, might well have been the boast of the gentile world. In the introduction of his address, he availed himself, with singular felicity, of two important circumstances: the uncommon devotedness of the Athenians to the worship of the gods, and a remarkable inscription on one of their altars.

“Ye men of Athens,” said he, “I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious:” *exceedingly addicted to the worship of invisible powers*. The word which he used was ambiguous, and might be understood by them as expressing a trait of character, which they could consider, not as reproachful, but as highly honourable to them. “For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription: ‘TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.’” So great was their addictedness to the worship of lords many and gods many, that they would even erect an altar to one, of whose character, being, or even name, they had no certain knowledge. “Whom, therefore, ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.” You suppose me “to be a setter forth of strange gods,” and demand of me information respecting them: but he, to whom your mysterious altar is inscribed, is the God whom I serve. Him would I make known unto you; and what relates to his will and worship is the ‘new doctrine’ which I preach.

This supreme Deity is the Creator of all things visible and invisible: for the world neither existed from eternity, as some of your wise men have supposed, nor was formed by Chance, or by Fate, as others have imagined. But the “God who made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands.” This Infinite Being, the

and of heavier guilt, than were in general, the other classes of the people. Their case, in this respect was similar to that of the scribes and pharisees among the Jews. Odious, however, as those scribes and pharisees have been made to appear, by the great Teacher from heaven, who looked into their hearts, and stripped them of their disguises; they were nevertheless, in comparison with the people in general, "*outwardly* and in the sight of men, *fair and beautiful.*" So too were the wise men of Athens. Not only did they hold out lofty pretensions to virtue; but they really appeared to be comparatively virtuous.

What then, I ask again, must the character of the great mass of the people have been? Vicious—openly and dis-solutely vicious.—How could it be otherwise? They were of the same depraved nature with the rest of mankind; they had not the word of God to teach them the way of life; they had no publick instruction, religious or moral; in the examples of those who claimed to be their guides, and even in the character of their gods, they had incentives to vice, rather than motives to virtue. Their religion consisted in merely external observances; in ablutions, sacrifices, and festivals; in rites and devices, some of which, though sacred to their gods, were yet most licentious in their nature, and most corrupting in their tendency. They "walked, like other gentiles, in the vanity of their mind; having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that was in them, through the blindness of their heart."

All classes of the people were infected with the vices, were sunk in the corruptions, so strikingly depicted by the apostle, in the first of Romans, and elsewhere. They lived without God in the world, were devoted to their idols, were enveloped in darkness, were immersed in pollutions, were emphatically dead in trespasses and sins.

Such was the state, in which the apostle saw the whole

city of Athens ; and such was the cause of his spirit being stirred in him. Let us now, then,

· II. Contemplate what he was impelled to do, and the effects which ensued.

Even in Athens there was a synagogue of the Jews, and to them and the proselytes who consorted with them, the apostle, in the fulness of his heart, first applied himself ; with what success we are not informed. Not confined, however, to the synagogue, “ he disputed daily in the market place,” or publick forum ; a place of general resort, where the philosophers and students, as well as others, were accustomed to meet for conversation and debate. His discourses drew attention, and he was soon “ encountered by certain philosophers of the Epicureans and of the Stoicks ;” two rival sects, of discordant principles and manners, but ready to unite in opposing the apostle, and spurning the doctrine, of Christ.

At the debates in the forum, the serious reasonings of the apostle were answered with raillery and derision. Some said, “ What will this babbler say ? Othfer some, He seems to be a setter forth of strange gods.” It was no uncommon thing for new and foreign deities to be introduced at Athens ; nor should it be thought incredible, that, among a people who had altars erected to Honour, Liberty, Fame—to Fear, Shame, Famine, and Fever—*Anastasis*, or Resurrection should be mistaken for a deity. Such was the fact. Paul “ preached Jesus and the resurrection ;” and some of the Athenians, some even of the philosophers, it should seem, supposed not only that Jesus was a god, but the Resurrection also a goddess, whom he wished to have introduced and worshipped among their thirty thousand deities. Under this mistake, they conducted the apostle to Areopagus : the high court of the Athenians, which had existed for ages, was composed of a large number of the first characters of the city, was held

ing era has commenced; a new and most stupendous scene is opening upon the world. No longer winking at the ignorance, the delusions, the corruptions of the idolatrous nations, "God now commandeth all men every where to repent." Under his commission, his messengers are sent forth to proclaim his name, to testify his truth, to publish his salvation:—"to preach to the Gentiles, as well as to the Jews, repentance towards God, and faith in his Son Jesus Christ." And to give to this great commission the most impressive sanction, "He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto men, in that he hath raised him from the dead:"—a fact of the most weighty import, attested by the most decisive evidence, and solemnly proclaimed, as an irrefragable proof of the divine authority of the new doctrine which I now declare unto you.

This, my brethren, was a discourse, such as before had never been heard at Athens. Short as this abstract is, (for it is doubtless only an abstract of what the apostle delivered,) it presents more of just views of God, and of sound religious doctrine, than was to be found in all the writings of the wise men of Athens, and of the whole gentile world; without any of those disgusting adulterations,—those mythological vagaries, sophistical subtilties, or panderly accommodations to human depravity, which spoiled their best systems, corrupted their purest doctrine, vilified their highest gods, and debased their wisest men. In a manner, clear, forcible and sublime, it asserts the being, the unity, and the perfections of God; his creation of the world and all things therein; his sovereign providence, extending to all nations, creatures, and events: the common relation of all men to him as their original Father and rightful Disposer. and to one another as his offspring

and of one blood ; their common dependence upon him for life, and breath, and all things, and their common obligations to acknowledge, serve, and glorify him. It displays in a strong light the folly, the absurdity, and the guilt of image worship, and of every species of idolatry. It alludes, most impressively, to the forbearance and the wisdom of God, in affording opportunity for a full exhibition of the imbecility and the perversity of reason in depraved human nature ; and of the fitness and the necessity of a special interposition of Heaven for the recovery of mankind. It announces with emphatical distinctness, a momentous change of divine dispensations, the opening upon the world of a new and most interesting scene, and the high authoritative call upon all men every where to turn from their vanities unto the living God. It refers, with awful solemnity to the glories and the terrors of the appointed day, when all men must stand before the judgment seat of Christ, for final audit and everlasting retribution. In a word, it explodes, at once, all the vaunted systems of gentile philosophy and religion,—the productions of human wisdom in the long succession of ages ; and demonstrates, incontestably, the infinite importance to all mankind of divine instruction—of a religion from heaven—of such a dispensation as that of the gospel.

But, alas ! “ the light shone in darkness, and the darkness comprehended—admitted it not.” Having, in so admirable a manner prepared the way, and just brought forward the gospel of Christ, the apostle, beyond doubt, intended to proceed to a more distinct declaration of its principal doctrines. But no sooner did he touch upon the doctrine of the resurrection, than his wise auditors stopped him short in his course. “ Some of them mocked,”—began to laugh ; derided him and his doctrine, and would dismiss him with contempt. “ But others said, we will hear thee again of this matter.” His discourse was too

Maker, the Possessor, and the Sovereign of the universe, will not limit his presence, or his abode, to any structures, however magnificent, erected by man who has his habitation in the dust. He inhabiteth eternity; and the heaven, and heaven of heavens cannot contain him. "Neither is he worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing." Neither temples, nor shrines, nor sacrifices, nor oblations—no accommodations which men can provide, no services which they can render, are needed by him, for his own convenience, or happiness, or glory. In him all things consist, on him all creatures are dependent; and "he giveth unto all, life, and breath, and all things."—"And he hath made of one blood all nations of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth; and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitations." All men are his creatures. All the nations and families of the earth, by his almighty power, and under his beneficent providence, have proceeded from one common stock; and the periods of their lives, and the boundaries of their dwellings, are all ordered by him, according to the eternal counsels of his sovereign wisdom. He therefore, should be acknowledged and adored by them all, as their common Father and God: and he has so determined their times, and their habitations—so ordered the arrangements of his Providence, as, from age to age, to exhibit most striking proofs of his being and perfections; "that they might seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him:" that, amid the darkness and delusions of their apostacy, they might have fair opportunities and powerful inducements so to exercise their faculties, as, by the notices given them of "his eternal power and Godhead," to be led back to the knowledge and worship of him. This in his infinite benevolence he has done, "though he is not very far from any of mankind;" as, were it not for moral alienation and

blindness, all would perceive : “ for in him we live and move and have our being.” Accordingly “ certain of your own poets have said, *We all his offspring are.*”

“ Forasmuch, then, as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto an image of gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device.” Thus to “ change the glory of the incorruptible God,” the fountain of all being and sum of all perfection, “ into images made like to corruptible men, and to birds and quadrupeds, and reptiles,” is infinitely dishonourable to him,—infinitely derogatory to our own divine origin and proper dignity. Vain imaginations, however, have for ages prevailed ; “ and the times of this ignorance God winked at.” It was the purpose of his sovereign wisdom, that opportunity should be afforded, amid various changes of times and circumstances, for the exertions of human reason ; that a fair experiment should be made, whether, by their own wisdom, fallen men would, or could, recover themselves to the true knowledge and worship of their Maker : and in pursuance of this high purpose, He allowed the gentile nations, to follow their own devices, and to go on in their own ways, without any special interposition, for instructing them by messengers divinely commissioned, and without those signal manifestations of his holy displeasure, which otherwise might have been expected.

The period allotted for this important purpose is now come to a close. The great experiment has been made, and the awful result is manifest. Your own mysterious inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD!—an inscription on the loftiest tower of philosophy,—is a solemnly monumental and most decisive attestation, that “ THE WORLD BY WISDOM KNOWS NOT GOD !”

Arrived at this momentous crisis, the course of divine dispensations is now changed. A new and most interest-

serious for their vain and curious minds, and they became impatient ; yet they had some impressions of the importance of his subject, and like Felix, on another occasion, they proposed to hear him further, at a more convenient season. “ So Paul departed from among them :” retired from that distinguished assembly, with very painful reflections, no doubt, on the vanity of human wisdom, and the obstinacy of human pride.

“ Howbeit certain men clave unto him and believed ; among whom was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.” Though in regard to the assembly at large, the apostle could have but little satisfaction, yet his discourse was not altogether fruitless. A few became obedient to the faith. A few, touched with the power of divine grace, turned from their idols to serve the living God, and humbly “ to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead ;” and those few will shine forth, like the sun, in the kingdom of God, for the joy of the apostle, and for the glory of the Redeemer, when all the proud monuments of Grecian wisdom shall be lost in everlasting oblivion.

Among the many reflections, which this subject cannot fail to awaken in every thoughtful mind, our attention at present must be limited to a few, more particularly appropriate to this interesting occasion.

1. Our thoughts, in the first place, naturally turn upon the moral state of the pagan world.

Upon this subject, more perhaps than upon almost any other of equal importance, do extremely inadequate, and delusive conceptions prevail. Dazzled with the splendours, particularly of ancient Greece, we are apt to perceive but very imperfectly the moral darkness, in which she was enveloped—the moral corruption, in which she was immersed. Delighted, charmed, transported, with her stupendous productions of genius, learning and taste,

we are ready to imagine that she could be wanting in nothing, which could exalt or adorn human nature, or secure and promote human happiness. How different was the fact, as found by the apostle of Jesus ! Amid the glare of Grecian glory, he saw the deep depravity of human nature. He saw, that with all their boasted light, the people of all classes were groping in fatal darkness ; that with all their boasted religion, “ the things which they sacrificed, they sacrificed to demons and not to God ;” that with all their boasted virtues, they were “ given up to the vilest affections and most detestable vices :—that their magnificent temples were scenes of publick pollution, —of consecrated abomination in the sight of Him who made the heavens and the earth ; that their far famed mysteries were works of darkness, too abominable even to be named ; that their inimitable productions of genius and of art served only to give grandeur to debasement, lustre to corruption, and splendid disguise to deplorable wretchedness.

My brethren, is there any part of the pagan world, whose moral state, at this day, is better, than was that of ancient Greece?—any pagan city, in whose praise, or whose favour, the admirers, or the apologists of gentilism would say more, than for ancient Athens? We have heard much of India : much in praise of its religion, of its morals, of its happiness. Have we heard it, however, from any one who has viewed that empire of paganism with the eyes of a Paul? Have we heard it, under the sanction of Him, whose commandments are universal and everlasting : “ Thou shalt have no other gods before me ;” —“ Thou shalt make unto thee no graven image ;” —“ Thou shalt not kill ;” —“ Thou shalt not commit adultery ;” —“ Thou shalt not steal ;” —“ Thou shalt not bear false witness !” Are not these commands violated. throughout the whole extent of pagan India, and by all

classes of the people, without compunction, in the face of day, and even with claims of merit? What is the concurrent testimony of a Schwartz, a Carey, a Buchanan, a Jones, a Teignmouth, and many others? Is not their witness true? Go to that land, ye who would have it believed, that its moral state scarcely admits of improvement, and see. Go to Banares, the consecrated seat of Braminical wisdom,—the Athens of the modern pagan world—and see if that city also is not wholly given to idolatry:—thence extend your survey in all directions, and see if the whole immense regions around are not full of idols. Go to the banks of the Ganges, and behold the multitudes of human beings,—infants, aged and infirm,—continually sacrificed to that watery god:—thence look through all the wide and dark realms of Brahma, and behold the fires of the sacred piles, on which many thousands of widows are annually devoted, by his religion, to self-immolation, with the dead bodies of their husbands. Go to the temples of the numerous gods:—though we will not ask you to look on the hideous scenes of impurity and of blood, of which the emblems and the proofs will be but too manifest; yet we will conjure you to consider very soberly, what must be the moral state of a people, the publick rites of whose religion are too revolting to be viewed by a christian eye,—to be uttered by a christian tongue.—And is this the religion, on which men, calling themselves by the name of the Holy and Just One, so liberally lavish their praises! Is this the morality, which they would have our missionaries bring back into this country, in exchange for the holy christianity which we would propagat in that!

Is the religion, or the morality better in Burmah,—in China—in Japan—in Thibet—in Tartary—in any part of pagan Asia? Is it better in the benighted regions of Africa—of Northern or Southern America—or in the islands of the Southern Ocean? Are not all those nations

and tribes wholly given to idolatry? Are they not all in darkness, in the shadow of death? Have they not all changed the glory of the incorruptible God into images made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things? Are they not all utterly alienated from the fountain of light and of purity,—estranged from the laws and the ways of righteousness and true holiness,—bewildered with delusive imaginations and devoted to lying vanities?—Devoid of the purifying and elevating principles and hopes, which point to a future inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away,—and given up to vile affections, to do those things which are not convenient, and to perish in their deceivings and corruptions! Is not this the deplorable state, in which the first heralds of the gospel found the whole pagan world in their day? Is it not the state, in which all the pagan nations are to be found in our own age?

2. We are led, in the second place, to consider the imbecility, and the perversity of human wisdom.

The temptation offered to our first mother was, “Ye shall be as gods.” And “she took of the fruit and did eat,” because, especially, she supposed it to be a fruit “to make one wise.” This, my brethren, has been the fatal delusion of her posterity in all ages. “*Vain man would be wise.*” To this delusion, in the sovereign wisdom of God, the nations of men, for a long succession of ages, were given up. They were left to “walk in the way of their own hearts, and in the sight of their own eyes;” to give scope to their imaginations, and to seek out their inventions,—that their vaunted wisdom might be fully displayed in its real character. What was the consequence?—“Darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people.” The nations made to themselves “lords many and gods many:” deified every part of the creation, and

filled the world with idols. They wandered further, and further, and further from God; the darkness in which they groped continually thickened; they lost themselves in endless mazes, and plunged into the deepest corruptions. It was thus with the Greeks, as well as the barbarians,—with those that were esteemed the wisest, as well as the most ignorant. So decisive was the result, and so humiliating, that Soerates of Athens himself, exclaimed, “You may even give over all hope of amending men’s manners, for the future; unless God be pleased to send some one to instruct you.” Plato also said, “Whatever is fit, right, and as it should be, in this evil state of the world, can be so only by the particular interposition of God.”

The men who gloried in their wisdom, could neither reform the multitude, nor even recover themselves from the delusions and corruptions of a “world lying in wickedness.” Much indeed has their wisdom been celebrated in all ages; much is it blazoned and extolled in the present age, in lands called christian,—and—lamentable to tell!—in pulpits professedly consecrated to Him who is the light of the world. We do not deny, that the wise men of Greece had some correct ideas relating to religion and morals; some sublime conceptions of a God: some lofty notions of virtue, and of the supreme good. So had the wise men of Judea, who crucified the Holy One, and the Just: so too have the wise men of christian lands, “who deny the Lord that bought them!” But what says the Apostle?—Let his words be repeated, and never be forgotten. “When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful: became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools;—changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped, and served the creature, more than the Creator. And for this cause,

God gave them up to vile affections, and to a reprobate mind." This solemn testimony of an apostle of Christ, who had the best means of knowing the truth in the case, and wrote under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is not to be invalidated by any modern admirers of pagan wisdom and pagan virtue. Allow to those ancient sages as much as you please;—allow, if it be thought right, that they were as wise, as learned, as virtuous, as the celebrated scribes and Rabbins of the Jews; or as the philosophical deists, and *rational* christians of the present day:* but remember that, with all their wisdom, and learning, and virtue, they were in God's account "fools,"—men of "reprobate minds,"—"proud, boasters, inventors of evil things,"—"filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, deceit, and malignity." Remember, too, that of them the oracle of Jehovah said, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."

Theirs, my brethren, was not "the wisdom which descendeth from above." It was not the wisdom which "bows down the loftiness of man, and makes low the haughtiness of man." We censure it not for failing to discover truths, beyond the power of unassisted reason to discover; but for corrupting such as were known, and barring the mind against others. Instead of preparing the minds of men for a ready reception of the doctrine of Christ, it prepared them for the most desperate resistance

* As much as this, many of the *philosophical* and *rational* seem eager to claim for them. The more fully, however, this claim is admitted, the more clearly it will appear, of how little avail all that is called *virtue*—all that is called *religion*—is, to bring men to God, so long as in the temper of their hearts, they are unprepared truly to adopt the sentiment of him, who had been a pharisee of the strictest sort: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

of this holy doctrine. Instead of being forward to bow before the cross of "God manifest in the flesh," it proudly exalted itself against the "great mystery of godliness." Never probably did the Apostle of the gentiles find an audience less open to the sanctifying and saving word of the gospel,—less prepared to receive HIM whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith *in his blood*, than the assembly of Mars Hill. To the wise men of Greece, "Christ crucified was foolishness."

Has not the wisdom of the world preserved the same character to the present day? Is it not the same in pagan lands, and in christian; when exerting itself to pervert the truths made known by the light of nature,—and those exhibited in the volume of revelation; when employed in changing the glory of the incorruptible God into worthless images,—and in bringing down the supreme dignity of Emmanuel to a level with fallible and peecable men!

We have heard much of the Bramins and sages of India. But what have those wise men done? Have they turned the people from their vanities unto the living God,—from the ways of sin to the ways of holiness? Are they themselves prepared by their wisdom, their learning and virtue, humbly and thankfully to bow to the wisdom of God, and receive the word of divine truth and grace? Do not the very men, who so loudly extol their wisdom and their religion, exultingly tell us at the same time, that those eastern wise men will never embrace the gospel,—and even deride the very attempt to convert them to the religion of Christ! Do the men, who thus exult, and deride, still call themselves christians! It does not belong to us to make out their consistency, or their godly sincerity; nor will we stop here to ask them, whether they have forgotten that the gospel is the power of God, and has often bowed the loftiest pride of man. It is sufficient for our present purpose, that they so readily admit, and so confi-

dently insist upon the fact, that the wisdom and religion of Brahma is utterly adverse to the wisdom and religion of Jehovah : and from this notorious fact we conclude, that the wisdom of India, no less than the wisdom of Greece, is foolishness with God, and such as God ere long will destroy. We conclude further, that, if such is the admission respecting the wisdom of India, it will not be contended, that the wisdom of any other pagan country will bear the test of the divine standard. And, with the apostle we solemnly ask, "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"

3. We are led devoutly to contemplate the goodness of God in the wonderful economy of his truth and grace. "After that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." To infinite wisdom it seemed fit to give ample opportunity for the pride of human wisdom to make good its pretensions. This afforded the most decisive evidence of the desperate madness, naturally in the hearts of the children of men; of the complete moral ruin into which sin has brought them; and of the absolute inefficacy of their utmost inventions and expedients, to recover them to true virtue, dignity, and happiness: and thus prepared the way for the fullest manifestation, that "the foolishness of God is wiser than man, and the weakness of God stronger than man," for the brightest illustration of all the divine perfections in the work of human salvation, and for the highest thanksgivings and praises of the redeemed, with all the multitude of angels, in the kingdom of immortal glory.

But when the fulness of the time was come, "God sent forth his Son:" and the Son, having made atonement for the sins of the world, and "spoiled principalities and powers with his cross," sent forth his ministers, with the high

commission to preach the gospel to all the nations : “ to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness unto light and from the power of satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified through faith in him.” The effect was triumphant and glorious. The preaching of Christ crucified, foolishness as it was then, and has always been, in the esteem of the wise men of this world, was “ mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing which exalted itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” The prince of darkness was baffled,—his oracles were silenced,—his temples were deserted. The wisdom of the wise was destroyed ; the understanding of the prudent was brought to nothing ; the mighty were confounded, by the things which they proudly accounted weak. The darkness of many ages was dissipated. Myriads in different lands, turned from their idols unto the living God, obtained the forgiveness of sins through faith in the Redeemer’s blood ; were sanctified through the truth and by the grace of God, and were “ raised up together and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” “ This was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.”

4. We are led very seriously to consider our duty in regard to the propagation of the gospel.

The stupendous dispensation of divine grace, which opened upon the world, eighteen hundred years ago, with such transcendent light and glory, still continues ; and, thanks to Sovereign Goodness, it is destined to continue, until “ the gods that made not the heavens and the earth shall have perished from the earth, and from under these heavens,” “ and all people shall know Jehovah, and see his salvation together.” If we, my brethren, are not bowing down to idols, wood and stone ; if we have “ the true

God and eternal life ;” if we have a light shining on our path to heaven, and the hope of an immortal inheritance among them that are sanctified through faith in Christ Jesus : it is because we have been favoured with the glorious gospel of the blessed God. What gratitude is due to Him who hath loved us ! O when—how shall we discharge the infinite debt ?

Can we, then, think of the many millions of our race, yet destitute of this supreme blessing, and our spirits not be stirred in us ? *Do they not need the gospel ? Is there any other remedy for them ?*—They have no good hope ; they are without God in the world ; they are perishing for lack of knowledge. Their gods cannot save them ; their wise men will not, cannot direct their feet into the way of peace ; their religion does not sanctify the heart or the life ; does not bring them to the blood which cleanseth from sin,—does not shew them a redeeming God,—does not fit them for the mansions of immortal light and purity,—does not dissipate the darkness which heavily broods over them, thickening into the blackness of eternal night !—The wisdom of this world has never saved any of mankind. It did not save the Greeks :—did not bring them to the true knowledge of God ; did not lead them to seek for heavenly glory, and honour, and immortality ; did not preserve or recover them from the deepest moral corruptions. It will never save the people of India. The Bramins of India are not wiser, or better, than were the sages of Greece. They too change the truth of God into a lie ; and worship and serve the creature, more than the Creator, who is God over all blessed forevermore. Bewildered in endless mazes themselves, they will never bring the people home to God and to glory. Where then shall we look for the wise men who will do it ? Shall we look to the *rationalists* of christian lands ? Ah, how vain ! how preposterous ! “ They shut up the kingdom of

heaven against men : for they neither go in themselves, nor suffer them that are entering to go in." Sedulously intent on "taking away the key of knowledge" from those to whom it has been given, little will they exert themselves for the salvation of the poor heathen ; and as little would all their vaunted wisdom avail to this momentous object, were it exerted to the utmost. My brethren, *the heathen do need the gospel. There is no other remedy for them.*

It is an impious dream of infidelity, which ought to be chased from the earth, down to the place whence it sprung, that the great Parent of the universe has designed different religions for different nations : and though some religions may be better in his sight than others, yet he looks with allowance, and even with complacency upon all. What mean the denunciations of his word, so numerous, so tremendous, against all idolatry, and all idolaters ? What means the great commission of the Saviour, "Go ye, and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ?" What means the solemn declaration, "There is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved," but that of "Jesus Christ of Nazareth ?" What means the whole gospel of Christ—the entire word of God ?

Since it has been made decisively manifest, that the world by wisdom will never know God, it is the gracious pleasure of God, by that preaching which the world calls foolishness, to save them that believe. More was done for the salvation of men, by the single discourse of the apostle of Jesus, on Mars Hill, than all the wisdom of the world could ever effect. The same gospel was preached at Corinth ; and much people of that city—that sink of corruption—were "washed, and sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Its triumphs were not less illustrious at Ephe-

34.4
 sus, the glory of the lesser Asia—the seat of the great Goddess Diana. Nor was its success limited to the polished Greeks. Among the rude Galatians, it “run and was glorified.” Among Jews and Greeks, Barbarians, Scythians, bond and free, the sanctifying and saving efficacy of the doctrine of Christ crucified, was decisively and gloriously evinced. “So shall he sprinkle many nations.” The gospel, accompanied with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, is still “the power of God and the wisdom of God;” still as efficacious as ever for the sanctification and salvation of mankind.

Let it be emphatically repeated: *The heathen need the gospel.* They need the scriptures in their own languages. They need also *ministers of Christ* to explain the scriptures, and to inculcate these words of eternal life. “Understandest thou,” said Philip, “what thou readest?” “How can I,” said the eunuch, “except some man guide me?” The divine Redeemer had a perfect knowledge of what is needful for mankind; and hence he appointed “some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.” The same infinite goodness, which gave the written word, appointed also that this word should be *preached* unto all people; and to say, or think, that the dispersion of the scriptures is sufficient, without the ministry of the gospel, is to exalt the wisdom of man against the wisdom of God, even to the setting aside of his capital institution. How little attention is paid to the scriptures, where there is no preaching, even in christian lands? But if the *ministry* of the gospel is necessary, or useful, in christian lands; how much more in pagan? How are the scriptures to be *dispersed* among the heathen, if there be no missionaries to translate and disperse them? How is the attention of the people to be called to them? How are they to be instructed in them? How are churches to be formed, and the or-

duances of the gospel to be administered?—We do not read, that the nations are to be converted, by the written word merely; but we do read, that it “hath pleased God, by the foolishness of *preaching*, to save them that believe.” We also read, “How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? *and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?*”

Like Paul, then, we, my brethren, *we* to whom this gospel of the grace of God has been committed, should feel that we are “debtors: debtors to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, to the wise and to the unwise,” to do what we can to impart the inestimable blessing to them all.—How shall we discharge this debt? Shall we all disperse ourselves abroad, and actually engage in preaching to the heathen? No: but some of us must go; others of us must support and encourage them in the arduous enterprize, with our substance and our prayers: all of us must do something for the furtherance of this great work. The deplorable circumstances of six hundred millions of our race urgently demand it; the supreme authority and grace of Him, who died for us and for them impressively enjoin it: the signal events of this new age of wonders powerfully encourage and impel to the noble attempt.

Can any of us hesitate? Are any of us still listening to the deceitful voice of self complacent wisdom? There is no end to its reasonings and objections. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? They have been dreaming, for ages, of enlightening the world: but what have they done? When were they ever seen to stand forward in the cause of God—to advance, with the banner of the cross, upon the powers of darkness?—to display a holy heroism in taking the prey from the mighty and the captive from the terrible? Had the apostles listened to the wise men of Jerusalem, and of Athens, the nations might all have remained in darkness

to this day. If we wait for the help, or the leave, of men like minded with them, we must wait until, not only the present generation, but all the generations of the pagan world, are gone to the final abode of the nations that forget God. It is time that the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth should cease to inquire of the associates of Mars Hill; and give their ears and their hearts to the heavenly counsels and sentiments of the holy assembly on the hill of Zion. It is more than time, that the soldiers of the cross should cease to parley with the enemies of their exalted King; and, ardently rallying to his standard, engage with one heart and hand in the glorious work of spreading his truth, establishing his kingdom, and bringing home his redeemed.

Blessed be God, the christian world is wakiug up from the slumbers of many centuries. Already many thousands in different lands are moved, as with one common impulse, to impart the word of life to the destitute. We hail this wonderful movement as the finger of God! We hail it as a sure and most animating prelude to that long expected—long prayed for day—when “every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.” The word is sure; for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.

BELOVED MISSIONARIES,

You have not yet visited the abodes of pagan darkness; you have not yet actually seen the corruptions and the miseries of the heathen: but you have heard of them,—you have reflected upon them,—and your spirits have been stirred in you. They have been stirred to good purpose. You have called to mind “the commandment of the everlasting God, that the gospel should be made

known to all nations for the obedience of faith." You have meditated on what was done, in obedience to this commandment, by the first Missionaries of the cross, and by others of like spirit after them; on what is doing in the present age of missions,—and on what yet remains to be done. • While you have mused the fire has burned,—the hallowed fire of love to the Redeemer and to the souls for whom he died; you have spoken with your mouths; the momentous vow is recorded in heaven, and now to be sealed before the universe, by the solemn transactions of this day.

You are going, dear Brethren, far hence to the gentiles, to preach among them the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to do what you can to turn them from their vanities unto the living God. We rejoice in your noble resolve, and in your high destination; and we bow the knee in devout thankfulness to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the distinguished grace, bestowed upon you. In the multitude of your thoughts within you, may his comforts delight your souls.

We are not unmindful of the sacrifices you make, in leaving your country, and your kindred, and your fathers' houses,—the scenes and connexions endeared to your hearts by a thousand tender ties,—and all the flattering promises and alluring prospects of the world. Nor are we thoughtless of the hardships and the perils which await you:—hardships in voyages, "in journeyings, in labours, in watchings, in fastings, in weariness and painfulness;"—"perils of waters, perils of robbers, perils by your own countrymen, perils by the heathen, perils in the city, and in perils in the wilderness."—Dear Brethren, shall we pity you?—The world indeed, while it censures, may affect also to pity you; for "the world knoweth you not, nor the things of the Spirit of God." Our hearts, be assured, are tenderly touched: with sentiments however,

not of mere pity, but of what we might almost call a holy envy. We remember the words of the Lord Jesus: "There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this time, and in the world to come life everlasting." We remember Paul, and other apostles and martyrs of the cross:—how they forsook all things,—suffered the loss of all things; "endured afflictions, necessities, distresses, stripes, imprisonments, persecutions" unto death:—"counting not even their lives dear unto themselves, so that they might finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God:"—though "sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; though poor, yet making many rich; though having nothing, yet possessing all things." We glory in their memory; we admire their spirit; we exult in their triumphs; we adore the grace which was sufficient for them; we are transported with their glorious and immortal rewards.

We look upon you, dear Brethren, as servants of the same Master,—partakers of the same spirit,—devoted to the same cause,—destined to run for the same prize.—We are only concerned, that you so run as surely to obtain. Amid, then, the thousand tender thoughts, and the thousand obtruding anxieties of this day, give yourselves up for this holy, arduous, glorious service, without reserve, without regret, without fear; firmly resolving in the strength of divine grace to be followers of them, who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises. Take particularly for your example, the distinguished Apostle of the gentiles, and be followers of him even as he was of Christ. Imitate him in love to God, in devotedness to Christ, in benevolence to men; in faith, in self-denial, in patience, in fortitude, in courage; in zeal, in wisdom, in

labours, in prayerfulness, in perseverance. Do this, and you will not run in vain. Do this, and the Lord God of the holy apostles and prophets will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you; and to him you may safely commit your persons, your interests, your hopes, your work, and your reward.

Your dear and honoured brethren, who have gone before you, though they have been painfully tried, have not repented of their enterprise: though they have met with many discouragements, they do not faint, or waver in their purpose. Who does not admire the noble, the apostolick spirit which they have displayed? Who does not daily give thanks to God for the abundant grace bestowed on them? They call for you; they encourage you to follow them. They have seen—they have seen!—and their eyes have affected their hearts.

Go forth, then, beloved brethren, in the name of HIM who is to have the heathen for his inheritance. Go, with the dear partners of your hearts,—destined to be partners also of your sorrows and your joys, your fears and your hopes, your conflicts and your triumphs, your labours and your rewards:—destined, we devoutly trust, to an enrolment with HER, whose memory is so dear to all our hearts, and whose spirit now rests from her labours, in the bosom of her Saviour God!—Go—preach to the poor heathen the Saviour who loved *them* also, and died for them, though they have known him not.—Go—communicate to them the words by which they and their houses may be saved, and kindly guide their feet into the way of glory, and honour, and immortality. Go—and may the God of all grace go with you, and open to you a great door and effectual; make you successful in turning many from darkness unto light; enable you to prepare an abundant blessing for the generations to come; guide you evermore with

his counsel,—give you grace to be faithful unto death,—and, in the final day, award to each one of you a crown of glory which shall never fade away.

BRETHREN AND FRIENDS, you see these dear Missionaries, and your hearts are touched for them. While, then, this holy sympathy is warm, let us with one heart recommend them to the grace of God, for the momentous work to which they are appointed. Here, too, in this hallowed temple, let us solemnly record the inviolable vow, that we will never cease to remember them, or to pray for them : and particularly, that on the first Monday of each month, the season appointed in Europe, in Asia, in Africa, and in this country, for special missionary prayer, we will meet them at the throne of grace, and unite with them and the many thousands of Israel, in fervent supplication for them, for all engaged in the same great work, for the conversion of the nations, and for the prosperity of Zion in all lands. “ Jehovah hath not said unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain.” In answer to the prayers of his people, he has already done great things, and he will do still greater. At this very day, he is sending down showers of heavenly influence upon our land, and particularly upon our public seminaries ; raising up many of our sons for pastors, and of our young men for missionaries ; and preparing the hearts of multitudes, for more and more abundant freewill offerings, for his holy service in the spread of his great salvation. The work will prosper :—it will proceed until to an extent and conspicuousness at which the world will be amazed, persons and property will be HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And from the East unto the West, and from the North unto the South, the song shall be heard, sweet as the song of angels, “ How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace ; that bringeth good

tidings of good, that publisheth salvation ;—that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth !—Break forth into joy,—sing together, ye waste places : for the Lord hath comforted his people ;—hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations ; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.” HALLELUJAH. AMEN.

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CHARGE

BY DANIEL DANA, D. D.

PASTOR OF A PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN

NEWBURYPORT.

DEAR BRETHREN,

THE great Head of the Church has given you the desire of your hearts. By solemn prayer, and imposition of hands, you have now been constituted Ministers of Jesus Christ, and Missionaries to the heathen. Yes, my brethren, to *you*, humbly esteeming yourselves among the *least of saints*, “is this grace given, that you should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” No sublimer honor can mortals impart, or receive. With the honor, are connected responsibilities and duties, whose magnitude the mind can but faintly conceive, and eternity alone can fully unfold.

In this tender, awful moment, suffer me to stand up as your monitor. Suffer me, as the humble organ of this Council, and in HIS ADORABLE NAME to whom you and we are equally accountable, to charge you to be “faithful unto death.”

As you would take heed to your ministry, take heed, first of all, to yourselves. See that your hearts be right with God; that your bosoms burn with love to the Redeemer, love to his gospel, and love to the souls of men. See that you esteem even the *reproach* of Christ, with the self-denials, the toils, and the sufferings of your office, greater gain than all worldly treasures or distinctions. Wretched is that minister, though in comparative ease and affluence, who is a stranger to these principles of action, and these sources of comfort. But *you*, who are so soon to part with friends, with country, with earthly delights; and whose future lives must be one series of exertions and

sacrifices——where can you find a refuge, but in simple, ardent devotion to your Master, and your work ?

We trust, indeed, that you have anticipated us in these reflections. We trust that that OMNISCIENT BEING whose eye is this moment on your hearts, knows their sincerity. Nor could we give a stronger pledge of our confidence, than you have received this day. But in you, my brethren, *ordinary* piety would be insufficient. To be faithful and successful Missionaries, you must be EMINENT CHRISTIANS. In purity of heart, in simplicity and elevation of purpose, in faith, in zeal, in self-denial, in courage, in fortitude, in humility, in discretion, you must far exceed the common standard. To this sublime object be your efforts and prayers incessantly directed ; and here let a holy ambition have all its scope.

When, under the guardian care of Providence, you shall arrive at your allotted stations in the distant East and West, you will witness scenes the most painful. You will see rational creatures immersed in ignorance, in superstition and idolatry. You will see immortal beings living without God, and dying without hope. But let not your hearts despond. You will carry with you the sovereign balm, the universal remedy, for human guilt and wretchedness. You will go clothed with a divine commission to “ open the eyes” of these unhappy beings ; “ to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God.” Think of HIM who, from age to age, has raised up from the *dry bones* of human nature, armies of living Christians. And remember that though the *power* which has accomplished these stupendous changes has been all of God, the *instrument* has been his holy word.

Go then, and preach this blessed gospel. Preach it in its power. Preach it in its native simplicity and purity. It is the WISDOM OF GOD ; and surely needs no human admixtures, or ornaments. In erecting the temple of

Christianity among the heathen, see that its foundation and superstructure, its materials and proportions be all correspondent with the divine model.

Your preaching, to accomplish its end, must be *plain*. It must present the elementary truths of Christianity, in their simplest form. Be content to lay aside the stateliness of learning, and to *lisp awhile* with those uninstructed immortals whom you may address. Feed them with milk. Conduct them, by the gentlest gradations, up the heights of Christian knowledge. Having taught them the character and perfections of God, with the truth and inspiration of the scriptures, be principally emphatical upon those doctrines which constitute the basis of the Christian system, and the grand support of vital piety. Frequently and faithfully inculcate the utter depravity of man, the divinity and atonement of Christ, the influence of the Holy Spirit in conversion and sanctification, together with the distinguishing nature and evidences of saving religion.

While you conceal no important truth, however mortifying or humbling, be especially solicitous to exhibit the *grace* and *kindness* of the gospel. Let the love of Jesus be often on your lips, and let it deeply imbue your spirits. Convince, if possible, those unhappy pagans of your willingness "to impart to them not the gospel of God only, but your own souls." Be assured, that sermon is essentially defective, which does not leave on the mind of the hearer the distinct impression, that the gospel, and the preacher too, is his *friend*.

In a word: preach by your *practice*. Let the doctrines and duties you inculcate, be embodied in your daily deportment. O how eloquent, how persuasive, is a uniform, pious, Christian example! Here you will be understood without an interpreter. The beauty of holiness, like the sun, is seen by its own light. If you are the *living epistles of Christ*, you will be *known and read of all men*.

Happy indeed will you be, if, in the close of your missionary career, you may make to those around you, the apostolic appeal: "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblamably we have behaved ourselves among you."

Your first wish, we trust, is to approve yourselves to your GREAT MASTER'S eye. Next to this, your hearts will pant for success in converting the heathen. But this success no fidelity or efforts of yours can secure. Should you go forth with the abilities and zeal of a Paul, and the fervid eloquence of an Apollos, you would but plant and water. The increase must come from God. To God, then, pour out your ceaseless prayers for his blessing on your labors. Nor be discouraged, though you should perceive no immediate fruit of your pious exertions. It may be the purpose of God more signally to try the faith of the friends of missions in America, before he will grant success to their designs. It may be his will to train you, his ministers, by the discipline of adversity and disappointment, to superior degrees of humility, of faith, and of ultimate usefulness. Should you, after months, and even years, of anxious, indefatigable, and apparently fruitless exertion, perceive some symptoms of success; should the Lord make bare his arm for the conviction and conversion of the heathen; this will be like *life from the dead*. You will then be employed in gathering Churches, and administering the sacraments of the New Testament, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. In determining on the subjects of these Christian privileges, you will need much knowledge of the scriptures, much attention to the human heart, much accuracy of discrimination, and impartiality of judgment. May the Spirit of truth be your Guide! May you neither reject those whom Christ has received; nor by a vague, or precipitate application of the seals of the covenant, wound the Redeemer's cause, and injure the souls of men!

Surveying the magnitude and complexity of your work, with its everlasting consequences, not to yourselves alone, but perhaps to millions yet unborn, you tremble; and sometimes you are even ready to despond. But let not a sense of your insufficiency dishearten you. The cause is less yours, than the Lord's. Without his gracious presence, angels might shrink from so arduous a work. But blest with his almighty succor, you, feeble in yourselves as worms, shall be made strong and prosperous. Often ponder the Redeemer's promise, made to all his faithful ministers, and emphatically to his faithful missionaries: *Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.* Let this promise be your anchor of hope, and shield of defence. Let it impart comfort in despondency, and unshaken courage in danger.

Go forth, then, our dearly beloved brethren, in the name and strength of the living God; and carry with you the prayers, the solitudes, and the sympathies of all who love our common Lord. Go, cross the Atlantic wave, or penetrate the Western wild, fraught with the riches of the glorious gospel. Unfurl the standard of the cross on the mountains of idolatry. Bear the flaming torch of inspiration into the gloomy recesses of ignorance and superstition; and pour the light of heaven on the benighted, desolate minds of pagans and savages. *May the wilderness and the solitary place be glad for you, and the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose!* May the God of the sea and of the dry land go with you, and with the friends of your souls! May his kindest angels guard you! May his richest consolations evermore refresh you! May you be faithful unto death! And in the great rewarding day, may you, in the midst of thousands rescued from the jaws of destruction, address your Redeemer and your Judge; "Lord, here are we, and the spiritual children thou hast given us!" AMEN.

THE
RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP

BY THE
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A principle runs through the Kingdom of Christ, which binds the hearts of its members to one another, and to God. This lays a foundation for intimate fellowship : for the members of Christ's Kingdom are one.

However divided by seas, or continents ; climes, or ages ; the moment they become citizens of Zion, *they are all ONE.* Patriarchs, kings, and prophets ; apostles, and martyrs ;—Europeans, Asiatics, Africans, and Americans ; Jews, and Greeks ; Barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, all one in Christ Jesus. They have one God, one Redeemer, one Sanctifier ; are pursuing the same object, and inspired by the same spirit ; contend with the same enemies, and meet the same trials ; march the same way, under the same Leader ; will arrive at the same place, and join forever in the same employment.

This lays a foundation for endearing communion, not only with one another, but with God. United by a principle, which, like attraction in the system of nature, binds all to the centre ; and pressed forward by the force of infinite love, they will revolve, till drawn closer and closer,

—they are swallowed up in the effulgence of that luminary, whose glory fills the universe, and *God is ALL IN ALL.*

On this ground, Dear Brethren, viewing you as members of the Kingdom of Christ, and commissioned by him to preach the gospel to the gentiles, we, now in the presence of God, angels, and men, *give you this RIGHT HAND* : a token that we receive you as ministers of Christ, and that his ministers are *ONE* : that we acknowledge your equality with us ; and with all ministers of Christ, throughout his kingdom : and your right to all the authority, and privileges of the sacred office. We also express our cordial approbation of the service to which you are appointed ; our readiness to assist you by all the means in our power ; and to embrace, in bonds of christian affection, *all*, of every nation, kindred, people, and tongue, who by your instrumentality shall be turned to righteousness.

Go then, in the name and strength of Christ, and may the Lord God Omnipotent, make you the means of turning many from darkness to light, and prepare you, to shine as the stars forever.

But, Brethren, your work is *great, difficult, and dangerous* : and requires no ordinary share of self-denial ; faith, and patience ; wisdom, prudence, humility, boldness, perseverance, and prayer.

You must forsake *all* : give up houses and lands ; parents and country : commit yourselves, and your companions to the mercy of the winds, and the waves ; go into a land of darkness, and the shadow of death ; penetrate the very heart of satan's empire ; and that too for the purpose of disenthroning him, and turning his subjects to God.

Your object is, not to lead the heathen to adopt a few new gods, but to abandon all their old ones ; to declare eternal war against gods whom they have worshipped from their infancy ; against all the gods of their fathers ; and fathers' fathers ; condemn themselves, and all others

for embracing them ; and embrace ONE, who was crucified, by a band of soldiers, on Calvary, and who, you say, has risen again. In doing this, you must contend, not only with flesh and blood, but with principalities, and powers ; with the rulers of the darkness of this world ; and with spiritual wickedness in high places.

But, Brethren, *fear not*. Behold the fishermen of Galilee : commissioned, like you, to enter satan's dominions, and bring out his captives into the liberty of the sons of God. Helpless, they raised their eye, and surveyed unnumbered millions, bound in the chains of sin, and guarded by all the powers of darkness,—yet, rising in the strength of God, and putting on the shield of faith, the breast-plate of righteousness, and the helmet of salvation, they drew the sword of the Spirit, and went forward, CONQUERING AND TO CONQUER. Satan, and all his legions, driven out from strong holds which they had fortified for ages, retired in dismay before this band of martyrs,—and they waved in holy triumph the ensigns of the cross : rejoicing that the excellence of the power was of God, and not of them. DELIVERANCE TO CAPTIVES, broke from their tongues—and millions, bursting the chains of death, came out from their prisons—tears of repentance dropped from their gazing eyes,—and they melted before the cross of Jesus.

If the Lord has assigned *you* a work among the heathen, you will live to perform it. He will give his angels charge concerning you : will bear you in his arms ; and carry you to the desired haven. Already we see your vessel, wafted, by the breezes of heaven, across the Atlantic : see perishing heathen, touched by the spirit which goes before you, burdened with sin, rising on their hillocks, and looking round for a Saviour—they catch a view of the ark, press down to the beach, and stretch out their arms to receive you : and, as you go up the hills of

India, we hear the song of the Hindoos, “*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good ; that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth.*” And, lo, the mountain of the Lord’s house rises on the tops of the mountains—the flame of holy love kindles on every altar,—and a great cloud of incense goes up from the whole earth.