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MISSIONS WILL SUCCEED :

A Sermon,

PREACHED BEFORE THE BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH,

AT ITS MEETING IN PHILADELPHIA, PENN. MAY, 21st, 1843.

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Ps. XI. 3—" If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do ?"

THE distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental truths results from the nature of things and is useful. Some indeed pervert it to unworthy ends. Yet wise men will not on that account reject it. They will rather inquire how they may lawfully and profitably use it.

This distinction is applicable to the subject of Missions. If this enterprise be all superstructure without foundation, it will, it must come to naught. For it makes demands upon us to an extent that ensures utter and early abandonment, unless there exist the best reasons for our patient continuance in well-doing. It summons its friends to repeated sacrifices of luxury and comfort for its support. Our missionary institutions could ill spare those contributions, which are the fruit of a rigid self-denial. The amount of them is large and a rich blessing is in them. Indeed the missionary cause could much better lose those of its wealthy friends, whose gifts though large, cost no sacrifice, than those of its poor friends, who, for their love to Christ, give all but the means of meeting their absolute wants.

Besides, a much larger sum of money than is now expended in Foreign fields,

could be advantageously expended in our own country in well-trying methods of disseminating truth. Nor has the American church ever given her parting blessing to one of her sons to go among the heathen, because she could not find ample work for him to do at home. The impression seems to be extensive and extending, that to no work is our church more loudly called than to the lengthening of her own cords and the strengthening of her own stakes.

The work of Foreign Missions also demands sacrifices of feeling, which none can appreciate, but those who have made them. It is no small matter to part father and son, mother and daughter, brother and sister, with the expectation of seeing each other's faces no more in the flesh, unless wasting disease should send home the servant of Christ with a shattered constitution. The young missionary too gives up his country, dear to him as Jerusalem to David. I have no desire to exaggerate, but the disruption of these tender ties ought not to be called for without very strong reasons.

Moreover, Foreign fields seem far less promising than some near at hand. The

heathen are besotted, caste-ridden, inveterate in their habits and prejudices, mad upon their idols. Most of them are bloody and cruel. Often have they menaced and sometimes murdered the servants of Christ. Error is entrenched behind immemorial usage and dignified by alliances with science and power.

These things being so, he is blind who admits not the necessity of being fully persuaded that we have the sanction of a divine approval in our Foreign Missionary work. The day of missionary romance is past, and we have come to the sober and difficult realities of an enterprise whose chief properties are strongly repulsive to the carnal heart. If this work be of man, it will be arrested. If it be of God, it can be shown to be so. Thanks be to Jehovah, He has not withheld the needed light, nor sent us a warfare at our own charges. The foundations of this enterprise are broad, obvious and firm. The mediatorial throne is not more stable. Allow me specially to notice some of the great truths on which this enterprise is built.

I. In the covenant of Redemption, between the Father and the Son, this great cause formed a chief part of unchangeable stipulation. Some sound and able divines do not distinguish between the covenant of redemption and the covenant of grace. But others, unsurpassed in character, make the distinction. And the Scriptures seem to recognise it. In the covenant of redemption the Father and the Son are the *equal* parties. In the covenant of grace, God and man are the *unequal* parties. The covenant of redemption was made in *Eternity* before all worlds. The covenant of grace was made in *time*, after the creation and after the fall. The parties to the covenant of redemption had in each other infinite confidence and required no surety. The parties to the covenant of grace had no confidence in each other, and, therefore, a days-man, that could lay his hands upon both, was indispensable. The Father and the Son had the same glorious nature. They were one in essence. They need

ed none to reconcile them. God and man possessed natures wholly different. God was angry with man every day. And man was in a state of unceasing enmity to God. To reconcile them there must be a Mediator. Thus much for the distinction between these covenants.

In the covenant of redemption the subduing of all nations to Christ was fully promised. The Scriptures most full on this point, are the 49th chapter of Isaiah, and the 89th Psalm. The first of these passages contains some things so pertinent that I will give them nearly entire. "The Lord said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. Then I said, I have laboured in vain, and spent my strength for naught, and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God. And now, thus saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength. And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel. I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the end of the earth. Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord, who is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel and he shall glorify thee. Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves.*** Behold these shall come from far; and lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim." Isaiah xl. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12.

For an *extended* explication of this passage, the student of revelation is referred to Flavel's "*Fountain of Life*," or to

Charnock's "*Author of Reconciliation.*" But a few remarks are here offered for the better understanding of it.

1. The name "Israel," in the first verse quoted, is supposed to refer to Christ, the true Prince, that prevails with God.

2. The promises of reward for service rendered by the Son, seem to be made by the Father upon his own estimate of what was right. The work of salvation is as agreeable to the Father as to the Son. God the Father required no mediation to make him benevolent to our guilty race. Christ died not to render the Father merciful, but to enable him to be just in pardoning the guilty.

3. The promise here made is so large, that if all the Jewish church were left out of the account, the reward should still be glorious. "The end of the earth, the Gentiles, the prisoners, the people in darkness, and the desolate heritages" are forms of expression here employed to denote the vastness of the empire secured.

4. It is matter of no small interest that in this portion of Scripture, the Chinese Empire, under the name of "*Sinim*," is expressly given to Christ as a part of his reward. v. 12.

5. Lastly, the grant here made is upon the faithfulness of the Father. These things shall surely come to pass "because of the Lord, who is faithful." v. 7.

In the 89th Psalm also much is said on the same subject. Dr. Lightfoot thinks that this Psalm was written before the Exodus from Egypt, and that the name of David is in it only prophetically. However this may be, it is generally agreed that David is here spoken of chiefly as a type, and that God the Father in this Psalm reveals in a glorious manner his engagements to his Son. To quote the whole Psalm and remark upon even half its wondrous stipulations would detain us too long. The following are a sample: "I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David, my servant. Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations.*** Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne. Mercy and truth shall go before thy face.*** Thou spakest in

visions to thy Holy one and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people.*** My loving kindness I will not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.*** His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the Sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the Moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven." Ps. 89: v. 3, 4. 14 19. 33, 34. 36, 37. Such are some of the forcible expressions in this remarkable Psalm.

We have then a clear and glorious revelation of a covenant between the Father and the Son, stipulating that all nations, however degraded, however remote from the usual scenes of prophecy, shall be embraced in the compassings of redeeming mercy. No wonder that the Scriptures represent Christ as "henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool." He knows that all nations are given to him by a faithful God, who cannot deny himself, who will not disappoint his Son. Before he died he said: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." John vi. 37.

II. There is also a covenant of grace, revealed in the word of God and abounding in glorious promises to the church. In this covenant Christ, the surety, no less than the Father, pledges the divine faithfulness to the fulfilment of all it engages and all it requires. This covenant secures to individual believers all those spiritual blessings by which they become fitted for, and entitled and admitted to eternal glory. But some of its most cheering and enlarged promises have special reference to the full establishment of Christ's kingdom upon earth.—The very first disclosure of mercy, made by God to man, gave such an intimation: "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." Such a crushing of the serpent, such a deadly blow as seems to be promised by "bruising his head," has not yet taken place; but it is not therefore doubtful whether it shall. To Abraham God also said, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." All the

families of the earth have not yet been blessed, but they shall be. When we come down to later discoveries of this same covenant, we find God speaking to his church in a manner unsurpassed in tenderness. By one prophet He says: "I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and in judgment, and in loving kindness and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people, and they shall say, thou art my God." Hos. ii. 10. 20. 23. By another prophet God addresses his church thus: "O thou tossed with tempest and not comforted.*** All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children.*** No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper." Isaiah liv. 11. 13. 17. By the same prophet Jehovah says: "The Lord shall arise upon thee and his glory shall be seen upon thee, and the Gentiles shall come to the brightness of thy rising.*** The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and incense, and they shall shew forth the praises of the Lord. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee. The rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee. . . . The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls and their kings shall minister unto thee. . . . The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree and the box together to beautify the place of my sanctuary. . . . The sons of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. . . . Thy people shall be all righteous." Isaiah lx. 3. 5. 6, 7. 10. 13. 14. 21. On these declarations I only remark that a catalogue of the names of all the countries and classes of men embraced in the foregoing passages would fill far more space than the predi-

tions themselves. And yet God in kindness hath made particular mention of some, especially several times naming Arabia, whose case might be regarded as the most hopeless, and whose children have for thousands of years had their hands against every man and every man's hand against them. Blessed be God, in the tents that Kedar doth inhabit shall joy and gladness be found, thanksgiving and the voice of melody.

In these extended quotations there is danger of losing the attention of my hearers; but these promises are so full, so beautifully expressed, and so apposite, that their presentation can hardly be unacceptable to the man of taste or the pious friend of missions. In view of them we boldly assert that whatever encouragement the child of God may draw from the provisions of the covenant of grace respecting any blessing, the whole church of God may draw from the terms of the same covenant touching the universal spread of the Gospel. David in his old age and in his keen domestic affliction, said: "Though my house be not so with God as I could wish, yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure." 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Truly then the church, even in the hour of apparent discomfiture, may lift up her hands and her head and her voice and shout: He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, and kings and queens shall yet nurse my children and all nations shall call me blessed.

Both the covenants, of which we have spoken, secure the most glorious things: both are unchangeable; both are confirmed by promises and oaths. "Now if it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed; no man disannulleth or addeth thereto." How much more shall God's covenants stand. Therefore they may well be esteemed the main pillars of Christian hopes. They are foundations, which cannot be shaken. If they could be destroyed, what could the righteous do? What could the friends of missions do? But they shall stand for ever.

III. But there are other grounds of confidence in our missionary labours. If there

is any thing towards which the eyes of pious men ever turn with peculiar and profound interest, it is the death of Christ. It was the burden of prophecy and the strength of hope to righteous men of old. On this theme "Isaiah's hallowed fire" burned with intensity. Since its occurrence the Church of God, by all her enlightened and spiritual members, has sung, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." In the modern astronomy the sun holds no more important place, than in pure Christianity is filled by the death of Christ. It is the great central truth of the system. A world without a God would not be more an object of commiseration than a church of sinful men without a crucified Saviour. No tragedy compares with that of the upper room, of Gethsemane, of the Judgment Hall, and of Calvary. Yet there is something in the death of Christ far more moving and influential than its tragedy. The pious mind looks upon those remarkable sufferings, and asks their cause. Inspiration answers, the mysterious sufferer was drinking the wine of the wrath of God, was expiating human guilt, was redeeming sinners, was treading the wine-press alone. God was smiting the man that was his fellow. The glittering sword of Eternal Justice was buried in the bosom of spotless innocence. If we reverently inquire what occupied the mind of this holy sufferer while in his agony, the word of God gives the answer. He was thinking of the glory of his Father—he was thinking of the preservation, unity, peace, purity and growth of his church. For a moment he thought of his aged mother, now perhaps a widow. At another time he granted salvation to the only man that asked of him in his agony any favour, and bore the cup of blessing and of mercy to the parched lips of the dying thief. To the inquiry, what sustained him in this hour? I answer, his divinity was his efficient support. But the Bible goes further. It lifts up the veil from the rational soul of this sufferer in that hour of shame and wrath. Paul has told us many a great truth, and many a sweet truth respecting Christ. He says it was "for the joy set

before him that Christ endured the cross, despising the shame," Heb. xii. 2. "The joy set before him," was his joy in prospect of the return of countless millions of sinners, coming home to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. He looked down the whole length of the vale of coming years, and saw myriads returning to God.—This sustained him. Indeed, long before Paul was born, Isaiah had published—"He shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied." And yet more plainly—"When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand," Isa. liii. 10. And *such* a seed—a seed compared to the drops of the morning dew for multitude—a seed, not of *one* generation, nor of *one* century, nor of *ten* centuries—but a seed that should serve him while sun and moon endure—a seed not mean or despicable, but a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people. Glory to God in the highest, that even now among those cast out in their blood are millions, of whom we may hope that Jesus remembered them in the tenderness of electing love, while he agonized in the garden and on the cross. Certain, *certain* is the universal spread of the Gospel, because seeing the kingdoms of the world becoming the kingdoms of the Lord, was the bright vision that sustained the Saviour on the cross. We know that he has not died in vain. We know that he shall not fail, nor be discouraged, until he have set judgment in the earth. We know that he never rejoiced in a thing of naught. "He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto death," Isa. liiii. 12. We are not called to preach salvation to a world for which Christ neither cared, nor wept, nor died. "From everlasting, when there were no depths, before the mountains were settled, he rejoiced in the habitable part of the earth, and his delights were with the sons of men," Ps. viii. 23, 24, 25. 31. On the cross his thoughts and his delights were the same. This doctrine of the death of Christ lies at the foundation of all that

brings hope to man or glory to God. If ever the argument *a fortiori* was powerful, it is here. If a *dying* Saviour can redeem, a *living* Saviour can get the victory.

And when we send out pious missionaries, they go not to preach a Saviour whom they neither know nor love. Each of them has sung,—

I was a stricken deer, that left the herd
Long since. With many an arrow deep infix'd
My panting side was charged, when I withdrew
To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
There I was found by One, who had himself
Been hurt by archers. In his side he bore,
And in his hands and feet, the cruel scars.
With gentle force solliciting the darts,
He drew them forth, and healed, and bade me
live.

If the pious missionary points the dying heathen to a Saviour, it is to a Saviour whom he knows, and whom, having not seen, he loves.

Nor should we forget that as the blood of Christ shall never lose its power, so neither shall the doctrine of Christ's death. "The sage explores till wisdom falls asleep," and is yet the slave of sin. The philosopher speculates till he is lost in labyrinths of darkness that may be felt, but his conscience finds no rest. The outrageous sinner is corrected by his own iniquities, and punished by his own transgressions, but his enmity is unslain. The blinded formalist sews together the filthy rags of his own righteousness, but his nakedness still appears. The ferocious savage scorns the sublime and refined sentiments of civilization; and the prejudiced devotee of superstition laughs to scorn the doctrine of a pure theism. All these "wax worse and worse," until they are taught from heaven the fact and the intent of the death of the Son of God. Then with one consent, they cease to cavil, and each of them, as the penitent Greenlander, exclaims, "If this Saviour died for me, he shall be my Saviour." The lion puts on the nature of the lamb: the spirit, as ungovernable as a storm, and as fierce as a tempest, is calmed—is subdued. The heart, as hard as adamant, is melted; pride falls down in adoring humility; self-righteousness covers her nakedness with garments of sal-

vation; and enmity comes forth no more for war, but is converted into love, and opens the store-houses of her energies and her possessions, and, like a thoughtless prodigal, pours them out in honour of the Great High Priest of our profession. This blessed doctrine is still the wisdom of God, and the power of God unto salvation.

We have a gospel to preach, and it contains the most melting story ever recited to men or angels. It is "the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God." The prospect of its wide-spread publication and acceptance filled Jesus with a sustaining joy, even when under the hidings of his Father's countenance. Look at it in any light in which it is revealed, and the death of Christ is a foundation of hope for the nations and of encouragement for the church. Earth and heaven shall yet sing, "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ." The death of Christ secures this sublime event.

IV. Christ having died for us left not our cause to others, but became our Intercessor in heaven. For this work he is eminently fitted. He understands well our cause—he is incapable of betraying it—he knows what human guilt and human weakness and human wickedness and human misery are—and he is equal with God—he stands high in favour with the Father because he is Jesus Christ "the righteous." In him the Father has said, He is ever well pleased. A good writer* well remarks that Christ's intercession "is not a humble dejected supplication, which becometh not that glorious state of advancement, which he is possessed of, who sitteth at the right hand of the Majesty on high." So far from this it is rather "an authoritative presenting himself before the throne of his Father, sprinkled with his own blood, for the making out to his people all spiritual things, that are procured by his oblation." So that what would be extremely wicked in our intercessions is eminently proper in his. He says, "Father, *I will.*" No sinner, no creature may stand before God

* Dr. Owen.

and say "*I will.*" But our Intercessor may thus speak and his "*will*" shall be done. The nature of Christ's intercession may be in part understood from the intercession of the high priest under the law. Properly arrayed, and wearing his breastplate containing the names of the chosen tribes, he took the burning coals of fire from off the altar and the appointed sweet incense, and came within the veil, and put the incense upon the fire and the cloud of incense covered the mercy-seat. Then he took the blood, which had just been shed and sprinkled it on the mercy-seat seven times, and then confessed and pleaded for mercy for the errors of the people. So "Christ being come a high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Heb. ix. 11, 12. This our great Intercessor is successful. Those, for whom this intercession is made, though in themselves most unworthy, have long been objects of divine and tender regard. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love," says God to his chosen people. This Intercession must prevail, for the Father and the Son are one—one in being—one in counsel. The Scriptures often declare the efficacy of Christ's intercession. Just before his passion, He said, "Father, I thank thee, that thou hast heard me, and I knew that thou hearest me always." John xi. 41, 42.

For ages the saints have been assured of victory over opposing principalities and of perseverance in holiness unto death through this glorious intercession. How many millions of saints in the hour of trial and despondency have with rapture heard the words: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." Luke xxii. 31, 32. Upon this everlasting rock they have stood and sung the song of Miriam—

"The Lord hath triumphed gloriously."
Do any ask, what has this to do with the cause of missions? The answer is—

much every way—but chiefly that God hath joined the two things together by express revelation. In the second Psalm, (verses 7 and 8,) Jehovah thus speaks: "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Will not, does not every pious friend of missions exclaim, as Jacob, when assured that Joseph was yet alive, "It is enough!" No man can have any higher assurance of salvation and the church can have no higher assurance of universal triumph than that given by the intercession of Christ. Unbelief may demand further ground of confidence. Faith is satisfied.

V. In a discourse on Missions it may be expected that at least something shall be said of the commission given by Christ at his ascension. So much has of late been written and spoken on this part of Scripture, that but little is called for at present. The fullest account of this matter is given by Matthew, (xxviii. 18, 19, 20.) He says, "Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." On these words I remark,

1. That Christ's authority is here by himself asserted to be unlimited. He has all power in heaven and in earth.

2. This authority is by himself asserted to be the basis of this commission. I have all power, *therefore* go, teach.

3. This commission is in the form of a command. Were it but permission, or exhortation, yet coming from Him, who could disregard it; who would neglect it? But it has both the force and authority of a command. It is, therefore, as safe to obey it as for the man with the withered hand to stretch it forth at Christ's bidding. It is as safe to obey it as to believe in Jesus. The godly Payson said, "Were Christ to command me to rule half a dozen worlds

I should be safe in undertaking to do so." And as it is Christ's last command, it is not saying too much that it is entitled to a very prominent place in our thoughts.

4. To obedience to this command a very gracious and glorious promise is annexed—"Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world." This promise shows that if we would obey Christ we must preach while the world stands. It also teaches that churches animated by a missionary spirit have the promise of a great blessing. By fair inference, therefore, it declares that those who are opposed to the progress of the Gospel are under a curse. What is here implied is elsewhere clearly asserted. Indeed I know not in the Bible a more alarming passage than that which denounces those, who are enemies of evangelical missions. There are such now. There were such in the days of Paul. He speaks of some, who "please not God, and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost," 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16. The cup of Jerusalem's sins was not full, when she stoned the prophets, nor when she murdered the Prince of Glory, nor when the mass of her inhabitants refused to believe in Jesus. She must first be "contrary to all men," opposing their salvation through the preaching of the Gospel. Then she "fills up her sins, and the wrath comes upon her to the uttermost." So that opposition to the spread of the Gospel is no *new* sin, though it is a very heinous one.

But what is the import of the promise, "Lo, I am with you always?" "Another evangelist seems to explain it by referring it to "the promise of the Father," (Luke xxiv. 49,) i. e. the pouring out of the Holy Ghost, often called the Spirit of Christ,—a promise, which began to be fulfilled ten days after the giving of this commission. This Spirit is almighty and irresistible. He is able to subdue all things. His energy makes God's word a fire and hammer. In his hand Scripture is sharper than a two-edged sword. It pierces so as nothing else does. It is a discerner

of the thoughts and intents of the heart. This Spirit makes all things new and beautiful in the kingdom of grace. He comforts so as no mother comforts. He can make—he has often made a dungeon a palace, and the consuming flames of persecution a chariot of fire in which the martyred saints ascended to glory. His influence gives life. "The Spirit quickeneth." When He works none can hinder. Even the dead obey him. When the Scriptures reveal the agent, we are not surprised at the work that prophecy declares shall be done, even in a short time. It is by THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST that "a nation shall be born in a day"—that Satan shall fall like lightning from heaven—that men shall "fly as a cloud and as doves to their windows"—that the ploughman shall overtake the reaper." This is He, who moved upon the face of the deep and garnished the heavens, and established the order of the universe and created all things on earth in six days. He will garnish the new heavens and create all things on earth new; and in doing it, he will cut short the work in righteousness. Behold His wonders in Greenland, in South Africa, in the West Indies, in many Islands of the sea, yea wherever the pure Gospel is preached.

It may well be doubted whether a greater number of sinful men were made obedient to the faith during the year succeeding the day of Pentecost, than during the last twelve months. We have indeed no data for forming arithmetical estimates of this kind. But we may speak of probabilities. No wonder the churches flourish when the Spirit is poured out from on high. The promise was that then they should "revive as the corn and grow as the vine and cast forth their roots as Lebanon."

Thus I have noticed some of the foundations of this great missionary enterprise. They mutually support each other. They are stable. Faith never built her hopes on bases more sure. The hope of personal salvation in apostle or martyr was never better founded than the blessed hope of the church that this earth shall be subdued to knowledge, to holiness, to Christ.

I shall conclude with a few remarks.

1. Let not the friends of missions be soon shaken in mind, or troubled by discouraging events. Theirs is no less a work of faith than a labour of love. Some missions are broken up by unforeseen difficulties—some are unpromising through years of sorrowful toil and heavy expenditure—some, that prosper, yet encounter amazing opposition from ungodly and unreasonable men—some in a short time lose by death half the reinforcements sent them. At home, too, some, from whom better things might be expected, are opposers—some indifferent—some unbelieving and despondent—many poor, and all far less engaged than they should be. What, then, is to be done? The answer is, Have faith in God, Have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Have faith in the Holy Spirit. Believe the promises. Rest in the oath of God. Never, never did the disciples offer and never could the friends of Missions offer a better prayer than this: "Lord increase our faith."

2. Let the friends of Missions give themselves to prayer. In every department of Christian service, perhaps nothing is now so much wanting as effectual fervent prayer. Without this, counsels are carnal or confused—labour is vain—success stands afar off, and God is offended. When by Ezekiel, xxxvi. 37, God says, "I will increase them with men like a flock," he also says, "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them."

When the ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands round about the throne, sang with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches, and wisdom and strength and honour, and glory and blessing, and every creature which was in heaven, and on the earth," united in the hallelujah, we are informed that this event was immediately preceded by "the four and twenty elders falling down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints." Rev. v. 8. 11, 12, 13. It has often been remarked that the Lord's prayer, which contains a form of

prayer, ordinarily to be used in the church of God, contains seven petitions, three of which and those of the first, are on this subject: "Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

3. Let us guard against divisions and discord in this work. Let the bonds of union be firm and strong. Petty jealousies are too apt to creep in and mar every good work. A divided people must be a weak people. The perfect freedom secured by the gospel, and by our form of church polity, may tempt the inexperienced and ill-informed to urge some favourite scheme too far. Let it never be forgotten that Presbyterianism must be administered in the *spirit* of the Gospel if we would have good fruit from it. Inferior judicatories must respect the decisions and arrangements of higher courts, respecting this great work, if we are ever to succeed as a denomination in securing the crown of missionary zeal and success—a crown hardly less bright than that of martyrdom.

4. Let us labour to keep the whole body of people, ecclesiastically associated with us, well informed on the subject. Ignorance is neither the mother of devotion, nor of any other good thing. If she ever did a good *act*, surely she never did a good *work*. We must write more, converse more, and preach more on this subject. An impulse may now and then be given to this cause by a striking providence or a stirring appeal, but solid information must be the basis of any uniform and reliable action.

5. Finally, may I not, with a good writer* say: "The proper work of Christians is the extension of Christianity; the adding to the cloud of witnesses, the diminution of the sons of darkness; the accession of gems to the Redeemer's crown. It is to be imbued with holy untiring anxieties to rescue beings like themselves from going down to the pit; and, because time is short, to devote every power, to consecrate every talent,

* John A. A. A.

devise every means, employ every resource, to 'save souls from death,'—constantly to remember, that men are always perishing; therefore we should be always labouring; that the season for activity is circumscribed—and that ere long, the night will come—it is coming—when our tongues shall be silent, our hands motionless, and our hearts pulseless: 'for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither we are all going.'

Thus engaged, we shall find our work pleasant. Melancholy and *ennui* will flee away—worldly sorrow, which worketh death, will yield to pious grief for the miseries of a world, and our work will be as pleasant as it is great.

"Would'st thou from sorrow find a sweet relief?
Or is thy heart oppressed with woes untold?
Balm would'st thou gather for corroding grief?
Pour blessings round thee like a shower of gold.
'Tis when the rose is wrapt in many a fold,
Close to its heart, the worm is wasting there
Its life and beauty—not when all unrolled
Leaf after leaf, its bosom rich and fair
Breathes freely its perfumes throughout the ambient air."

Did not Vanderhemp act wisely when he toiled in a brick yard that he might teach the Hottentots how to build comfortable cottages? Did not Mylne consult his real happiness when he proposed to go as a servant to the Chinese mission, if he might but go? Did not Gordon Hall consult his true interests when he refused the offer of ten thousand dollars a year, or fifty pounds a week for two hours a day, to be given to secular employment in the service of the East India Compa-

ny? Does he regret it now? Is Melville Cox's crown the less bright because he once lay burning in fever on the coast of Africa, and with his dying breath exclaimed: "Though thousands fall, let not Africa be given up!" Did the young and lovely Jane Wilson, whose bones lie a thousand miles in the interior of Africa, forget her own mercies and despise "the recompense of reward" when she left all for that land of darkness. Her dying message to her widowed mother and fatherless sister was—"I am glad that I came to this land," and then she kissed her babe and died. Show me a man upon earth, who at heart regrets any sacrifice he has ever made for this cause, and I will show you a hypocrite, or at least a poor blinded sinner, who never saw the glory of God in the salvation of man, and who never felt the love of Christ in its sweet constraints, and rousing energies.

Duly weighing all that has been said, it can hardly be wrong to speak to every one as Mordecai addressed his royal niece: "If thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed." Esther iv. 14. The best method of perpetuating the gospel in its purity and power amongst ourselves, and imparting stability to all our good institutions, is to live and feel and act in accordance with the obvious dispensation of the gospel committed to us as a people, highly favoured of the Lord, lest he come and remove our candle-stick and leave us in judicial darkness.

For the Foreign Missionary Chronicle.

ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHINESE, AND THE PROSPECTS OF MISSIONARY LABOUR AMONG THEM.

Recent events have considerably enlarged the field of Chinese missions, which is accessible to us, and directed the attention of the Christian church with renewed interest to that great nation: it may, perhaps, therefore, be interesting to your readers to consider some of the character-

istics of the Chinese people, and the prospects of missionary labour amongst them.

In considering this subject, perhaps the best way will be to institute a comparison between the Chinese people and the Hindu population of India. Inasmuch as India has long been occupied by Christian