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CHARITY AT HOME,

A SERMON,

PREACHED FOR THE BENEFIT

OF THE

United Domestic Missionary Society,

IN THE CHURCH IN MURRAY-STREET,

NEW-YORK.

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To the Hon. S. Van Rensselaer,

PRESIDENT OF THE U. D. M. S.

SIR,

This Sermon, preached for the benefit of the Society over which you preside, and published at the request of some of its most active members, is most respectfully inscribed to you.

When men, who have the confidence of the country on account of their intelligence and patriotism, are active in promoting plans of Christian benevolence; and give to Societies instituted for that purpose, the aid of their talents, time, and money, they afford a very high gratification to the humble disciples of the Saviour, and a pledge to the public, that these associations *have no object in view but that which is avowed.*

For this reason, as well as for others, many were greatly delighted to see some of the most distinguished laymen in our country presiding at the anniversaries recently celebrated in New-York: and not least so, to see *you* in the chair, at the annual meeting of a Society which promises to render blessings of a most important character to the church and the country.

With the highest respect,

I am, &c.

THE AUTHOR.

SERMON.

ACTS xiv. 23.

And when THEY had ORDAINED THEM ELDERS IN EVERY CHURCH, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

The text is contained in the clause: THEY ORDAINED THEM ELDERS IN EVERY CHURCH.

These words have been selected, because they suggest thoughts appropriate to the present occasion, and coincident with the plans and purposes of the *United Domestic Missionary Society*. What these plans and purposes are, I need not now take time to explain. To most who hear me, they are well known: to others, they will be sufficiently developed in the sequel.

It is necessary that we should understand what office is designated by the term *Elders*, in the text. Happily, the question can be settled without difficulty. In the 20th chap. of Acts, we read that Paul, on his journey, sent for the Elders of the church at Ephesus, to come to him at Miletus: and that on their obeying his summons, he gave them a most solemn and affectionate charge; in which we find these remarkable words, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers (bishops) to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." And in Tit. i. 5, it is written, "For this cause, I left thee in Crete, that thou

shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and *ordain Elders in every city*, as I had appointed thee.”

These passages put it beyond doubt that the word *Elders*, designates the persons who filled the pastoral office—They do more ; taken in connection with the history of the apostolic administration, they enable us to understand the plan which was adopted by the apostles in the organization of the primitive church. Uniformly, as soon as possible,

A PASTOR WAS ORDAINED IN EVERY SOCIETY.

Now, we are warranted in saying, even though we could not discern the reasons for the measure, *that it was wise*. The Apostles not only *wrote*, but, in this respect *acted* as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. And their *example* is as full a warrant for the rulers and guides of the Church in subsequent ages, as their *precept*.

But we are not required to submit to this as an authoritative measure, the reasons for which we cannot understand.

A little consideration will show us, *that it is adapted to the nature of man, and to the objects to be obtained by the ministry of reconciliation*.

These last may all be comprehended in one sentence, *the glory of God in the salvation of sinners*. In the accomplishment of this high and holy design, according to the appointment of the Head of the Church, the darkness of nature must be dissipated by the light of divine truth ; the selfishness of man must be subdued ; his hard heart melted ; his stubborn and wayward will vanquished ; his affections taken from earthly things and raised to heaven ; his pollutions

washed away ; and he made fit to dwell in the presence of God, and enjoy the society of the just made perfect. In a word, under a course of wise and holy discipline, he who bears the image of the prince of darkness must be renovated, and transformed into the image of the blessed Redeemer. It is Grace which does this work : but it is done in the use of means adapted to the end. These means God has appointed. And the chief of them is the ministry of the gospel. “ For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed ? And how shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard ? And how shall they hear without a preacher ? And how shall they preach except they be sent ?—For it hath pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe.”

But it is not the transient itinerant who is to be depended on for the accomplishment of this great purpose. *An Elder is to be ordained for every Church*. The following remarks will assign the reason :

1. It is presupposed that the teacher of religion is a man of well disciplined and regulated mind ; “ not a novice, but one able to teach others ;” a man imbued with the Spirit, and walking after the example of the Saviour ; one who counts all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord, and who is moved by no labours, privations, or dangers ; yea, who counts not his own life dear unto himself, if he may but finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he has received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the grace of God ; a man who is constrained by the love of Christ, to live not to himself but to him who died for us and rose

gain ;—a man, who with all his attainments, is humble ; with all his zeal is meek and kind ; and with *all* his love of truth is liberal and tolerant.

2. A minister of the gospel, delivered into this mould, is prepared to pursue his business in the way which promises success ; because it is conformed to the spirit of Christianity, and suited, as was said, to the nature of man ;—for there is no access, for moral truth, to the mind of man, *but that which is made through the heart* : man is won over to the gospel, and subdued to the obedience of the just, *by love*. Now,

3. The relation between pastor and people is one of kindness and confidence. It affords, in all its duties, an opportunity for exercising many of the best feelings of the human heart. It implies a continual performance of good offices. Its influence extends to all the departments of life ; and is felt in prosperity and adversity, in sickness and health, in life and in death. While the preacher teaches by precept and example, the religion of love ; and the doctrine descends like the dew of Hermon, and spreads its gentle yet mighty influence, the husband looks on the wife of his bosom with a purer and holier affection ; the wife leans on her husband with higher confidence ; the parent associates the endearments of natural love with the immortal happiness of his children ; and children look at their parents as their precursors in the way to heaven. Family government is maintained, discipline enforced, and obedience rendered in the Lord ; and a spirit akin to heaven diffuses itself through the domestic circle. Then it spreads wider, and to neighbourly kindness is added all that is implied in brotherhood in Christ, in the communion of saints on earth, in the exercise

of a common faith, the cherishing of a common hope, and participation in common joys. And as the pastor pursues his work of love, these blessed influences are more and more diffused, the progress of assimilation becomes more complete ; and the Christian Society at length seems to be directed by one spirit, and animated by one heart.

4. But such is the frailty of man's nature, that the influence must be continually kept up, or every thing will go down to the level of the world. Old age, in its infirmity, needs to be constantly reminded of what it is easy to forget ; to be strengthened in its weaknesses, and soothed in its afflictions. They who are in the bustle and action of life, need the warning voice of him whom they love, and in whom they confide, perpetually to recall their attention to heavenly things, and prevent the world from coming in between them and their God. And childhood needs to be instructed in its ignorance ; to be controlled in its waywardness ; to be guided along the slippery paths of youth, and conducted in the ways which are pleasantness and peace.

Now all this love is to be excited, this confidence gained, this unintermitted labour performed, not by the passing itinerant, but by the settled pastor : by the man who, situated in the midst of his people, proves himself to be worthy of their confidence ; who shares in their prosperity and adversity ; who blesses their connubial relations, and consecrates their children to a covenant God ; who kneels by the bed of the dying, and directs the departing spirit to the Saviour of sinners ; who goes before the dead to the grave, and there mingles his tears with those of the bereaved.

These considerations show why the Apostles,

moved by the Holy Spirit, directed that "Elders should be ordained in every Church." And here we see the means by which "the sacramental host of God's elect" are trained to their holy warfare, and prepared for their final triumph.

But it is to our present purpose to observe, that while these arrangements in the Church are well suited to accomplish the great end in view,

They are also admirably adapted to the state of human society, and exert a most salutary influence on the interests of this world.

Two things are universally necessary to form a well-ordered and prosperous community; the general diffusion of information, and the prevalence of a sound morality. Now the very plan adopted by the Apostles, as the best for the promotion of true Christianity in the world, is that which is best adapted to produce the most desirable, because the most happy state of society. This position is established by incontrovertible facts. The most intelligent and moral people in the world, are they who are arranged according to their convenience into ecclesiastical societies, and are connected with pastors, whose business it is to instruct the people after the pattern of the primitive teachers. For the truth of this remark, I appeal to Scotland, to protestant Switzerland, to Holland, to New England, and ask a comparison between the population of these countries and that of France, Spain, Italy, or popish Germany.

I wish it, too, to be distinctly understood, that while it accords with the theory of Protestantism to afford instruction, derived from the Bible, to all, there is a wide difference in the effect of which I now speak, owing to the different arrangements adopted

in various countries. Where pastors depend for their living on the few, the multitude are much neglected: where they depend on the people, instruction is carried into every family. The reason is—if no higher motive operates—it is the interest of an enlightened minister, who expects to exert his influence through the understanding of the people, that *they* also should be as much enlightened as possible. The eloquent reasoning of Chalmers, which sways a Scotch audience at his will, would be lost on an Italian or a Spanish crowd.*

But we need not depend altogether on facts to support our position. We may easily see from the nature of the case that it must be true. The promotion of learning and morality among the mass of the people, requires a constant effort, and most vigilant superintendance. The young are wayward and thoughtless, and know not the value of these things: while the mature are continually, by the irresistible calls of necessity, drawn to a care for the means of subsistence, and provision for their dependents. In this case it is most obvious that some powerful stimulus must be applied to the mind to awaken its energies, and prompt its efforts. But whence is that stimulus to be derived, and who is to apply it? We say that it is furnished by the Bible; that Christianity is so conveyed to us, by its enlightened teachers, that it communicates a powerful impulse to man's intellectual nature. It raises in the bosom of the peasant the most lofty feelings; and fills him with

* If it is thought that Scotland furnishes an objection against the argument, I would remind the objector, that the whole ecclesiastical policy was put into operation, and exerted its influence, long before the law of patronage spread its baleful effects through the Scottish church. Besides, in the popular constitution of that church, there is something to resist, and in a good degree to nullify the law of patronage.

profound and solemn musings, even while he handles his spade and follows his plough. The record of God's creating work, the history of providence, the unfolding of the wonderful plan of redemption; the life and immortality brought to light in the gospel; the whole range of man's duties in all his relations; and the motives to obedience furnished by the terrors and the mercies of the Lord, by the torments of the unblest, and the joys of the ransomed, are the subjects of his meditation. And however severe his toils, or heavy the pressure of his daily burdens, he is not too weary at night to read, with his family, a lesson of heavenly wisdom, and invoke the blessing of the Almighty; nor is his morning call too urgent to prevent his engaging in the same delightful service. Thus employed during the week; on the day of rest he repairs to the house of prayer, joins with his family and neighbours in the solemn song of praise, in supplications and thanksgivings to the common Father of all, and then listens to his pastor, whose understanding he respects, whose sincerity is unquestioned, whose friendship he has tried, while, as the ambassador of the divine Redeemer, he speaks of the law and the gospel, of man's duties and the Christian's hope. With an enlightened conscience, and passions hushed to peace, he returns to his home to search the scriptures, and see if these things be so; and to enforce on his own heart, by self-examination and prayer, the lessons which he has learned. Thus passes off the day of rest—sweet emblem of heaven!—and the man rises in the beginning of the week, with his heart raised to the tone of duty, and his body refreshed and prepared for labour.

Let us for a moment compare him with the man

on whose mind the light of truth has never shone, who is excited by no motives but such as earth and self afford, and who knows no pleasures but those of sense. He is driven to labour by necessity, or urged by avarice; his daily task done, he goes to his bed like a brute to his lair; he dozes away the Sabbath, as inactive as a savage, or seeks amusement at the tippling-house with drunken companions. Every hearer is prepared to draw a just conclusion from the comparison.

But let us turn now to that age in which, for the most part, the colouring is given to man's character, and the direction to his pursuits. No one, who has the heart of a Christian, can look on children with indifference. But who is to take up the children of the poor and excite in their minds the desire of improvement, raise their curiosity to know things important, and direct them to what is good? Is it done by the parent who spends his Sabbath in the tippling-house, or rambling in the fields? Is it done by the mercenary schoolmaster who, too proud to beg, too lazy to dig, and unfit for any other occupation, is employed as a teacher because he *works cheap*? Is it, in short, attended to by any but the pious parent, who, feeling his insufficiency, and knowing his want of time, seeks the counsel and superintending care of his faithful pastor and well-tried friend? And does not he who delights to walk in the footsteps of the Saviour, love to take little children in his arms, and imbue their opening minds with heavenly wisdom? Does he not feel bound to inquire into the schoolmaster's competence and fidelity; to examine the child's progress at school; to catechise the little ones of the church; to encourage expanding genius, and aid indigent merit, and train

up the young of his flock for his country and for heaven?—An enlightened and faithful ministry ensures an enlightened people.

After these remarks, very little time need be spent in proving that the services of the faithful pastor most effectually promote a pure, sound, high-toned morality. All his intercourse with his people is suited to call forth kindly affections; all the truth which he teaches them is intended to promote holiness; all the hopes which he awakens, have a sanctifying virtue; all the aspirations which he bids them cherish, give a lofty bearing to the soul; all the motives which he urges, prompt them to “cease to do evil, and to learn to do well.” Nothing so promotes the peace and order of society; so ensures obedience to the laws, the discharge of duty, and the interchange of kindness, as the labours of an enlightened evangelical ministry.

I wish to add, too, and it is a consideration of no small importance, that while this is the surest, it is the cheapest way of promoting the welfare of society. When I say this, I wish it to be distinctly understood of those arrangements which are made according to the pattern of the primitive church. When dignitaries are appointed by the great men of this world, and clothed in worldly pomp, that they may be exalted enough to preach to kings and nobles; and when royal stipends for their support are exacted from the poor man’s pittance, the case is widely different. Though even in this unevangelical form Christianity costs less than heathenism. But when the people, who support themselves by their own labour, have the privilege, as in our happy country, of choosing their own ministers, and assigning to them that support which experience shows to be competent,

then a great and necessary good is procured at the least possible expense. This will appear from the following remarks:

1. The vices of men create the necessity for almost all the burdens of society. The records of courts and police offices prove this. As far as religion prevails, then, losses by theft, and the expenses of criminal prosecutions, are lessened.

2. As far as the people are brought under the influences of an enlightened, evangelical ministry, the evils of pauperism are removed. Vice, ignorance, and improvidence, are the general and constantly operating causes of poverty. A society taught and disciplined as Christian societies are, does not indulge the vices, and pursue the expensive pleasures, which ordinarily produce want—it is industrious, frugal, and economical.

But I must not go into detail too far. What are the heaviest expenses of this great city? Vice and pleasure cost you a thousand fold more than religion and charity. And in many instances you give a premium for pauperism, and thus increase your own burdens. But it is few of your frugal, industrious, consistent Christians, that are on the list of paupers.

It is so every where: the great body of regular, humble, devout church-goers, are the most thriving people in the country, most comfortable in their houses, and least distressed by parish levies and public burdens. The money wasted at taverns, card-tables, race-fields, and other places of fashionable resort and sinful pleasure, is far more than the church wants to carry on all its noble designs of charity.

There are other matters of high import, however, which here claim our attention. No man, who has the heart of a man in him, can look round on this

country, remember its past history, and contemplate its future destiny, without deep emotion. Here a refuge was sought by our ancestors from oppression; here liberty, when expelled from the old world, sought a habitation and received a welcome; here our fathers fought, and bled, and conquered, in the cause of freedom; and here an infant nation has sprung forward in her growth of greatness and glory with a celerity unexampled and amazing. Our progress in times past gives assurance of what is to come. The increase of our population, our prosperity, our security and happiness, teach new lessons to mankind. Already the eyes of the world are fixed on us with intense interest. Statesmen quote our example; and monarchs on their thrones hear the voice of the American people, uttered through the organ of their government. No nation in the world is destined to act so important a part—a part which will bear so mightily on the condition of mankind as our own. This is not the blustering of national vanity, but the result of sober calculation. If no change takes place in the course of nature, our country will contain, before the children of some now living will die, two hundred millions of inhabitants. And this vast multitude will be a homogeneous race, speaking the same language, governed by the same laws, having a common interest, and prepared to bring their whole moral and physical power to bear at pleasure on any one object. And where has the world seen such a nation? Let us suppose that all Europe constitutes one country, holds but one people, and is governed by one head, and we shall form some adequate conception of what this country will be hereafter, and the influence which it will exert on the affairs of the great family of mankind.

There is an experiment now being tried by the people of the United States, in which not only the unborn millions that are to inhabit this vast continent, but the whole world is concerned. Our fathers have established perfect religious liberty: and as for the rest, no restraint is laid but for prevention of injury; no burden but for common defence. Now, the question to be decided is, can this degree of liberty be enjoyed, and the order of society be preserved, and the interests of religion promoted? The friends of liberty affirm, and the advocates of legitimacy all over the world deny it. Hitherto the experiment has been crowned with triumphant success. And there would be no doubt of the result, if the population of the country were not so rapidly going beyond the means of moral improvement.

A dense, vicious, ignorant population, cannot be governed but by the strong arm of authority. A republic cannot exist without virtue. The law loses its energy, when it is not enforced by the sanctions of religion. These are truths put beyond all doubt by the experience of the world, and admitted by all who are not avowed infidels. The great question, then, in which such mighty interests are involved, depends on this single point: will the men of the present generation awake to a sense of their mighty responsibility, and make the exertions which the crisis demands? I say of the *present* generation, because, as our population increases, in another age the task will, humanly speaking, be hopeless.

And here I wish to urge, with an earnestness proportioned to the importance of the subject, that we shall be miserably deluded if we make the example of Christians in other countries a pattern for us, or reason from other nations to our own. Our case is

singular and unique. No country affords us an example.

1. Religion in other countries is established by law, but in ours it is perfectly free. Governments which have sought an alliance with the Church, will employ their resources to afford a sufficient supply of clergymen suited to the purpose. But in our country, the supply must be afforded by the voluntary exertions of the Church and her friends.

2. In other countries the Church has honours and emoluments to bestow: hence the profession is eagerly sought, even by the sons of the wealthy and powerful. Among us the Church has no wealth, and the road to worldly honour lies through other professions. This is an unspeakable advantage in regard to the purity of the clerical character—an advantage for which nothing else can compensate: but it makes it necessary that the Church should take young men of piety and talents, and train them for the ministry of the gospel.

3. But the point of difference most urgently claiming attention is this: in other countries the population is comparatively stationary, it therefore is easy to keep the supply up to the demand. But in the United States, population advances with amazing rapidity: so that if the whole country were this year fully supplied with the means of moral and religious improvement, there would, next year, be a deficiency which all our present resources would not enable us to make up.

Let us not, then, suppose that we may take pattern from others. Our case is peculiar, and calls for peculiar efforts: for plans and efforts of extraordinary character.

That I may not appear, under the influence of un-

due excitement, to exaggerate the case, let me produce a few statements made by cool, calculating men, in the retirement of their studies.

1. The astonishing fact is becoming familiar to the minds of all, that our population doubles in about twenty-five years: accordingly, in that period we shall have twenty millions of souls in our country; in fifty years there will be forty millions; and in seventy-five years eighty millions. Our annual increase now is not far short of 350,000; twenty-five years hence it will be almost 700,000; fifty years hence about 1,400,000; and seventy-five years hence nearly 2,800,000.

2. But while population proceeds with these gigantic strides, there has been a proportional decrease in the means of moral and religious improvement. This is most evident to all who, familiar with the history of the past, look at the present state of the country. But most people stay at home, and think little of any but those just around them. We must, therefore, collect facts, and repeat them, and urge them on attention, until the truth, in all its alarming reality, stands fully before the minds of our countrymen. Education societies have laboured in this field, and have collected a body of information which ought to be continually held up before the public eye. I can only state, at the present moment, a few results of their particular and extensive inquiries.

The men who originally settled this country were religious men. They brought their principles, their bibles, and their ministers with them: and they set about the great work of making provision for their posterity, in a manner worthy of the importance of the object. Much as is said of this, as the age of action, I doubt whether the half is done by us now,

proportioned to our means and numbers, that was done by our fathers. "In 1753 there was in New-England, on an average, one liberally educated minister to every 628 souls:" but the case is greatly changed since that period. An examination of college catalogues, from their foundation to a late date, gives the following result:—from 1620 to 1720, of graduates the proportion that entered the ministry was one half; from 1720 to 1770, the proportion was one third; from 1770 to 1810, the proportion was one fifth; from 1800 to 1810, it was one sixth.

In the third report of the American Education Society it is stated, that the whole number of ministers, graduates of colleges, then living, was about 1,465; and the number of educated ministers, of all societies, was put at about 2,500, as the very highest calculation.

Mr. Ingersol, in his late oration before the Philosophical Society of Philadelphia, states the whole number of preachers, of all sorts and denominations, at 5000. Of these not a few have an education but little above what is afforded at a Sabbath school. Some have received a chaos of opinions, made up of Socinianism, Universalism, and Antinomianism, most strangely combined. I do not pretend to know what proportion of the whole number ought to be considered as competent to interpret the bible, and qualified to direct the powerful influences of religion: but on the supposition that all are able rightly to divide the word of truth, if one minister is to be allotted to every thousand souls, then, at this moment, five millions of our countrymen may be considered as destitute!

"But there is one consideration which increases the darkness of the prospect, already sufficiently dis-

treasing. The ratio of 1000 souls to one minister does by no means exhibit the full extent of the evil. This ratio is the highest that can reasonably be applied to the most populous districts of our country: but when applied to a population so dispersed as the great majority of ours is, and must be for a long period, it is much too large. A brief illustration will make this evident. Perhaps a compact city congregation may increase to three thousand souls, and yet be served by one minister. But let this congregation emigrate to the west, and spread themselves over six new townships, and then they will need the labors of six ministers."

This is most obvious: and in confirmation I state, that to my knowledge, in many parts of our country, few as the ministers are, their regular congregations do not exceed, often do not amount to five hundred. Of the whole 5000 ministers I should say that three thousand do not minister to greater congregations than just stated. This makes the destitution of the country more appalling, and shows a still wider scene of moral desolation.

3. But if any doubt the correctness of these calculations, let them listen to the positive testimony of eye witnesses. I have myself preached to people who had not heard a sermon in nine months—and it was no extraordinary case. I have heard a gentleman, whose word is as good as his oath, say that in one district of our country, compact, rich, and populous, there were 60,000 people connected with no religious denomination whatever. Another tells us of 180,000 without religious teachers. Another, of a district of 100 miles in extent, where there is but one settled minister. I could go on by the hour in mortifying, heart-sickening, appalling details of this

kind, to show the nakedness and desolation of the land. But the task is too painful. The emotions awakened by these facts are overwhelming.

Now, there are many among us looking at the old world and endeavouring to emulate the example of Christians there, while our country presents a new scene, and calls for efforts of a new character. According to the example of primitive times, we ought to have *churches* organized in every neighbourhood, and pastors ordained in every *church*. But instead of this, there are thousands and millions already in our country, who own no church connection, and are brought under none of the softening, subduing, sanctifying influences of the sanctuary; and while this is the case, our population increases in geometrical proportion. Within twenty-five years from the present day, a greater additional amount of the means of moral and religious improvement will be demanded, than have been provided from the first settlement of the country until this time. In fifty years, four times that amount will be necessary; in seventy-five years, eight times; and in one hundred years, sixteen times as much must be done as has been done from 1608 until this present 1824. And while this is so, all the exertions now made are nothing like sufficient to supply the deficiency created by former negligence. Is it probable, *as things now are*, that the people of this country will do, in the century to come, *sixteen* times as much as their forefathers have done in two centuries past? Alas! who can think of the present spirit that prevails, and of the mighty amount of labour to be performed, and not feel the deepest anxiety for the result? O God of our fathers! what is to become of our country? O Saviour of sinners! what is to be the fate of thy church

in this western land? "Didst thou not bring a vine out of Egypt, and cast out the heathen, and plant it? Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land: the hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs were like the goodly cedars; she sent out her boughs to the sea, and her branches to the river. Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.—Return, we beseech thee, O God of Hosts; look down from heaven and behold, and visit this vine, and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch which thou madest strong for thyself!"

The piety of the Psalmist, his edifying confidence in God, and his humble invocation, has refreshed my spirit, and strengthened me amidst this wide scene of desolation and death and these heaps of dry bones, to pursue my work, and endeavour to point out

THE REMEDY FOR THE EVILS WHICH NOW PREVAIL TO A MOST ALARMING EXTENT, AND THREATEN FINALLY TO OVERWHELM US.

Happily for me, there is no necessity that I should produce any thing new. The ingenuity of Christian benevolence has already devised plans well suited to the state of the case, and the urgency of our wants. All that is necessary is, that we should pursue them with a zeal and benevolence proportioned to the value of the interests at stake, and the magnitude of the work to be performed.

EDUCATION SOCIETIES, THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES, and MISSIONARY SOCIETIES, *conducted on right prin-*

principles, embrace the means to be employed in this mighty work, as far as it is my present purpose to enumerate them.

Education Societies are an American invention; less popular, perhaps, on that account! They originated in the peculiar situation of this country; and they furnish the only plan to be depended on, to afford a sufficient supply of educated ministers for the church. All denominations in this country begin to see and feel this truth; but these institutions require to be cherished with much warmer affection, with much more active zeal, to render them competent to their purpose. They ought to be increased a hundred fold in their resources—But it would be out of place, at present, to do more than barely advert to them, as a part of the great machinery by which the preservation of our country is to be accomplished.

Theological Seminaries stand in order next to education societies. The value of these institutions is admitted in words, but not, by many, *in deeds*.—There are few Bartletts or Browns, Norrisses or Phillips's, among us; nor does there seem to be any adequate conception of the extent to which such establishments are wanted. It is not considered that if Princeton and Andover should now be attended by students sufficient to supply the wants of the country, they must be enlarged at once, in all their means, at least tenfold. Nor is it thought how much this would enhance the price of living; nor is it taken into the account how difficult it is to send poor young men five hundred or a thousand miles from home for their education; nor do many appreciate the importance of placing these institutions in different parts of the country, that they may create a deep interest in their favour, and produce a salutary effect

on society. All these things, and a thousand more, under the influence of local feeling, are disregarded, or slightly considered; while the state of the country is becoming worse every year. But our principal business at present is with

Missionary Societies, which we have placed last in the order of Agencies to be employed in furnishing instruction to the destitute. It is too late now to prove the necessity, or vindicate the utility of such associations. This instrumentality is employed by Christians of all classes. These institutions are winning their way into many hearts, and even silencing the opposition of many adversaries.

It is not the cause of Missions in general, however, but of *Domestic Missions*, which I am now called to plead.

It is the cause of Domestic Missions, as the means of planting and supplying Churches, according to the primitive pattern, and of saving our country from vice and irreligion, which I now plead before you. But Education Societies, Theological Seminaries, and Missionary Societies are all linked together, so as to form integral parts of the same great plan. The Education Society must take up the youth of well-approved piety and good talents, and subject him to the discipline of the schools. The Theological Seminary must receive him, thus fitted, and train him for the work of the Ministry, that he may be apt to teach, and thoroughly furnished for every good work. Thus prepared, the Missionary Society sends him forth to plant the banner of the Cross in the wilderness, where the bloody pennon of the Indian warrior once waved; and to proclaim the messages of redeeming love,

where lately resounded the howlings of the wolf, and the war-whoop of the savage.

But when I introduced Missionary Societies as important parts in this great system of instrumentality, I could not help adding, with emphasis, the words *properly conducted*. We are yet new in this business, and it is not wonderful that mistakes have been made. In many parts of the Church, money has been expended in supporting itinerant Missionaries, the final result of whose labours have been of questionable character, and who, at any rate, might have done much more good on a different plan. It is really melancholy to contemplate the progress of a Missionary through hundreds of miles, and to witness an effect of his labours, as transient as the wake of the steam-boat which floats in your river. And it is still more mournful to see advantage taken of this temporary excitement, by the irregular and anomalous itinerant, who sows in the prepared soil the seeds of error and division. This plan must be abandoned, and a method more conformable to the *primitive arrangement* must be adopted. And here I observe that

The United Domestic Missionary Society commends itself to the approbation and support of the churches, and the public, for the very reason just stated.

1. This Society is organized on principles which, in the present day, God has most signally blessed; and on which the seal of heaven's approbation is distinctly impressed. It is the *United Domestic Missionary Society*. Men who hold a common faith, and agree in great fundamental principles, have forgotten the little differences which separated them; and have united their intelligence and

zeal in promotion of a common cause. Orthodox congregationalists, Dutch Reformed, and Presbyterians of the General Assembly, have cordially united in this work of love. This co-operation gladdens the heart of every one who cherishes a fraternal spirit, and warrants the hope that much will be done to Christianize our countrymen.

2. The plan which has been adopted by this Society, is *precisely suited to the state of the country*—the great object is, *to organize churches, and furnish pastors and regular ordinances to every church.* THIS IS THE TRUE APOSTOLIC PLAN. In execution of it, some such method as the following is pursued. It is understood that a portion of the country is destitute of regular adequate religious instruction, and that a few, at least, deplore their wants, and fain would have them supplied; but they are unable. The proposition then is made, "raise what you can for the support of a minister, and as for the rest you shall be aided; and a preacher shall be sent to labour regularly for your benefit." There are hundreds and hundreds of places where a proposition like this would be met with joy. The effect is instantaneous. The pious, who in their scattered and desolate situation, were despondent and inactive, are roused by hope. They make efforts which otherwise never would be made. A considerable sum is collected. The services of a well-trained able minister are procured. The people receive him not as a passing stranger, but as one to whom they are related; they begin to feel as though he were their own; he wins their confidence and love; the effect of his labour is felt through the neighborhood; hearers increase; new contributors are found; a church is organized; it increases; a pastor is wholly sup-

ported; and finally, an auxiliary society is formed, which assists in sending the blessings of the gospel to the destitute, and building up the waste places of Zion. This plan is excellent: because it is suited to the state of the country; because it rouses people to help themselves, and make exertions for their own improvement; and because it affords the only radical cure, that I can conceive of, as at all within our reach for the wide-spreading and desolating evil of sectarianism. Besides, it affords an opportunity to the already organized churches: the Church is engaged in missionary operations of doing most good at least expense; of making their charity extensively and permanently beneficial.

3. The success of this plan corresponds to its adaptation to the state of the country, and its conformity to the appointments of scripture.

And here allow me to say that the success of missionary operations is an irresistible argument in their favour. One soul is in itself as valuable as another: for all are immortal. Let us suppose, then, that a society adopts such plans, and selects such objects, that by its instrumentality 500 souls are brought to the knowledge of the truth in a year, and that another, pursuing a different course, brings into the pale of the church 20 in 20 years—is not the former society to be prized five hundred times more than the latter?

But if this success is gained among a rapidly-increasing population—where the good that is done will be diffused, and multiplied and extended through succeeding generations—it is of unspeakably more value than if the population is decreasing, and the influence necessarily confined within a narrow circle.

I have made these remarks for the sake of show-

ing that the success of the Domestic Missionary Society calls for joy and thanksgiving. Great good has been done, in proportion to the means employed, and thus the way is paved for still greater. Every instance of success prepares a new auxiliary; diffuses more widely the influence of the society, and gives it greater strength. The Society has existed, in its present form, just two years; it has expended on missionary operations the sum of \$8,544; including payments made by the two societies of this city, which were merged in the United Society, it has paid about \$11,000 in all. The first report contains a list of more than fifty missionaries employed by the Society; and in the second we have an account of seventy-eight. The time for which these missionaries have been employed, if added together, would make nearly 100 years. The number of souls to whom the gospel has been preached cannot be computed. But the labours of the missionaries have been blessed to the hopeful conversion of about 1000 souls. It may be added to this, that “several churches have been formed through the agency of the missionaries, and many edifices of worship erected.” I must refer to the reports, and to various publications of the society, for farther particulars.

And now, it may with confidence be asked, what society, at an expenditure of not six *thousand dollars a year*, can show an amount of good, permanent and substantial good, to be compared with this? I rejoice when I hear of the gospel being sent to India, and Palestine, to the Sandwich Islands, the Cherokees, Osages, and Tuscaroras, and thank God for what he has put into the hearts of his people to do for these poor benighted souls. But I confess that, taking into view this country and its present state, and its fu-

ture destiny, I have a deeper feeling for its spiritual welfare than for that of any other. And when I consider, that there are now *twelve times as many destitute souls in the United States as there are Indians from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean*, the operations of such a society as this swell before me in their importance to an immeasurable magnitude. And when it occurs to me, that in a hundred years this land where I was born, and where my fathers fought and bled, will be peopled with two hundred millions of a homogeneous race, all armed with the influence which civilization and science give, I cannot but be astonished at the comparative indifference of my countrymen. And when I think how many thousands are perishing, and how many thousands more are born to live in ignorance and darkness, even in this land called Christian, I am amazed that the friends of Christ, the followers of the Saviour, (shall we call ourselves so?) can feel so little. I would not take one dollar from the poor Indian, I would not recall one missionary from the Sandwich Islands, nor from Hindoostan, nor from Palestine; but if my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, I would weep over the desolations of Zion, over the mourning vineyard of the Lord in our own country.

Here is a society, organized on a liberal plan, pursuing its measures wisely, aiming to do good in a scriptural and rational manner, crowned with surprising success in its labours, and yet unable to appropriate more than five or six thousand dollars a year to their benevolent object: a society which aims to make their countrymen sober, peaceful, industrious citizens, good neighbours, kind parents, dutiful children, faithful friends, and, in a word, true Christians. And they tell you that at every meeting

they are obliged to turn away importunate applicants, to say to their countrymen who are begging for the provisions of God's house, "we have nothing to bestow." They tell you that if they had men to send, and money to spare, they could easily build up hundreds of churches in different parts of the land; but that the Theological Seminaries do not afford men, and the churches do not afford money. And what effect is produced by this report? Is this city moved by some mighty emotion, and is it rousing itself to some new exertion? Or does it turn a deaf ear to the call, and throw away on useless indulgence and sinful pleasure enough every day to gladden the hearts of thousands, and to save many souls from perdition? Do you see the stream of your country's population growing broader, and deeper, and darker every hour, and carrying with it all the feculence and poison of unchristianized civilization, and does not the sight move you? Do you hear without alarm, that to save our country from irreligion and infidelity there must, in the century to come, be provided an amount of moral means sixteen times as great as all that has been provided from the beginning to the present day.

The means of safety have been pointed out; the path of duty is before us. In regard to the supply of a preached gospel, the great method appointed by God for converting the world, in this country the work must be done by Education Societies, Theological Seminaries, and Domestic Missionary Societies. With this demonstrated truth before us, I would call on **THE PATRIOT** and inquire, do you believe that law can govern, and that our happy institutions can be perpetuated without religion? Can our republic exist with a hundred millions of civilized heathens

among us? If not, then by all that is venerated and dear in the name of country, and that is sacred in the cause of patriotism, I entreat you to make new and more vigorous and more systematic efforts to promote that religion which ensures the practice of a sound and pure morality. I call on the CHRISTIAN. Do you believe that the church will be enlarged, and the Redeemer's kingdom extended, without human instrumentality? If not, I beseech you, by the mercies of the Lord Jesus Christ, to listen to the cry of dying souls; to look at the millions ready to perish; and the millions who are soon to rise up in this land with none to guide them in the way to heaven, and improve the privilege which God affords you, to provide salvation for them.

This United Society ought to be supported by the wealth, and directed by the intelligence, and helped by the prayers of several large and flourishing denominations of Christians. When, O! when, will every little local feeling be suppressed, and every logomachy be quieted, and every jealousy be subdued, and the whole body of Christians who profess one faith, and own one form of government, bring all their force to bear on the common cause?

I call on you as PARENTS. Your young children will live when the population of this country will be more than twenty millions. Do you not see now how thefts, and robberies, and murders increase? Do you not see how the vices of our fellow-citizens encourage the ill and ambitious designs of demagogues? Can you not see through the opening vista of future years, contentions and great agitations, anxiety and fear, and much distress? How can you bear to think of your children living in the midst, and under the example, of men who have no fear of

God before their eyes? Your little ones now dwell in your presence—the joy of your hearts and the glory of your houses. But where will they end their days? They may wander to the west or the south, and have none, when the time of trial comes, to tell them of Him who died that they might live; of the resurrection and the life; of the atonement and pardon. Do you not find here a motive for exertion? I address your PHILANTHROPY. Do you wish that the mighty influence of this great nation upon the world's destiny should be salutary? How can it be so, unless Christianity be preserved as the religion of the nation? Do you wish that we may be instrumental in converting the heathen? Oh! how great a drawback has our wickedness already furnished. How often have your missionaries been confounded by the bitter and just reproaches of the poor savages on the whites! Remove this stumbling-block out of the way: at any rate, let us prevent the necessity of missionaries being hereafter sent from Otaheite and Owhyhee to evangelize our heathen countrymen.

I address you as the STEWARDS of *God's bounty*: and I remind you, that you must give an account to God for the manner in which you spend every shilling that he gives you. Now, *every man can do as he pleases*: he can pamper pride, and indulge ease, and gratify his love of wealth, and live in luxury, or deny himself, and bless the poor, and send salvation to the perishing. *And it is right that he should be at liberty thus to show what is in his heart.* But the day of reckoning is coming—and God will decide according to every man's work.

With these pleadings of patriotism, and natural affection, and philanthropy, working on your hearts, and these warnings of judgment sounding in your

ears, I wait to see whether you will bid the officers of the Domestic Missionary Society go and tell their poor brethren who supplicate for the bread of life, "we have nothing more to bestow;" or will enable them to call out, with an animating voice, to the inhabitants of the wilderness, "cheer up, and make your best efforts: we are prepared to aid you; your deficiencies shall be supplied, and you shall have a pastor." I wait to see! The Holy One of Israel is present as our witness. The doings of this night are just about to be registered in the book of God's remembrance; and they will appear in their true colours in the great day of decision. May the Lord have mercy on us, and enable every one to do his duty! Amen.

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CONVERSION OF THE JEWS

TO

The Faith of Christ,

THE TRUE MEDIUM OF THE

CONVERSION OF THE GENTILE WORLD.

A SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE

The London Society for promoting Christianity amongst the Jews,

ON THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 1822,

AT THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. PAUL, COVENT GARDEN.

BY THE

REV. GEORGE STANLEY FABER, B. D.

RECTOR OF LONG NEWTON.

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