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A Mighty Saviour :

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ISAIAH LXIII. 1.

MIGHTY TO SAVE.

WHAT an unutterably frightful scene must have met the eye of the prophet when, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, he found himself in the midst of the valley of dry bones! The spot was not like a common burial-place, in which you walk over the ashes, and among the monuments of the dead;—it was rather like an immense battle-field, upon which the slain had been left to become the sport of corruption, till, in place of dissolving bodies, were dry bones; and even these, instead of retaining their natural order, were disjointed and thrown into utter confusion. Had there been no higher agency revealed to the prophet than that which he himself could exert, or any created power could exert—when the question was put to him—“Can these dry bones live?”—his answer must have been,—“They cannot live; for who shall be able to bring bone to his bone? And who shall convert the skeleton into a corpse? And who shall change the dead body into a living man? Who, especially, shall accomplish this resurrection, not merely in respect to one, but the thousands and millions, whose bones are bleaching throughout this valley?” It was only when the prophet remembered the almighty power of God, that he could ad-

mit the possibility that those dry bones should ever be transformed into living men; and in view of that, he could only refer the matter back to God's wisdom and sovereignty—“O Lord God, thou knowest!” “I know that thou art able to effect such a resurrection; but *thou* only knowest whether it will be most for thy glory thus to display thine omnipotence!”

Similarly situated to the astonished prophet, is the man who looks abroad upon the world to take the dimensions of human guilt and human wretchedness. The first being upon whom his eye rests, is one who bears upon himself the curse of God; and upon analyzing that curse, he finds in it the elements of an eternal death. There is an understanding darkened; a conscience benumbed; a will perverted: passions and appetites have revolted from their allegiance to reason, and set up as tyrants in the soul; and out of the abundance of the heart proceedeth every evil thing. At the same time, the relation which this being sustains to God, is invested only with terror; it is the relation of a guilty and powerless rebel to an immutably just, holy, and almighty Sovereign; a Sovereign who has declared that “the soul that sinneth shall die;” and who “is not a man that he should lie, nor the Son of man that he should repent.” To have found *one such*

being in the earth's entire population, were a fearful discovery; but what shall be said when it turns out that this one, in the general features of his character and condition, is but a specimen of the race! The multitude even in *Christian* lands, though they may differ greatly in their external circumstances, their intellectual and moral constitutions, yet agree in this most momentous particular—that they are the servants of sin, and the heirs of death. And if you look abroad upon the *unevangelized* portions of the world, there you see superstition and idolatry, sensuality and cruelty, reigning with an undisputed sway. The bones in the valley, when the prophet first beheld them, moved not; neither is there any motion here to indicate the existence of spiritual life. Every heathen land is a sepulchre, full of the dead in trespasses and sins; and the eye that can survey such desolation without a tear, knows not how to weep. And can these dead souls live? Can these regions of spiritual barrenness ever be clothed with spiritual verdure? Can the wilds of Africa, the sands of India, the frozen regions of the North, all be brought to produce plants of righteousness—to yield fruit unto eternal life? I put it to Reason; and Reason, either in the modesty of her ignorance, acknowledges that the problem is too deep for her, or in the vanity of her pretensions, hastily gives a negative answer. I open the lively oracles, and repeat the question there; and, lo! the answer comes forth, "These mighty desolations *may* be repaired; Paganism with her bloody rites *may* be driven into exile; and there is not a territory of Satan's empire on earth but *may* be reclaimed,—nay, but *will* be reclaimed, to the dominion of Truth and Righteousness." And I am *sure* that this result will be realized, not merely because the Lord hath spoken it, but because these same oracles reveal to my faith a glorious personage who is "mighty to save."

The verse which contains our text commences a conference between the

prophet in the name of the church, and the Son of God, who appears in the character of a conqueror. The admiring prophet, beholding some one advancing towards him in the habiliments of victory, and sprinkled with the blood of his enemies, exclaims, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah; this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?" The illustrious Conqueror answers, "I that speak in righteousness; MIGHTY TO SAVE."

We will illustrate briefly the truth contained in our text, and then show its bearings upon the cause of Christian missions.

I. JESUS CHRIST IS MIGHTY TO SAVE.

This is the truth that we are to *illustrate*. *Salvation*, in its most general import, implies deliverance from evil. In the evangelical sense, it implies deliverance from the curse of God's law—in other words, from the power and punishment of sin, and an exaltation to the glories of an immortal life. When the Son of God in our text declares himself "*mighty to save*," the meaning is, that he is *abundantly* qualified for the work, and that what he has done, and what he is doing, fully ensures its accomplishment.

This will appear, if we consider *the perfection of his character; the efficacy of his blood; the power of his grace.*

1. *The perfection of his character.*

Let me say then, if the most unequivocal declarations of God's word can be relied on, Jesus Christ is the perfect God. For who but God is the "Alpha and the Omega; the beginning and the ending; the First and the Last?" Who but God has "created all things, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers?" Who but God has the ability to search the heart; to raise the dead; to conduct the scenes of the judgment-day? But this, and much more than this, the Bible expressly attributes to Christ; and, in doing so, puts his claim to divinity beyond

all reasonable doubt. But if Jesus Christ is God, then he possesses infinite wisdom ; and infinite wisdom qualifies him to devise the scheme of salvation. If Jesus Christ is God, then he is a Being of boundless goodness and grace ; and these attributes would dispose him to form such a scheme, provided it could consist with the harmony of his perfections. If Jesus Christ is God, then he is possessed of almighty power ; and what is there even in the work of saving rebellious man, that almighty power is not able to accomplish ? In short, if the divinity of Christ be admitted, this of itself is sufficient evidence that if he saves at all, he is a *mighty Saviour*.

But he is also the perfect *man*. For "he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham ;" and he "was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." The work of salvation was to be accomplished, partly by the power of a perfect example ; but the example which should be most effective in its influence upon man would be that of man himself ; and that the example might be perfect, it was necessary that the character should be so also. It was, moreover, to be accomplished partly by his offering himself up as an expiatory sacrifice ; but here again, it was necessary that he should become man, for the Godhead is incapable of suffering ; and he must be a *perfect man*, else he would have needed that a sacrifice should have been offered up for himself. In his human nature there were, indeed, elements of weakness ; but in all that weakness there was power. In his susceptibility of suffering on the cross, lay one secret of his being mighty to save.

And he is the perfect *Mediator*. Had he been *God alone*, this could not have been so ; for blood must be the price of reconciliation. Had he been *only man*, this could not have been so ; for even *perfect man* has no superfluous obedience that can be set to the account of another. Had he been an *angel*, this could not have

been so ; for the mightiest angel, the purest angel, is God's creature ; and he only meets God's claim upon *himself*, in rendering the highest service of which he is capable. But in the union of the Godhead and manhood, we have a character in all respects fitted to sustain the mediatorial office. In Jesus Christ the natures of the two parties to be reconciled, are represented : he is Jehovah's "fellow" on the one hand ; he is our "brother" on the other. His humanity enables him to suffer ; his divinity imparts value to his sufferings. And thus he has all the qualifications for a perfect Mediator.

2. *The efficacy of his blood.*

In *what respects* was the blood of Christ efficacious ?

Its efficacy had respect both to *God* and to *man*.

It had respect to *God* as the righteous Sovereign against whom man had become a rebel. Man's transgression of the divine law was an insult to the majesty of the Lawgiver. It was a violation of the moral order of the universe. It was a formal renunciation of his allegiance to the power in which he lived, and moved, and had his being. And God as a Sovereign stood pledged by his holiness, his justice, his truth, that whoever trampled upon the precept, should be visited with the penalty of his law. Now the blood of Christ is the grand consideration upon which God relaxes the claims of his justice against the sinner. He accepts it as a reparation to the injured honours of his throne ; as a ransom for those who had forfeited their life at his hands. It establishes the authority of his law, it secures the harmony of his perfections, while he proclaims himself to the world, "a God forgiving iniquity." Through the blood of Christ, "mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace embrace each other." Through the blood of Christ, God can "be just and" yet "the justifier of him which believeth."

It has respect to *man* also ;—to the rebel not less than the Sovereign. It is

the channel through which pardon and all its attendant blessings are communicated to him. While the Almighty Sovereign whose authority he has set at naught, proclaims to him a free and gracious forgiveness, his conscience recognizes the pacifying influence of that blood, in consideration of which forgiveness is bestowed; and the spirit of a rebel gives place to the spirit of a child. The flaming sword that guarded the way of life is now removed. The throne of justice which had always met his uplifted eye, frowns upon him no more; and the very home of his renovated spirit, the element in which he breathes most freely, is beneath the throne of the heavenly grace. I hear the scoffer, and the skeptic, and the wise man of the world, charge him with enthusiasm; and I hear him calmly, yet triumphantly, reply, "Then let me live and die an enthusiast; but take heed lest ye put from you the only medicine of a wounded spirit—the only staff in the valley of death." A change has taken place in his relation to God, of which the spirit of adoption is at once an evidence and an effect;—but a change to be referred immediately and solely to the influence of Christ's atoning blood.

But if the blood of Christ be thus efficacious, both as it respects God and man, whence arises its efficacy?

From the nature of the covenant of redemption. It was an arrangement in the eternal counsels of the Godhead, that the Son of God should disrobe himself for a time of his divine glory; should descend from Heaven to earth to be a man of sorrows; and finally should offer himself up in an ignominious death; and that in consideration of this mighty sacrifice, a great multitude of ransomed souls which no man can number, out of every kindred and nation, and tongue, and people, should be given him as his mediatorial crown. It is this wonderful transaction that is referred to in that memorable passage in the prophecy of Isaiah—"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. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." This was a voluntary covenant on the part of Christ; for he said, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God; yea, thy law is within my heart." God the Father knew well the value of the ransom that was to be paid; and because he saw that it was a sufficient ransom, he engaged to accept it; and hence the efficacy of Christ's blood becomes identified with God's covenant faithfulness; and hence, too, the Apostle speaks of Christ as one whom God has "set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." Let no being in the universe dispute the atoning efficacy of the blood of Christ; for that blood is the very price which the justice as well as the wisdom of God hath fixed for the soul's redemption.

But we shall find this question answered still farther, if we look at the constitution of the person of Christ. The fact that, as a man, he had no sins of his own to be expiated, was indeed essential to the acceptableness of his sacrifice; though that of itself could never have rendered his sacrifice availing to the salvation of men. It was, as I have already intimated, the union of divinity with humanity that gave to his sufferings the character of an atonement. Not that the divinity suffered, or could suffer, but the humanity with which divinity was united, suffered; and these sufferings were efficacious because the divinity was present. If you ask, then, whence the efficacy of the blood of Christ? I answer, because it was the blood of Christ; of a Being who could claim not only equality but unity with the Father. Thus far I cannot doubt that God's word permits me to go; and if you say that this leaves me surrounded with mysteries, I own it, and choose to lay my hand upon my mouth. With the great fact that Christ's blood avails as a proper atonement for sin, and that it avails especially because he is what he is, I desire

to be contented; and instead of indulging an irreverent curiosity, to wait for higher revelations the light of a brighter world.

3. *The power of his grace.*

I need not say that the death of Christ has opened a channel for the grace that sanctifies, as well as the mercy that forgives; for in the act of dying, he purchased the Spirit for the sanctification of his people. Hence we find that the Spirit is often styled "the Spirit of Christ;" and hence, too, he connects the coming of the *Comforter*, with his going away.

In illustration of the power of Christ's grace, I would refer you, in the first place, to the wonderful *adaptedness* of that great system of truth, through which his grace especially operates, to control the principles of human conduct—to mould the elements of human character. Look at this system for a moment, and tell me to which of the great springs of human action it does not appeal. Is man constituted with a natural aversion to misery—a natural desire of happiness? But if he opens the Bible, there he finds the fact fully confirmed—a fact of which his own conscience had previously given him notice—that, as a sinner, he is exposed to God's everlasting displeasure; and if left to himself, must incur the miseries of an endless death. There, too, he finds it revealed that for the righteous there is a future state of happiness and glory; that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." In addition to this, he is assured that all this misery to which he is exposed may be averted; that all this happiness and glory is fairly within his reach; while yet from the influence of temptation without, and the corrupt tendencies of his nature within, there is unspeakable danger that he will sacrifice the good and plunge into the evil. And is there nothing *here* to awaken the dormant energies of man's

spirit; nothing in hell, to arouse his fears; nothing in heaven, to appeal to his hopes? But there is in man also a principle of *gratitude*; and if you look again into the system of evangelical truth, you will find every thing that is fitted to call *that* into exercise; for what is there that can appeal to this principle, that is not included in the fact that "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." In short, you may analyze the whole gospel, and you shall find that while it is every way adapted to the constitution of man, it is especially fitted to move the sensibilities of his nature, and constrain him to vigorous action. Such is the nature of the truths which it reveals, that no man *can* believe them without being influenced by them; and all that faith which does not work by love, and purify the heart, though it has assumed a hallowed name, is of the nature of practical infidelity.

But while we look at the truth of God as wonderfully adapted to the moral nature of man, we are to take heed that we do not glorify the instrument at the expense of the agent; that, in contemplating the *sword* of the Spirit, we do not dishonour the Spirit itself. The word of God is indeed "quick and powerful," and "mighty to the pulling down of strong holds;" but it is so, not from its own independent energy, but because the energy of Omnipotence is lodged in it; because it is the appointed medium of moral influence through which God operates upon the heart. The power of divine grace, then, is nothing short of Almighty power as exhibited in the salvation of the sinner; especially in his transformation into the moral likeness of God.

But we judge of the energies of a cause by the *effects* which it produces: what say you, then, of the power of divine grace, in view of the triumphs which it has already achieved, is constantly achieving, both within and without, the circle of our observation? Christian, commune with

your own heart, and institute a comparison between the present and the past. Think of the difference between rebellion against God, and a cordial submission to his authority; between the bondage of sin and death, and the liberty of a child of God; between the clamours of guilt, the forebodings of hell on the one hand, and the joyful assurances of a pacified conscience on the other. And when you have estimated the importance of this change, so far as you can, in respect to yourself, and it occurs to you that you are but a unit, then multiply that unit by millions and millions, some of whom you have seen and some of whom you have not seen, upon whom this same change has been wrought, and who have already been received up into heaven, or are yet waiting the hour of their redemption! And remember that in every one of these, as truly as in yourself, there is a monument of the power of the Saviour's grace. Listen, and you shall hear the witnesses to that grace singing its praises every where. You shall hear the sinner who has but just escaped from the embraces of spiritual death, wishing that he had an angel's tongue to proclaim the power of the grace which hath saved him. You shall hear the sufferer, while the deep waters are coming over his soul, magnifying the grace that sustains *him*; while he looks calmly toward Heaven as the place of his rest. You shall hear it come up from ten thousand voices in the valley of death, nay from amidst the flames that surround the martyr's stake, "There are no terrors here, no agonies here, which the Saviour's grace is not sufficient to neutralize." And then you shall hear it coming to you from the depths of the wilderness, from the other side of the ocean, from the very ends of the earth,—“Here, too, the power of Christ's grace hath been proved, for it hath melted even the savage heart at the foot of the cross; it hath caught the dying wife in her plunge into the funeral fires of her husband; in short, it hath already well nigh palsied

the right hand of Paganism, and thus given a pledge that the blood shall ere long congeal at the monster's heart." With so many witnesses to what my Redeemer has done, is doing, at this hour, can there be any limit to my incredulity, if I doubt the power of his grace; in other words, whether he is mighty to save?

Having endeavoured to illustrate the truth contained in the text, I proceed now,

II. To direct your attention to some of **THE GREAT BEARINGS OF THIS TRUTH UPON THE CAUSE OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS**; and if I mistake not, we shall find that it has in it much to encourage, to admonish, to instruct, in respect to that glorious enterprize.

I. The doctrine that Jesus Christ is mighty to save, *rebukes the spirit of discouragement* on the part of the friends of missions, under *any* circumstances, and calls upon them to go forward in their work.

That the great object contemplated by the missionary enterprize, viz., the conversion of the world, would seem utterly impracticable on any of the principles of mere human calculation, we readily admit. I will say nothing here of the strength of Jewish bigotry, or of Mohammeden delusion, or of the great numbers who are under the influence both of the one and of the other; but I will limit my views to the system of Paganism, if system it can be called; and ask you, for a moment, to contemplate some of the chief obstacles to the conversion of the Pagan nations to Christianity. Look, then, in the first place, to *the circumstances in which we find these nations*—to the nature of that religion which we call upon them to abandon, as well as of that which we propose in its place, and see whether you are prepared to pronounce their conversion an easy matter. You know something of the power of hereditary prejudice; how naturally we cling to the usages of our ancestry, and how gratefully we

cherish that which we have learned from the lips of our parents, and which is consecrated among our earliest and tenderest recollections. But the religion of the Pagan comes to him endorsed by a line of ancestry, reaching, it may be, through more than forty centuries; and thus hoary with age, it has become well nigh incorporated with the very principles of his nature; while the religion which is offered him as a substitute, comes under all the disadvantage of an unwelcome innovation. The system in which he has been educated falls in with his naturally corrupt dispositions, and even the worship which he renders to his idols, is often identical with the grossest self-indulgence; whereas the religion of the gospel makes war upon all his inclinations to evil, and teaches him to deny ungodliness and every worldly lust. Moreover, if any thing were wanting to render his bondage to the doctrines and rites of Paganism complete, it would be supplied by the system of *caste*, which so identifies his religion with every earthly interest, that the renunciation of it is literally the giving up of every thing. Now, if we suppose but a solitary individual in circumstances like these, can we doubt that his conversion to Christianity would be a matter of most serious difficulty? and would any reasonable man expect that he would be gained by any other power than that which Christianity herself reveals? But instead of an individual, there are hundreds of millions, including much the larger part of the entire population of the globe, who are in bondage to this system; who are clinging to the absurdities which their fathers have held, and worshipping the idols which their fathers have worshipped, through an indefinite number of generations. No wonder that those who look at the object here to be accomplished with the eye of mere worldly wisdom, should pronounce those who are aiming at it as mere dreamers of that which can never be.

Nor is the case materially relieved

when we contemplate *the circumstances of those who have gone to heathen lands to devote themselves to missionary labour.* Mark the fearful disproportion that exists between the number of labourers hitherto engaged, and the amount of labour to be performed. Contemplate the obstacles which they have to encounter from usages the most foreign to those in which they have been trained; from languages, of the existence only of which they have heard; from suspicions and jealousies which their errand, however benevolent, must naturally awaken; and I may add, in view of the past, from lack of co-operation—may I not say—from actual opposition, on the part of Christian governments, from which the missionary enterprise has a right to claim an efficient patronage. And last of all, bear in mind that these beloved men and women go abroad, for the most part, to find an early grave. The severity of their labour, the deprivations to which they are subjected, the general unhealthfulness of the climate, and the frequent recurrence of the pestilence in its most desolating forms, renders their hold on life extremely feeble; and hence it not unfrequently happens that the first intelligence we receive from them after their arrival at the stations to which they are destined, is that they are dead. And what is this little company of men and women, scattered here and there throughout the immense empire of paganism, breathing a pestilential air, and often dying before they begin their work—what are these to the accomplishment of such a work as the conversion of the world? What is the stripling of Israel to the mighty Goliath?

And I am at once constrained and ashamed to add, that it is but a slight relief that we gain on this subject, when we look at *the state of the evangelized world*; and even of that portion of it by which the missionary enterprise is chiefly or entirely sustained. There is here and there an individual, who regards this object in its real importance, and who

bears it on his heart with a fervent and holy solicitude; and who contributes cheerfully and liberally, according as the Lord hath prospered him, for its promotion. But do I wrong the church when I say that a large portion of her members are yet asleep on this subject! that when the wants of a perishing world are set before them, they have no tears to shed, and no charities to bestow, and of course none but hypocritical prayers to offer! Do I wrong her when I say that she cherishes within her bosom the spirit of avarice, the spirit of ambition, the spirit of unhallowed strife, the spirit of the world in every form, insomuch that even the heathen find in the character of some of her members, an apology for rejecting their religion! Blessed be God for all the zeal that is awakened, and all the efforts that are put forth, in the missionary cause; but what is this zeal, and what are these efforts, when considered in reference to the magnitude of the object to be accomplished!

I have spoken thus freely, my brethren, of the difficulties attending the missionary enterprize, only that you may see how this great mountain becomes a plain before the doctrine of my text; that you may realize that *no* obstacle ought to discourage us, so long as there remains to us the consoling assurance that Jesus Christ is "mighty to save." I would not blame any Christian, if he were obliged to look at this object as one to be accomplished by mere human agency, though he should sit down in discouragement, and attempt nothing, because he imagined nothing could be done; but when I remember that we are nothing but instruments in this work, and that the great Agent has declared himself "mighty to save," I can see no apology for any Christian who suffers himself to become disheartened. You are not only forbidden to trust in your own strength, but required to trust in the strength of Jehovah. Advance, then, ye friends of missions, in your work, and take fresh cou-

rage as you go. Think of obstacles only in connection with the power that is pledged to enable you to overcome them. Look at that banner which waves in majesty from the mediatorial throne, on which is inscribed in letters of blood, "mighty to save;"—look upon it, I say, and give your fears, if you have any, to the winds.

I can imagine that even the missionary of the cross, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost though he ordinarily be, may yet have hours of despondency pass over him; and he may be ready after having prophesied, and prophesied, and prophesied, in the valley of vision, apparently to no purpose, to ask almost despairingly, "Can these dry bones live?" Yes, Brother, they *can* live; they *shall* live; not because there is any vivifying energy in thy breath, but because He who has commissioned thee is "mighty to save." Thou art indeed a feeble instrument; but no matter what the instrument may be, so long as the agent is Almighty.

2. The doctrine of our text *charges home upon us our responsibility*, and bids us take heed that the blood of the unevangelized nations be not found in our skirts.

Jesus Christ is indeed "mighty to save:" there is no guilt so black, but he is able to cancel it; no pollution so deep, but he is able to remove it; but then, let it be remembered that he saves in his own way; and it belongs to his economy of salvation that the truth which he has revealed in his word should be received into the understanding and the heart. But "how shall" the heathen "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?" This is the work, peculiarly, which he has entrusted to his church; and if, instead of performing it, they are contented to remain inactive on the ground that he is "mighty to save," and can accomplish his own purposes without their aid, then are they guilty of perverting his gracious constitution; then

will their garments be found stained with Pagan blood.

But what a fearful responsibility, my brethren, do we assume in suffering the heathen nations to remain in darkness, when it is within our ability to carry to them an *Almighty* Saviour! If it were questionable whether the blood of this Saviour were of sufficient value to atone for their sins, or whether the power of his grace were sufficient to renovate their hearts, there might perhaps be some apology for remissness; but to keep from them the knowledge of one who is "able to save even to the uttermost,"—of one who has sent out a universal invitation, designed to extend to all the ends of the earth, to "look unto" him "and be saved,"—I say, to keep from them this knowledge, were alike cruelty to them, and treachery to the Saviour himself. Who of us is prepared to stand in the judgment and say to Him that sits upon the throne, "I knew that the heathen were perishing, and I knew that thou wert 'mighty to save;' but I loved my ease too much, or I loved my property too much, or I loved thee and thy cause too little, to engage in the self-denying enterprise of sending them the gospel; until it was too late to do any thing else than weep over the mighty ruin!"

3. The doctrine of our text teaches us *in what spirit our missionary efforts must be put forth*, in order to justify the hope of success.

It belongs to man in his unrenewed state that he attempts nothing but in his own strength; and this disposition, though greatly weakened in the bosom of the Christian, still exists in a greater or less degree till the work of his sanctification is complete. And it discovers itself not only in the efforts which the Christian makes for his personal advance in holiness, but also in what he does for the salvation of his fellow men—for giving the gospel to the world. How many plans for promoting the great work of evangelizing the nations, have evidently been formed

in the wisdom and in the strength of the church herself, rather than in the wisdom and strength of her Head; and how frequently, as disaster has succeeded prosperity, and disappointment has overtaken expectation, has there been heard the language of despondency, as if the staff on which we were leaning had failed us! The truth is, we have not yet fully learned where our strength lies. It is only as we take counsel of Him who is "mighty to save," in respect to what we ought to do, and rely on the grace of Him who is "mighty to save" to crown our efforts with his blessing, that we have a right to expect that the great cause of moral renovation will advance under our influence. Let us labour diligently, but dependently: whatsoever our hand findeth to do, let us do it with our might; but let us also take heed that we be found not in a path of our own devising.

Finally: The doctrine of our text *invests the cause of missions with the highest dignity.*

Do you not estimate the dignity of any enterprise in a great degree by the dignity of the agent who is employed in conducting it, and by the character of the measures which are adopted for its promotion? But the cause of missions, in other words, the cause of human salvation, is originated and sustained by a personage no less glorious than the Lord Jesus Christ—the perfect God—the perfect Man—the perfect Mediator. Had he been a mere finite being, his work never could have derived from his character such a lustre as that which now surrounds it. But consider, also, what he has done for the accomplishment of his benevolent purpose. He has become a sufferer on earth—even a tenant of the tomb; while he has shown himself great in all his suffering—mighty even to burst the bands of death. Ever since the fall of man he has been travelling in the greatness of his strength; and he is moving forward continually in the arrangement of his providence, and the dispensation of his

word and spirit; bringing light out of darkness, and rendering every thing tributary to the one great end—the redemption of his church. Was ever an enterprise projected, I ask, that bore upon it so many marks of moral dignity, as this enterprise of the Son of God? And yet there are those who can see nothing of true dignity in the cause of missions,—nothing that should entitle it to live in our charities,—nothing to redeem it from absolute contempt. You may hear the infidel scoff at it as the dream of enthusiasm, and at those who are engaged in it, as the votaries of a delirious phrenzy. You may hear the baptized worldling complain that so much is lavished for an object, to say the least, of questionable utility. You may hear the calculating professor answering appeals to his charity by arguments against the probability of success, while he clings to his silver and gold with the grasp of death. You may hear even the Christian who acknowledges that the cause is a good one, debating with himself the question whether he can submit to a retrenchment of his luxuries in order to sustain it. But I would say to all who openly or secretly oppose this cause—to all who have not a heart to pray for it, or a hand to labour for it,—ye are opposing the noblest cause in the universe. Ere long a light will shine upon you that will reveal “Vanity” writ-

ten upon all your projects. The objects which engross your affections and efforts will pass away. The very earth on which you tread shall be wrapped in flames; and even the old rolling skies will not be spared. But this cause with which you venture to trifle shall survive in the majesty of a complete triumph. It shall survive to the everlasting honour of Him who hath conducted it. “Mighty to save” shall be read in the destiny of every ransomed soul. “Mighty to save” shall be the burden of every celestial song.

My brethren, is it not a delightful exercise of Christian faith to associate the missionary cause with the power, and grace, and faithfulness, of our Redeemer? Let us cherish this grateful association, and it will animate our zeal, and give fresh vigour to our efforts. On the next Sabbath, you are to assemble around the sacramental table, specially to contemplate the glories of this Almighty Saviour. There, while you are sitting beneath the cross, and receiving a fresh baptism from the Holy One, remember the perishing heathen. Plead their cause with Him who is “mighty to save.” And who can tell but your silent wrestling before the throne may cause some poor Pagans when they shall meet you at the judgment, to rush exultingly into your arms, and hail you as their eternal benefactor!

Proceedings and Intelligence.

Scotland.

Act of the Church of Scotland concerning Collections.

Many of our readers are aware that the Church of Scotland is prosecuting the work of Christian benevolence with much zeal. The somewhat peculiar title of Schemes has been adopted to designate the different enterprises undertaken by that Church—of which there are five; viz., that of Education,

embracing the support of normal, common, and Sabbath-schools; of Foreign Missions, with stations at Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras; of Church Extension, giving assistance in the erection, and sometimes, we believe, in the endowment also, of new churches; of Colonial Missions, having wide and too long neglected fields in Canada and the other American colonies, in Australia, and recently in New Zealand; and of the Conversion of the Jews, the latest and not