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ART. I.—*Annual Report of the Board of Missions of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in the United States of America. Presented to the General Assembly, May, 1849.*

As a fruit of the Spirit of Christ in the church, and of the motions of that Spirit towards its proper manifestation, the Annual Reports of our Board of Missions are signs of the times. These yearly statements of the aims and results of our activity in the natural and legitimate direction of true Christianity, indicate a method and a scale of operations, honorable to the zeal and wisdom of the Board and its agents, and gratifying to the church; and while these operations are far behind the ability of the church and perhaps behind our advancement in some other things, they come from the spirit of the gospel, and are destined, as the gospel prospers, to a vast enlargement. While the same is true of the other Boards of our church, we would here offer a few hints concerning the ground of our system of Domestic Missions, for the sake of the bearing of our remarks on the nature and extent of our work.

The first Christian Missionary was the Lord Jesus Christ. He was sent from the bosom of heavenly love to seek and to save that which was lost. He bore the missionary toils and privations. He came from light into darkness. Though rich, he became poor; made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, lived and laboured, in a condition assumed entirely for his benevolent ends, amongst the wicked and the miserable, and as it were, away from his glorious home.

Jesus Christ was a Domestic Missionary. We refer to his relations according to the flesh. He came to his own. From the days of Abraham he had had a people in the world whom he called his own, as distinct from all others as a people could be. Through the ages preceding his earthly mission, while its nature, its objects, and its very time, were the theme of prophetic celebration, it was strictly defined as having immediate and primary reference to the people he called his own. The Salvation of Israel, the Hope of Israel, the Deliverer of his people, and other like expressions, have their origin in this patriarchal idea; and when other people are mentioned as sharing the benefits of this mission of the Son of God, they appear as accessions to Israel. "Nations that knew thee not shall come to thee."

At the advent of our Lord, this view of his national relationship is revived with solemn emphasis and decision. The register of genealogy is produced to prove his Jewish descent, and even to secure for him the advantage of a name the most honourable in the annals of the nation. He acknowledges and honours his countrymen. He keeps their civil and religious laws. The fathers, the prophets, the patriots of the nation, he venerates for the nation's sake. He vindicates the religious distinction of that people, and declares his purpose of exalting the memory of their tribes forever. To the woman of Samaria, he asserts the religious superiority of the Jews, and implies his own acknowledgment of affinity and identity with them. "Ye worship ye know not what; we know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews." He speaks of showing favour to a woman of Syro Phenicia as casting the children's bread to the dogs. He pronounces his blessing on the house of Zaccheus with peculiar emphasis, "forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham." He enforces his self-defence for healing on the Sabbath by stating

that the sufferer is "a daughter of Abraham." And as a comprehensive explanation of his general course, he says, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

This national partiality of the Saviour made its impression. The disciples felt it, and revealed it. By this apparent exclusiveness of their Lord, their own Jewish predispositions seemed to be allowed, and even commended and enjoined. So firm was the prepossession which survived his personal example, that Peter made conscience of refusing to teach a Gentile, till relieved from his scruples by a special revelation.

The divine election of that people to such a connexion with the spiritual dispensation, suggests an important view of the relation of a Christian nation as such to the kingdom of Christ. This view we wish here to unfold.

When the Word was made flesh in the bosom of a national organization he taught the national relations of Christianity. The earthly life of Jesus was spent in the sphere of a citizen. The Saviour of the world became a member of a civil and religious community. He became in fact, and in spirit, a Jew. How many of his acts and words seemed the genuine offspring of love for his Hebrew kindred. The eternal scheme of his mediation, while it guided all his earthly movements, allowed him the free adoption of his temporary and earthly associations. Though he always spoke the words and did the works of his Father, though he spoke and acted under the general direction of those laws of his mission which lay remote from human observation, his proximate reasons for saying and doing every thing then and so, were the exigencies of his occasions. His plan involved the national element; his earthly life assumed accordingly the national relations and spirit. He came as the great Expected of the Jews. He was in covenant with them from times of old. He had made their history a catalogue of wonders. While he deprecated and denounced their degeneracy, and wept for their misery, he still glorified their name. He espouses their cause as being himself a Jew; allows his national affinities to pervade his whole spirit; promises those of his people who should receive him, peculiar peace and honour in his kingdom, announces his new administration as only a sequel to the old covenant established upon better promises, and gives his

earthly labours to the land of his birth, and to his brethren according to the flesh.

We feel no motive for attempting to divest our Lord of the proper national partialities. We are deterred from such an attempt by the whole tenor of his earthly history. We concede to him all the patriotic sentiments natural to a good man, and are free to allow them the influence over the Saviour's feelings and actions towards his people which belongs to them as principles of a pure mind. When we witness the subjection of his divine powers to the conditions of humanity in this world, and remember how commonly he wrought his divine works under human impulse; when we hear his withering sentence against the fig-tree which had failed to supply his human want; when we see him calling the dead from their graves with the tear of compassionate humanity in his eye; we discern no repugnance between the laws of the human nature in their full scope, and the laws of the divine; and nowhere does the harmony of the two appear more clear and more glorious than in this free adaptation of himself and of his kingdom to the national instinct of mankind.

The merciful regards of the Saviour embraced the world. His missionary precept required the propagation of the gospel "to every creature." But without turning to follow the spirit and power of the gospel in its great work of Foreign Missions, we would trace the law of national Christianization; a principle evidently respected by the Saviour in his earthly life, and in the methods of his spiritual administration;—a principle requiring earnest obedience from any people who wish to belong to the kingdom of Christ, and who wish to conduct their efforts for the world abroad, with due efficiency and success.

Christianity in its sure and universal diffusion, is destined to regard the national ties. The Saviour yielded most condescending regard to the principle of national unity. This points out the social character and motions of Christianity on its way to its destined triumph. The law of national unity is everywhere presupposed in the Saviour's scheme of gospel propagation, and will help us here to the true explanation of his way of introducing himself and his gospel to the world.

To prepare the way for the national relations of his incarnation, he rears a nation in the course of nature; calling first an

individual as head of a household, making a covenant with him as the progenitor of a peculiar people, and assuring him that the dispensation of heavenly favour should proceed in the line of his posterity, and upon the national scheme; an instructive and sublime anticipation of his future personal connexion with the world. He elects of old, and maintains for ages as his own, the people with whom he purposes in due time, to join himself by blood. He sanctifies the national affinities to his service, as he has always done those of the family. He encompasses himself with these sacred relationships. He comes as an Israelite to deliver Israel. As the Redeemer of men took not the nature of angels, but the nature of man, to communicate grace through human affections, so the Redeemer of Israel took not the nature of a Gentile, but of the seed of Abraham, to communicate grace through the national ties. Tracing his lineage on the public records from David, the heart and centre of the Hebrew nationality, he falls, as the heavenly gift of light and life, into the bosom of the nation, and blends his immaculate humanity with the earthly qualities and conditions of his chosen people. In his person Christianity revealed its national predisposition. It teaches the religious unity of a nation; and the ground of that religious responsibility of a nation as such, which appears so prominent in the dealings of God with mankind.

The nation, as to its elements, begins in the family. There, the unity of interest and character leads us to expect a unity of accountability and destiny. As a system of life, a natural organization, the family is as really one, as a man is one. The prosperity and honour of the family each member enjoys, the adversity and disgrace of the family each member suffers. The family is, in an interesting sense, an enlargement of the individual. By joining families in a community, you create a further enlargement, and have unity still. You have multiplied the members, but have yet one body. There is one interest, one character. The prosperity and honour of the community each citizen enjoys, the adversity and disgrace, each suffers and laments. The family is an enlargement of the individual the nation is an enlargement of the family.

The nation, as one, has its duties to itself and to others. When men, according to their nature, have taken their social organization, they become national subjects of the Government of God.

There are divine laws for nations as for individual men. Their rewards and penalties, though confined to the present life, the only life of nations, are often distinctly set forth, are dispensed by rule, and are employed as incitements to virtue in the individual members. God speaks to nations, as such. He directs, warns, reproveth, threatens them. There are national sins; and ways to punish them. When men join hands to work evil, and use their social organization to break the law of God, he is wont to send his judgments through the instruments by which they broke his law, to cause their social organization to hasten the work of destruction to the wicked and to make it the more dreadful. When men do right by nations, joining hands to honour God and keep his laws, he has national blessings for them. He can send his rewards through the national organization to individual hearts, and make the government that honours him a blessing to all the subjects. Nations, like men, are righteous or wicked, and their righteousness blesses or their wickedness curses their members. Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.

The Lord calls nations as such into his service. When they offer their homage through their rulers or other official organs, he accepts it; and often through those organs, in return, does he distinguish them with national powers and honours. "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Kings shall minister unto thee; the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish."

It belongs to this plan of taking a nation in the mass for religious purposes, that the mass be Christianized throughout. A general evangelical virtue, congenial to the work of the Spirit on individual men, must be diffused through the nation. As God rears a plant from the soil no less by tempering the hemisphere than by specific appliances to the root and the blade, so he conducts his moral discipline of men as much by the common allotments and motions of a nation as by direct dealing with particular persons. "The kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom is given to the people of the saints of the Most High." The nation, impregnated with a religious virtue, instinct with that intellectual vigour and refinement, and those sentiments of order and peace which please God and adorn mankind, becomes the garden of the Lord for the culture of the

spiritual man, where every element of soil and air yields nourishment and strength and beauty to the plants of grace. "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life or death, or things present or things to come, all are yours."

Such a vineyard of the Lord is the glory of the earth. God is her wall of defence. A nation formed and pervaded by the spirit of the Gospel is impregnable. No weapon formed against her can prosper. Her power will be chiefly known as an agent of benevolence; her science shall waken and guide the intellect of the world; her arts shall win and humanize mankind; her wealth shall be at once the fruit and nourishment of her virtue, and her morals the sensible pulsations of inward truth and righteousness. When the church thus takes up the social organizations of men as the instruments of her work, puts on the natural refinements as a part of her beautiful attire, commands the wealth of the world for her works of love, and breathes the spirit of her doctrines into the social habits of the people, she reveals the true nature and power of her life, and accomplishes her earthly destiny.

The heritage of citizenship in such a nation is the greatest of earthly blessings. It brings our temporal destiny into connexion with that of the kingdom of Christ. A truly Christian country is the sanctuary of all that is dear to man on earth. Knowledge is there, and liberty, the security of all personal rights, and true and progressive civilization; incitements to pure thought and beneficent action; the aids of spiritual growth, and the encouragements of hope; all the beauty and all the fragrance of a field which God hath blessed. The Lord provides, in such a country for the furtherance of his work in the hearts of men. The Christian owes religious duties to his country. They are duties to God. God and our country! The Christian citizen of an evangelized nation may regard his country as an abode of the church, and love his country the more without loving the kingdom of Christ the less. The more he is a patriot, the more he may be a Christian. His Christian spirit and obedience may flow largely through the patriotic

channel ; and he will seek the prosperity of his country, for the same end for which the Lord upholds it ;—the glory of Christ.

All complete religion in this world partakes of this patriotic element ; the high principle which represents a man to himself as a free and accountable constituent of a nation, whose character he contributes to form, and whose history involves his own. This is one of those nobler sentiments of human nature, which Christ cherished, and which are taken up, refined and exalted by the Spirit of Christ in the Christian. He is the Christian patriot who loves his country as the garden of the Lord ; who delights to view it as the spot where the Lord has planted and is nourishing a branch of his vine ; where “the powers that be” are a defence and a help to Zion ; where the policy and the laws of the nation presume Christianity, recognize its obligations, and in their way and measure do it honour. It is one of the clearest dictates of piety to embrace such a country with fervent love, and serve it with unmeasured devotion.

The confluence of patriotism and piety in a sincere and intelligent Christian forms a living continuation of the patriotic submission and sympathy of the Saviour. He regarded and treated the nation as one ; a large family ; and there was the more consanguineous import in this view of the Jewish nation, from the relation of the whole, except proselytes, to Abraham their common father. But this blood relationship was not the essence of nationality ; as mere consanguinity is not the sole ground of the family constitution. The confederate tribes of Israel had their national institutions common to all, and their national character and interests. Their one government gave unity to the body ; and made them one organization ; and with that body thus made one they became personally incorporate, and treated the whole as vitally concerned in his mission. He recognized their nationality in his offer of the Gospel. Not less solemnly and impressively did he recognize it in their rejection of the Gospel. The individuals who believed received their spiritual salvation ; while even they, as parts of the rejected nation were exposed to memorable calamity and distress. The nation, by the act of its supreme authority, had set the Son of God, at nought, and by wicked hands, had put him to death. The guilt of the deed was a national guilt. It brought a national retribution. The religion of Jesus Christ gained no

place in the public councils of that people. It received no homage from their laws and customs; no respect from their public proceedings. On the contrary every national demonstration was against it. The acts of Christ were wrested into constructive violations of the civil and religious law of the nation; and the sin of crucifying the Lord of glory, in which a few only were actively engaged, was visited upon the whole. The catastrophe of that people is an awful example of God's dealing with men by nations, to show each man how much his welfare depends on the course of the nation to which he belongs.

The natural grounds for such indiscriminate visitations commend themselves with peculiar force to the Christian citizen. The civil organization, with its unity of action, of interest, and of aim, may fitly bear a unity of responsibility. Its texture of interest and sympathy facilitates the diffusion of suffering; while such compendious retribution from the righteous Judge of nations satisfies the common sense of mankind, from the presumption that among the individuals involved in the suffering there has been a common assent to the sin. We thus bring our civil affinities and interests into the kingdom of God, and extend our religious regards to whatever belongs to our country. The Christian patriot carries his country on his heart before God; laments her sins, and confesses them with the same humiliation he feels for his own, and regrets every law of the nation and every usage which expresses or occasions disrespect for the law and the Gospel of God. The moral degeneracy of his country he feels as his own dishonor. A lack of religious instructions and of Christian privilege, in any quarter, he feels as his own privation. He hears the voice of God to the nation as addressed to himself. In his daily confessions he answers to God for the sins of the nation; and prays for the power which can guide the public sentiments and acts in the way of righteousness. As a member of the body politic, he receives the divine word as a national blessing, and owning his responsibility for its due improvement, he takes heed that the light which is in his country be not darkness.

In no other country on the face of the earth can these sentiments glow with such warmth, and act to so high purpose as in our own. Let a Christian contemplate himself in the character of an American citizen; let him consider his country as a

nursery of the Church, and dwell upon those facts of her youthful life which have made her already the light of the world. Every chapter of her history is original; without precedent, without parallel. Many shores have been colonized by adventurous enterprize. But there is known to history one land only which was colonized by Christians to obtain for themselves and their posterity the free enjoyment of their religion. The colonists of this country were not heathens, who first filled the land with their idols, and were afterwards converted by the missionaries of Christianity. They were not men of mere worldly ambition who sought room for the expansion of their restless enterprize. They were Christians, who desired to worship God with free and pure hearts; who felt a check upon their freedom, and came hither to escape it; and whom God sent to raise up a nation on this ground from Christian blood. With the word of God in their hands, and his spirit in their hearts, they organized their communities, founded their schools, built their sanctuaries, and arranged the order of their worship. They withstood the encroachments of power by the instinct of conscious right. When their favorite principle of liberty was assailed, they rose in its defence. When protection hardened into oppression, they severed the political ties and stood for independence. And now, to the descendants of those Christian heroes, and the heirs of their freedom, their memory is consecrated by their zeal for the Gospel. The Christian relations of our civil polity have come from that source. Those laws which guard the church in the use of her rights and powers, the civil authorities which stand as an inclosure of Zion here, have risen on that foundation. We are a temple of God; its courts, the state; its sanctuary, the church. May church and state fulfil their glorious design.

Look, now, through our social constitution upon our prospects. In the mutual relation of church and state, our country appears to us just as we would have it, in the perfection, not indeed of social and moral condition, but of adaptation to the work of religious culture. Only let the people be intelligent enough to understand their moral interests, and virtuous enough to consult them; let knowledge, patriotism and Christianity unite in our character, and direct our course, and we have the perfection of external arrangements for religious improvement. The sup-

porters of Christianity here are not the rulers, but the people. Whatever the character, the principles, the aims of men in power, while our constitution remains inviolate, the keys of knowledge and virtue are held by the people. It belongs not to our government to build our churches, to appoint and sustain our ministry, or to assign its duties. It is not through the civil arm that the people support their Christian institutions. They apply their support to the church with their own hands. No paternal sovereignty judges for us how many or what sort of religious institutions will be best for us. The people judge for themselves, and when the Christian sentiment of any branch of the church deems it desirable to increase the religious privileges of any portion of the country, it can do it in its own way. This is one of the advantages of the friends of Christianity in this land.

This country, which we may gratefully call our own, and not the dominion of any earthly monarch, distinguished already above all other lands, and destined, as we hope, and as many signs foretel, to unparalelled exaltation as an abode of the church, has received the light of life as a national blessing. It is a gift to the nation. Every citizen has a share in it. Every citizen is, in his measure, responsible for the due improvement of it. We have a joint interest in the moral welfare of this nation; an interest which may well reconcile us to our joint responsibility for the proper use of our Christian institutions. How can a Christian citizen of such a country be content to see any portion of his country covered with spiritual darkness. It must seem to him as a blemish in his own estate. A Christian, in these United States, however sound and comprehensive his doctrine, and peaceful his religious experience, unless he is afflicted for the spiritual desolation of his country, must yet accuse himself of views too narrow for an American citizen. He has not yet grown into a proper and essential constituent of his Christian state. A nation of such Christians would not be a Christian nation. His Christian element does not yet flow into the channel of his civil relations. He is a Christian only in part. He may be a Christian parent, interweaving all his religious practices, with his domestic relation; he may be Christian in his occupation, pursuing his labor with Christian motives; but he is not a Christian citizen. His religion reaches

not his country. His patriotism is unevangelized. His Christian sentiment and character, shrunk far within his civil dimensions, denied a share in the defence and use of his civil rights, and not pervaded by his natural affinity for his country, leave to him the form of citizenship, without the power. As a patriot he is not risen to newness of life. One branch of affection in him has only its natural properties. It has not yet been grafted in, and partakes not of the root and fatness of the olive.

Imperfectly as it has been considered by our people how much depends on them in the diffusion of the light of life through our country, it has not been wholly overlooked. A large and efficient portion of the Christian church have long acted and are still acting under a sense of their responsibility in this matter. Many Christians of nearly all denominations, survey the spiritual wants of our people with patriotic and pious concern, and unite their zeal and strength to spread the work of God and its institutions. They are moved to it by love to God and man, and co-operating with this love is the powerful element of national affinity. The distant and scattered population of our southern and western regions, are a part of our civil body; fellow-citizens, partners with us in the blessings of liberty, and in toil and sacrifice for its support. Their property, their arms, their blood, must contribute, with ours, to the common defence. Our country is their country. But they have not the gospel;—our national heritage from God, given to the nation as much for their sake as for ours. The spiritual circulation of our country is too feeble. The life blood does not go with force enough to the extremities; and those extremities are cold and weak. They are a part of our living system, but have not their due share of life. Yet the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is exerting itself to supply the defect. It recognizes the civil relation, it blends itself with the national sympathies; it prompts the Christian citizen to give the gospel to his own, as the Saviour came to his own in person. Here is reproduced the Saviour's soul of patriotism, striving to penetrate and illumine the national organization with the laws and the spirit of his holy kingdom.

Thus germinates the system of Domestic Missions. The national instinct is self-conservative; and no sooner is the gospel recognized as a defence and glory to the nation, than the patri-

otic impulse takes the direction of gospel propagation. The Christian instinct is evangelical, spreading the glad tidings of salvation; and in union with patriotism, with which, as we have seen, it was connate in the Saviour, it holds the gospel as the heritage of the nation. This is history. The motions of Christian patriotism in supplying and preventing spiritual destitution appear in the earliest period of our history. And they were, in some points more marked and decisive than they are now. The colonial history of this country contains records of activity, patriotic as well as religious, for the vigorous establishment of gospel institutions among all the people. A community without the gospel was no more to be found than a community without a magistrate. When the time for political independence came, the men who fought and bled for liberty were the men who spread the gospel in the land. And to those primitive Christian patriots, under God, we owe the present enlargement of the church on these shores, the vast facilities for our work of missions, and not improbably, the very existence of our present efficient system. They sent the vital circulation of their social system in full force to the extremities.

Our Domestic Missions are, then, the legitimate offspring of Christian patriotism. As the Christian is a patriot, he lives for his country. As the patriot is a Christian, he claims his country for Christ. This law of Domestic Missions, residing in the nature of a Christian citizen, may be a natural ground of our hope in God that our country shall be supplied with the gospel. The patriotism of Christianity may be expected to do its work wherever Christianity finds a home. For parts of a Christian country to be destitute of the gospel, were as unnatural as for some members of a family to starve while the rest are fed. The water of the same pool never rests at different levels. Our unity as a Christian people necessitates the diffusion of the gospel throughout our borders. The self-diffusive force of Christianity must as surely send its equal impulse through the nation as the nation remains one, and our Christianity retains its virtue.

In this view our Domestic Missions assume the aspect of great power and high promise. They reveal their living contact and incorporation with the Spirit of Christ in the church. Their two elements, patriotism and religion, pertain, the one to

the natural life of civilized man, the other to the life of God. The divine principle joins itself to the human. We might reasonably hope for the Christianization of our country by the sure obedience of Christians to the Missionary precept of the Saviour, as an appeal to their love for him, and their reverence for his authority; for all active Christians respect that command, and are chiefly moved by it to send the gospel to all the nations. Or, we might rest a strong Christian hope for our country, on the natural philanthropy of pure minds, always enlivened by union with pure religion. This also lends its impulse to missions for the world. But to all this we may add to insure the fidelity of our people to their Domestic Missions, that profound and undying love of country, which exerts such power in all right-minded Christians, and was allowed such scope in the Saviour himself. A noble principle,—a sanctified love of country,—the love of Christ in a patriotic heart. We cannot despair of the country unless we despair of the church that is in it.

Our Domestic Missions, then, form one of the brightest features in the aspect of our country. They imply at least a small degree of resemblance to the Saviour. They are a fruit of our religious life. They are an instrument of our religious activity. They confer a great dignity on us as a Christian people. Such is our own Board. It has the seat of its life in the hearts of the members of our church. Through all its process of growth to its present eminence and power, it has been nourished by the spirit of Christ in the hearts of his people. It is not the mere offspring of a calculating policy, either civil or ecclesiastical. It has come not alone from a general philanthropy, nor from sectarian zeal, nor even from the missionary injunction of our Lord, as an expression of authority. It rises out of the national spirit of our Christian people. On this deep and broad foundation it is destined to stand so long as the true gospel dwells in any part of our country, and other parts have need.

The Domestic Missions of this country have every advantage which can commend them to the people and facilitate their work. In this land where church and state have their separate organizations, the church may extend her bounds and fulfil her destiny by her own resources and in her own way. Where church and state are united the church acts through the com-

mon organization, upholding and extending itself by the civil agency. The state becomes agent for the church in spreading the gospel through its jurisdiction. A people unanimous in their Christian views, and united in their Christian work, might find great conveniences in such a system. It would be the natural system for them. But such unanimity has never yet existed where the people were free. There is as yet no free and intelligent country on the face of the earth, where the church can operate through the civil organization without hindrance to her proper work. The state can do the outward part of the work of church extension. It can build houses of worship. It can appoint and maintain an officiating ministry. But the difficulty of keeping the spirit of religion diffused through the public and formal proceedings of a civil government has been found insurmountable wherever the attempt has yet been made. Governments will tend to be as secular in managing the affairs of the church as in other things. Every impulse of the missionary work must come fresh from the hearts of the people.

In this respect our facilities for the propagation of the gospel in our country can hardly be improved. The church in this country has her own organization. She stands separate and complete in herself. Her government is in no way interwoven with the government of the state. She has a circulation and a system of life of her own. She is not compelled to mingle her life blood with the frigid and impure humours of a secular organization. Her divine light is not, by any social necessity absorbed in the opaque body of the state, and lost in the vapours of political strife. She has her character and her destiny to herself. Her members come into her communion, professing her principles and bound to her service. The springs of our missions are in them. The gifts of the church for the spread of the gospel come spontaneously from the people; carrying with them to every point of their application the savour of her sacredness, and then at once, suggesting their origin and ensuring their success.

Thus went such proceedings under Christ and the apostles. The disciples who were sent out two and two were to look for their support directly from the people among whom they laboured. They received only what was willingly given. What

the apostles applied to their own use and the relief of the poor, they received directly from the hands of Christians. The contributions were religious charities. They were not exacted in the name of the government, assimilated to the civil revenue, and appropriated according to political expediency, and as a part of the civil expenditure. They went in their Christian character, and to their Christian ends. The religious interests of this country are under God immediately in the hands of our Christian people. The constitution of the nation leaves this charge on us. The responsibility is our own; and for doing our work effectually, and in the most convenient way, we have all the facilities we can wish.

The broad and firm principles of human nature and religion above stated form the ground of our Domestic Missions. They involve the security of our success. They embody the great persuasive to faithfulness in the cause. Every sincere and intelligent Christian will feel their power. We must either quench both the Spirit of Christ within us and our natural patriotism, or we must give a vigorous support to our system of Home Missions. The example of Christ, and the tendency of the spirit of Christ in his people;—the one objective, a matter of devout and thankful contemplation, the other, subjective, a matter of peaceful and joyful consciousness;—these are the chief sources of action to the true Christian. Let the members of the church of Christ in this country, then, while moved by these principles, consider the connexion of this part of their work with the true prosperity of their country, the welfare of the human family, and the glory of God.

Our country, as we have said, had a Christian origin. We have a high character to maintain. It will be no light matter for us to walk worthy of our early history; it will be no small shame to walk unworthy of it. Our infancy was such as no other nation ever had. Our manhood must correspond to it. Our dereliction would bring a memorable reproach upon Christianity. With a character emblazoned in literature, science, and art, the traces of which can never, without some signal catastrophe, be obliterated from the world; with industry, commerce, wealth, and power, fostered by illustrious Christian endowments, and ample for almost unlimited beneficence, we cannot hope that the disgrace of our delinquency would ever be

forgotten. The republics of antiquity fell without such reproach. It is rather a wonder that they ever lived, than their shame that they died; for they had not "the law of the spirit of life." They had not Christianity. But shame to us, if we quench the light that is in us. Our infamy would be abhorred forever. And where, except in our Home Missions, can we find security against this degeneracy? Without this scheme of carrying the lamp of life before the footsteps of our active and migrating millions, how soon should we see a majority strong, vicious, and bold enough to give us the character, and consign us to the doom, of an ungodly nation.

The proportion of our country, subject, as to its destiny, to the control of our Domestic Missions, gives this cause an overwhelming greatness in our view. Our people will scatter as long as there is room. They will live as far asunder as they can. Our "West" would have no western boundary till it reached the Pacific; and now that we rule from ocean to ocean, our people so abhor a vacuum that they instantly compass and occupy the whole. What but a vast and vigorous system of Domestic Missions can plant the gospel in this immense dispersion, and prevent the small remainder of religion in the settlers from total extinction. When we consider how few of our migratory people have the disposition or the ability to establish and maintain religious institutions for themselves, we see what the older and denser portions of the church have to do. Three-fourths of our whole territory and population, to speak far within the bounds of truth, have already received, or have yet to receive, the beginnings of their religious institutions as a missionary benefaction. The infinite activity of our increasing population leaves no habitable region uninhabited within our bounds. The people will live too far apart, and be too poor, to maintain the institutions of the gospel, and by the time they gain the numbers and ability they will lose the disposition. Over the vast extent of our new settlements, the gospel must be planted by Domestic Missions; and few, very few are the counties in our whole Union, where the church, by her missions, has not something to do.

By our Domestic Missions, the Christians of this age have the character and happiness of the future millions of this country largely in their power. Even by helping to support the

ministry in small congregations, stationary in numbers and ability, and not expecting to become independent, we are acting for coming generations. Such congregations may be thought to be few. Doubtless most beneficiary churches, may be expected to become more willing to exert themselves for their own support, and, without increase of numbers or ability, may be expected soon to sustain themselves. But not a few have their self-sustaining period, indefinitely remote. They are a permanent part of the missionary field. It is a blessed work to give them the gospel ministry; for almost entirely have we the religious character and happiness of those people and of their posterity in our power. But of the new communities, rising with unparalleled rapidity all over the land, especially in the new states and territories, what may we not say? The inhabitants of new settlements are peculiarly susceptible of religious impressions. They have some childlike traits. They amalgamate with each other more readily than the same persons would in older communities. Their first religious teachers will, in a majority of cases, impress on the community its leading features. These impressions are a germ. The future character of the people will be a growth from them. Every one of the old thirteen states bears yet the features of its colonial infancy. It belongs to our Domestic Missions to impress on the infant communities of the land a character which will never fade away.

The Domestic Missions of this country will bear an important part in preserving the union of the states, and in making it a blessing. With such territorial extension as we now have, and such as we seem to many destined to acquire, it were folly to hope for continued union and prosperity, without an equally extensive and operative Christianity. Without religion, there are not interests and sentiments enough common to all our people to give them a ground of unity. In the productions of the earth there is no greater difference between any two continents on the globe, than between different sections of our country. In social institutions and habits, we are as unlike as any two nations on earth who speak a common language. Nothing but the fact of union and a relish for its benefits, can any more bind together the people on opposite sides of the Potomac, the Ohio or the Mississippi, than the people on opposite sides of the St. Lawrence, the Great Lakes or the Rio Grande. The argu-

ments for union from geography and from economy, are no stronger for states now united than for states now divided. The existence of the union, and the certainty that division could come only of evil and produce only evil, are the two considerations on which we must rely to perpetuate our national unity. For the required effect of these considerations, our people must duly appreciate the evil which would lead to disunion and that which would follow, and be content with the compromises and faithful in the mutual offices of morality, covenant and friendship involved in the support and exposition of the constitution. In other words, our security is in our virtue. This virtue comes only of Christianity; and to establish Christianity in three-fourths of our country is the work of our Domestic Missions.

These missions assist the prosperity and glory of our country by hastening the mutual assimilation of our people. We must have one standard of taste and of morals. We must judge alike of the nature and value of liberty, and of the means of preserving it. We must speak one language. We must have manners and customs as similar as our difference of climate and of occupations will allow. We must have a common zeal for the universal education of the people. All facilities must be created for mutual alliance from acquaintance, interest, and love. All this must be sought after with earnestness and on a large scale; for our country is becoming a field for the conflict or the conciliation of all that is heterogeneous in humanity on the face of the earth. Nothing but our Christianity can assimilate our people and by no other means can our Christianity do this than by our Home Missions.

As to the bearing of our Domestic Missions on the condition of the human family: first, it is here alone as yet that the world witnesses a salutary and commanding operation of the true law of liberty. In this view we are a wonder to the nations, and may well be a wonder to ourselves. We are the light of the world. The rays of the sun of freedom which have fallen on this land are reflected with great power on other nations, and though few of the nations seem fully prepared to walk in the light, yet many are now putting forth genuine signs of life. Wo to the world and ourselves if we suffer our liberty to outrun our religion; if we wake the people of the nations to

a consciousness of right and of power, without commending that righteousness by which alone right and power are safe; if we apply to the present susceptible generations of humanity the corrosive compound of freedom and licentiousness. To prevent such shame and wo, will be an invaluable service to mankind. All we do for ourselves in this cause we do for the human race. Our Domestic Missions are doing more for the world than all our other institutions could do without them. Indeed without that thorough diffusion of Christianity among us for which we must rely on Domestic Missions, our political example will do the world more harm than good. If the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted.

We are destined to serve all nations by taking many of their people to ourselves. The eyes of all the pilgrims of the world are towards our shores. Thousands of the people of God come here from other lands to lighten their temporal burdens, and breathe the air of spiritual health. Thousands of nominal protestants, with little piety and with none, come hither to seek a worldly portion. To these we have the privilege of tendering the living word, by the hand of our missions. Thousands of Catholics come hither, under a wise direction and for gracious purposes, which they themselves never think of, but the remembrance of which must guide us in our reception and treatment of those people. We should bid them welcome, give them a share of our heritage of freedom. It is not ours to monopolize. It is ours to offer to them. It belongs to all men. We cannot shut out the oppressed of other lands who are drawn hither by the fame of our freedom and happiness, but must give them a place so long as they find their advantage in coming. Even though we had less ambition to multiply, we have other and higher reasons against exclusiveness; and while our statesmen for their reasons, are not exclusive in their laws, how much less shall Christians, for their nobler reasons, be exclusive in their feelings. We must learn not to dread the flow of Romish corruption and infirmity into our ocean of purity and health. If Romanism can flourish in the atmosphere of spiritual truth and freedom with which we trust the merciful Lord is surrounding our country, we need not labour to destroy it; if not, let it come hither to die. It is for us, through the potent agency of our Domestic Missions, and the blessing of the Lord, to keep

the healing virtue of the waters so strong that all the impotent who step into them shall be made whole. 'This is an important part of the office which we are bound to fulfil, and are partially fulfilling for the world.

Our Home Missions work mightily for the world in the department of commerce. We do business with all mankind. We send to all the nations the harvests of our fields, the products of our workshops, the fruits of our invention, the treasures of our learning, the maxims of our political wisdom. We are to send them also the blessings of our religion. But how shall we ever do this in a measure proportioned to the wants of the world? How small and feeble the rills which are flowing from us to refresh the nations. Fill the fountain that the stream may rise. Elevate the fountain that the stream may flow faster. Cleanse the fountain that the stream may be pure. In other words, enlarge and strengthen our system of Domestic Missions, till the spirit of our purest Christian churches shall pervade the land; till Christian seamanship shall guide all our vessels on the sea, and Christian enterprise engage all our communities on the land; every seaman under our flag being a gospel missionary and every dweller on our shores a labourer and a suppliant for the conversion of the world.

Our Domestic Missions owe a valuable service to the world in the name and behalf of the protestant form of Christianity. Whether the original claim to this continent, either from discovery or settlement be catholic or protestant, whether many catholics or few shall call this land their home, it is here that God is bringing together, for the first time in the Christian era, the three potent elements of religion, intelligence, and freedom, to do their work on all the people of a great nation. Either our favourite theory concerning the natural and appointed relation between freedom of conscience and pure religion is false, or we must expect that the gospel effectually administered here will yield the protestant forms of Christian faith and practice. The progress of the gospel in any country where the popular mind is enlightened and free, must exclude all forms of worship and of government which tend to fetter either the understanding or the conscience. But in order to this, the free mind of the people must be applied to gospel truth. Otherwise we shall have, not probably Romanism, but an ignorance of Christianity and

a perversion of it, and a prostitution of our moral nature, not less criminal and pernicious than the most benighted Romanism; and for this, American Protestantism will be accountable. It is only through the agency of Home Missions, that our protestantism can be saved this reproach. It is only by this that we can prove our antipathy to popery to be the opposition of true piety against sin, and not a mere natural prejudice against those who differ from us. We have the name of a protestant nation. We have to show that, in the only nation under heaven where the people enjoy entire religious freedom, protestantism is not to be associated with infidelity. If our Home Missions may, by the divine blessing, be our instrument of accomplishing this, they will perform an important office for the world.

We only remark further, that it is by these means more than by any other, that our country is to promote the glory of God. She will thus become the glory of the earth, and it will be known and acknowledged in all the world as the handiwork of God. It will be seen that his word is our light, that his laws are the foundation of our government, and that his Spirit is the life of our religion. We are becoming a great and mighty people. Though we sought no conquests, waged no wars, cherished no ambition for national glory, praised not ourselves nor coveted praise from others, if the Lord preserve and bless us, our name must be great in the earth. With such people, territory, climate, science, arts, commerce, laws and religion, for us to exist is to have renown. If we make our Board of Missions the angel flying in the midst of our heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to all our people, we can regard ourselves as the people of God, and our land as the dwelling place of his glory. By blessing us, he will bless the world and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

These are only hints of the views which must often arise on this subject to the intelligent Christians of our country. They have great force for the people of our communion. If ever we had a call from God, we have one now, for a vast and speedy enlargement of our Domestic Missions. Men are wanted; men prepared and willing to serve Christ in the ministry wherever a place can be found. Means of support are wanted. Our scale of income and disbursement must be greatly extended. Means must be provided to support men of suitable qualifica-

tions to superintend the operations in the various sections of our great field. Means must be had to support distant and efficient missions on a scale of expenditure equal to that of some of our most expensive foreign missions. And means must be at hand to give the labourer a suitable reward; for no American Christian, worthy of the name, can ask or allow his brother to forego the ordinary comforts of life, in order to serve the church in the Christian ministry.

The last report of our Board, like its predecessors, gives us a view of the gratifying progress of our missions, of the vastness of the field which the Board consider it their duty to occupy, and the energy and faithfulness with which they apply to the work all that is given them by the churches for that purpose. We see the greatness of the work which we have committed to the hands of our Board of Missions; let us promptly supply the means of doing it well.

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- ART. II.—1. *An Inquiry into the alleged Tendency of the Separation of Convicts, one from the other, to produce Disease and Derangement.* By a citizen of Pennsylvania. Philadelphia: E. C. & J. Biddle. 1849.
2. *Prisons and Prisoners.* By Joseph Adshead. London: Longman, Brown, Green, & Longman. 1845.
3. *The Twentieth Annual Report of the Inspectors of the Eastern State Penitentiary of Pennsylvania.* Transmitted to the Senate and House of Representatives, March, 1849. Philadelphia: Printed by Edmund Barrington & George D. Haswell. 1849.
4. *Report on the Condition of the New Jersey State Prison; embracing the Reports of the Joint Committee, Inspectors, Keeper, Moral Instructor, and Physician.* Read January 16, 1849, and ordered to be printed. Trenton: Printed by Sherman & Harron. 1849.
5. *Annual Report of the Inspectors of State Prisons of the State of New York.* Made to the Legislature, January 19, 1849. Albany: Weed, Parsons & Co., Public Printers.

THE reform in the methods of imprisonment and the treat-