

in '49, but before 1847. The south western part of the United States, embracing part of Texas and all of New Mexico and California, was owned by Mexico in 1846. A few days before Great Britain signed the final settlement, war had broken out between Mexico and the United States. Had this information reached Great Britain in time she would at least have delayed to sign the settlement of July 18, '46. Then, in our war with Mexico of '47-'48, Mexico would have been backed by Great Britain. With this international alliance the war would have been prolonged until the discovery of gold in California in '49. This discovery would have led Mexico and Great Britain to redouble their energies for a share of this western continent. How rapidly these events press upon each other! How certain it seems that only the missionary settlement of Oregon, which resulted in the yielding of all claims by Great Britain before she learned of the Mexican war, alone saved us from a great international contest with two powers, one of them the greatest upon the earth! You say we could have waged the war and won against both foreign powers? Possibly. But the United States could far better afford to give the Methodist Missionary Society and the American Board each a million dollars a year in perpetuity than to have incurred the cost of this gigantic war, to say nothing of its bloodshed and desolation. These Flathead Indians were as truly messengers from God as was the vision of Macedonia which came to Paul; and Jason and Daniel Lee and Marcus Whitman were following plans as miraculous and providential as Paul in leaving Palestine and starting toward the west.

But the acquisition by the United States of territory of vast extent and boundless wealth in the West was not the end of this missionary enterprise. We sent our brothers out from our homes to bless others. They indirectly helped us win the greatest blessing for ourselves. The Oregon and California questions were settled in our favor in 1846, only thirteen years before the Rebellion. We were then called upon to fight the great battle between freedom and slavery. You remember that east of the Mississippi river the free territory of the United States embraced a little over 400,000 square miles, and the slave territory nearly 500,000 square miles. After crossing the Mississippi river and running through Missouri the line embracing the slave population fell rapidly south. It was this western territory into which slaves had not yet been brought that restored the balance in area to the side of freedom in this contest; and California, which had been acquired for the extension of slavery, was providentially settled by northern enterprise and poured her money and men into the Union side in that gigantic struggle. Suppose this territory had been held by foreign powers or that we had been still battling for this rich gold field against Great Britain and Mexico, and suppose that Mexico had been backed by France in the interest of absolutism and the Roman Cath-