

instrumentality which God had chosen and employed for the subversion of evil and iniquity in all their varied forms of outward exhibition. They wisely looked, not so much to the distinctive peculiarities of the prevailing systems of heathen superstition, as to the radical and essential elements of evil common to them all. They felt assured that the gospel, and the gospel alone, could successfully assail and overthrow these systems. And, as if to demonstrate on the largest scale, and in the greatest number of diverse instances, the universal suitableness and efficacy of the gospel, it was ordered—by no previous concert or collusion of their own, but by the overruling providence of Him who is head over all things to his Church—that the agents of these institutions should proceed to almost every part of the world,—that the gospel trumpet should be sounded simultaneously in the ears of the savage, the semibarbarous, and the comparatively civilized,—that the good seed of the word should be scattered simultaneously on every species of spiritual soil,—that the scions of the tree of life, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations, should be simultaneously planted in every clime, and under every sky.

It was a grand experiment:—and yet, so far as regarded those holy and enlightened men themselves, it was no *experiment*. In their view, there was no uncertainty, no contingency, no peradventure as to the ultimate result of their glorious undertaking. But though they believed, “some doubted;” and it required proofs strong and numerous to overcome the reluctance of the world, and, to some extent, of the Church itself, to admit the universal fitness and efficiency of the gospel of the grace of God. But that reluctance *has been overcome*. Facts well attested and abundant, and, as already said, continually accumulating, have demonstrated that there is no conformation of mind, no moral condition, no circumstances affecting the individual or social character of men, in reference to which it may not now be asserted, that the gospel is “the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth.” It is true that multitudes, in every part of the world, are yet “in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity,”—that hundreds of millions are yet bowed down under the burden of heathen, muhammedan, and antichristian delusion; but our missionary churches, viewed as a whole, now contain the representatives of

almost every class and community of men on the surface of the globe. Wherever the trumpet of the gospel has given a certain sound, the good soldiers of Christ have seen some of the opposing force casting down the weapons of rebellion, and submitting themselves to the “prince of peace.” Wherever the good seed of the word has been sown, there some spots of spiritual vegetation have relieved the dreary monotony of the moral desert; and the spiritual husbandmen, whilst prayerfully watching and waiting for the fruit of their labour, have beheld, springing from the hitherto barren and unproductive soil, “first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.” Already the once scarcely perceptible scions of the tree of life have risen to comparative maturity, not in one part of the world, but in all,—in all they are bearing the same fruits, emitting the same fragrance, and striking their roots deep into every soil. Truly “this is the finger of God.” “This also cometh forth from Him who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.”

THE FUTURE PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL.—We are taught, how to count on the future progress and final triumphs of the gospel. Thus organized, and thus sustained, it might appear to guarantee even its own perpetuity. But when, in addition, we reflect on that omniscient Spirit, with which it is evermore accompanied, and which is promised by the Saviour to his church throughout all ages, we feel that it would be alike irrational and impious, to question whether it shall continue to survive decay and danger, and vanquish opposition in the future, as it has done already in the past. The towers of imperial Rome once heard its voice, and trembled. That mistress of the world beheld, with astonishment, the eagles of her conquest, and the purple of her dominion, reckoned in the number of its trophies;—lost and overshadowed by the effulgence of its power. What barrier shall now forbid its progress? What rampart is now so massive as to roll back the surges of its might? Let this trumpet be blown, then;—it shall be the signal of universal victory. Let this ensign be reared;—it shall gleam with invincible splendour. Let this shield be fearlessly uplifted; it is bright with the heraldry of heaven. What need have we to shrink because of the ravings of blasphemy, the promises of false wisdom, the sorceries of perverted genius, the sneers of wit, the antipathies of taste, the caprice of passion, the assaults of unbelief? Has not the gospel already encountered enemies at least as formidable? Has truth not been summoned to the combat in a crisis at least as emergent? Where was her buckler ever loosened, her sword ever broken, her retreating