

The inquiry now before us is, to ascertain, if possible, how much of the marked and peculiar success of the first preachers of the gospel, over those of other ages, may be fairly attributed to their superior activity in the work which God had assigned them. A more laborious set of men never unfolded their physical and moral energies, in our world, than the first preachers of the gospel. Whatever may be true, of here and there an individual, of this or any other age, no generation of their successors, have attained, in this respect, an equal elevation. They appear to me to be the only men who have undertaken and accomplished in religion, what other men have done in some of the more elevated affairs of the world—in science, legislation, war, and commerce. They put their whole hearts into their work. The entire energies of their immortal minds, rekindled by a living flame from heaven, were concentrated, and made to glow and burn on a single point. They were “instant in season—out of season” Their great business was, to “preach the word.” Wherever they were, this object was never forgotten. Withersoever they were led by Providence, or driven, or transported by their enemies, their hearts clung to the single purpose of living and dying in the service of souls. It was not on the Jewish, or the Christian Sabbath alone, or in the synagogue exclusively, that they prosecuted this work.—Time and place were mere circumstances which they often compelled to yield to the master passion of their hearts, and the governing purpose of their lives. Take Paul as a specimen of activity in preaching the gospel. At Ephesus, “by the space of three years” he “ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.” During two years of this time he disputed daily in the school of Tyrannus. At Athens, his spirit was so stirred within him, “when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry,” that he not only preached the gospel “in the synagogue,” but “in the market,” and to the celebrated court, “Areopagus.” Disregarding the fastidiousness of worldly opinions, on one occasion he “continued his speech until midnight;” and after a little interruption, protracted his exercises “even till break of day.” When arraigned before Felix, he “reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come,” with such amazing moral appeals, that the judge “trembled” before the accused. When immured in a dungeon at Philippi, he and his fellow laborer and fellow sufferer, Silas, prayed and sung praises unto God; and these were but the introductory exercises to the successful announcement of the gospel to the tenants of that prison. In one word, the first heralds of the cross, exerted every energy of soul and body to convert and save the world.—Even Alexander in his

ambition
ter of t
and co
active
subjug

7.
ing th

The
tion of
their s
they se
cumsta
was to
manne
mend
influen
Their
which
struct
ate as
In all
tions,
labour
fame-
tempt
quenc
happy
ditary
mantl
succe
mere
imme
argun
preac
majes
ornan
things
the sa

T
which
A lab
fort i
by the
Great
must
exclu