

NEW-BRUNSWICK RELIGIOUS AND LITERARY JOURNAL.

"Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth peace, good will toward men."

VOLUME I.

SAINT JOHN, SATURDAY, JULY 18, 1820.

NO. 26.

MIS SIONARY INTELLIGENCE.

SUBSTANCE OF A SPEECH,

Delivered at the Anniversary Meeting of the Baltimore Conference Missionary Society, City of Baltimore, Monday evening, March 23, 1820—and repeated by request at the Anniversary of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in New-York, May 4th. By Rev. George G. Cookman.

I congratulate you, Sir, on the elevated position you sustain as the President of this Christian meeting; and I congratulate this assembly on the interesting and animating occasion which brings them together. There is, Sir, about a Missionary Meeting a spirit-stirring atmosphere, a sacred sympathy, better felt than expressed. It is here that we peculiarly recognize the solemnizing presence of the great Head of the Church, and it is here we catch the kindling charities of the gospel. Missionary ground is high and holy ground,—we stand exalted above our sectional and national feelings,—and as our eyes ranges over the boundless and comprehensive prospect of all the families of the earth,—as we mark the advancing march of gospel truth, and the victories of our Redeemer's cross, our souls spread abroad with spiritual enlargement, and catch a spark of that seraphic fire which touched the prophet's lips, and burns on heaven's high altar.

There was a period within your recollection, Sir, when it was necessary in the very teeth of opposition to advocate the cause of missions by force of reason, and dint of argument. Skepticism pronounced it a doubtful scheme, and infidelity pronounced it a mad scheme, and the wise men of this world pronounced it a foolish scheme; but, Sir, glory to the God of missions, he took the matter into his own hand, and triumphantly proved that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men!" and while some with Jewish unbelief were stumbling at the difficulties, and others with Grecian pride were smiling at the foolishness of the undertaking, our Father and our God was pleased by the foolishness of preaching to save even the very heathen that believe. And now, Sir, throughout this babbling earth, from the equator to the poles, we have ten thousand living epistles of irresistible argument, demonstrating beyond a doubt that the cause of missions is the cause of God. The object of these anniversaries is not to argue the practicability or propriety of the thing itself—this we reiterate is already abundantly established—but to rouse into full and vigorous activity, by the application of powerful and legitimate motives, the energies of the Christian church in the advancement of this grand and heaven-born design. The spirit of Christianity is essentially a missionary spirit. They are identified as one. You cannot separate them. Together they stand or fall. They are based on the broad foundation of an infinite benevolence, and they stretch abroad their sympathies to the wants and miseries of the universal world. The eternal Father loved nothing less than the world, and gave his Son for nothing less; and as he sent the sun to shine upon the evil and the good, so the out-beamings of his grace are essentially free.

The illustrious founder of our holy religion—himself a missionary, and the prince and the pattern of all missionaries—established a missionary system. He was not the mere head of a sect; but the great Head of that universal church, which, standing on the rock, defies the gates of hell. He broke down the middle wall of partition—he constituted this earth his magnificent temple, and in the evening of the world sent forth the general invitation to all the tribes of men to come and worship in his courts. This last glorious dispensation was ushered in by the songs of angels, as "glad tidings of great joy to all people;" and the "great effectual door" was opened on the day of pentecost, amid the rushing wind and the descending fire, with the mission-

ary commission, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

And, Sir, what were the old apostles, but heads of a missionary college? Themselves graduates under Jesus Christ, the great teacher of the church, Heaven taught, heaven inspired men! They were linguists without a lexicon, and preachers without a book. They had "the thoughts that breathe and the words that burn." These were missionaries of the right stamp. Men full of the Holy Ghost. Hearts of flesh—decision of steel—souls of fire. Emancipated by the Lord, the spirit of liberty, they rose above the narrowness of national prejudice, and became citizens of the world. They knew no man after the flesh,—they belonged to no nation,—they carried a message of mercy to every nation. There was Peter in his fisher's coat, and Paul the tent maker, and Matthew the publican, and they proclaimed, as they went, salvation free as the air you breathe, in the name of Christ the Lord. And the priests raged; and philosophy sneered; and royalty frowned; and the beasts of the people scourged, and pelted, and hooted; but, Sir, in the name of the God of missionaries, they went steadily on,—and, Sir, what was the result? why, Sir, the gospel was preached to all the world. The platform of Jewish ceremonies sank beneath the simple doctrines of Jesus; and the Gentile nations flocked to the standard of Immanuel. The proud citadel of Pagan mythology, stripped of its delusive grandeur, stood exposed a gloomy sepulchre, full of dead men's bones. Philosophy was conquered without argument; the gospel was preached in the very palaces of Rome; and eventually the cross of Christ was planted triumphant on the throne of the Cæsars.

And, now, Sir, that 1800 years have rolled away; I ask, Has the cause of missions lost any of its commanding and authoritative character? Is it not, like its divine author, the same yesterday, today, and for ever? Where will the opposer of missions set his foot? Will he dare to say that the unchangeable love of the eternal Father is in any degree abated? Or that the great Prophet of the Church has altered his purpose? Will he say that the gospel commission has run out, or that the moral state of the heathen is better, or the obligations of the Christian church less? O, tell it not in Gath, repeat it not in the streets of Askelon! We have been too lukewarm, too supine. It is high time to awake out of sleep. What! shall we need urging, with the high example of a missionary Saviour, and twelve missionary apostles, before our eyes? What! with such illustrious leaders in the van-guard of the Christian army, shall we shamefully loiter and lag in the rear? Nay, my brethren, let us up and be doing; the spirit of missions is the soul of the church; while we send the gospel abroad, God will revive the work at home. Let us then to the field. In this war there is no neutrality. Christ hath said, "He that is not for me is against me." "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." O, Sir, let us beware the curse of Meroz—for our want of missionary zeal. "Curse ye Meroz—curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, for they came not up to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

Let us not be misunderstood. We are not preferring a bold and sweeping charge against the churches, but rather stirring up their pure minds by way of remembrance. It is true indeed, emphatically true, that much remains to be done, but, Sir, it is equally true, that something has been done, and more is yet in progress. There has gone abroad throughout Protestant Christendom a redeeming spirit: of which this present missionary meeting is another triumphant proof, a spirit, which, in the expansion of its liberal designs, contemplates, under the blessing of God, nothing less than the evangelization of the world.

The world in which we live has taken a wonderful advance in art, science, civilization, and liberty, within the last hundred years, nor, Sir, has the

march of religious truth been behind the improvements of the age. The word of God, once immured in the recesses of a cloister, has been translated into almost all languages, and circulated into almost all lands, while the latent sparks of missionary fire have burst the shell of sectarian peculiarity; and now, Sir, the Protestant churches are emulously laboring in breaking up and cultivating the great field of the heathen world.

While we rejoice in the labours and success of other missionary societies, and wish them God speed in all their endeavours; perhaps, Sir, we may be permitted, on the present occasion, to refer particularly to our own.

We were saying, Sir, that the age in which we live was distinguished by unprecedented improvements. One astonishing discovery has followed upon another, proving how amazingly the vast powers of nature may be made subservient to the purposes of art, and among these stands pre-eminent the steam boat, the bright production of the creative genius of the immortal Fulton. It stands the eighth wonder of the world.

While, Sir, I as an individual render up my meed of admiration, permit me to say, that there is a vessel now afloat, which, though less celebrated on the pillar of this world's fame, has been productive of more real benefit to the best interests of mankind.

She was built at the foundry, city of London, under the direction of Messrs. John and Charles Wesley. She is constructed on precisely the same model, and built of the same materials, as the *old ship*, which was launched in the city of Jerusalem by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ immediately after his resurrection, and afterwards sailed and navigated by the fishermen of Galilee. She is, Sir, to all intents and purposes, a missionary vessel, calculated for spiritual discovery and Christian colonization. She carries letters of marque, a chosen crew of missionary adventurers, and steers by the bright and morning star of Bethlehem. It is true indeed for the first few years, her voyages were confined to the British seas. She alternately visited the islands of Ireland, Scotland, Man, Guernsey, Alderney, and Jersey;—in all which, under the blessing of God, flourishing colonies were established. But, Sir, the God of heaven never intended her for a coaster, she was destined to circumnavigate the globe. Accordingly, Sir, at this juncture, the great Head of the church raised up a body of men of high missionary feeling—spirits of lofty enterprise—hearted of universal charity. Need I name an Ashbury, a Boardman, a Pilmoor, a Whatcoat, and last, not least, a Coke. These men, adventurous as Columbus, and greedy of souls as ever Spaniards were of gold, launched the missionary vessel into the great and boundless deep of the Atlantic; and favored by propitious gales and an approving God, reached the shores of this new and far-famed world. Here, Sir, they boldly planted the standard of Methodism. Here they found the fields white already to harvest, nor had they long to complain that the labourers were few. God gave the word and great was the increase of able and effective men in this western viceroy of the Lord. The word of the Lord was like fire among dry stubble—it cleared the woods—it ran along the banks of our vast rivers—it was irresistible—it crossed the northern lakes—it penetrated the Southern swamps—it defied the frosts of Canada—it scaled the cloud capped summits of Alleghany—and now, Sir, let the pious observer behold the great family of Methodism—from New-Orleans in the south, to Labrador on the north, sitting beneath their own vine and fig tree;—and truly may he exclaim, "What hath God wrought?"

Nor, Sir, is this all. The Missionary spirit has done greater things than these. It has silenced for ever the futile theories of a self-created philosophy, and stopped the mouth of an arrogant political expediency. Where is now the empty declaimer who affirmed, with the solemnity of an oracle, that it