

Righteousness, who, with healing in his wings, was to dispel the darkness of a benighted world. Thus does the gospel concentrate the light of all past ages; and ever may it shine as a light to our feet and a lamp to our path, till its pure and heavenly radiance shall over mingle in the light of eternal glory.

II.

AN ADDRESS ON MISSIONS.

The subject to which your attention shall be directed for a few minutes is missions—the importance of missionary labour—the duty of constant and patient effort in this cause. Permit me to remind you,

1. *That the cause of Missions is the cause of God.*

The enterprises in which men engage are numerous and varied. Many of these require, and call forth no ordinary degree of fortitude and patience, and they are attended with great anxiety, since their results are followed by happiness or misery to multitudes. Of these numerous enterprises in which mankind engage, there are many of such a nature, that success in them adds but little to the aggregate of human happiness, and brings little or no advantage to those engaged in them. These circumstances tend not a little to retard effort. But even when the enterprise in which we engage, is in all respects proper, if we are ignorant of its ultimate success, and especially if we have some reasons to anticipate failure, in this state we begin to hesitate, we become listless, as if we had no great end to serve by our efforts. The slightest breath of opposition tends to cool our ardour and blight our hopes. We fold our hands and exclaim—"a lion is in our way." It is thus with many human enterprises. But the cause of missions, is the cause of God, of truth and of men. It is neither of small importance, nor of an uncertain issue. So important is it, that God's glory, the present and future happiness of man, are involved in its success, and it is as certain as God is true and Almighty. He has promised success in this cause; the word has gone out of his mouth and shall not return to him void, "That all flesh shall see his glory." The divine decree is, "I will give the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." And to accomplish this eternal purpose, which he purposed in "Christ Jesus our Lord," he has caused, and is still causing, all events to work together. We read the history of the Church, and of the world, to little purpose, if we see not in these records of his providence, intimations of his gracious designs to all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. And it is by the Gospel sincerely received, and properly diffused, that God is to be glorified. It is by the Gospel received and diffused that his perfections are to be known, and this is the glory which all flesh is to see. This cause then must advance, and ultimately triumph. He can accomplish this *His* purpose, and he will do all his pleasure. What examples have we of his power. Lift up your eyes on high and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their hosts by number, he calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power, not one faileth." We may see from his providence that he can make even the wrath of man, the opposition of his enemies, subservient to his will. But though he can thus bring honour to himself from the very ruin and dishonour of his enemies, it is because they hate and oppose the progress of the Gospel. The opposition of enemies and the indifference of pretended friends, may retard the progress of this cause, but when God arises to plead his own cause, and to contend with those who hate and oppose him—all opposition must give way and indifference cease.

2. *Consider what God has done to accomplish this cause.*

We refer especially to the mission, sufferings and death of the Saviour. And looking at this part of the divine effort for the promotion of the Gospel, we say, At what expense, how costly the sacrifice, on the part of God, that this cause might be promoted? Man, formed in the image and glory of God, is tempted by Satan—sins, and falls. All the race is involved in this sin and ruin. To remove these evils, to save fallen man, God sent his son into the world, after he had, through a long succession of years, and by a multiplicity of means, prepared for his advent—He sent him, in the fulness of time, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem those that were under the law, that we might obtain the adoption of sons." And when he sent him—it was to give his life a ransom for many. He gave him up to sufferings, many and severe, and at last brought him to the dust of death. In the sufferings and death of God's *own* son, we have strong evidences of the importance which he attached to the cause of missions and the salvation of sinners. For if he who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working—who ever displays his wisdom and power, by accomplishing important ends by apparently feeble means—if he, in order to promote his own glory and to extend, by the knowledge of the Gospel, the happiness of mankind—if he sent his only begotten son, shall we, enjoying as we do the benefits which he procured, and has so freely conferred on us, live indifferent to our duty? Say, shall the Son of God descend from the glories and happiness of Heaven? Shall he sojourn among beings whose depravity is so deep-rooted and rank, as to make them fit associates for impure spirits; fit fuel for unquenchable fire? Shall he become the object of their contempt, hatred and persecution? Shall he drink such a bitter cup of adversity as was given him—so large and deep—drink it to the very dregs? Shall he neither faint nor weary in this work of benevolence? Shall all this be done and those to whom the Gospel has been committed, and who have been blessed so greatly by it, and who profess to have received it, not only in word, but in power, weary in the duty, the important and pleasant duty

of communicating it to others—becoming the agents of comforting others with the consolations with which they are comforted of God. Surely such can never be our conduct. No work more glorious than this, and no honour greater than to become workers together with God! But

3. *This cause has been committed to his Church, and so far as our power and influence extend, to us.*

It has pleased God to make Christians the depositaries of his word, that word of life, which is given by inspiration. And the cause of missions, the cause of God, can be promoted only by the knowledge of the truth, contained in God's word. How important is it then, that all should know it. We may suppose, that if angels had been made the depositaries of such precious truth, as has been entrusted to the Church of Christ, and had they received such an honourable commission as the people of God have received, had they been made the messengers of God's mercy to guilty men—they would not have wearied in such a service—especially if their own happiness had been connected with its performance. How unweariedly would they have sought out, and brought sinners to the knowledge of the Gospel, that they might have seen the full import of their own words—"Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and good will toward men." But God has reserved this important duty, and high honour, for his people. He has fitted them for this work and honour. They can sympathise with ruined suffering sinners, in their trials, and with the redeemed in their joys. And this is well. The person who has been in slavery or captivity, knows the heart of the captive, what sorrows corrode his soul, and rob him of happiness and life—what longings for freedom and enjoyment possess him. The people of God know the importance of spiritual freedom—they can cordially sympathise with those who do not possess it—and they know that the Gospel must be to those in spiritual bondage, "glad tidings of great joy." Thus they are fitted to be the messengers of mercy to sinners. And as they are his people and acknowledge his authority, and profess obedience to his laws, to them he gives the command—"Go into all the world—preach the gospel to every creature." And in order to fulfil this commission, he gives them the Spirit, and promises them every requisite aid. The Spirit which he gives them subdues their selfish feelings and fears. Under the influence of the Spirit, they do not wish to possess such a rich inheritance as that which Christ has provided for and conferred upon them—an inheritance, which neither time nor death can destroy—"incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away," while multitudes of their brethren of mankind are destitute and perishing, especially since there is abundance for all, and room for all. When they know, too, that in proportion as multitudes are brought into the Kingdom, those who are there, and who are made the means of the salvation of those introduced, are made happy by their salvation. This then is our duty and privilege—the emancipation of those enthralled by sin—the redemption of the lost, through the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. You can never say to "a brother or sister naked and destitute of daily food—depart in peace, be warmed and filled—and give not to them those things which they need." No, you would supply their temporal wants. And with respect to their souls' needs, you surely would not withhold from them the bread of life, which never perishes, of which if a man eat he shall never hunger. You would lead them to the fountain of living water, of which, if any man drink, he shall never thirst. You would put it in their power to be clothed with the garments of righteousness, which will cause them to shine as the light and as the stars for ever and ever. You would endeavour to make them heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, in that Kingdom into which nothing that defiles can enter. And can we believe that such a glorious enterprise is committed in part to us, and yet remain in a state of callous indifference. To us, the Gospel has been committed, as an invaluable blessing—a treasure of great price—to be employed for the promotion of his honour, who has so honoured us. Surely we have experienced the blessedness of those who know the joyful sound. And is that blessedness which the Gospel has conferred on us, of such slight importance, of such small value, as not to be worth conferring on others? What would you think of any person who could, with feelings of apathy, behold myriads falling victims to the pestilence, which walketh in darkness, or to the destruction which wastes at noon day, and who had in his possession an infallible remedy for the malady—what could you think of such a person thus furnished, remaining indifferent to the ruin of the human family? You would regard him as actuated by dispositions akin to those which exist in, and excite the great enemy of God and man; to glory in the misery of those whom he has deceived and ruined. Now such is but a faint representation of the character of many professed Christians—who possess the spiritual food and medicine of this perishing ruined world. The Gospel is the true balm for every wounded soul—the true cordial for every fear—the true consolation for every sorrow. It is in their power to impart it, and yet they withhold it and permit men to perish. Such surely is not your disposition nor character. You have known that there is no happiness equal to that which springs from the approval of God, and the testimony of a conscience void of offence towards God and man—this happiness will be yours, if you receive the truth into your own souls, and continue to be workers together with God in the salvation of others. But remember—

4. *The nature and destiny of those for whom your sympathies and exertions in the cause of missions are required.*

They are immortal beings. When this earthly house of their tabernacle is dissolved, their being does not terminate. The soul lives in a state of unspeakable joy or sorrow. Even if man's existence did terminate when death comes and puts an end to all temporal toils and suffer-