

responsibility of having so many souls hanging upon us for the bread of life. The rapid strides of science, especially as combined with commerce, lay upon us an additional responsibility. God has given us such a wondrous sway over the material world, just that it may be made subservient to a spiritual sway over men's minds and hearts. We have by the leadings of a wise providence pressed into our service the most subtle elements of nature; and we now see realized before us, what in the last generation would have been regarded as the wild dream of a magician. We see steam wafting a frigate over the deep with as much ease as it spins a gossamer thread. By lines of rapid communication spread over the country as a net-work, our ideas of time and space are completely revolutionized, and a kingdom shrinks into a city with its suburbs. By the subtle and mysterious power of electric agency, mind can communicate with mind quick as thought, at any distance, so that the whole empire, when the lines are complete, may be regarded as a living frame-work, with nerves of sensation that in an instant vibrate intelligence from the remotest extremities. Let this system be but indefinitely extended, (and who will dare, from a review of the past, limit the future,) and you can easily conceive the stupendous power we shall have at our disposal for the spiritual regeneration of the world. And he who looks with curious but chastened gaze into the mysteries of Providence, cannot help thinking that these are so many paths preparing for the Lord in the desert—so many high-ways made straight, and smooth, for the chariot wheels of the Gospel, when in the latter days men shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. While we then view with wonder and delight the triumphs of mind over matter, let us feel it to be our duty, as a nation, to make these triumphs subservient to the triumphs of truth.

When I speak of a nation's duty to extend the Gospel, it is of course to be understood, that the responsibility, as to direct missionary labour, is committed to the National Church, as the exponent of the nation's creed, and the recognised organ of its evangelizing efficiency. While we would, therefore, gladly hail as auxiliaries, the various religious bodies which have embarked in the good cause, let us never forget that on us in the sight of God, lies the chief burden of cherishing a missionary spirit at home, and of sending the Gospel

abroad. It is matter of deep gratitude, that in the hour of the Church's need, her people shewed that they were not dead to their responsibility as members of a National Church. When we look on her unparalleled exertions in the cause of missions during the last two years, we have much reason to thank God and take courage. To you, who in the hour of affliction, have clung closer than ever to the Church of your fathers—a Church endeared to your hearts by the lives of saints, and the blood of martyrs—to you it must be peculiarly gratifying to see that Church so often laid low, rising once more from a temporary prostration, with all the glow and buoyancy of returning health and vigour. Oh! may it be the earnest prayer of every son and daughter of our beloved Zion, that she may give further proof of her indestructable vitality, by still more strenuous efforts for the evangelization of the world.

In conclusion, my friends, be not disheartened though there may for a time be an apparent want of success attending your missionary exertions. Be not dismayed though all the powers of darkness should seem to be arrayed against the progress of the kingdom of God. The obstacles may appear insurmountable, but how often is it that success is nearest when the obstruction is the greatest. How often has the triumph of the cross been most conspicuous, when Satan's power has been most appalling. Who could have dreamt at the Reformation, that such a flood of light should at once burst upon the world, from the thickest darkness that ever brooded over it? The progress of the kingdom of God is like that of a mighty river, almost imperceptible in its rise, but widening and deepening as it rolls on—and when fullest, most liable to obstruction. When the genial influence of spring relaxes the icy fetters of winter, and breaks up its solid surface, it rushes on with impetuous force, till arrested by the many arched bridge that spans its bosom. Here for a time its onward course is checked, but it is only that it may with its pent-up water, burst through with crashing and resistless energy. So it is in the kingdom of God; when the floods of divine grace are fullest, then are Satan's barriers most formidable. But though there may be a momentary arrest, it is only that the flood may gather strength to burst onwards in it overwhelming and triumphant course till it at last merge as one wide wave in the ocean of Millennial glory on earth, and eternal glory in heaven.