

men, to accomplish their object; that is, they applied appropriate means—the means of God's appointment, to awaken, convert, and save men. And in this undertaking they expected to succeed—not because they believed there was an inherent power in the means, nor even in revealed truth itself, to save the soul, but because God had promised his blessing. This assurance, that their labor would not be in vain, was intimately connected with the accomplishment of their end. This leaning upon heaven, honored God, and at the same time urged them forward in their work. They were precisely in that state of mind, most favorable for spiritual action. They were so deeply impressed with the consideration, that they could effect nothing without the Spirit of God, that their eye and heart were always fixed on heaven; and they were so confident that God *would* grant this influence, that they hardly commenced an enterprize, but they saw it already accomplished. In every undertaking, whether secular or spiritual, an *expectation* of success, is one of the necessary elements of successful action.

The apostles too, in preaching the gospel, aimed at making an impression at once; their object was to bring men to an immediate decision. In this respect they acted as men of good sense act in other things. They wished for a decision when the subject was fully before the mind, and its impression fresh upon the heart. They never sent men home to think of a sermon; they urged repentance for sin, and submission to the terms of salvation, as for the last time; they closed up the concern, under every discourse, as for the judgment seat! And in this course, they were directed by the clearest principles of common sense, as well as the Bible. The Advocate insists on a decision when the case is fairly before the court or the jury; the parliamentary speaker, when the discussion has fully closed.—And the reason is obvious; the subject is then before the mind. If it is a matter which respect duty or feeling, the heart and conscience are then most susceptible. If it should be urged that the cases are not parallel, because the efficacy of the gospel depends upon the divine blessing—I reply, that while the fact of dependence on God is not denied no such use of this fact is justified by the Bible. And the reason is probably this: the blessing of God goes along with the truth, and its rational applications, and not in some other way, mysterious in its nature, and unassociated with the instrument. Although the truth, by its own inherent powers, or by the appeals of moral suasion, will never convert one sinner, yet as far as it can reach, it has this tendency; and it is to be urged in the same manner, so far as man is concerned, as if the truth itself could effect the object proposed. In other words