

use the word "inspired" except in one peculiar sense—but if a man ever came near being inspired, it was William Carey when he was divinely guided to this very text, from which to preach that very sermon that was the foundation of modern missions; and we could not in the Word of God find another text more appropriate to June 1st, 1892, not less so than it was to May 30th, 1792. I am not ashamed to repeat a good thing: Sydney Smith said that for the purpose of public persuasion in oratory, repetition is the only figure of speech that is worth a farthing. Thank God, we can always use, and all of us use, that figure of speech! so I take this text, for it is the only text to take: "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations."

Let me first call your attention very briefly and simply to the text itself. I would like to have you notice the grammatical and rhetorical structure of it, for all these things help exegesis and exposition. It is formed on the principle of the Hebrew parallelism. You remember how the Hebrew poets, instead of seeking rhyme and rhythm in words, sought rhyme and rhythm in thought, and that is one of the marks of the inspiration of the Word of God. If the poetry of the Hebrew depended upon words, their peculiar collocation and allocation, and rhyme and rhythm, we could not convey into another language, without much circumlocution, the beauty of the Hebrew original. But when the rhyme and rhythm are in the thoughts and not in the language they can be transferred into any other tongue. Now, looking at this as an example, you will find that although this little idyll or epic on missions runs from the first to the eighth verses inclusive, the portion we are now to consider contains several couplets or portions consisting of two numbers each, and yet in parallels as well. I think you can notice this in the reading. There is first a double exhortation: "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations." Then there comes a single phrase that has its correlative phrase further on—"Spare not." The correlative to that is, "Fear not," in the beginning of the fourth verse. We shall see the relation of these as we go on. Then there comes a double injunction, showing the means by which the Church is to enlarge her tents, stretch forth her curtains: "Lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes." Then there comes another couplet, the couplet of Divine promise: "For thou shalt burst forth on the right hand and on the left, and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles and make the desolate cities to be inhabited."

Now I think no man is competent thoroughly to expound Scripture that does not study its exact structure. There is a reason why this structure is evolved in the very form of the text itself. God is showing us here what the duty of the Church is—to enlarge her canopy and stretch forth her curtains. He is showing the Church how to do this duty—there are to be lengthened cords and strengthened stakes; and He is showing the Church what her great peril is, that, in the first place, she shall spare—the Hebrew word means "grudge"—that is to say, that she shall be selfish and so