

asmuch as these constitute the most successful antidote to despondency and distrust, and the most animating and powerful stimulants to enlarged exertion and increased activity. It is want of consideration and study, as well as want of faith, that makes some men droop, doubt, waver in this matter, while others are steadfast in their purpose, alive to their duty, and cheerful in the anticipation of assured success. Whether we revert to the past, or look around upon the present, we are equally taught to regard, with interest and confidence, the opening prospects of the future. Christianity has already passed through the most trying ordeal, baffled the calculations, and defied the opposition of countless foes, and is now more extended, more vigorous, more aggressive than ever.

From the early and rapid propagation of the faith, therefore, we draw a powerful historical encouragement to anticipate its final triumph—a universal success. Ours is still the self-same instrumentality, which proved so effective in primitive days—it is called “the foolishness of preaching,”—and this is still our confidence, that “the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” We are animated by the thought, that it is the same holy, heavenly faith, which, at the first, overturned the most elaborate systems of Paganism, hurled the idols from their shrines, and crushed their polluted temples into dust, that is now again going forth upon the world—speeding with undiminished eagerness and energy, to nobler triumphs and more splendid victories. Admirably has a living author expressed the sentiment,—“We pass to the field of missionary effort, over the wrecks of former systems of idolatry, and through scenes of early Gospel triumph; and shall we not feel the inspiration of the scene? Where now is Diana of the Ephesians? Where now are Jupiter and the gods of Greece, and where the whole pantheon of Rome? The first Christians testified against them, and they vanished. Missionaries of Christ came to Britain, and where now are Woden and all the Saxon gods—Hesus, and all the more ancient and sanguinary rites of the Druids? The idols which we now assail in other lands, have been long since routed, and the sword we wield routed them. The gods of India are the same, under different names, which Greece and Italy adored; the sword of the Lord chased them from the West, and shall it do less in the East? Remembering ‘the years of the right hand of the Most High,’ let us thank God, and take courage.”

Another historical encouragement may be drawn from the progress and success of modern missions. Already the attractive power of the cross of Christ has been signally manifested on fields the most unpromising. Enough has been accomplished to demonstrate, that no obstacle whatever, physical, social, moral, intellectual, can finally frustrate the introduction of the Christian faith. All things are possible with God. And by His grace accompanying the proclamation of the Gospel, the most degraded tribes of Adam's family have been elevated, enlightened, Christianised. The Bible has struck the chords of sacred emotion in the stony heart of the savage, hushed his terrific passions, refined his rugged nature, driven out the unclean spirit, and taught the poor child of the wilderness to rest in God alone, and wait for His salvation. The darkened intellect of the African has been lighted up with the lamp of eternal truth. The affections of the Greenlander have been warmed and sanctified. The Red Indian has with lowly heart embraced the faith. At the sound of the gospel, proclaimed by Brainerd, the veteran of a hundred battles, and a hundred years, has become a little child; and a host of warriors, each of whom would once have preferred death to a tear, have wept—“so that there was a very great mourning, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon.” In the far off Islands of the sea, the ferocity and repulsive degradation of the cannibal have been transformed into the gentleness, the purity, and prayerfulness of the spiritual Christian. Mada-

gascar has yielded its noble band of witnesses for the truth. Nor must we omit to add, that successful inroads have now been made on the engrossing superstition of the Asiatic mind. The letters of the sternest bigotry have yielded to the power of the gospel; and love to Jesus Christ has enabled even the shrinking Hindoo cheerfully to incur the loss of cast, nay, more, to brave the pangs of martyrdom. Such are the first fruits which have been gathered in by missionary effort, even with the feeble and limited exertions hitherto put forth. Shall we not exclaim with joyfulness, “what hath God wrought?” and shall we not with renewed gratitude, and redoubled zeal, promote an enterprise so auspiciously begun?

It is not my intention, however, to dwell any further on these animating views to which I have referred, but rather to invite your attention to the encouragement which comes to us from yet another source, and that is *scripture prophecy*. We repose our confidence on the word of Him who cannot lie, and who has declared, “I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times, the things that are not yet done—saying, “My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure; yes, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I also will do it.”

Familiar to every reader of scripture, are the rich promises addressed to the Lord Jesus Christ himself, as God's elect servant, the Messiah, and the King of Zion—in reference to the number of His spiritual offspring—the extent, prosperity and duration of His kingdom. It is nothing less than a universal dominion that is ensured to the Son as the reward of His low-magnifying, God-glorifying obedience. What can be more definite than the promise “I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” Or what more expressive of the enlarged purposes of Jehovah, than the word which came by the prophet Isaiah: “It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.” When we behold, with shrinking and dismay, the violence and apparent success of those who are the enemies of the cross of Christ, we may take comfort in the thought, that their prosperity is short-lived at the uttermost—for it is written, “His enemies will I clothe with shame, but upon himself shall his crown flourish.” All that opposes shall be taken out of the way; and of his dominion there shall be no end. “His name shall endure for ever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed.” This was that joy set before him which cheered the man of Sorrows in the toils of life, and even in the bitterness of death. With the cross on his back, he had the crown in his eye. He finished his work—he won the prize—he secured the eternal reward. Ere he returned to his Father's house, he gladdened the hearts of his disciples with the announcement, “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.” Then let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. His throne cannot be subverted. All nations shall bow to the sceptre of his grace. The word of the Most High God is pledged in covenant, in prophecy and promise to our Lord Jesus Christ, to exalt his name in all the earth—to “set his hand in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers.” “My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him; his seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.”

Closely connected with these promises addressed to Christ, the Head of the Church, are the numerous predictions more directly spoken to the Church herself—indicating a triumphant termination to her present struggles—ensuring a vast expansion of her present influence—and telling of the reign of universal purity and peace, when Satan shall be

bound a thousand years, and Zion shall be made an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. “Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God.” “The Lord will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defence.”

We have been divinely taught to pray—“Thy kingdom come”—and we know that the fulfilment of that petition cannot fail, for in ancient prophecy it is written: “The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom, under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.” Manifest are the illustrations of the same great truth. In vision there appeared to the king of Babylon, “a stone cut out without hands,” an emblem of the Church of Christ, established without the aid of human power, or carnal policy. This stone “smote the image, overturned all opposing authority—and it became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.” Elsewhere the figure is varied, and the Church is compared to a magnificent temple, rising in its sublime proportions from earth to heaven, and all nations flowing unto it. The materials of this stupendous fabric are described. Foundations of sapphires, windows of agates, gates of carbuncles, and borders of pleasant stone, are all illustrative of the permanence, prosperity, and spiritual beauty of the gospel Church. Once more—the effects of a universal reception of the gospel are indicated by predictions of a glorious change even on the visible creation. The earth is represented as one scene of peace, and purity, and love. “The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.” And all this as the result of *spiritual renovation*—for it is when the “spirit shall be poured upon us from on high” that “the wilderness shall be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.—Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field.” In the figurative descriptions of this truly golden age, not even the inferior animals are forgotten—“The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fating together, and a little child shall lead them.” It shall be a time of enlarged knowledge as well as extended peace.—Darkness shall brood no longer over the church or the world. “Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.”

Such then being the glorious prospect which awaits the church of Christ—it is manifestly a most interesting and important reflection, that this consummation shall be reached, this amazing change accomplished, by human instrumentality under the dispensation of the Spirit. It is by means of labourers that the harvest of souls shall be gathered. It is by the foolishness of preaching that God is pleased to save them that believe.—We deny not indeed, nay, we believe, that great movements in Providence shall be made subservient to the world's conversion. Not without terrific struggles shall the empire of superstition and sin be suppressed. There shall be weep on the earth, before the dawn of the long morn of a thousand years. This is in accordance with the general order of the divine government in the past, according to which, providential judgments have broken up the way for the onward march of the spiritual reign of Christ. As it has been well expressed—“So vast is the gospel economy in its sweep and design, that it includes and appropriates every kind of agency; presses into its service the angel of wrath, as well as employs the angel of mercy; and lays under tribute all the revolutions of time, and all the dispensations of providence.”

[Here follows a brief review of the theory of