

means and human institutions are employed to convey this message to the hearing of men, but there human agency ends. To render it effectual is reserved for the direct and irresistible influence of the Holy Spirit of God; and to that influence the most degraded of the human race are as accessible as the most elevated in learning and refinement. We are ready to regard it as an easy matter to preach the gospel to an enlightened and professedly christian community. No opposition will be encountered there;—but it is entirely different to go among savages, and the undertaking is looked upon as difficult, if not hopeless. True, if the preacher looks no further than the form of religion; the two cases are widely different. But if his object be to save souls from the power of sin, this difference disappears, and he will find himself as helpless, and as entirely dependent on the working of God, in the one case as in the other. Difficult indeed it is to dislodge the power of idolatry and superstition, and to root out those depraved habits established in all parts of the heathen world; but is it *less* difficult to destroy the love of the world which, in every unrenowned heart, rules among the most distinguished for intelligence, and most strict in their adherence to the outward forms of religion? Among them, not less than among the most degraded savages, the carnal mind is enmity against God; and instead of that enmity being more easily subdued among those outwardly moulded to the precepts of Christian morality, the facts of the case lead us to the very opposite conclusion. Look at the records of missionary labour, and compare the fruits with those of which the servants of Christ labouring in the professedly christian world can speak, and how great and striking is the difference. It is not uncommon to see the missionary rejoice over hundreds and thousands whose hearts have savingly experienced the power of the gospel, while his brethren at home, preaching the same truth, and as faithfully as he, have very frequently to mourn that no token for good is given. Take the South Sea missionaries, Williams, Geddie, and many others, or look to whatever part of the heathen world the heralds of Christ have gone—Africa, India, China, or the Indian tribes of North America,—and the result will be the conviction that the obstacles which ignorance and idolatry present, are not in reality so formidable as the barriers raised in the fashions, the forms and the worldliness which pervade the multitudes professedly Christian. Not more dead in sin is the untutored savage than the most irreproachable in character whose heart is still unsanctified by the Spirit of God. It is of the greatest importance that this should be constantly borne in mind. However hopeless the case may seem, the message of Christ conveyed by the agency of the Spirit will be found sufficient. When Peter preached his first sermon under the ministration of the Spirit, he addressed a multitude of whom it was difficult to cherish any hope. They were enemies; the most of them hated the name of Jesus, and many of them were sharers in the awful guilt of His death; but memorable will ever be the fruits of that first sermon. The Spirit of the Lord was there, and in His hand the word pierced through every obstacle, until, from thousands of wounded hearts, the cry of pain and agony was heard, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” The first preachers of the gospel always ascribe every instance of success to the presence of their Lord, working by his Spirit: “The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed.” God always causeth us to triumph in Christ. “The Lord opened the heart of Lydia.” This is the character of their language throughout the whole record. You are going to the dark places of the earth with the same commission as they, and with the same assurance that the presence of your Master will be always with you. Souls are as precious now, in His sight, as when the eleven disciples went forth on another mission of mercy; and there is still joy among the angels when one sinner is brought from darkness to light. You cannot rest too confidently in the fulfilment of His promise. The more entirely you commit yourself and your labours into His hands, and the more largely you ask and