

I Affair of the highest Importance to Mankind, and therefore first given in Charge to his Apostles by the Son of God, when He commanded them to Go, Teach, and Baptize all Nations in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost :

So hath it been the chief Care of Apostolical Men in all Ages downwards, to execute that Commission for the Good of Souls, and the Honour of their Blessed Redeemer.

How the Primitive Preachers of the Gospel succeeded in the Discharge of their great Trust in the earlier Days of Christianity, we have a glorious Account in the sacred Writings, where we find, that whilst they were acted by one and the same Spirit, the Gospel was wonderfully propagated by them; 'twas no sooner risen, but, like the Sun its Emblem, it shone forth even upon the remotest Parts of the then known World, giving Light to them which sat in Darkness, and in the Shadow of Death. But it underwent in after-times frequent Eclipses, and suffer'd strange Declensions thro' the Corruptions and Dissentions of those that succeeded in the later Ages: And 'tis a very melancholy thing to reflect, how our most Holy Religion, which in Fifty Days after the Resurrection of our Lord, was proclaim'd at Jerusalem to Men of all the Nations, and in all the Languages under Heaven; doth now at more than Fifteen Hundred Years distance, thro' the prevailing Influences of Judaism, Mahometanism, and Paganism, bear no larger a Proportion to those other Professions than that of V. to XXV. No more than which is allow'd it by the most accurate Computation in its utmost Latitude, as it comprehends the Eastern, the Latin, and the Protestant Communions at this Day.

To recover the Ground lost, and for the better promoting the Design of the Gospel, in reducing all Denominations to one Fold, whether Jews or Gentiles, there have been many and zealous Attempts for the Conversion of Infidels in these last times.

The Church of Rome, whose Emisaries compass Sea and Land to gain Profelytes, boasts much of her Spanish, Portuguese, French, and several other Missions; by which it must be confess'd, that the Name and Profession of Christianity hath indeed been enlarged, yet not without such gross Corruptions as very eminent Persons among themselves have deservedly complain'd of, whilst the Reformed Churches of Holland, Sweden, Denmark, &c. have done more, though with less Pomp, and under far less happy Opportunities.

England, we must confess, hath been too much wanting and negligent in this great Concern, from whom more might have been expected, as enjoying more of the special Favours of God, under a clearer Light of the Gospel than many other Nations; but the Concurrence of some unhappy Circumstances under which we have long labour'd, hath obstructed the willing Endeavours of many able and pious Persons, who would heartily have come into this Evangelical Work; But this noble Design seem'd, by the special Providence of God, to be reserved for so favourable a Season, when many other pious and charitable Works are carrying on in this Kingdom.

'Twas during the Reign of King William III. that this glorious Design, for advancing the Kingdom of the Blessed Jesus abroad, was first effectually set on foot; Who was no sooner inform'd by some whose Hearts God had fir'd up for this extraordinary Undertaking, That in many of our Plantations, Colonies and Factories beyond the Seas, the Provision for Ministers was very mean; and many others of our Plantations, Colonies and Factories were wholly destitute and unprovided of a Maintenance for Ministers and the Publick Worship of God; and that for lack of Support and Maintenance for such, many wanted the Administration of God's

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