

the days of her youth, her moral power would shake all nations. How is she to awaken from her lethargy? How is she to strengthen the things that remain and are ready to die? Simply by acting according to her constitution as a missionary church: by praying God to be merciful to her and bless her: and cause his face to shine on her, so that his way may be known upon the earth, His saving health among all nations.

If one of her chief functions be the evangelistic or missionary, the neglect to exercise that function, must deprive her, in a great measure, of her vital energies. The health of the body is preserved by the regular and legitimate exercise of all the functions belonging to it; if any one is abused or suffered to remain inactive, debility and disease are the consequence. The same law holds in the spiritual world. If the christian neglects his duty to God he feels the blighting effects of such dereliction in his own soul. If the church neglect hers, she is punished by the withdrawing of the light of God's countenance and the loss of those graces which are cherished by the faithful performance of duty. Of this her history affords abundant proof. At what period was she spiritually wretched and poor and miserable and blind and naked? Was it not when she was saying to herself 'I am rich and have need of nothing;'—when she was enjoying the adulterous embrace of kings and seeking after worldly grandeur and preferment. When did she possess most of the spirit of Christ and shine in the beauties of holiness? Was it not when she was poor in this world's goods and rich in faith: when she remembered her Saviour's command and was engaged in evangelizing the world. Then, the spirit of love; holy zeal and fervent piety shone brightly. Then love marked the Christian character; it moulded his actions and directed his aims. With the decay of the evangelistic spirit in the church, the spirit of love decayed and lukewarmness came in its place. From lukewarmness arose indifference to the grand distinguishing doctrines of Christianity, and indifference opened a door to error and every corruption. Nothing, indeed, is so essential to the maintenance of love, unity and purity as the conviction that the whole church is a body organized for the converting of the world. We see that in those sections in which this conviction has been revived in some measure, dissensions begin to cease: as it deepens, one general pulse is felt and all unite in harmony and peace. The amount of the reflex influence of missions on the church can hardly be estimated. It is like the water evaporated by the sun, which returns in gentle showers producing fertility and beauty. Benevolence is strengthened: piety is deepened: the doctrines of grace are honored and preserved in their purity—those doctrines by which alone the hearts of sinners can be melted into penitence, and the souls of believers refreshed and invigorated. These are some of the effects of missions upon the church, but there is another, and one which must afford the richest enjoyment to every christian. It is the sweet consciousness of obeying the parting command of Him, who though he was rich, yet for our sake became poor.