

from all danger, by introducing them to the lights of the Gospel. Without, therefore, presuming to decide upon a question so awfully momentous as the salvation of the heathen, we may readily perceive, that by imparting to them the rich inheritance of the Gospel which we enjoy, we shall confer upon them the most precious benefits, both of a temporal and spiritual kind; and to do this, is an imperious duty; a duty acknowledged by the first Christians, and performed with a zeal and fortitude not to be surpassed. Nor is this duty now forgotten; it appears to attract all the Christian world; for, as we become better acquainted with the lights of the Gospel, the more do we feel for those who are still in darkness.

Protestants had long been reproached by the Catholics, for their want of zeal, and indifference to the progress of Christianity. This was called one of the proofs of their heresy; for if they really professed the true faith, it was said that they would be anxious for its propagation. But it is easy to justify the Protestants on this head. They had not the necessary means to send out Missions among the heathen nations, till long after the Reformation. Harassed, opposed and persecuted by their more powerful and numerous opponents, they had no leisure to look beyond themselves. They had to contend for the faith at their own doors; they were still in jeopardy, still doubtful of the victory; but no sooner were they at rest, and their principles firmly established, than they began to turn their attention to their benighted brethren.

In 1699, a few individuals in England, of elevated station and eminent piety, both among the