

# THE MISSIONARY RECORD

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### THE INDIFFERENCE OF THE WORLD TO THE ONE PARAMOUNT INTEREST.

However it is to be explained, that the men of the world exhibit a deplorable indifference to the one grand interest that ought to engage our concern or attention, is too obvious to need any proof. A great gulf, as it were, divides the two opposite states, or conditions, of man—his temporal and spiritual. He is on an arena on which there are two great parts to be played; two great dramas; of which the denouement or catastrophe is very different. According as it is his temporal or spiritual part that is cared for, his action partakes of one or another character. If he assign sole importance to the one, all his efforts and actions will be characterized accordingly: if the other is allowed its legitimate place, the bent of the feelings, and direction of the energies, will correspond. We see, however, the temporal usurps the place over the spiritual. Man looks upon himself as born for time; as having only this world to care for; and his object is to live for his world, to get on as prosperously in it as he can. He embarks all his energies on the tide of secular enterprise, or he sails down the current of time, heedless of the future, or with as little regard to the claims of another state of existence as possible. What although his enterprises are often baffled, he sees the wreck of his schemes, and the relentless wave of disappointment covers all his fondly cherished hopes, the present life is all to him, and disappointment teaches no lesson with regard to the importance of another. Nor does man seem to see that in all part he is playing even while his schemes are most successful, and when

every enterprise is going well with him. Should this world engage our sole attention? Should secular interests merely, engross our time, and form the only object of our pursuit? What noble powers are expended upon these! What fine faculties are made the servants of engagements that ought not exclusively to claim them! The termination of a career which has been solely for this world appears a sad solecism when one comes to die, and finds the end of all his enterprises to be on this side of time, and existence is like a thread that has been snapped, without any continuity. We come to a pause, and see the sad disproportion between the past and what is now our future. We are arrested, and we hardly realize—we are confounded—that we could have lived wholly for time, been engrossed exclusively with its objects, and scarcely spent a thought upon eternity. The immense disparity between the interests of the one and those of the other, now appears. We are made to realize our true destinies. The great drama has been played wrongly. *The termination to the acts is altogether disproportioned to them*—the exit from the stage is not a sequel to the part that has been performed. Is man, however, to be altogether indifferent to his temporal interests? Certainly not. But a beautiful continuity may be preserved, even when it is our temporal interests that are attended to, so that there need be no violent change when we are passing from time to eternity,—as inevitably we must: there need be no such disparity between the two states: the one may harmoniously run into the other. The actor may be the same, and the drama may be consistent. Man has only to realize his spiri-