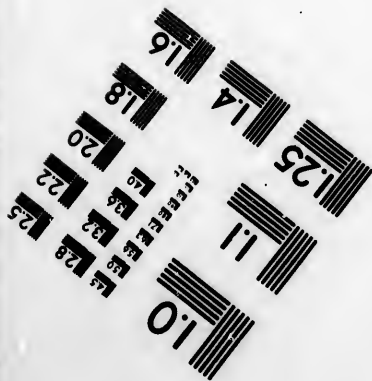
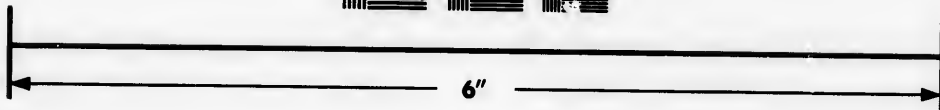
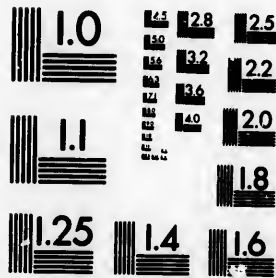


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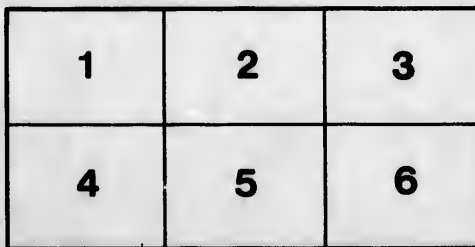
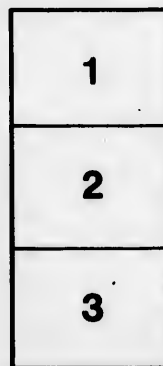
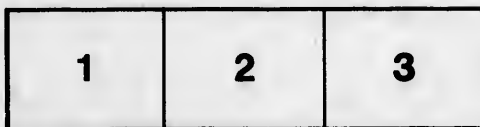
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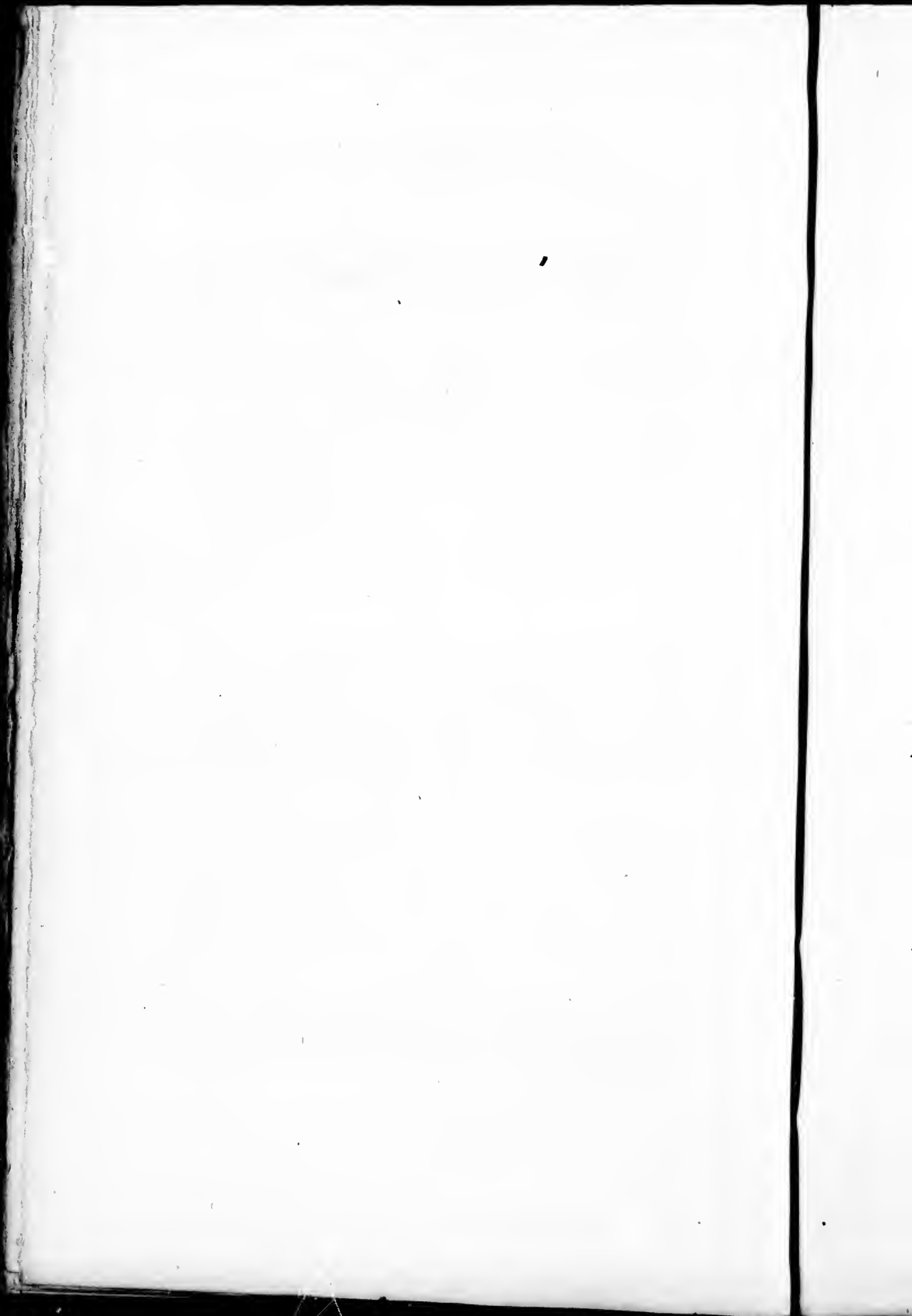
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THE

Witnessing Church:

A SERMON,

DELIVERED IN THE GREAT QUEEN-STREET CHAPEL, LONDON, APRIL 28, 1837; AND IN GROSVENOR-STREET CHAPEL, MANCHESTER, JUNE 20.

BY THE REV. JOHN HARRIS,

AUTHOR OF 'MAMMON,' 'THE GREAT TEACHER,' 'BRITANNIA,' ETC.

TORONTO:

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THE WITNESSING CHURCH.

"Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God."

Nature - A Witness for God Isaiah xlili. 12.

There is one important respect in which all objects in the universe, from the atom to the archangel, unite: all are witnesses for God. He who made all things for himself has so made them that, voluntarily or involuntarily, according to their respective natures, they distinctly attest the divine existence and character. He has not left it contingent whether they give such testimony or not. The great name of the Maker is inwoven into the texture of every thing he has made. So that even if the creature possess a will, and that will become depraved, and guiltily withhold its intelligent testimony to the divine existence, an eloquent and incorruptible witness is still to be found in the physical constitution of that creature; if the fool should say in his heart, "There is no God," every pulse of that heart replies, "There is," and every atom of that vital organ adds, "He is thy Maker."

As the nature of the material witnesses differs, it follows of course that the manner in which they render their evidence will vary accordingly. In regard to some of them, the marks of design and beneficence

are so obvious that they may be said to be ever speaking for God, without solicitation,—the divine signature is visibly imprinted on their surface. In regard to others, the evidence lies deeper, and must be sought for patiently. In such cases, while the witnesses are under examination, while the investigation is proceeding from link to link in the chain of evidence, the ungodly sometimes unseasonably exult, and the timid and uninformed believer in revelation trembles for the issue. But he need not. Let him only wait confidently, as God does, till the examination be complete, till the inquiry has reached the last link of the chain, and that link will invariably be found in the hand of God.

Chemistry—once the stronghold of the skeptic—has long since discovered that no substance in nature is simple and unmixed; in other words, that every thing is in a *made* state,—that even the atom is an artificial, manufactured thing: so that an argument for God lies hid in every particle of which the globe is composed; and a witness is in reserve in every pebble we pass; and a final appeal is lodged for him in the elements, or first principles, of all things: thus demolishing the altar which skepticism had erected to the eternity of the world, and replacing it by an altar dedicated and inscribed to the divine Creator. So that, if we hold our peace, or withhold our homage, the very stones will cry out.

Geology,—the voice of the earth, the Pompeii of natural religion, the witness now under examination,—a witness raised from the grave of a former world,

is producing her primitive formations, to show that even *they* are in a *made* state, and her fossil skeletons, to show that they bear indubitable marks of having come from the hand of the one great Designer: leaving us to infer that, could we reach the foundation of the earth, we should find it inscribed with the name of the divine Architect—that, could we penetrate to the central atom of the globe, it would speak for God; and thus impelling us to erect, out of the wreck of a former world, a temple to Him who hath created all things new.

Astronomy leads us forth into the vast amphitheatre of nature, to gaze on ten thousand times ten thousand burning worlds: and are they not all witnesses for God? For are they not all *in motion*? This is not nature, but miracle. The first miracle was the production of matter; the second, to make that matter move. Its natural state is rest; but here are unnumbered myriads of material worlds in motion, out of their natural state, in an artificial, constrained, preternatural state. They are all God's witnesses. The stars in their courses fight against irreligion. Each of them, obediently followed, is a star of Bethlehem—a guide into the divine presence. Each of them rushes through immensity as a miracle and a messenger from God to the universe, proclaiming—"There is a God, and the hand of that God is upon me:" and all of them unite—yes, this is the real music of the spheres, the chorus of creation!—all of them unite in proclaiming his eternal power and Godhead. In the estimation of the Psalmist, the creation is a vast temple; and often

did he summon the creatures, and join them in a universal song of praise. And John heard the chorus. The noise and din of a distracted world may drown their voices here; "But," saith he, "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever." Thus nature, with all her myriad voices, is ever making affirmation and oath of the divine existence, and filling the universe with the echo of his praise.) *Nature's Witnessing Church*

But since the period of the creation, a new state of things has arisen, and a new order of witnesses has consequently become necessary. Sin has entered the world. Man has fallen away from his Maker, and has renounced the divine authority. To say, therefore, that there is a God, and that that God is wise, powerful, and good, is only to say, in effect, that there is ground for the greatest apprehension and alarm; for sin is a guilty impeachment of that wisdom, a hostile defiance of that power, and a wilful affront of that goodness. The question, therefore, now arises, What is the course which the offended Majesty of Heaven is likely to take toward us? What, under these new circumstances, are the new terms on which we stand with him? *Will* justice have free course against us? And, if not, what is to turn it aside? On this anxious topic, nature has received no instructions, and is silent. "The depth saith, '*It is not in me.*'" Clouds of gloom have gathered and settled into thick darkness

around about his throne, and whether the light that will eventually burst forth from that gloom will be a fierce flash to scathe and destroy, or a genial ray to enkindle hope, nature could not foretell. By the introduction of sin, our condition had become preternatural, and the voice that speaks to us, therefore, must be supernatural. God must become his own witness.

And he did so. Breaking the fearful silence which sin had produced, and which might have lasted for ever, he spoke to us. And every accent he uttered was an accent of love. His first sentence contained hope for the world. He signified that it was his divine intention to save, and announced, at once, a coming Redeemer. Then *God is love!* The great question is answered—the grand secret has transpired, that *God is love!* And the world must know it. The veil which sin had raised between God and us has fallen—and, behold, “God is love!” And every creature under heaven must hear of it. The happiness of every man depends on his knowing it. “This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”

But if the knowledge of the divine character be thus indispensable, how shall that knowledge be made most accessible and available? As nations multiply, and one generation succeeds another, how shall this sacred treasure be preserved and transmitted? Depravity will tamper with its holiness; who shall guard it from polluted hands? Penitence and fear will question its truth; who shall encourage them to believe it? Unbelief will dispute its authenticity; who shall bear

witness for God? All will need it, for it is essential to salvation; how shall it be made accessible?

Now these questions had been anticipated by the eternal Mind, and all these necessities provided for, in his purpose of instituting a church, a society of witnesses for God. The design of this divine institution, indeed, is twofold—partly, to promote the welfare of its own members, but principally to be a witness for God, an instrument of his mercy to the world. It is first a focus, in which all the light from heaven should meet, and all the sanctified excellence of earth be collected and combined; that it might next be a centre, whence the light of truth might constantly radiate, and pour forth in all directions over the face of the earth.

And, accordingly, the general remarks to which I would now solicit your devout attention relate to the following important positions:—that the church of God is expressly designed, in its relative capacity, and as the depositary of the knowledge of salvation, to be his witness to the world; that in every age it has prospered or declined in proportion as it has fulfilled or neglected this special office; that its motives and its responsibility for answering this end are greater now than at any preceding period of its history; and that this consideration should induce its members anxiously to survey its wants and its resources for answering that end: and may the divine Founder of the church be graciously present by his Spirit to aid our meditations.

First, then, I would illustrate the great truth that

the church of God is expressly designed, in its relative capacity, and as the depository of the knowledge of salvation, to be his witness to the world.

Passing by all the interesting illustrations of this truth which might be drawn from antediluvian and patriarchal history, let us confine our attention to the Jewish and Christian churches. And here, on viewing these Churches together, as parts of a great whole, we are instantly struck with the different ways in which they concur to answer their design as witnesses for God. The Jewish Church was a local stationary witness; and the duty of the world was to come and receive its testimony: the Christian Church is not local and stationary, but is to go to the world. The Jewish Church was an oracle, and the world was expected to come and inquire at its shrine: the Christian Church is an oracle also, but instead of waiting for the world to come to it, it is commanded to go into all the world, and to testify the Gospel of the grace of God to every creature.

In accordance with this representation of the Jewish Church, we find that it contained every prerequisite for answering its end as a stationary witness for God; nothing was omitted calculated to promote this object; its early history was a history of miracles, to excite the attention, and draw to itself the eyes of the wonder-loving world; its ritual was splendid and unique; its members were distinguished in character from those of every other community on the face of the earth; its creed, or testimony, was eminently adapted to the existing state of the world, for it proclaimed a

God, and promised a Saviour ; its members possessed a personal interest in the truth of the testimony they gave ; and what was especially important, its geographical position was central. That large portion of the earth whose waters flow into the Mediterranean, is the grand historical portion of *the world* as known to the ancients. Judea was situated in the midst of it, like the sun in the centre of the solar system. Placed at the top of the Mediterranean, it was, during each successive monarchy, always within sight of the nations ; and its temple-fires, like the Pharos of the world, were always flinging their warning light across the gross darkness of heathenism—protesting against idolatry, witnessing for the one living and true God, inviting the nations to come and worship before him, and foretelling the advent of One whose light should enlighten the world.

Thus studiously adapted, and divinely qualified to act as a stationary witness for God to the world, the Jewish Church is called on in the text to appear in this its official capacity, and the idolatrous nations are summoned to Judea to receive its testimony. Ages had elapsed since that church had been called into existence, but still the worship of idols prevailed. Now, therefore, God is sublimely represented as determined to bring the great question to a close ; his voice is heard issuing his mandate to all the nations of the earth, to all the idols and their votaries, to appear in Judea ; and then calling forth the Israelites to give evidence in his behalf. “Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears—the

senseless idolators ; let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled : what god among *them* can show us former things ? Let them bring forth *their* witnesses, that they may be justified ; or, if *they* cannot do it, let them hear *me*. and acknowledge that what I say is truth. Ye people of Israel are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I, even I, am God, and beside me there is no Saviour."

As if the Almighty had said, "It is high time to bring this great controversy to a final decision ; let all my rivals come." And we are to suppose them assembling : Moloch, "besmeared with infant blood," and all the cruel gods of the Ammonites ; Rimmon, Ashtaroth, and all the licentious idols of Syria ; Baal, Dagon, Tammuz, and all the false deities of Phenicia ; Apis, and all the monster-deities of Egypt. "Let them come from their fabled resorts in Ida, from the heights of Olympus, from the shrines of Delphos and Dodona, from their temples, groves, and hills,—the whole pantheon,—the thirty thousand gods of heathen mythology, with all their retinue of priests and worshippers. And now," saith Jehovah, "having assembled, let them produce their witnesses to justify their conduct in receiving worship ; and for this end, let them prove that one of their pretended prophecies was ever fulfilled. I am content to rest my claims on that single proof. Are they silent ? Then let my witnesses stand forth ; let the nation of Israel appear. Descendants of the patriarchs, children of the prophets, *ye* are my witnesses. Testify in my behalf before this assembled and idolatrous world. Read in

their hearing the history of my conduct toward you, from the day that I brought you out of Egypt to the present moment, and they will be constrained to admit the fact of my existence, and the doctrine of my superintending providence. Tell them of all the miracles I have wrought in your behalf,—and thus you will be a witness to my almighty power. Inform them of all your apostasies from me, and rebellions against me, and of the way in which I have borne with and pardoned you,—and thus you will be witnesses to my infinite patience. Tell them of all the predictions which I have caused my prophets to utter, and of the literal fulfillment they have received,—and thus you will testify to my omniscience. Take them, in solemn procession, to Sinai, and repeat the laws which I there proclaimed when the mountain trembled,—and thus you will attest my unspotted holiness and inflexible justice. Conduct them to my temple on Sion, lift up the vail of my sanctuary, let them see for themselves that no image stands in my shrine, no human sacrifice bleeds on my altar, no licentious rites pollute my worship,—and thus you will be attesting the unity and spirituality of my essence, the purity and mercifulness of my character. Forget not to assure them that I am no respecter of persons—that there is mercy for *them*—that, as I live, I will not the death of a sinner. Lead them to the altar of sacrifice, and, as the victim bleeds, say to them, “Behold, in a type, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” Tell them that to him have all my prophets given witness, and let them hear the glorious things

which they have witnessed. Let my servant Isaiah stand forth and declare, that upon that sacrifice I have laid the iniquities of mankind,—that he is wounded for their transgressions, bruised for their iniquities,—that the chastisement of *their* peace is upon him, and that with his stripes *they* may be healed,—that he shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied, for he shall save out of all nations a multitude which no one can number. Thus will you be my witnesses that I am God, and that besides me there is no Saviour.”

Now such was the honorable office and the lofty intention of the Jewish Church,—it was a stationary witness for God to the world ; and the sublime scene described in connection with the text is only the figurative realization of that idea. Through each successive age of that church this divine mandate may be said to have been issued to the world, directing it to repair to God’s witnesses in Judea. But the world heeded it not. Individuals, indeed, resorted thither from far-distant lands ; but in all the regions whence they came, idolatry still reigned. The leading nations had, each in succession, come into contact with God’s witnesses ; but, so far from receiving their testimony, they went on worshipping their idol-gods, and even essayed to enshrine them in the very temple of Jehovah. Even the Jews themselves had lost the high and spiritual import of their own testimony. All things proclaimed that, if the world is to be enlightened and saved through the instrumentality of the Church, another Church must be set up, and another mode of witnessing be employed.

When the fulness of time was come, that church was set up. You know its heavenly origin, its aggressive constitution, and its early apostolic history,—all combining to prove that it was a new thing in the earth, a fresh witness for God. In another and a nobler sense than before, God became his own witness. The Son of God, in person, assumed the office. In this capacity he had been predicted, “I have given him,” said God, “for a witness to the people.” In this capacity he came; and having traversed Judea in every direction, and found it hemmed in on all sides by the grossest idolatry,—having found that he could nowhere step over its frontiers without entering the territory of an idol-god,—having taken an ample survey of the world,—what was his estimate of its moral condition? He lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said,—for he found that he could obtain no fit audience on earth—“Oh, righteous Father, the world hath not known thee!” And what, under these circumstances, was the course which he pursued? “To this end was I born,” said he, “and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth,”—to the full manifestation of God. And, accordingly, his acts demonstrated the existence of God,—his humanity imbodyed the spirituality of God,—his character illustrated the perfections of God. He was the true “tabernacle of witness.” The glorious train of the divine perfections came down and filled the temple of his humanity. God was manifest in the flesh. His character left no attribute of the divine nature unillustrated,—his teaching left no part of the divine will

unrevealed,—his kindness left no fear in the human heart unsoothed,—his meritorious death left no amount of human guilt unatoned for. Wherever he went, and however he was employed, he was still winning for himself that title which he wears in heaven—“The Faithful and True Witness.” But, chiefly, Calvary was the place of testimony. There, when he could say no more for God, he bade the cross begin to speak. There, when his *lips* had uttered their testimony, he opened his heart, and spake in blood. There was the summing up of all the promises, and of all the character of God; and the total was—*universal and infinite love*.

And now, if his first object had been thus to witness for God, his second was to arrange for the boundless diffusion of the testimony. No sooner has he worked out the great truth that *God is love*, than he provides that the world shall resound with the report. As if he had been sitting on the circle of the heavens, and surveying all the possibilities and events that could occur down to the close of time, he answers the objections to this design before they are uttered, anticipates wants before they arise, and provides against dangers before they threaten. Was it necessary, for instance, that he should first distinctly legislate on the subject? “Go,” said he—and he was standing but one step from the throne of heaven—“Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” Still, plain as this command might at first appear, the duty which it enjoins is so novel, and the project which it contemplates so vast, that

doubts are likely to arise as to its import and obligation ; he repeats it, therefore, again and again,—repeats it in other forms, as an old prediction that must be fulfilled, and as a new promise : “ Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is *written*, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things.” But peculiar qualifications will be necessary : “ Ye shall receive power from on high,” said he, “ after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you ; and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” But peculiar dangers will assail them.—“ All power is mine,” said he ; “ go, and you shall move under the shield of Omnipotence ; lo ! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.” Thus, making the most comprehensive provision, and taking the whole responsibility of success on himself, his last word to his witnesses was, “ Go”—his last act was to bless and dismiss them to their work,—and the last impression he left on their minds was, that *his* church was to be essentially missionary, or aggressive.

And as this was the last indication of his will on earth, you know how far his first act in heaven corresponded with it. Let the scenes of Pentecost attest. The eternal Spirit himself came down—came expressly to testify of Christ—came to be the great

missionary spirit of the church, to "convince the world of sin." You know how the witnesses began at Jerusalem, when the three thousand souls received their testimony. You know how their hesitation to quit Jerusalem and Judea was gradually overcome—how a Paul was added, like a new missionary element infused into their spirit—and you can conceive how they must have felt, in the terms of his new commission to be a witness to the Gentiles, as if their own original commission had been renewed and reinforced. You know how they were divinely allured farther and farther from Jerusalem—how vision after vision drew them on to invade the neighbouring territories of idolatry—and how, at length, when even a Paul evinced a reluctance to pass the last limit of Jewish restriction—when even *he* scrupled to leave the confines of Asia—you know how a vision was seen far back in the western regions of idolatry—the emblem of Europe—in the person of the Macedonian suppliant, saying, "Come over and help *us*." Bursting that last enclosure, the outermost circle of restriction, he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision; and the church found itself fully committed to its lofty office of traversing the world.

But was there no danger lest the church should yet, under the influence of its old attachments, cast back a lingering look to Judea, lest it should debase and localize religion by regarding Jerusalem as its rallying point, and the temple as its home? Judaism, and the place where for ages it had dwelt, are forthwith swept away; henceforth but two parties are to be left on the

earth—the missionary witnessing church of Christ, and the listening world. Thus Judea, which had been the goal of the old religion, the resting place after its wanderings, now became the starting point of the Christian church, for the race of the world. The old economy had expected the world to be missionary, and to send to it. The new economy requires the church to be missionary, and to send to the world. And if the waiting and stationary character of that church had been emblematically represented by the bending cherubim on the mercy seat, the new missionary church was henceforth to be represented by another mighty angel, flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, that dwell on the earth.

And now, we might have thought, the Saviour has surely made it sufficiently apparent that his people are to be *his witnesses to the world*. Nothing more can be necessary to show that this great object enters into the very design and principle of his church. But not so thought the Saviour himself. Once more does he come forth and reiterate the truth. When we might have supposed that his voice would be heard no more, once again does he come forth, and break the silence of the church; and the subject on which he speaks is the missionary character of his church. Not that his church had lost sight of its office. His witnesses were carrying their testimony in all directions. But as if the angel having the everlasting gospel did not yet speed on his way fast enough to satisfy the yearnings of infinite compassion, or as if he feared that angel

would stop ere the whole earth, the last creature, had heard the gospel testimony—he came forth personally, and announced, “The Spirit and the bride say, come; and let him that heareth say, come; and let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely.” O! where is the tongue that can do justice to the boundless benevolence of this final declaration of Christ? What is the comparison which can adequately illustrate it? Picture to your minds a large company of travellers, destitute of water, while crossing one of the vast deserts of the East. For days previous they have had barely sufficient to moisten their parched lips; but now their stock is quite exhausted. Onward they toil for a time, in the hope of finding a refreshing spring. But the unclouded sun above, and the burning sands beneath, render some of them unable to proceed—they lie down never to rise again. The rest agree to separate, and to take different directions, in the hope of multiplying their chances of discovering water. After long wandering in this almost forlorn pursuit, one of them finds himself on the margin of a stream. Slaking his enraged thirst, he immediately thinks of his fellow-travellers. Looking around and perceiving one in the distance, he lifts up his voice, and shouts to him, with all his returning strength, to *come*. He communicates the reviving signal to another still farther off, and he to a third, till the very extremities of the desert ring with the cheering call to *come*.

Brethren, that desert is the moral waste of the

world ; those perishing travellers, perishing by millions, are our fellow-men ; that living spring is the redemption of Christ ; the first that drank of it was his church ; that church, every member of it, directly or indirectly, is to lift up his voice to the world, with the divine invitation to *come* ; while the Spirit of Christ, speaking through them, gives the call effect. Every one that hears the call is to transmit it farther still, till it has reached the very last of human kind, and the world echoes with the welcome sound.

Brethren, such is the Scripture theory of the Christian church. Its members are witnesses for Christ to the world. Every place to which their instrumentality reaches is meant to be a centre for extending it to a point farther still. Every individual added to it is meant to be an additional agent for propagating the sound of salvation onward, till a chain of living voices has been carried around the globe, and from pole to pole, and the earth grows vocal with the voice of the church witnessing for Christ.

II. Now, if the design of the Christian church be essentially that of a missionary witness, we may expect to find that every page of its history illustrates and corroborates this truth. No law of nature can be obeyed without advantage to him who obeys it ; nor violated, without avenging itself, and vindicating its authority. The same is true of the laws of the Christian church. And accordingly, we find—*secondly*, that in every age it has prospered or declined just in proportion as it has fulfilled or neglected this primary law of its constitution. This might be de-

monstrated by an induction of the great facts of its history. But, on an occasion like the present, we must confine ourselves to general remarks.

And here need I remind you that the period of its first, its greatest activity, was the season of its greatest prosperity?—that it expanded without the aid of any of man's favorite instrumentality—learning, eloquence, wealth, or arms?—that it achieved its triumphs in the face of it all?—that though persecution ten times kindled her fires, the blood of the church ten times put them out?—that it saw some of its bitterest foes become its champions and martyrs, and new territories constantly added to its domains?—that its progress from place to place was marked by the fall of idol temples—the banners of the cross floated over the thrones of idolatry—and God caused it to triumph in every place? And why all this, but because the church was acting in character, answering its end, fulfilling its office, as a witness of Christ to the world?

O! had we witnessed the activity of its first days, had we heard only of its early history and triumphant progress from land to land, how naturally might we ask, "How long was the church in completing a universal conquest?—At what precise period did India embrace the faith of Christ? How long was it before China was evangelized? Was there not a year of jubilee on earth when the gospel had been preached to the last of the species; and in what year did it occur? Alas, for the church, that these inquiries should sound so strange! and alas, for the world! and alas, too, that the most striking historical illustrations of the design

of the church should be those drawn from its neglect of that design !

Need I remind you that the cessation of its activity was the cessation of its prosperity ? From the moment the church lost sight of its appropriate character, it began to lose ground to the world. Its members, instead of witnessing for God, began to bear false witness against each other. When it ought to have been the almoner of God to the world, it became the great extortioner, absorbing the wealth of the nations. When it ought to have been the centre whence radiated the light of life, it was the focus, drawing to itself the learning and the vain philosophy of heathenism. When it ought to have been the birthplace of souls, it was the grave of piety, so that, in order to live, it was necessary to leave it. When its members should have been the peace-makers of the world, it was a camp—the great school of war. When it should have been checking political ambition, it has been used as the great engine of states. When it should have been furnishing martyrs to the world, it has itself been a great martyrdom, in which to witness for God was to burn. And the strength of the church, which should have been all put forth in aggressive efforts, has been wasted in the strife of internal discords.

What was the history of the Christian church,—what *has been* the history of any branch of that church, when it has once lost its essential aggressive character, but the closing scenes of Judaism enacted over again ? What do we see, in such a case, but the spirit of piety displaced by the spirit of discord ? Scribes, Pharisees,

and Sadducees—the proud, persecuting, and worldly, among its members? The great doctrines of grace supplanted by outward forms? What do we see but the Son of God rejected, betrayed for money, deserted by his professed disciples, delivered into the hands of his enemies, receiving the mockery of homage, crucified afresh, and put to an open shame? What, then, do we see in that church but fearful signs of approaching judgments? till, at length, when it ought to have been vanquishing the world, the world, like the Roman army, advances, besieges, and destroys the church.

But as every departure of the church from its aggressive design is sure to be avenged, so every return to that character has been divinely acknowledged and blessed. Had we no facts at hand to prove this, the calls which our Lord gave to the seven Asiatic churches to repeat their first works, and his promises of prosperity if they did so, would lead us to infer it; the uniformity of the divine procedure would warrant us to expect it; the very return itself, implying, as it would, a divine influence, would itself be a proof of it. But facts *are* at hand. The history of every Protestant Christian church in Britain, during the last fifty years, demonstrates that every return to spiritual activity is, in so far, a return to divine prosperity. Ascertain the measure of holy activity and devotedness in any church, and you have ascertained the measure of its internal prosperity. So that a person might at any time safely say, "Tell me which branch of the Christian church is the most scripturally active and aggressive in its spirit, and I will tell you which is the most prosperous."

And the reason of this is sufficiently obvious. The planet is then moving in its appointed orbit, the church is then moving in a line with the purposes of Omnipotence, and in harmony with its own principles. If, before, it had been hampered with forms, customs, and corruptions, at every effort which it now makes to move, some portion of these old incrustations of evil fall off; a desire to advance aright sends it to consult the word of God; a concern to retrieve its past indolence fills it with a zeal that calls on "all men everywhere to repent;" the conversions which ensue furnish it with the means of enlarging its sphere of activity. The existence of all this both proves the presence of the divine Spirit in the midst of it, and leads it to earnest cries for still larger effusions of his influence; and thus, by action and reaction, an increase of its prosperity leads to importunate prayer for larger impartations of the Spirit, and larger impartations of the Spirit necessarily produce an increase of divine prosperity.

Brethren, look at the Christians and Christian denominations of Britain at present; and say, what but their activity for God, and the salutary effects of that activity on themselves, constitutes the sign and means of their visible prosperity? Take away this, and what single feature would remain on which the spiritual eye could rest with pleasure? Their orthodoxy? That would be their condemnation; for, if their creed be Scriptural, activity for God is necessary if only to make them consistent with themselves. The numbers they include? The world outnumberers

them; and it is only by their aggressive activity, blessed by God, that they can hope to keep their disproportion from increasing. Their liberality? Apart from this Christian activity, where would be the calls on that liberality? It is this which brings it into exercise, and by exercise augments it. Their union with each other? This activity for enlarging the kingdom of Christ is almost the only bond which, at present, does unite them; take away this, and almost the last ligament of their *visible* union would be snapped. Their spirit of prayer? That has been called into exercise almost entirely by means of their Christian activity; for, feeling the utter insufficiency of their own endeavors, they have earnestly entreated God to make bare his arm in their behalf.

Their aggressive spirit, then, in the cause of human salvation, whether at home or abroad, forms, at present, the principal sign and means of their visible prosperity. Amid scenes of political strife, it has brought to them visions of a kingdom which is not of this world. Amid scenes of ecclesiastical discord, it has provided one standard around which all can rally against the common foe. Amid the icy selfishness of the world around, it has called forth warm streams of Christian liberality. It has given employment to energies which would otherwise have been wasted in the arena of angry controversy. It has given a *heart* to the church, stirred its deepest sympathies for the world, brought large accessions to its numbers, enlarged its views, and brightened its visions, of the reign of Christ, filled many of its members with a sense of

self-dissatisfaction, of utter dependence on God, of aching want and craving desire for something more, and something better, than it yet possesses ; so that its loudest prayers are prayers for the promised outpouring of the Holy Spirit : from all of which we infer, that a full return in faith and prayer to the aggressive design of the Christian church would be a full return to its first prosperity.

III. Now if such be the design of the church, and such its illustrative history, let us, *thirdly*, attempt to enforce that design ; and we shall find that the motives of the Christian church, and its responsibility as a witness for God, are greater now than at any preceding period. Not only do all the original motives to this duty exist : they exist in aggravated force, and others in addition have come to reinforce them.

1. For instance, the first witnesses for Christ required no higher motive for duty than the divine command of their risen Lord. They no sooner saw that he *designed* his church to bear his testimony to the world, than they hastened to obey. Brethren, that design is not merely essentially the same—it is now more apparent than ever. Could those first witnesses return to the church on earth again, they would find that the history of every church, since the time of Christ, had unceasingly illustrated and enforced that design, without a moment's intermission. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." And this is the language of the Spirit as he conducts us over the ruins of once flourishing churches—"Exist aggressively, or not at all.

Behold in the state of every existing Christian church an illustration of the principle, that to act the evangelical missionary church is to prosper ; to neglect it is to languish and perish."

2. "But is there the same necessity for a witnessing church now as at first?" The wants of the world are more urgent than ever ; or, what amounts to the same thing in the matter of our responsibility, we are better acquainted with them, and our facilities for meeting, as far as Christian instrumentality *can* meet them, are greater than ever. The map of the world, in the days of the apostles, was only the map of a province, compared with that which lies open before us. Every geographical discovery since has only served to enlarge our ideas of the great Satanic empire. O ! in what a small minority does the Christian stand ! What a fearful expanse of darkness around him !—and that darkness how dense !—and what hideous enormities does it conceal ! *There* cruelty has its chosen habitation, and feasts perpetually on human blood. *There* superstition has its temples, and its sacrifices of human suffering, and its music of human groans. *There* sin has its priesthood—its ceremonial of murder, and its ritual of lust !

By a very slight effort of the imagination, we can cause the hosts of evil to pass before us ; and what a spectacle to behold ! First, come the Jews out of all nations under heaven, each with a vail over his heart, and stained with the blood of the Just One. Next, nominal Christians, by myriads, and from all parts of Europe, headed by one who drags a Bible in triumph,

as a dangerous book, and embraces an image, or an amulet, instead. Then comes the crescent of imposture, followed by Turkey and Persia, by large tracts of India, the islands of the Eastern Sea, Egypt and northern Africa, the inhabitants of the largest and fairest portions of the globe. After these, the swarthy tribes of Africa, central, western, and southern, with their descendants of the Western Indies, laden with the spells of witchcraft, and covered with the charms of their Fetish worship. Now come the aborigines of the two Americas, and the islanders of the great Pacific—fresh from the scalp-dance, the cannibal feast, or the worship of the snake-god. Next, the selfish Chinese, one-third of the species—in appearance all idolaters—in reality all atheists—a world of atheists, to whom all truth is a fable, and all virtue a mystery. Last comes India—the nations of southern Asia, and the many islands of the Eastern Sea, a thousand tribes, including infanticides, cannibals, and the offerers of human blood, dragging their idol-gods, an endless train, with Juggernaut at their head, worn with the toil of their penances, and marked with the scars of self-torture. And who are these that close the train? The Thugs of India, just discovered—a vast fraternity of secret murderers—the votaries of Kalee, who has given one-half of the human race to be slaughtered for her honor. O God, and is this *thy* world! Are these *thy* creatures! Where is thy church? O, righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, and thy church, appointed to declare thee, hath neglected to fulfil her trust! Christians, did you count their num-

bers as they passed? Six hundred millions at least. Did you ask yourselves, as they passed, whither they were going? Follow them, and *see*. Can you do so, even in imagination, without feeling an impulse to rush and erect the cross between them and ruin? *That* is your office; *that* is the great practical design for which the church exists, to go and testify this faithful saying, *that Christ has come to save them all*. "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord."

3. And this reminds us of another inducement,—the testimony of the Gospel is divinely adapted to them. It is not the fearful burden of Isaiah, threatening judicial blindness and hardness of heart, or we might hesitate to go. It is gospel. It is a message from pity to misery—an invitation from mercy to guilt. It is a gift from the fulness of God to the emptiness of man. The witness for Christ takes with him a treasure more precious than the ancient Jew, could *he* have taken the ark of the temple. Christian missionaries, you take with you tears—the tears of incarnate compassion; blood—the expiatory blood of the Son of God. "Before your eyes," said the apostle to the Galatians, "Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you." Brethren, you go to India with the cross, to repeat the scenes of Calvary, to let the Hindoo see Christ crucified before his eyes. Do you feel sufficiently the grandeur of your message? You go to Africa with the identical gospel that Paul took to Rome. You go to China with the identical blessing that Christ brought from heaven. O, it was the consideration of their subject—its necessity, its adaptation,

its infinite grace and glory, which fired the apostles—which made them think little of life itself when this was at stake—which made them wonder that any should suppose that persecution could affright *them* from their office—which gave them the air of ambassadors, the port of kings—which would have led them, if necessary, to contend for precedence with an angel. You go to address a nature which, however depraved, was originally prefigured to the truth, and the message you bear is divinely adapted to the moral state which that depravity has created—and the Spirit goes with you to give it effect. You go to tell the victims of imposture of essential truth—to point the eye of the Hindoo widow from the corpse of her husband to Him who is the resurrection and the life—to tell the infanticide mother that she may save her offspring, and may press them to her heart—to tell the followers of Boodha of a true incarnation—and the parched pilgrim of the desert, of a well of water that springeth up to everlasting life—and the devotee of the Ganges, of the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost—and the self-torturing votary of cruelty, that the name of God is Love—and the self-immolating worshipper of Juggernaut, of the sacrifice offered once for all, and of the blood which cleanseth from all sin. O, find out the nation where guilt has been hourly accumulating ever since the time of the deluge; and the command of Christ is, “Go to it.” And, having gone, challenge them to produce the one guiltiest man of their nation; and the command of Christ is, “Offer him redemption through the

blood of the cross." Have they, as many of the nations have, a fabulous tradition that such or such a cavern is the mouth of hell? Ask them to lead you to it; for even there, could the dreadful spot be found, your commission would extend—to the very brink; for He whom you preach is able to save even to *that* uttermost.

Brethren, in testifying to the necessity and divinity of the gospel, you occupy higher ground than did even the apostles. Since their day, nearly eighteen hundred years have added their testimony to the fact that man by searching cannot find out God—that spiritual deliverance, to be effectual, must come direct from heaven; and nearly eighteen hundred years have only served to demonstrate the sufficiency of the gospel remedy. Guilt, which might destroy a world, has been cancelled by it—iron chains of sin have been burst asunder—hearts filled with pollution made habitations of God—where Satan's seat was, happy communities have been formed—earth has been blessed by it—and heaven has been hourly growing louder in its praise. In affirming its *necessity*, then, all history is speaking in your voice; the nations that have perished—all the lost—rise up and confirm your testimony, and urge you to repeat it with a deeper, and yet deeper, emphasis. And in proclaiming its efficacy, thousands who in every age have been saved by it urge you to speak louder in its praise—the chorus of all heaven comes to your aid, ascribing "salvation to the Lamb that was slain."

4. Again, think of the certainty that the testimony

of the gospel shall ultimately and universally prevail. We do not undertake to say that the present kind of Christian instrumentality *alone* will cause it to prevail—that no new machinery, no miraculous agency, will come to its aid. But, whatever the means employed, the end will be gained—and gained as the result of *all* that had in any way been scripturally done to obtain it—the gospel, in the most enlarged sense, shall be preached as a witness to all nations.

Where now is Diana of the Ephesians? Where now are Jupiter and the gods of Greece?—and where the whole Pantheon of Rome? The first Christians testified against them, and they vanished. Witnesses for Christ came to Britain—and where now are Woden, and all the Saxon gods; Hesus, and all the more ancient and sanguinary rites of the Druids? Brethren, the idols we assail have long since been routed; and the sword which we wield routed them. The gods of India are the same, under different names, which Italy and Greece adored: the sword of the Lord chased them from the West; and shall it do less now in the East? Many of them are already fallen. “Bel boweth down, and Nebo stoopeth.” And the Christian missionary, approaching and standing before the most crowded temple and the firmest throne that idolatry boasts, is divinely warranted in taking up a burden against it, and saying, “Thy days are numbered, and thine end draweth near.” Yes, if there be stability in a divine decree—merit in the mediation of Christ,—if any truth in the doctrine of his reign—any power in the agency of his Spirit, the

prediction shall be fulfilled. Prior to the ultimate triumph of the gospel, indeed, unnumbered events may transpire which have not yet been conceived. It is possible, even, that the affairs of the kingdom of Christ may at times assume a doubtful aspect, and his people may begin to wonder how *he* can retrieve them. But he *sees* no difficulty—he *feels* no perplexity. At any moment he can touch some secret spring which shall silently and imperceptibly, but most effectually, change the whole aspect of his affairs. Looking on to the end, he sees nothing desirable which he has not provided for,—nothing adverse which he has not provided against. The history of the world, to the latest period of time, is written already in his mind. Every province of idolatry and error has its limit and its date appointed there. The angel is already selected who shall eventually shout, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen.” The chorus is appointed whose voices are to resound, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.” “And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.” Brethren, if we listen, we can hear that voice too; for even now are they rehearsing for the glorious day,—and every hour increases the chorus, and every echo that reaches us rebukes our indolence as witnesses for God, and proclaims the dignity of our office, and the certainty of our success.

5. And, then, think what the consequences of that

success would be. Civilization? The missionary of the cross, indeed, is the missionary of civilization. This the gospel taught first at imperial Rome,—cleansing her amphitheatre of human blood; and evincing that her boasted civilization had been only a splendid barbarism. Morality? The missionary of the cross is the missionary of morality. The gospel produced charity even in Judea, humility at Athens, chastity at Corinth, humanity at Rome. And wherever it has gone, in our own day, liberty, morality, education, the arts of civilization, and the blessings of commerce, have followed in its train. It has extinguished the fires of the suttee, and called away the cannibal from his unholy feast. It elevates the barbarian into a man, and raises the man into a useful member of society. It turns the wandering horde of the wilderness into a civilized community, and calls it to take rank among the nations. There is but one art which the gospel does not promote; as the peace-maker of the world, it steps between the ranks of war, and, taking the weapons of death away, it declares that men shall learn war no more; and, joining their hands in amity, it says to them, "Love as brethren." O! could mere human civilization effect results such as these, how soon would her image be set up, and what multitudes would fall down and worship! But these are triumphs for the gospel alone, and triumphs which it achieves incidentally, by aiming at greater things than these.

The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. It raises the savage into the man by making him a new creature in Christ Jesus; it prepares him for civil so-

ciety by making him a member of a Christian church. In the zeal of its new-found existence, that church becomes a witness for Christ to others; the word of God sounds forth into all the regions round about; and similar triumphs result, only to be followed by similar labors and triumphs again. Thus every step of present success is a new facility for a farther advance, and an additional pledge of universal triumph.

O, there is a day—call it the millennium, or by any other name—there is a period yet destined to bless the earth, when it shall no more be necessary to witness for God, for all shall know him; the knowledge of his glory shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. Happy state of Christian triumph!—a day without a cloud—the reproach of indolence wiped away from the church, and of ignorance from the world. Truth shall have completed the conquest of error—Christ shall have given law to the world—and, impressing his image on every heart, shall receive the homage of a renovated race. Brethren, these are visions—but they are the visions of God—and let nothing rob us of the inspiration to be derived from gazing at them. They are visions—but visions painted by the hand of God—dear in every age to the church of God—gazed on in death by the Son of God. Yes, then they were brought and set before him, and such was the joy with which they filled him, that he endured the cross, despising the shame. Then, on the lofty moral elevation of the cross, all the ages of time, and all the triumphs of his church, passed in review before him. He saw our missionaries go forth in his name to

distant climes—again he looked, and saw them surrounded by ten thousand converts to his grace. He saw the vail fall from the heart of the Jews; and heard their bitter mourning as they stood looking at Him whom they had pierced. He saw Ethiopia stretching out her hands unto God. He heard his name shouted from land to land as the watchword of salvation, and marked how its every echo shook and brought down the pillars of the empire of sin. He saw the race of Ishmael that now traverses the desert tracts of Arabia—the castes of India with their numbers infinite—the national Chinese—the Tartar hordes—the unknown and snow-concealed inhabitants of the north—the tribes of Europe—and all the islands of the sea; he saw them flocking into his kingdom—his grace the theme of every tongue—his glory the object of every eye. He saw of the travail of his soul, and was *satisfied*; *his* soul was satisfied! Glorious intimation! Even in the hour of its *travail* it was satisfied. What an unlimited vision of human happiness must it have been! Happiness not bounded by time, but filling the expanse of eternity! His prophetic eye caught even then a view of the infinite result in heaven! His ear caught the far, far-distant shout of his redeemed and glorified church, singing,—“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!” Brethren, if we would do justice to our office as witnesses for God—if we would catch the true inspiration of our work—we, too, must often cross, as he did, the threshold of eternity,—transport ourselves ten thousand ages hence into the blessedness of heaven, and behold the

fruits of our instrumentality there, still adding new joy to angels, new crowns to Jesus, new tides of glory around the throne of God. Realizing that scene, we should gird up our loins afresh, as if a new command had come down from heaven, calling us by name to be witnesses for God.

IV. We have now seen that the Christian church is, in its very constitution and design, a missionary church—that its history illustrates this truth—and that all the original motives for enforcing it still exist, and exist in ever-accumulating force. What, then, can be more appropriate for us, *fourthly*, than to survey our condition, and estimate our wants, in relation to that design, to profit by that history, and to yield obedience to those motives.

1. Now it must be obvious that whatever else may be necessary, a vivid and all-pervading apprehension of the original design of the church is of the first importance. "But do not our various aggressive efforts show that we have already recovered that apprehension?" To a very limited extent. Until recently, the Christian church was well nigh as local and stationary as the Jewish. And, as might be expected, considering the state of its piety, its movements, since it began to awake, have been fitful and uncertain, rather than healthy and regular. Are not its members, still, too content, generally speaking, with supporting a ministry for themselves alone; and thus resembling the local character of the Jewish church? Is not the clear apprehension of its missionary design confined still to a small minority? Or, if

felt by the many; felt only as a passing impulse—the result of an annual appeal, rather than as a personal obligation, and a universal principle? Or, if felt as a claim, felt as a duty to be easily devolved, and discharged by proxy?

Brethren, according to the theory of the Christian church, every one of its members is a witness for Christ. In making you, Christian, a partaker of his grace, he not only intended your own salvation—he intended the salvation of others by your instrumentality—he intended that you should go forth from his presence as a witness, conveying to the world the cheering intelligence that he is still pardoning and saving sinners—sitting on his throne of mercy, waiting to be gracious to them, as he has been to you. He says to you, in effect, “You have given yourselves to me, and I give you to the world—give you as my witnesses: look on yourselves as dedicated to this office—dedicated from eternity.” Brethren, your very *business*, as Christians, your *calling*, is to propagate your religion. Is the gospel-cause a warfare? Every Christian present is to regard himself as drawn to serve. Is there a great cause at issue between God and the world? Every Christian present is subpœnaed as a witness for God. Look on yourself in *this* light, and you will not, on the ground of disqualification, dismiss the subject from your mind. You will not think that a mere annual subscription buys you off from that great duty for which God has made you a Christian. “I cannot *speak* for Christ,” said a martyr, on his way to the flames, “but I can *die* for him.”

And, in the same martyr spirit, you will say, "I cannot speak for Christ—would that I could—the world should hear of him; my *lips* cannot speak for him, but my *life* shall; my tongue cannot witness, but others can; and, if property can aid, and prayers prevail, they shall." Brethren, this is simply the sentiment of Scripture; this was the spirit of the primitive saints. They looked on themselves individually as born to be witnesses for Christ—*ordained* to the office of diffusing the gospel. Wherever they went, the language of Christ was still sounding in their ears,—“Ye are my witnesses—go into all the world.” Is it true that he has said this to us? To the ear of piety he is saying it still—to the eye of piety he is here this day to repeat it—do you not behold him? Do you not hear him saying it to you—and to you? Never till Christians feel themselves thus individually addressed, will the church fulfil its lofty design as a missionary witness for Christ to the world.

2. A second requisite for this end is wisdom—wisdom to mark the characteristic features of the age, and the movements of the world,—to appreciate the peculiar position of the church in relation to them, and to apprehend and obey the indications of God concerning them. Never was there an age when the wide field of human misery was so accurately measured, and so fully explored, as the present; and, consequently, there never was a time when the obligation of the Christian church to bring out all its divine resources and remedies, was so binding and so great. Never was there an age when science attempted so

much, and promised so largely—challenging the gospel, in effect, to run with it a race of philanthropy; and, consequently, never was there a time when it so much concerned the church to vindicate her character as the true angel of mercy to the world; and to show that not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of God, the wounds of the world must be healed. Never was there a time when the elements of universal society exhibited so much restlessness and change—when the ancient superstitions exhibited so many signs of dotage and approaching death,—when the field of the world was so extensively broken up, and ready for cultivation; broken up, not by the ordinary ploughshare of human instrumentality, but by strange convulsions from beneath, and by bolts from an invisible hand above; and, consequently, never was there a time which so loudly called on the Christian sower to go forth and sow. And never was there a land blessed with such peculiar facilities as Britain, for acting as a witness for Christ to the world. Why is it that the gospel is at this time in trust with a people whose ships cover the seas,—who are the merchants of the world? Has He who drew the boundaries of Judea with his own finger,—who selected the precise spot for the temple,—who did every thing for the Jewish church *with design*, abandoned the Christian church to accident? And, if not, if he has placed the gospel here with design, what can the nature of that design be, but that it should be borne to the world on the wings of every wind that blows? Say, why is it that Britain, and her religious ally, America, should divide

the seas,—should hold the keys of the world? O, were we but awake to the designs of God, and to our own responsibility, we should hear him say, “I have put you in possession of the seas; put the world in possession of my gospel.” And every ship we sent out would be a missionary church,—like the ark of the deluge, a floating testimony for God, and bearing in its bosom the seeds of a new creation. Christians, ours is, indeed, a post of responsibility and of honor! On us have accumulated all the advantages of the past; and on us lies the great stress of the present. The world is waiting, breathless, on our movements; the voice of all heaven is urging us on. O, for celestial wisdom, to act in harmony with the high appointments of Providence—to seize the crisis which has come for blessing the world!

3. A third requisite is Christian union. It is in vain to talk of the beneficial rivalry of sects. This only shows that we are so much accustomed to our divisions, that we are beginning to see beauty in that which forms our deformity and disgrace. It is in vain to say that good is done notwithstanding our want of union. Is not the good which is effected abroad, effected by merging the disputes of home—in fact, by uniting? And would not a knowledge of our differences there be fatal to our usefulness? But the doctrine of Christ on the subject is decisive—“that they all may be one, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” In other words, the visible union of Christians is *essential* to the conversion of the world. It is in vain to say that but little disagreement exists *as*

yet among the Christian witnesses abroad ; the seeds of discord only ask for time, and they will not fail to bear their proper fruit. But why have not the witnesses abroad differed ? If they are right, must we not be wrong ? And how is it that even we, on occasions like the present, can quit our denominational camps, and proclaim the truce of God ? Both owing to the same means—by paying greater deference to the will of Christ than to the claims of party—by looking out on a world perishing—by erecting the cross for its salvation, and rallying around it,—in a word, by reverting practically to the *design* of the church. O ! who is not ready to say, at such times, “ Would that the whole church could be converted into a Christian Missionary Society, and meet in that capacity alone.” The union wanted is not the union of one day in a year, but the union of every day—not merely a oneness of purpose, but, as far as practicable, a union of means for the attainment of that purpose. Here is one society calling aloud for agents, and pledging itself to raise the funds for their support ; while another proclaims that it has agents ready, if it did but possess the means of sending them forth. Now the spirit we need is that which, on the first hearing of a statement like this, should induce the parties to sympathize in each other’s wants, and, by uniting their respective means, to supply them. Brethren, the same obligation which binds the church to act as a witness for God at all, binds it to do so in the best manner, and to the full amount of its resources. While division is making that which is already little, still less—not only would

a spirit of union, by combining our resources, economize and increase them, but by evincing a greater concern for the will of Christ than for the success of party, it would invite it—it would humbly challenge his blessing, for it would be a substantial fulfilment of his prayer.

4. And is not greater liberality wanted?* Not that

* Appropriateness required that the remarks which immediately followed this inquiry on the two distinct occasions specified, should materially differ. In preaching before the Wesleyan Missionary Society, it was added, "To this fact, [the need for increased liberality] I should not have alluded on the present occasion as a distinct topic, did I not read in the report of this society, a statement to the effect, that it has missionary agents to send, did it only possess the pecuniary means for employing them. Christians of property, shall this statement become an accusation? Can you think of all that is implied in it, without feeling as if a burning truth had fallen upon your naked heart? Can you know—as *some* of you must—that you are at this moment holding in your possession *that* which would send some of those agents to the ends of the earth?—can you know this, without hearing that property cry out and give witness against you?" On the second occasion referred to, the well-known liberality of Manchester Christians at the anniversaries of their auxiliaries to the London Missionary Society, naturally called forth a wish that "every town, were, in this respect, a Manchester!" but accompanied with an intimation that "even then the question would not be irrelevant."

If the difference in the tone of these remarks on the two occasions should convey to the mind of the reader an impression that in the one class of Christians there is a want of that liberality which is commended in the other, it is only necessary to state that the comparative want of "pecuniary means," complained of by the Wesleyan Society arises, not from a greater deficiency of liberality in its members than in the members of other societies, but from causes rather which redound to their honor—from their possessing a greater number of agents ready for missionary service than some other societies possess—and, also, from their Christian activity and zeal expending so nearly the whole of their annual income, that they are left in a state of honorable and exemplary poverty.

I have remarked that the liberality of Manchester Christians on missionary anniversaries is the subject of praise in all the churches. In the amount of their collections at their late anniversary, they have "gone beyond" themselves; not, indeed, so much in the actual excess of the

which waits for public excitement,—that which gives, not a little from much, but much from a little,—that which brightens into cheerfulness and rises into prayer, as it casts its gift into the treasury, saying, “May this be a witness for Christ.” The liberality wanted is that which shall induce the wealthy Christian parent to offer up his pious son on the missionary altar, and to lay beside him, at the same time, whatever may be necessary to make the oblation complete. The liberality wanted is that which shall constrain the wealthy Christian to ascend that altar himself, taking with him all he has, and offering the whole as a missionary oblation to God. Talk not of sacrifice; do you forget that the world has been redeemed by sacrifice,—do you remember the nature of that sacrifice? O, if you really *know* the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, let the church but sympathize with Christ in the travail of

sums collected compared with former years, as from the peculiar circumstances under which that excess has taken place. The earthquake-shock which trade and commerce lately sustained, was felt especially at Manchester. So that, had the contributions at this anniversary exceeded those of the preceding by a single farthing, it would have been more than could have been expected, and must have been hailed as a great triumph of the missionary spirit, and of Christian benevolence, over that selfish contraction of the heart which naturally arises from a depressed state of trade, and the attendant apprehensions of personal exigence. The collections approached very nearly to 3000*l*. And thus Manchester, long since denominated, by Howe, the Capernaum of religious privileges, has proved itself the Macedonia of Christian liberality; for “their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.” But though Manchester is, in this respect, far in advance of many, of most other places, it knows and proclaims that it is not yet at the goal. Its liberality, accompanied by a spirit of fervent supplication for the promised presence of the Holy Spirit, cannot fail greatly to augment, and to exhibit, to the glory of God, still “greater things than these.” May its “zeal provoke very many.”

his soul; such acts of self-devotion would become of frequent occurrence, and new songs would burst forth in heaven.

5. The history of the church would justify, and its present position demands, an increase of energy and zeal. I say this, not so much in relation to our missionaries as to our churches. He must be ignorant, indeed, who does not know that rashness often passes for zeal, and that the path of wisdom lies between a blind impetuosity on the one hand, and a cold calculating policy on the other. But blind must he be, also, not to perceive that much in the Christian church, at present, which assumes the name of prudence, is timidity and unbelief in disguise; that, as missionary witnesses, we treat with God too much in the commercial spirit; that we do not trust him to any large amount; that we look too much at funds in reserve, and too little at promises in reserve. "Prove me, now," saith God, "whether I will not open the windows of heaven to bless you." But who thinks of accepting the generous challenge? Does not our conduct, in effect, reproach the first witnesses, and charge the confessors and reformers of later days with guilty rashness? If we are *only* prudent, what were they? Imprudent men, to venture life so recklessly as you did! Imprudent witnesses for God, to calculate present consequences so little, and to think so much of the future! And how insensible must you have been to say, when all the engines of martyrdom were brought out, that none of these things moved you! And how presumptuous to affirm that the promises of God war-

ranted such zeal! How would you have stood corrected now! How much more cheaply might you have purchased distinction in the church now! But if distinction was your aim, well is it for your present fame that your zeal burned so long ago; for, though your names are now on every lip, and we boast that God raised you up, you could not now repeat your noble deeds without endangering your fame. Yours is zeal to be admired at a distance!

And yet, brethren, theirs, in truth, is the energy we want; the zeal of a Paul, and the first disciples; of a Luther, and the early reformers; of a Brainerd, and our first missionaries; a zeal that would startle the church; aye, and be stigmatized by thousands of its members, as what zeal has not been? zeal that would be content to be appreciated a century hence. The zeal wanted is that which, while it invites prudence to be of its council, would not allow her to reign; which, while it would economize its means, would be too frequent in its demands on the funds of Christian benevolence to allow them to lie long at interest—anniversary zeal made perpetual. The energy we want is that which springs from sympathy with the grandeur of our theme, the dignity of our office, and the magnificence of the missionary enterprise. O, where is the spiritual perception that looks forth on the world as the great scene of a moral conflict, and beholds it under the stirring aspect which it presents to the beings of other worlds! Where are the kindled eye, and the beaming countenance, and the heart bursting with the momentous import of the gospel message? Where the fear-

lessness and confidence whose very tones inspire conviction, and carry with them all the force of certainty, and the weight of an oath? Where the zeal which burns with its subject, as if it had just come from witnessing the crucifixion, and felt its theme with all the freshness and force of a new revelation?—the zeal which, during its intervals of labor, repairs to the Mount of Vision to see the funeral procession of six hundred millions of souls—to the mouth of hell to hear six hundred millions of voices saying, as the voice of one man, “Send to our brethren, lest they also come into this place of torment”—to Calvary, to renew its vigor by touching the cross—to the spot where John stood, to catch a view of the ranks of the blessed above. Enthusiasm is sobriety here. In this cause, the zeal of Christ consumed him—his holiest ministers have become flames of fire; and, as if all created ardor were insufficient, here infinite zeal finds scope to burn, “for the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall perform it.”

6. And where is this flame to be kindled?—where is the live coal to be obtained but from off the altar? It was there the witnesses of Christ, in every age, found it; and there they kept it bright and burning. It was there that Christ himself sustained that zeal, in the flames of which he at last ascended as a sacrifice to God. Nay, what was that atoning sacrifice itself, but a more intense prayer for the redemption of the world—the prayer of blood—a prayer so ardent that he consumed himself in the utterance—a prayer which is ascending still, and still filling the ear of God with its entreaties—a prayer, from which all other prayers

derive their prevailing power. And what was the object of that bleeding intercession? and what did he himself regard as the full answer to it? What but the advent of the Spirit, as the agent of a new creation? O, Christians, is there such a doctrine in our creed as the doctrine of divine influence? Is there such an agent in the church as the Almighty Spirit of God? Is he among us expressly to testify of Christ—to be the great animating spirit of his missionary witness, the church? and is it true that his unlimited aid can be obtained by prayer—that we can be baptized by the Holy Ghost, and with fire? O, ye that preach “believe and be saved” to the sinner, preach the same to the church—“believe the promise of the Spirit, and be saved.” Ye that love the Lord, keep not silence; send up a loud, long, united, and unsparing entreaty for his promised aid. This, this is what we want. And this is all we want. Till this be obtained, all the angelic agency of heaven would avail us nothing; and when it is obtained, all that agency will be unequal to the celebration of our triumphs.

Witnesses for Christ, hear the conclusion of the whole matter; the cause of your Redeemer has come on in the heathen world—the cause of human happiness; the destiny of immortal myriads is involved; and the world is hushed, and waiting to receive your evidence. By the love of Christ, will you not go and testify in his behalf? The destroyer of souls is witnessing *against* him; and millions are crediting and confirming the dreadful testimony: will you not hasten to testify *for* him? Mohammedanism is denying his

divinity, and is placing an impostor in his stead—will you not attest that there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we can be saved, but the name of Christ your Lord? China is denying his existence, and one-third of the human race believe it; will you not go to proclaim, “This is the true God and eternal life?” Hindooism is affirming that his name is Juggernaut, and that he—your Lord, the Saviour of the world—that he loves impurity and blood; and millions believe it; will you not go and attest that “his name is Jesus, because he saves the people from their sins?” Shall his cross have next to no witnesses of its benevolence? shall his blood have no tongue to proclaim its efficacy? his cause no friends to espouse it? Witnesses for Christ, your Lord is in India, awaiting your arrival. He has obtained a hearing for you; and he is on the plains of Africa—at the gates of China—in the temples of Hindostan, calling for his witnesses to come and testify in his behalf. And shall he call in vain? He is saying to his church to-day, not for the third, but for the thousandth time, “Lovest thou me!” Then, by the blood which redeemed you—by the benevolent design of that redemption, that you might be my witnesses—by the wants of the world, waiting to hear you proclaim my grace, and perishing till they hear—by the certainty of your success, and the glories that would result from it—by the power of that cross which is destined to move the world—awake, arise, to your high prerogative and office; call down the aid of the great renewing Spirit; and let every creature hear you say, “We

have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." "Ye are my witnesses."

THE END.

the Son
my wit-

