

J. J. Hinton (No 2.)

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### A Sermon

Preached by the Rev. JOHN HOWARD HINTON,

OF READING,

FOR THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY, AT SURREY CHAPEL,

June 16, 1830.

*"Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion!"—Isaiah lii. 1.*

THESE quickening words were addressed to the ancient Israel, when the purposes of divine mercy were ripening, and their captive tribes were about to re-people the desolate land. You will probably deem us guilty of no violence to the sacred oracle, if we consider it as applicable to the spiritual Israel, in the anticipation of those greater blessings of which all that was done of old was but an emblem and a shadow.

I need not now stay to prove that brilliant prospects are before the church, or to expatiate on the glories of the latter day; nor is it necessary here to argue the near approach of them. These are points on which there is a sufficiently general agreement among the present auditory, and indeed among Christian professors at large, to warrant an appeal to the heart, without a prelude of an argumentative discussion. It may be presumed, too, that your hearts, as many of you as are Christians indeed, are fully prepared for such an appeal. The prospect of a renovated world and a reigning Saviour, is assuredly not one to which you are indifferent. You cannot be strangers to the holy and delightful anticipation of it; even from the vale of tears, you oftentimes look "over the gloomy hills of darkness," watching and longing for the coming glory. Or if it be not so with us, it is quite time that it were, and that we should all of us awake out of sleep. The voice of our returning Lord sounds in our ears, and is adapted both to rouse the dormant from their slumbers, and to quicken the watchful to action: "Awake, awake, O Zion, put on thy strength!"

We consider this address as a call to exertion—a call addressed to the whole church, and therefore to every member

of it—to be employed in a manner tending to the accomplishment of the expected triumphs. The topics to which we shall advert are of two classes; first, those which justify, and secondly, those which enforce it.

I. The considerations which justify this appeal.

1. It is obvious, in the first place, that the passage assumes *the possession of sufficient strength* for accomplishing the end designed. It was thus, in fact, with the captives of Chaldæa, at the time to which the prophecy refers, since every facility was afforded them for their return, which required only the courage to brave its hardships and its perils. In like manner, we are to suppose that the friends of God are not called upon to apply themselves to the conquest of his enemies, without adapted and proportionate means. We are not summoned to do any thing without strength, or beyond our strength; the exhortation is simple and intelligible, "*Put on thy strength.*" Of course it will be here understood that we speak of the possession of means, or of instrumental strength alone; and necessarily so, seeing that nothing but an instrumental agency is assigned in any case to man. As to effectual agency, *all things are of God.* With respect to our own province, however—that, namely, of instrumental action—our strength is ample, though the conversion of the world be the object of it.

If it were necessary to establish this sentiment, we might observe, that the conversion of the world, as to the instrumental accomplishment of it, is left altogether in the hands of the church. It is committed to the saints, and no other parties are to be employed in it;

a fact from which alone we might conclude, that they are in possession of sufficient strength for the purpose. Where otherwise would be the wisdom, or even the safety, of such a trust?

But wherein does our strength for the reconciliation of the world consist? Strength, in all cases, is the possession of adapted and sufficient means. Now the means of converting a sinner is the truth of the gospel, as comprehended in the sacred oracles. We have no means of converting a sinner but this, and if we proceed rationally to the work, it is by some method of bringing the gospel to bear upon his heart and conscience; as either by the ministry of the word, the circulation of the Scriptures, familiar conversation, or otherwise. The question, therefore, whether we possess adapted and sufficient means for the conversion of sinners, resolves itself into one respecting the adaptation and sufficiency of the word of God. *Is divine truth adapted and sufficient to this end?* To this point inspired testimony is most direct and express. See the language of David in the 19th Psalm. Hear also the apostle affirm that the Holy Scriptures *are able to make us wise unto salvation*. Matters of fact bring us to the same point; for sinners have been converted by divine truth in every age, and none have ever been turned from the error of their ways by any other means. A weapon which does its work so well, can suffer no imputation on its adaptation and sufficiency. Nor upon any other ground can we suppose that it would have become the chosen weapon of the Most High; for then it must have entailed either a disappointment of the expectations formed from it, or a necessity for the direct interference of his power to remedy a defect of his wisdom.

If any attempt should be made to invalidate or to evade the argument, by referring to the necessity of divine influence, we reply that divine influence is undoubtedly necessary to give the gospel success. But it is also necessary to give success to the use of means in every other case; whether to the speculations of the merchant, or the labours of the husbandman. If, therefore, the necessity of divine influence in order to success is to hinder us from speaking of the sufficiency of means in one case, it must also in every other: there can then be no sufficient means for any thing, because God's blessing is necessary to every thing. We must leave such objectors as these to invent a new

vocabulary for the ordinary affairs of life; and when they have done so, we shall make no scruple in adopting it for religious uses, though we suspect with little advantage to their cause. In the meantime it may be enough to say, that the means of converting sinners are sufficient for that end, just in the same sense, and to the same extent, as means are sufficient to any other end; success in all cases being alike dependent on the blessing from above.

Let us put the sentiment before us to another test, by a hypothetical calculation of the effects which might probably arise from a vigorous use of the divine word. Of course, it is impossible to speak with precision, but it may be thought probable that every person who earnestly seeks the salvation of those around him, may be blessed to the conversion of one sinner in the course of a year. Now supposing this, and that there were at this moment but 100 Christians in the world, all of them and their successive converts so labouring, and so successful continually, 800,000,000 of persons, that is to say, the whole population of the heathen world, would be converted in about thirty years. But the world already contains many thousand Christians—can it be said, therefore, in the face of such a calculation, that they are inadequate to the conversion of the world? Or if it be thought that these resources are inadequate now, how grievous a miscalculation must have been made when the same work was left in the hands of a despised and persecuted band, the number of whose names together was but 120!

We maintain, then, that the church is in possession of adapted and sufficient means for the conversion of the world. It needs nothing more than to bring the truth of God into close contact with the heart of man, and the expected result will follow. Now, if there be in our hands adapted and sufficient means for bringing about the universal triumphs of the gospel, there is manifest justice in the stirring appeal by which we are roused into action. "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion!" Persons who would reply to such a call, "What is the use of telling me to labour?—it is God who must do every thing," would merely subject themselves to a severe and indignant reproof, and a direct charge of making their pretended want of power a pretext for their love of sloth. Let none of us so deceive ourselves, or insult our Lord. When, as the hosts of his warfare, he summons

us to his help, he says, Here is your sword; which of us is prepared to turn upon him, and say, Is it of proper temper for the war?

2. We observe, secondly, that the text assumes not only the possession of adequate strength, but the *existence of inadequate exertion*. It is appropriate only to a state of comparative indolence and slumber. "Awake, awake, put on thy strength!" That this was the case with the exiled tribes when the period of their restoration arrived, is well known; but it may seem hard, perhaps, and to some incredible, that we should have any design of applying this topic to present times. There *have been* ages when the church slumbered, but these surely are long past; and as for the present, this is pre-eminently the age of exertion and of zeal.

It is not, dear brethren, either in ignorance of what is doing, or in depreciation of it, that we speak; but, admitting that there is much to commend and to be thankful for, we may not spend the short time which is allotted to us here either in eulogy or in thanksgiving. Neither can we now indulge in retrospection—a too favourite employment perhaps—and put the incipient exertion of the present in flattering comparison with the sluggishness of the past. Be it so, that we do a little more than those who did nothing, are we to be everlastingly feeding our pride with this fond recollection, while, if we look at our utmost exertions in comparison with our means and our obligations, we shall find ample reason to cover ourselves with shame. If any man's heart fails him, and he wants matter of encouragement and of thankfulness, let him look at the past, and he will find it; but for what other purpose should the retrospect be taken? If it should ever be lingered over with a doating fondness—not so much to say, What hath God wrought!—as What hath man wrought!—not so much for adoring the Giver of all good, as for admiring the creature into whose emptiness his goodness has been poured; not so much to nerve us for mightier efforts, as to luxuriate in past and partial success;—the professing world would surely become bloated with self-complacency, and so passionately fond of the sweet food to which it had been accustomed, as to be rendered not only inaccessible to the influence of healthy stimulants, but even resentful of their application. This would be a puny, a childish, and a mischievous method, and

would indicate any thing rather than a vigorous grasp of the vast object before us, and the deep influence of the motives which should impel us to its attainment. At all events, congratulation is not an object now; but the much more salutary, though less pleasing one, of showing how far the Christian body at large yet is from bringing its whole resources to bear on the accomplishment of its triumphs.

For this purpose let us first look at contributions of a pecuniary kind, in which it is obvious that the principal efforts of this age, and the whole efforts of many individuals consist. Duly thankful to every contributor, and not wanting, we hope, in Christian respect and kindness to any, whether contributors or not, we must yet ask whether, even in this direction, any thing like the whole resources of Zion are brought forward. We know the honoured liberality of a few individuals; but why is such liberality yet an individual matter, and not general in proportion to our wealth? The eulogy of a few in this respect is the scandal of the many. When will all Christians be such that the now conspicuous few shall be lost in the crowd? We know, too, the afflictive cases in which contributions have perhaps exceeded the bounds of wisdom or of duty, though it is not quite in a millennial spirit that they are made so often a pretext for covetousness. But the cases are vastly more numerous in which contribution falls below the level of just obligation; in which it is made of a customary amount, irrespective of proportionate ability; in which it is made under worldly or personal considerations, rather than the influence of a divine law; and in which, though it is paid with easy regularity, like a tax or a rate, it would be very long in springing unsolicited from a devout and a grateful heart. Even if the actual amount of money raised at the present day were proportionate to the wealth possessed, there is about the general system of its collection something so unlike the hallowed principle, and the eager forwardness of primitive times, that if the record of it were inserted in the New Testament, it could scarcely fail of being pronounced an apocryphal chapter.

But there is another direction in which Christian activity, if consistent, might be expected to appear. We refer particularly to direct individual exertion for the salvation of souls; such as is described in the Old Testament, by

every man saying to his neighbour, Know the Lord; and in the New, by shining as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life. This mode of exertion on the part of every Christian without exception, arises naturally out of the existence of gracious character, which both creates the adaptation and supplies the motives to it. This capacity of action unquestionably holds a place among the resources which the church possesses for the advancement of its triumphs. It is not only a part, but a very important part, of Zion's strength. We may go further, and say, that it is by far the largest and most important part of it, and that to which all else is either subordinate or inferior. To this all pecuniary contributions are manifestly subordinate; the only possible utility, and indeed the only design of them, being to enable some persons to do this very thing. And as for the word of God, which has doubtless a sufficiency, and sometimes an efficacy, apart from direct instrumentality, it is more adapted to produce the wished-for effects, when it is associated with the force of the living voice and the breathings of affectionate anxiety. The direct communication and personal application of divine truth, therefore, takes the precedence of all other means for the conversion of sinners. It is emphatically *Zion's strength*.

Only try the experiment. If this method alone were adopted, and every person who knows the Lord were to make only such efforts for the conversion of others as the most scrupulous prudence might sanction, what an immense multitude of instruments would immediately be brought into operation, all of them fitted for their work, and peculiarly fitted for it in their several stations, because they would bring into bearing the personal and relative influences of life. This whole amount of activity would be constant, without expense, without sacrifice, without violent effort, without exhaustion. It would in every case engage the heart, that most effectual of all methods of reaching the heart of another. The church has no capacity of magnitude and force for a moment to be compared with this. The whole missionary host does not constitute a tythe, nor the tythe of a tythe of it; and if the system of universal personal endeavour were but acted upon, the entire missionary apparatus of the present day, magnificent as it now seems, might be almost overlooked in the much wider and vaster activity of

which it would form but an inconsiderable portion.

How can it be said, with any semblance of truth, that in this respect Zion has put on her strength? We speak not of individuals, whom here we cannot stay to eulogize; we speak generally of those who may be considered as Christians indeed; and we ask, whether there are not many of them who never think of such a thing as trying to convert a sinner; who are so much strangers to the obligation of it, that they stand in vacant wonder when it is pressed upon them; and so dead to all the motives to it, that they give utterance to nothing in reply but evasions and excuses? This is undeniably the case to an immense extent in the domestic circle, where every facility exists for such endeavours; and yet more extensively in the sphere of relations, acquaintances, and neighbours, who seem to be as quietly left as though their courses of sin were only different ways of going to heaven. The great exertions of this age are made upon a principle which tends to paralyze the principal aggressive force of Christianity. Every thing, or almost every thing, is to be done by societies. But the strength of the church does not lie in societies. It would be of no advantage if there were a society, with all its officers, for the conversion of every house, any further than the force of individual character was brought into bearing; and if this could be otherwise secured, the machinery of societies were much better dispensed with. A great part of what is done by Mr. Secretary, Mr. Treasurer, the committee, and the collectors, is just so much withdrawn from what the same persons might do in their single capacity, if those whom they have to stimulate would but be active without them. The complicated movements of public bodies, which constitute so large a part of the efforts of the present age, and occupy so large a space in the public eye, instead of being of any intrinsic value, are an indication that the force of character is too feeble to act without such artificial help, and a deduction of a very large per centage from the resources which are available for the conversion of the world. The thing of principal value is that every man should be at his post, and effectively discharging his particular duty, by labouring vigorously for the conversion of those to whom he has access. The strength of Zion lies in the many thousand hearts which love her Lord,

and the many thousand tongues which are fitted to plead his cause. A society, for the most part, is a scheme in which a great many Christians give their money to enable some to plead for God, while the rest are silent—and as an apology for their silence. It opens the mouths of the few, and shuts those of the many; and thus, upon the whole, while so perverted, it does more harm than good. Combined endeavours for the accomplishment of objects which are beyond the reach of individual strength are admirable, when added to the exertion of individual strength for that which is *not* beyond our reach; but apart from this they are feeble, and when used to supersede it, they are injurious and absurd. The mechanism of societies bears upon no man's heart nor conscience; it has itself no heart, but tends to withdraw from operation the main mover of the moral world, and to substitute for it a mere engine for collecting money, and giving receipts, which many persons take as a discharge in full for all their obligations to Christianity and to the world. Our strength lies no where but in the heart, and the heart of the poorest Christian constitutes a much more important portion of it than the treasures of the wealthiest. If every Christian would but try heartily to convert every sinner he meets with, it would effect more than all the thousands which are poured into the treasury of the Lord, and the machinery of all the religious societies in the world.

The truth is, therefore, that the church sleeps. Let us all hear the voice of him who is at once weary and grieved at our slumbers: "Awake, awake, O Zion, put on thy strength!" What we have yet exerted is only our feebleness. We have much more powerful means of making an impression on the world than we have yet employed, and the Captain of the Lord's host summons us to the use of them. Does Zion know that she is asleep, or will she say that the imputation of slumber is a calumny?

The force of the language we are considering goes beyond the mere awakening of activity. It calls not for a partial, but for an entire employment of our resources. *Put on thy strength.* The meaning cannot be less than this: The scenes which are in prospect will require your *utmost* efforts; the victory will be quite as much as you will be able to win; put into requisition, therefore, all your powers, and exert your whole strength. From what is known

of God's administration, it appears that he has always proceeded upon the principle of proportioning the call for exertion to the strength which is possessed. Where this is small, works of the utmost magnitude are wrought as it were without hands; but if it be more considerable, his methods bring it into full employment. On one occasion he said to his ancient people, "*stand still, and see the salvation of God;*" but on another he proclaimed, "*quit you like men, be strong.*" And it is like himself; for as he does nothing in vain, so neither does he allow any prodigality or wastefulness in his works. Whenever he gives strength he means that it should be employed.

We cannot, therefore, suppose for a moment that the conversion of the world will be brought about by any thing less than the entire energy of the church. None of that which is given her is meant for waste, or for purposes of self-indulgence or worldly aggrandizement; and the keeping back of any part of it proportionately hinders the expected victory. Nor is it credible it should be otherwise, when we contemplate the magnitude of the end in view. It might well have been doubted—by many persons it is actually doubted—whether the resources of the church in their amplest extent be adequate to the conversion of the world; but, if we maintain the affirmation on this point, we surely are not disposed to go further, and to imagine that a *part* of those resources is equal to such an achievement. To expect it from the whole energy of the church is faith; but it is madness to expect it from less. Let us remember, therefore, that the realization of the blessed prospects before us is not to be anticipated because something is doing, or because some individuals, or some portions of the Christian world, are actively employed. Zion must put on her strength; the whole church, and every individual in it, is called upon to labour, and to labour to the utmost of his means. Is this too much? Would we rather mingle with the mass of Christian activity a leaven of self-indulgence and worldliness?—It can be done at no price less than the proportionate extinction of our hopes.

II. We proceed, secondly, to consider the topics by which this call may be enforced.

1. Here it is obvious to notice, in the first place, *the interesting character of the object to be attained.*

The end contemplated in the text was personally and directly interesting to the parties addressed. Zion was called

to exert herself for her own triumphs.

It was for their own restoration to the land of their fathers that the slumbering exiles were summoned to awake. We also should remember that the triumphs of Christianity are our triumphs, and the increase of the church is our enlargement. We are a portion of Zion itself, and our condition is identified with hers, whether of sorrow or of joy. Are we then citizens of a patriotic spirit?—Are we identified in heart with the welfare of the great spiritual community to which by profession we belong?—When Zion is in ruins do we favour the dust thereof?—and can we say with one of her ancient sons, "If I forget thee, let my right hand forget her cunning; let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem to my chief joy?"—Who should labour for the prosperity of Zion, if her own children do not?—And what should arouse us to labour, if it be not the prospect of enlarging the borders, and augmenting the glory of the new Jerusalem, which is the mother of us all?—Are we willing that the church should continue to be small and despised, or do we really wish to see her arrayed in celestial beauty, and the joy of the whole earth?

The interests of Zion are identified with those of a guilty and perishing world. The progress of Christianity is not like that of a wasting pestilence, or of a destructive conqueror; it bids the wilderness rejoice, and bows the blest nations to the Prince of Peace. Where the power of the gospel is not felt, there is guilt, and wretchedness, and wrath; every man is in rebellion against his Maker, and beneath his awful indignation. The spread of the gospel is a remedy, and the only remedy against these evils. There is no other name by which we can be saved, except that which it reveals; there are no influences by which the depraved heart of man can be made holy, except those which accompany its ministration. But the name of Jesus carries salvation to the ends of the earth, and those who submit themselves unto him shall live for ever. Do we then wish for the extermination of iniquity from the earth, and for the rescue of perishing millions from hell? Should we rejoice in the drying up of a world's tears, and the diffusion of the richest blessings which Almighty love can bestow?

The advancement of Zion is identified with the glory of her Lord. The kingdom of grace is his kingdom, and

his honour will arise out of its universal establishment. In his church he reigns; and the extension of the church therefore is synonymous with the extension of his authority and dominion. Which of the children of Zion then are devoted to their King? Which of us are panting to see him enthroned in every land and in every bosom? Do our hearts burn with indignant grief to see him despised and rejected of men? Do we glow with ardour to achieve some wider victories for him who so well deserves to reign? Let us awake, and put on our strength; for we have in our hands the sure means of accomplishing these glorious and delightful ends.

2. The call may be enforced secondly, by the proximity of the most blessed results. Triumphs, and even our ultimate triumphs are at hand.

Now, the prospect of success is one of the most natural stimulants to exertion. Every man is willing to labour in his calling, if he may but see the fruit of his toil. Most cheerfully does the husbandman sow if he may reap—and the soldier bear the perils of war, if he may gather the laurels of victory. The motive becomes yet more powerful in proportion to the amount of success which may be anticipated. To what unwonted activity would it give birth, for example, if it were said to the husbandman, this year your harvest shall be unusually abundant; or to the merchant, by this voyage you shall amass unprecedented wealth; or to the soldier, by this battle you shall gain a decisive victory; and if the husbandman exclaims, now will I sow plentifully, for I shall reap also plentifully; if the merchant, now I will venture a rich cargo, for I am sure of a large return; if the soldier, now I will fight bravely, for I know I shall conquer; how much more we, whose harvest is of immortal joys, whose merchandize is the purchase of redeeming blood, and whose victories achieve the glories of Immanuel! If there were no Hope, the arm of strength might be unnerved; but strange is the heart that wakes not at her voice, and enters not with vigour and with joy into all the labours which can be pursued beneath her smile.

This consideration is presented to us in a manner peculiarly forcible. Labour for God has always been encouraged by the assurance of success; but in this respect our situation is different from that of Christians in any preceding age. They had to look through dark periods, of longer or shorter duration, before the

great and terrible day of the Lord should come, but, though it is not given to us precisely to know the times and the seasons, we have reason to believe that the night is far spent, and the day is at hand. The precious promises, illuminated by the lamp of prophecy, seem to be approaching the fulness of their time, and hastening to the realization of the anticipated blessing, while the movement which has arisen within the church itself, and the hallowed sympathy in the great work which pervades almost all its departments, encourage and confirm our hope. We are expecting now, not merely the success which would have attended devoted efforts for God in any circumstances, but those larger results which shall lead to the universal diffusion of Christianity. It is not now that the ministry of the gospel shall take one of a family, and two of a city, but that a nation shall be born in a day; for the glory of the Lord is about to be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. In every age it has been said, "Be steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is *not in vain* in the Lord:" but the voice which we hear is far more animating: "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion;" for the time of thy final triumph is at hand. Vigorous and faithful endeavours now shall be attended with a large and extraordinary blessing. There has been one pentecost, but there comes a second, and a second of superior glory, amidst the results of which it shall be said, remember ye not the former things, neither let them come into your mind. Dear brethren, is it such a call that fails to awaken us? Shall we not now arise, and put on our strength? Can we be slothful while such a recompense is attached to our labour? Or is there no bounty upon exertion, by which we can be induced to throw off our supineness?

3. The appeal may be yet further enforced by the *necessity of exertion in order to the expected results.*

The glories of the latter day will doubtless be illustrious manifestations of divine power, and the manner of their introduction will shew the honour to be God's. But we are too apt to think of them as though they would be achieved by a direct and exclusive interposition of the Most High, apart from a continued and proportioned employment of inferior agency; as though, in a word, the great change were to be wrought by some mighty power

while men slept, or at least while we continue to pursue the ordinary courses of business or of pleasure,—yet such a sentiment, when we come to examine it, is clearly contrary to all God's ordinary methods, and to the most decisive indications of his will. Though he is the great mover of all good things, yet he acts by instruments, and not by himself, in all cases where adapted instruments exist. In the world of nature, he employs the elements of heat and cold with their kindred powers to accomplish the variations of the changeable year. In the world of providence he makes man the instrument of his own discipline, as well as of the reward or punishment of his fellow-man. And in the world of grace he carries out the same principle; he has never converted a single sinner but by the instrumentality of his truth; and whenever this blessed work has been more eminently enlarged, it has always been in connexion with an augmented agency. The spread of the gospel during the apostolic age is an evidence of this never to be forgotten, and with it agree all the facts which can be gathered from the ecclesiastical history of later ages, down to the present time. Why should the future differ from the past? Or where is the scriptural indication that it is to do so? There is not the slightest reason to think that sinners are ever to be converted to God but by the experimental influence of his word, or to expect any enlarged success without a corresponding enlargement of heart and of labour. Before they shall all know the Lord, that all-important wisdom is to be communicated by *every man to his brother*; before the greatness of the harvest is gathered in, multiplied labourers are to enter into the field. Whatever had been told him, how unreasonable would it be for a husbandman to expect an abundant harvest apart from the proportionate culture of the spring; or for a merchant to revel in imaginary wealth, while he sent forth no goods for which return could be made; or for a soldier to exult in anticipated victory without coming to the charge! Yet no less unreasonable are we, when we imagine that a wide extension of Christ's kingdom will occur, without corresponding exertions of ours. Whatever certainty might exist of a large harvest, or of a rich merchandize, or of a decisive victory, you would not scruple to affirm in either and in all of these cases, that, without activity, it could not and would not be realized: nor can we hesitate at all to say, that if the strength

of the church be not put forth, the world never will be converted. We know that God has decreed it, that his word has foretold it, that the promises teem with its glory, and that the Saviour waits for his reward; but, unless we arise and labour, it can never be accomplished. God has as truly predetermined the means as the result; and his decree as certainly precludes a deviation from the method as a failure in the end. Although the necessity of human instrumentality does not arise from any weakness on the part of the Almighty, but solely from his good pleasure to employ it, the necessity of it becomes as absolute on this latter ground as it could be on the former. His purposes are immutable as his nature; and he will no more change his plan of operation, than he will abandon its final result. Though he has attached to human efforts, therefore, an importance which they do not possess in themselves, that importance is now as real as though it were intrinsic; and the exertions of men are nothing less than essential to the extension of Christianity.

We have not now an opportunity to dwell upon all the humbling and the elevating tendencies of this sentiment; we notice only its influence as a stimulus to exertion. "Awake," says the voice from heaven, "put on thy strength, for days of triumph are at hand." And those triumphs require your strength, they cannot be achieved without your activity. To a man who feels the value of the object it is needful to say no more; but if there be those whom the call fails to arouse, who would rather sit still than labour, who, while they imagine they should rejoice in the result, cannot find in their hearts to strive for its production, but quietly wait for its arrival, while they continue to pursue life's ordinary course,—to them we say, If you will not sow you cannot reap; if you will not fight, you can never conquer. Abandon, therefore, all the prospects which you say have cheered you; and be assured that while sloth continues, the world will be a desert. Your supineness throws to an immeasurable distance the period of Zion's joy; and were there not hope, either of arousing you, or of seeing a generation succeed you of a different character, it would cover the whole prospect with darkness, and write vanity on all the promises of God.

4. The language of the text may be enforced, finally, by the actual suspension of the issue upon our obedience. It

suggests the animating sentiment, that the final glories of the church are waiting for her awaking, and for that alone. It is as though the voice had said, "all things are ready, and the hour is come; now therefore awake, put on thy strength, and the battle is won."

It is an obvious fact, that whatever progress the gospel is making, the ultimate triumphs of Christianity are still in abeyance. We see not yet all things put under his feet, whose right and whose destiny it is to reign. Nothing like a rapid extension of the gospel is visible in heathen lands. The main bulwarks of superstition, the Brahminical, the Chinese, and the Mahomedan, though defended only by the blind and the lame, hitherto defy the armies of the living God. In Christendom the state of things is yet worse. The unbroken power of the papal delusion, the death-like formality cherished by protestant establishments, together with the infidelity, and all monstrous and horrible things which revel at large under so extensive and almost impenetrable a shelter, are still the grand features of our times. Something, indeed, is attempted for the advancement of Christ's kingdom, and we bless God that some success has crowned the attempt; but that success is by no means great, either in proportion to the magnitude of the object contemplated, the expectations entertained, or the efforts employed. It is not yet as it was in ancient days, nor as it is to be before the end shall come. With the most heartfelt thankfulness for the tens of thousands who have been rescued from destruction, we have to recollect that the millions and the hundreds of millions are perishing, and that the gospel is fitted to become the salvation of them all. Why has it saved no more? Why have the great bulk of those who have heard it, despised and rejected it? And why are the numbers who submit to its power, in our own land of light and privilege, even less than among the wretched victims of avarice and wrong in Western India, or in the scattered islets of the Southern Sea? Is it that the cup of mercy is not yet full, or that the time is not fully come? Is it that the weapons in employ are of unsuitable temper, or that the Captain of our salvation is unmindful of his host? All things conspire to instruct us that the final diffusion of Christianity is at hand; and the whole earth heaves with the moving principles which are to accomplish the subversion of all that opposes



Immanuel's dominion : but the triumph waits, *because the church sleeps*; we conceive, and we cannot hesitate to express our conviction, that her slumbers provoke the admonition of her Lord: "Awake, awake, O Zion, put on thy strength!" If we should point to the efforts which are making, and the thousands of wealth that are expended upon his cause, it might be considered as no answer to his appeal. Even here there is matter of humiliation rather than of complacency. But his reply might be, "this is not your strength. Seek every man the conversion of his fellow, and say every man to his neighbour, Know the Lord. Bring to my service not only the mechanism of societies, but the fervour of the heart. Give me not only your money, but your importunity. Offer on my altar not only your wealth, but your supineness; not only your prayers, but your personal exertions. Try me now *herewith*, saith the Lord, and see if I will not pour you out a blessing."

If this were the principle of his conduct it would be perfectly just, for it is only upon *sincere* devotedness that we can expect him to smile. But consistency is a necessary evidence of sincerity. And how can devotedness to God be deemed consistent, when there is a cherished neglect of some of the most obvious and obligatory modes of its exhibition? If the various expressions of missionary zeal were genuine fruits of love to the Saviour and his cause, would not the same principles produce the equally characteristic fruits of personal endeavour for the same end? Can he be supposed to have much pity for a sinner perishing at the distance of half the globe, who shews none for one that is in his own house? It is impossible; and it is high time that such delusions should be banished from among us. Whatever there is of missionary contribution or effort, apart from personal and actual endeavour to save the sinners around us, is but a mockery of God, and an imposition on ourselves. Why should our personal indolence blast our associated efforts by attaching to them a character of insincerity, if not of hypocrisy, which forbids the Most Holy to pour down his blessing?

If, indeed, a large measure of success were to crown the present system of exertion, it would give to the diffusion of Christianity a most perverse and incredible aspect. We should see it then, as in part we already do, extending rapidly in Jamaica and Tahite, while it

would be, as it really is, comparatively stationary on the continent of Europe and in England. We should see falling before the spiritual weapons of our warfare, the cannibalism of the New Zealander, the idolatry of the Hindoo, the theism of Boodh, and the philosophy of Confucius; while there would be perpetuated in almost undiminished magnitude, the irreligion of Christendom, the soul-destroying formality of its national establishments, and the wide-spreading infidelity, which now, almost unmasked, riots in its domain. Would it not be unnatural, and even monstrous, that the extension of Christianity should have such an aspect as this? Are we expecting that religion shall be thus transported instead of being *diffused*? Is not the heaven to transform the lump by first acting on its immediate vicinity, and then extending its influence to more distant regions? In truth, these remoter conquests are by no means the chief of those which the gospel has to win. Its main battle will not be fought in the islands of the Pacific, nor on the sands of Africa, nor on the shores of the Ganges; but on the fields of Europe, perhaps in the privileged sanctuaries of Britain. What would it be to Christianity, if all the savage lands were subjected to her sway, while the companion demons of scepticism and irreligion stalked through the walks of literature, presided in the halls of science, and prowled through the whole circle of society; while in melancholy proof of their dominion, the great majority of every rank were revelling either in splendid or in vulgar sins? Is her triumph to be reduced to this, that she is to remain stationary or struggling on the high places of the earth, and to reign only over the Negro, the Hottentot, and the Hindoo? We cannot allow ourselves to anticipate such an issue. From the whole earth which is to see the salvation of God, surely the European and the British lands are to be no exception. It is here, in truth, that the grand resources of the church exist; and for *their* evangelization the day of glory cannot come, until an energy proportionate to its immense strength is put forth.

I am by no means content with the bearing which this representation may seem to have upon the societies, which with high and consistent excellence, now aim at the cultivation of the British waste, and the cleansing of our polluted streets. Even these societies are as yet feeble; but the strength of Zion does not lie

in societies, but in individuals and in the energy of personal exertion.

And we have said already that there is no prodigality or wastefulness in the divine administration. He produces nothing but for some useful end. But if he were to bring on the universal extension of Christianity while the resources he has provided for it are not fully employed, it would be a manifest departure from this rule of his conduct. He would have generated strength adapted to an invaluable end, without having given scope or a summons to its exercise. We ourselves are her strength. If we dedicate not ourselves to the work, it is through supineness and sloth, through self-indulgence and worldly love, through indifference or fear; and is this a state of things which we can expect God to honour? Will he absurdly give the victory to a host which gazes idly on the foe, and attach a bounty to a spirit which deserves no other name than that of ingratitude and unfaithfulness?

We cannot hesitate to express our belief, therefore, that the final glories of Zion are waiting till she puts on her strength: but we believe, also, that they will wait no longer. Let her but throw off her slumbers, and the dawn of the expected day will simultaneously appear. All things are ready for her triumph, which waits only for a last and proportionate effort. Oh, if every person who knows the Lord would but throw out his whole energy for the conversion of his fellow; if there should be no longer left in the tabernacles of Zion, any example which does not shine, any life which does not speak, any influence which is not employed, as well as any treasure which is not consecrated, then verily would the Lord command his blessing, and all the ends of the earth should see his glory. From such a state of things he could not withhold it. When has he withheld a proportionate blessing from devoted zeal? Was it in the apostolic age, when the gods of the nations and the vices of the world fell before the power of his gospel? Was it in the dense darkness amidst which the light of the reformation broke on the deluded earth, and the spectral superstitions of which it drove back with the astounded shades? Was it in the days of our fathers, when the countless voice of separate individuals aroused, like a clap of thunder, the sleeping population both of the old world and the new? Or is it now, when the heart-felt piety of the negro

spreads like a contagion through the mournful bands of the exiled captives; or when the islands of the Southern Sea are blossoming like the garden of the Lord? And will it be then, and only then, when in the end of the world the awakened church shall make an effort more comprehensive, more uniform, more consistent, more devoted than she has ever made? It is impossible. O Zion! put on thy strength, and thy triumph is won!

If we are right in considering this passage as the voice of the Lord to his church at the present period, it is highly important that it should be solemnly regarded; and more especially that it should be associated with the present voice of the church to her Lord. There has been manifested of late, a deeper conviction of the necessity of divine influence in order to crown our efforts with success, and an apparent augmentation of the fervour with which an outpouring of the Holy Spirit has been supplicated. We have publicly, and perhaps also privately, addressed the God of Israel in the language, "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake as in ancient days!" Have we heard his answer to our supplications? It is this: "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion!" It is well that you have acknowledged the necessity of my blessing, now betake yourselves to the fulfilment of your labours. In your own hands are the means of accomplishing all that you have sought. Go, and say every man to his neighbour, "Know the Lord, and the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea." Have our prayers been associated with our endeavours, and our sincerity verified by our diligence? Or have we contented ourselves with prayer without a determined mortification of our supineness and augmentation of our zeal? Are we expecting that prayer alone will be a blessing to the world, and comforting ourselves with the thought that we have now thrown the burden of its conversion on our Maker? Let us remember then that he flings it back upon ourselves. The conversion of the world, says he, as to the whole labour of it, is yours, and your means are fully sufficient for its accomplishment; you call upon me to put on my strength; I require you to put on yours. It is not my slumbers that hinder the triumphs of the gospel, but your own. "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion!" He has no more to do with the conver-

sion of the world than he has with the growth of corn; in both cases he has to pour out his blessing in order to give efficacy to the means employed, nor can the harvest of the spiritual husbandry be separated from the industry which is required in the natural.

What is the influence, then, of this language upon us? We individually, if we know and love the Lord, are the parties addressed in it. For Zion to awake and put on her strength, is for every Christian to awake and put on his strength in the cause of his Redeemer. Are we individually disposed to do so? Do we mean each of us to do, not only something, but all that we can for the conversion of sinners, and of every sinner for whose conversion we can do any thing at all? With respect to the perishing of distant lands, for whose help our pecuniary aid is properly and earnestly solicited, are we about to make a contribution justly proportioned to our wealth, and the inestimable value of the object? And with respect to those to whom we may have direct and personal access, our children and our parents, our servants and our labourers, our relatives and our friends, our neighbours and our acquaintances:—do we mean to do any thing for these? Even if you subscribe to a Home Missionary Society, or if you are a visitor in a Christian Instruction Society, the first sphere of action may yet be overlooked—it is your own house and your immediate circle. Do you mean to do any thing there? For these, which are the most hopeful of all efforts, we have immense strength, but it has not yet been employed. Are we about to employ it, or to repeat our excuses, and to perpetuate our neglects? Oh, if there were a person who felt disposed for a moment towards the latter of these courses, I would say to him, is it nothing then to you, that by calling you out of darkness into marvellous light, the God of grace has fitted you to promote so blessed an end as the conversion of the world? Will the husbandman toil for his harvest, the merchant incur hazards for wealth, and the soldier risk his life for victory, while you will do nothing for a far nobler end? Is it nothing to you that the diffusion of the gospel is so linked with human instrumentality that it cannot be achieved without it, and that your sluggishness and fearfulness prolong the reign of iniquity and multiply the destruction of souls? Would you really rather that the progress of the gospel should be hindered, and that men around you

should die in their sins, than be at the trouble of mortifying your carnality, your pride, or your self-indulgence? At all events, if such be the real state of your heart, it is high time you should come to the knowledge of it. Tell us no more, and do not any more deceive yourself by imagining that you are identified with the cause of the Saviour, or are anticipating with joy the glories of the latter day. The final triumphs of Christianity are nothing to you, at least they are less dear to you than your carnality and your sloth. Though they should never come, you would not strive for the conversion of sinners. Vain is it to tell you of the blessedness of Immanuel's kingdom, or the greatness of your obligations to him; your heart acknowledges no commanding sympathy with the welfare of the world or the glory of the Saviour. You profess his name, but you are a dead weight upon his cause, and no loss could it suffer if you were to abandon it. But if yet you cannot abandon it, O become worthy of it! Bring home to your heart, by serious meditation, the quickening appeal which is made to you from above. Awake from your slumbers, put on your strength! Oh, let us not be men of such defective character as to be an obstruction to our Redeemer's victory, and to make him say, "I must sweep these sleepers from the earth, and replace them with more devoted followers, ere I can cover it with my glory!"

I take occasion from this subject to address to ungodly men one observation. You have often wondered, perhaps, why the gospel, which is by us so highly estimated as an instrument of conversion, should make so little impression. And we acknowledge to you that the effect of it is far less than might be expected from its divine adaptation and appointment. But we take the shame to ourselves. We have not been faithful to our trust. You know perfectly, how remiss we have been in endeavouring to fix upon your hearts the great convincing and persuasive truths of the divine word; you have lived with us without feeling that we regarded you as enemies to God, or that we made any effort to induce you to be reconciled to Him. Is it wonderful you are still impenitent? How different the case might have been if our conduct towards you had been different! It shews, not that we are feeble, only that we have not put on our strength. But that there is a power in God's word your own consciences testify, for you dread to medi-

tate on it. You find it of so penetrating and subduing an influence that you have no remedy against it but forgetfulness, and are constrained to make inconsideration your perpetual shield. By that means, indeed, you may shield yourselves from every thing. If the matters declared in the Scriptures were a thousand times more weighty than they are, if they *did* comprehend what we have often told you they do, all that is moving in the wrath, or melting in the love of God, you could defy it by thoughtlessness. It is thus you defy the gospel now. But to what a pinnacle of folly does it elevate you; and to what a depth of ruin will you fall! There are things in the Bible so irresistibly influential that you cannot think of them attentively for ten minutes without being touched to your very heart; yet you are so afraid of their influence, so determined not to yield to it, that you refuse it a place in your remembrance. And these are the things, too, which involve your future and eternal condition, which urge you to flee from the wrath to come, and set open before you the gate of heaven! O most melancholy infatuation! And it is you whom we have failed to exhort—to persuade! Forgive us, but perish not, though we have been unfaithful.

Your souls are unutterably precious. Behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation, and yet is our living intercessor able to save to the uttermost. The fountain of his blood is open; and in his name we now beseech you, "Be ye reconciled to God!"

## REMARKS.

The author of the foregoing discourse is destitute of some of those qualifications for the pulpit, in which his father, the late Rev. J. Hinton of Oxford, peculiarly excelled. Continuous flow of appropriate expression, variety and pathos of address,—the ease and elegance of nature herself, shone brightly in the ministerial labours of the father;—but while the son is in these by no means his equal, he is surpassed by none in vigour and independence of thought—in acute and conclusive methods of argument, in plain and faithful dealing both with saints and sinners.—We feel that while we have never presented our readers with a sermon less calculated to please the ear, or deceive the heart of the self-complacent professor, our pages have rarely contained matter so full of pungent appeal, and so calculated to arouse the energies of Christians of all denominations in the great work of the conversion of the world.

## SUBSTANCE OF A SERMON

PREACHED AT BRISTOL, FOR THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN  
SCHOOL SOCIETY,

By the Rev. THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D.

June 17, 1830.

"I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians."—Rom. i. 14.

THIS text has been suggested by the twofold object of the institution, whose cause I have been called upon to advocate, embracing as it does, the forwarding of education at home, and the work of Christianisation abroad.

With regard to the first head, I would say that they have never hesitated on the question of popular and plebeian education; and if asked to what point I should limit the cultivation of intellect in the lower classes, my answer would be, let them proceed in the path of mental improvement as far as their time, their taste, and their opportunities will permit, and let these be their only limits.

With the alarm that has been felt by many for the results, I cannot sympa-

lise. They anticipated nothing from the diffusion of knowledge but sedition, as if education alone were wanting to throw the whole mass into fermentation and disorder. It has been urged that the people are already formidable by the possession of mere muscular strength, and that, when mental power was added to physical, the ascendancy will become too great for the safety of the upper classes of society; that scholarship will unhinge their former habits, give them a feverish aspiring for power, and sow the seeds of a wild and wasteful anarchy throughout the land. It has further been thought that individually the system will be productive of much evil to the people themselves—that it will not

only infuse into them the ingredients of discontent and commotion, and teach them to spurn their humble lot in life, but that it would spoil them as husbandmen and artizans. The pulpit is not the proper place to refute such groundless assertions. But putting aside the political question, and looking upon the subject only in its relations to individual character, I am bold to say that the fear would not be found realized. The best test of ability and honesty in the humble artizan, is that of his spare hours being devoted to a mechanics' school. In such men, the appetite for science, and the acquirement of general knowledge are useful, and should be encouraged; and though it is the opinion of many that some check should exist, lest the mechanic should neglect the duties he owes to his family, from the constitution of human nature, however, there is nothing to be apprehended from the principle of enquiry being called into over activity. A taste for literature and habits of sound workmanship are not incompatible: indeed, wherever they are found to exist together, so far from unmaking the mechanic, they only transform him into an artizan of a higher class. Let us not, then, attempt to curb the aspiring intellect. Let us rather hasten the rapidity of its flight, in full assurance of its beneficial results. THAT were a noble achievement in mechanics which should discover a plan from which should originate a system of more wages and less work, that the labour of the handicraftsman might lie lighter on his hands, and his earthly blessings and little comforts be increased; and *that* were a still more noble achievement in philanthropy, which should teach him to fill his intervals of time with the study of philosophy and the pursuit of literature and science.

Having said thus much in favour of education in general, I feel myself on vantage ground, and would proceed to enforce the necessity of education in religion. And here I would say, that if the first kind is useful, the second is indispensable. The alphabet is the very key to the Scriptures, and to lay an interdiction on them is worthy alone of the darkness of popery; and yet there are not wanting those who would withhold education altogether from the poor, and sacrifice their eternal welfare for the temporal good of the rich. It is the fashion with some, to consider the humble classes of society only in relation to their animal wants: their spiritual natures are never weighed—they are re-

garded as mere machines—their limbs the levers—their living breath the moving impulse—useful only as they add to their wealth, or as they administer to their necessities or their luxuries; estimating human nature alone by the physical strength it may be made to yield in its application to the toils of busy artizanship. An avaricious feeling has crept into our merchantmen, by which human nature is brutalized. It is, therefore, more refreshing, on this Christian territory, to see for so glorious and wide an harvest so firm and numerous a band of intrepid labourers. City Mission, and other valuable societies, framed for the education of the people, are labouring in an enterprize which has its gains in heaven. I say it is most refreshing to find men endeavouring to impress upon souls now in the darkness of night a glory that is imperishable: an employment which far surpasses the commerce of the world. It is a reproach to merchandize, that while it calls for the exertion of physical strength, it cares nothing for the eternal welfare of the people. True, there are noble exceptions: there is a growing liberality amongst us on the subject of education. Among all classes of society we meet men who are conscious of its necessity, and even kings must find that the firmest basis of authority, is a virtuous and a well-schooled peasantry. That class is fast on the decline who are fearful of educating the poor, and the miserable policy of that system of error, superstition, and bigotry which would lay an interdiction on human souls, and barter away the eternity of our fellow creatures, is fast shrinking before the light of knowledge. George the Third did much to scathe it from our shores. That revered monarch had said, that "he hoped to see the day when the poorest man in his kingdom should be able to read the Bible." The speech was worthy of an enlightened monarch, and needs only the Saxon antiquity of Alfred to give it the highest place in general estimation. Let us hope it may be handed down to posterity as a great and glorious tradition of the saying of a wise and a beneficent king. Be assured, it is not because people know too much that they will become licentious—but just because they know too little. The way effectually to check society from aggression, is to scatter knowledge through the whole mass. This, indeed, is the only way to counteract the efforts of the political charlatan, whom the people would thus be taught to regard as the origin of dis-

cord; and might I be allowed to allude to my own country, I would say that, historically as well as argumentatively, the effects produced in Scotland prove that the only way to tranquillize a people is to cultivate their intellectual faculties.

Let us now proceed to the second head—I mean the work of Christianisation abroad. I shall occupy the space allotted to this portion of the discourse in vindicating the rationality and hopefulness of missionary enterprise; and this may be resolved into one principle—the self-evidencing power of the scriptures. We hold all scholarship to be worthless, when dissociated from the influence and companionship of the Bible: to the self-evidencing power of that book, all the triumphs effected in evangelizing the earth are to be ascribed. If asked to explain what I mean by the self-evidencing power of the Bible, I would answer, it is that within it which announces its own authority—which makes it the bearer, not only of its contents, but of its credentials, and enables the reader, even without the lights afforded by profane history, and without the aid of sensible miracles, or the possession of acute scholarship, to combat the scepticism of learned and academic men. I do hold that the Bible may be evidenced in the very moral natures of men. There is nothing in this which supersedes the workings of the Spirit, for what but him can give the evidence? The Spirit brings no new truths from afar, he only testifies to the truths already announced in the Scriptures. He opens our eyes to behold the works contained in the book: he lifteth up a veil it is true—not from a distant or a mysterious region, but from our own hearts, and we behold the emptiness within. In this process, there is neither a voice nor a vision: true, there is light, but it is a light shed from our own consciences. He who is thus visited, may say, "I was blind, but now I see," for the unintelligible parts of the Bible now appear full of weight and significance. The commandments of God are now revered; the man has become a Christian in the truest sense of the term; the gospel is made the wisdom of God unto him, and he rejoices in the hope of future glory; and this is that self-evidencing power which the Bible possesses, independent of the testimony of history in its favour. Were we to enter the cottage of the poor, we should find on its shelves, not works on the externals of the books, but the book itself, and works

on its internals—not the volumes of Paley, or of the writers on deistical controversy, but those of Baxter, and the authors of the puritanic age—the Augustan age of English piety. Such is the Christianity of our husbandman and of our artizan, they possess not a light from without, but from within. It is not the Christianity of implicit reliance upon authority, but of rational belief; and in allusion to Scotland I would say, that the fact is authenticated by the moral condition of her population. It is a remnant of the good old day when the purest doctrine was heard from her pulpits and the sweetest psalmody from her cottages, that sustains the Christianity of the ploughmen of the land, nobly accredited by the virtues of her peasantry, and that constitutes the strength and glory of the Scottish nation.

It is an approved axiom, that from a like material, a like manufacture may be framed. Wherever we go, we have not a different species, but the same identical human nature to contend with. The instrument which we employ is the same—that Spirit which bloweth where it listeth. We export the same machinery that is at work in our own parishes—the Bible, the preacher, and the schoolmaster. We cannot charge the missionary work with folly, without branding the cause at home with opprobrium; we cannot deny the hope and expectation of success, without paralyzing the Christianity of our own country. Wherever a human being exists, there is a conscience, and by this channel the gospel may be circulated over the earth, through all her tribes and families.

To complete the picture, let us unfold, though in a general way, the history of missionary success. When the first missionaries went to Greenland, we might be sure they had enough of ignorance to contend with, and they thought that it might be better to go to work systematically, and, before yielding to the natives, the full perfection of revelation, to give them some idea of natural religion, and of the unity of God. The poor Greenlander did not comprehend them, and after a lapse of years they found that they had not gained a single convert. They now saw the necessity of changing their mode of operation: they made one bold step forward, and presented them the simple truths of scripture. The eyes of the Greenlander were opened: he felt that he was a sinner, and he rejoiced to hear the voice of the preacher declare that a Saviour had died for him. The success of the mis-

sionaries was henceforward great. Who shall say that a religion calculated to produce such effects is chimerical? The discovery thus made by the Moravians was carried by them over the world, and this is the secret of their remarkable successes among the Esquimaux of Labrador, the negroes of the British Colonies, the Indians of North America, and the Hottentots of Africa. By the last report of the Moravians, it appeared that, in the West Indies alone, they possessed 35,629 negroes in Christian communion.

This seems to be the proper place to determine the question, whether it is best first to civilize or to Christianize. Many sentimental travellers, smitten with the air of neatness and order existing in the Moravian settlements, had endeavoured to elevate their character at the expense of that of their Christian brethren and fellow labourers. They had spoken as if they believed Christianity to be a graft upon civilization, and not civilization a graft upon Christianity. There are none who are more averse to such praise than the Moravians themselves; and they have published a book to vindicate their principles from the opprobrium attached to the mistaken praises of their friends. True, they have endeavoured to teach their converts the arts of Europe, and the two educations have gone on together in such a manner, that it is in some cases almost impossible to settle the question of priority; but scripture principle has ever been the prime mover, and civilization has attended upon the footsteps of Christianity, not Christianity upon the footsteps of civilization. The message of God may be delivered immediately to all men, and this explains the text, "I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians."

Had the members of some school of philosophy, by dint of analysis, become acquainted with all the operations of the human mind, so as to be able to trace its transition from savage to civilized life; had they framed a book of rules for their progress, and then, actuated by a great philanthropic spirit, embarked from the shores of civilized Europe to assist in the education of the barbarous inhabitants of an unexplored distant land;—had they succeeded, under those circumstances, in gaining an ascendancy over the minds of the natives;—had they obtained their children as pupils, and, in a word, transformed a horde of cannibals into a race of merciful and intelligent beings, teaching the arts and decencies of life to a people who, but a short time before,

were wandering in nakedness, and buried in intellectual depravity;—it would have been an achievement so wonderful, so dazzling, so brilliant, that our academies would have blazoned forth titles for the specific charm, and heaped their honours on the heads of the successful adventurers.

Now it is not many years since that the members of a certain college, though not a literary one, engaged in such an enterprise. They went forth—they tried their specific—they carried with them a book, but it was not composed by philosophers, and hundreds can testify to the results of the mission, whatever was the nature of the operations by which they were effected. The island of Otaheite felt the powerful influence of their charm, and we behold its glorious effects—a nest of grovelling savages has become a nation of men. It is, indeed, a wonderful transition. They have now a written language, and the light of scripture shines upon them with refulgent rays. It is pleasant to contemplate their well-regulated families—their new-formed alphabet—their infant literature, and the holiness of their sabbath. The mariner, too, on the bosom of the broad Pacific, when the chime of the bells sounds sweetly on his ear, never before heard in that mighty ocean, can testify to the misery and the desolation that once reigned in this spot where all is now happiness and peace. A few gospel missionaries had the doing of this—but then they had the Bible. This was the effect of pure Calvinistic orthodoxy, and a stern resolution to abide by that system of evangelization which has been productive of such great effects as to awaken even the astonishment of unbelievers. "When God worketh a work, despisers wonder and perish."

However imperfect other authorities may be, such facts convey with them internal evidence of the truth of Christianity. And you will permit me to state in a few short sentences what that evidence is. St. Paul speaks of one unlearned coming in, who, on hearing the Scriptures, fell down and worshipped. When the apostles preached the doctrines of life many of the people were constrained to exclaim, "Of a verity God is in these men." How was this? They felt a remarkable accordance between what they heard and their own feelings, which assured them there was something more than human in the message. They next told them what they needed, and the consciences of the people bore testimony to the correctness of

the speech. They then directed them what to do, and the effects bore in themselves a still greater proof of the apostles' mission, inducing them to conclude that God was in them of a truth. In all this a reflected light was passing and re-passing between the inspired word and the conscience. Now the oral communication of the will of God is become his written commandment, we trace the same remarkable coincidence between spiritual exercise, the doctrine of the scriptures, and the mission of the preacher. God does not make any direct communication with us, but he enlightens the page of holy writ, and enables us to perceive in them truths we had never beheld before. They become graven upon the tablets of the heart, and thus between the Bible and conscience internal evidence becomes certainty, and our minds yield to the written word the same testimony that was given to the preaching of the apostle, that God is in these things of a verity. I repeat it, there is nothing in these things to supersede the operations of the Spirit: for it is not enough to apply the mere words—we must pray for grace in the application.

Many of you that are present may recollect with what éclat the first missionary ship was launched upon the ocean for Otaheite—the dazzling streamers, and the proud expectations of the many who crowded to witness the pomp of her departure. The vessel reached her destination in safety, but the judgments of the Almighty fell heavily on the missionaries as a punishment for their vanity and their pride. A cloud of disappointment hung over them, and a spirit of dejection prevailed even among their own body: the scoff of the ungodly rung in their ears, and the seed fell for a time without producing fruit. At this period, doubtless, the enterprise was sustained by the Almighty, in answer to the prayers of his more zealous servants. At length the friends of the cause were led to look from the mere means to the invisible God, who has declared that he will yet be enquired of. A more fervent outpouring of the soul in prayer, and a louder knocking at the throne of grace was heard; and after a season, an influence came down from on high upon the island, and we now behold it the happy home of lovely and Christianised natives.

I trust what I have said will have due

effect upon my hearers, inducing those who were friendly to education to be solicitous for its advancement, and reconciling those who were averse to it. I cannot, however, leave you without endeavouring to bring the arguments I have advanced home again to your consciences. My speech shall be a gospel addressed to all men, and to *them* specifically. It is your duty to enter into the truths of that gospel until you see God as the Father of Jesus Christ. Remember that the Almighty has sworn by himself that he has no pleasure in the death of a sinner: you have nothing to fear from the acceptance of Him, for he has done all he could to encourage you. He has stooped to plead the matter with you—to beseech your acceptance of his word—and to knock at the door of your hearts with the information, that he has sent his Son into the world that the blind may see and the dead have eternal life. The song of the angels was, "Good will to man," not to certain men, to the exclusion of others. I have the word of God for my warranty when I say so, let the sinner be who he might. I would cheer him on simply in virtue of his being a man. It is not for me to say who shall or who shall not enter the kingdom of heaven; but wherever faith in God is found, I do not doubt of acceptance. I look into the Bible, and find that by one comprehensive sweep it takes the whole world within its saving influence—that it extends its mercies to all the children of men—and that the unbelief of man is the only obstacle to its progress. "Look, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved." The beneficence of God impairs not by one single exception the universality of his mercies. It is powerless alone, not for want of kindness in the caller, but for want of confidence in him that his called. He would woo them to its acceptance, but they slighted the gift; he would charm them into listening to his word, but they refused to hear the voice of the charmer. I stand here, the ambassador of God, and I do not exceed my commission by a single iota. I speak the very message of the Almighty, and if you think otherwise of God, you do him great injustice: you withhold your faith from a Father of mercy, and tremble before a malignant being of your own creating. May God work better things in your hearts, and bless you all!

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