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Elements of Christianity that tend to Secure its Diffusion and
Universal Prevalence.

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S E R M O N ,

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR

FOREIGN MISSIONS,

AT THE

MEETING IN PHILADELPHIA, PA.

OCTOBER 2, 1859.

BY ROBERT W. PATTERSON, D. D.

Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church, Chicago, Ill.

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AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

PHILADELPHIA, PA., OCTOBER, 1859.

Resolved, That the thanks of the Board be presented to the Rev. Dr. PATTERSON for his Sermon, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication.

Attest,

SAMUEL M. WORCESTER, *Rec. Secretary.*

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S E R M O N .

MATTHEW XIII. 33.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE UNTO LEAVEN, WHICH A WOMAN TOOK, AND HID IN THREE MEASURES OF MEAL, TILL THE WHOLE WAS LEAVENED.

OUR Savior gave his disciples many striking lessons, in relation to the nature of his kingdom. Most of his parables are designed to illustrate this subject. And many of his more direct teachings have the same bearing and intent. Why did he so much dwell on this theme? I think we may find the reason in the fact, that the kingdom of heaven must be planted and have its growth in the understandings and hearts of intelligent and moral beings, who become co-workers with God in the sowing, reception and culture of the seeds of divine truth, that are made to germinate and bring forth their appointed fruits of holiness and glory to Christ. We must know what the elements of the kingdom and the working of these elements are, to be rightly prepared to give them their fit place in our own souls, and to apply them wisely and efficaciously for the establishment of the kingdom in the earth. And in this light I know of no words of Jesus

Ms. A. 10. 2. 1. 4. 3. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12.

that are more full of weighty instruction than those which have been selected as the text for the present discourse. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." The leaven is the truths and influences of the Gospel. The measures of meal are not merely the elect portion of mankind, but the mass of our fallen race. The leaven has been hid in this mass, having been deposited deep in the hearts of many men and women and children, who have been brought to feel its power. It is self-diffusive. Its most important effects are produced silently, and the world at large fails to recognize them, or is even unbelieving as it regards their reality. But still the leavening process is continued, and will surely go on until all the measures of the meal shall be leavened.

Without further exposition or expansion of the text, by any direct method, I will proceed to call your attention to some of those elements of Christianity, which tend to secure its diffusion and universal prevalence in the world; and which it becomes us to use wisely and earnestly in our relation to the great leavening process. And in doing this, I can best subserve the practical end I have in view, by a very plain and simple exhibition of the subject. I wish to show you, my brethren, if I can, that our holy religion, considered as a scheme of vitalizing forces, is, in all its great, characteristic features, wonderfully prophetic of that glorious day for whose coming we pray and labor, when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the whole earth. And in the

development of this truth for our encouragement, I trust we shall all find motives, at each successive step, to stimulate us to increasing zeal and activity in the noble work which has brought us together in this holy convocation.

At the basis of all our faith in the Gospel, lies the fact that it is specially and wonderfully adapted to meet the moral nature and necessities of sinful man. The human soul spontaneously reaches forth after the knowledge of such a personal and perfect God as the Bible reveals; such a manifestation of God, in union with humanity, as the person and incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ have exhibited; such a sacrifice for sin, as that which was offered on the cross of Calvary; such a fact of spiritual and divine agency for the illumination, regeneration and sanctification of darkened, corrupted and helpless men, as the Christian doctrine of the Holy Ghost unfolds; such a prospect of life and immortality, as the Gospel brings into clear light. I take this known adaptation of our holy religion to answer the practical ends of a religion for the world as a first fact, not to be argued, but *assumed*, in the discussion I am to prosecute on this occasion. The Gospel is not, like other religions, essentially local, or fitted to meet only some peculiar phase of mental development during a limited period of human history. It is not one-sided, like other religions, recognizing but a single great truth, or providing for only one among many human necessities. It excludes all hurtful elements, and embraces all those positive elements which must enter into a religion that is to

commend itself to man as man ; to all nations, in all ages of the world's history. Had not this been true, it could never have been securely *deposited* in the measures of meal ; or, when hidden, it would speedily have been worked out, and excluded forever from human thought and memory. But it found its way down into the hearts of the first disciples, and there began to operate in that long process of self-diffusion, which I am now to consider and illustrate, as far as the time allotted me will permit.

Let me begin the series of remarks which I have to offer, by reminding you that the religion which constitutes the leaven that has been set at work in the world by our Lord, develops, first of all, in the hearts of those who embrace it, *a deep and grateful love towards God, as he reveals himself in the Gospel of Christ*—a love which begets an irrepressible desire to proclaim abroad the excellence and grace of the divine Person to whom it is drawn forth.

Other religions teach men to acknowledge and worship divinities that are conceived of as shadowy and impersonal, or, if personal and sovereign, as stern and arbitrary, if not revengeful, bloody, and grossly impure. Such gods may be revered and feared, but not loved ; and their worshipers may labor to tread down and destroy, or at least to subjugate to an iron rule, every neighboring people that does not receive their religion. Nay, such divinities may obtain a certain hold upon the *consciences* of tribes or nations, that are sensible of *needing* a higher deity than their fathers have been accus-

tomed to adore ; but a religion that does not constrain those who profess it, *by love and gratitude*, to make it known to the multitudes who are ignorant of its God, will never become permanently self-diffusive. It will neither stir up its votaries to self-denying and continuous endeavors to publish the character and claims of the divinity whom it acknowledges, nor will it win the *hearts* of the people whom it may convert, by force or political policy. For this reason alone, no religion, aside from Christianity, could ever become the religion of the world, even if, in other respects, it fulfilled the necessary conditions of catholicity and universality. But how does the religion of *Jesus* appeal to the affections and the grateful emotions of every soul that begins to feel its power ! How does it not only *command*, but *awaken* a warm, responsive love towards him who has first loved sinners ! The pouring abroad of God's love in the heart of the believer who has come to trust in a Savior who died for him, while he was yet an enemy to his Creator and Father, kindles a new and grateful love in that heart, which must find utterance in the praises of its gracious Lord and Redeemer. It was most natural for the lepers, whom Jesus had cleansed, to go and blaze abroad the matter. And so is it natural for the renewed and pardoned sinner, who has felt the warming of divine love, through the grace of Jesus Christ, to go, unbidden, and

“ ——Tell to sinners round,
What a dear Savior he has found.”

And in proportion as this affection towards God

in Christ is cherished and developed, it manifests itself *increasingly* in zeal for the extension of the honor of Him by whose grace it has been awakened in the soul. Hence, a genuine revival of religion is always attended, as was that of the Pentecost, by an unwonted zeal for the glory of God. Every newly-quickened Christian, as well as every new-born believer, is in haste to tell to others the beauty and excellence of that lovely Redeemer, who has been freshly revealed to his admiring view. And so, as the work of salvation goes forward in the hearts of *many* individuals, the Church is more and more melted together in that love to her common Lord, which leads to united and resolute endeavors to spread the knowledge of Jesus far and wide, even to earth's remotest bounds. And every lost soul that is brought to discover that the disciples of Christ do really *love*, as well as reverence, their Lord and Master, is led to inquire who and what the glorious Person is, who is declared to be the one "altogether lovely," and the chief "among ten thousand." The question thus becomes a common one, and it is pressed, not in derision, but with serious and interested thoughtfulness, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" Even the darkened heathen is induced to ask, with excited mind, "Who is your God, that you should come to us, over continents and oceans, to tell us of his goodness and love? What can there be in *him*, that so fills you with zeal to publish his name all over the world?" Thus, while the love of Christ constrains his followers, as it did the great Apostle

of the Gentiles, to show forth his praises far and near, it commends their Lord and Savior to the thoughtful hearer of the Gospel, as possessing personal *attractions* such as belong only to the Christian's God. Such a religion will gain access to the hearts of sinful men, and power over them, more and more rapidly, in proportion as it multiplies genuine converts, alike in Christian and heathen lands. I tell you, my brethren, this distinguishing fact, that Christianity begets and cultivates an earnest *personal love* towards God in Christ, contains within itself a prophecy of the Gospel's universal diffusion in the world, which no discouraging signs of any dark period can eclipse. We read this prophecy in all the hymns, and prayers, and devotional books, of the Christian Church, from her organization at Jerusalem to the present day, of her renewed progress and hope. We read it in the face of every loving and grateful disciple of Jesus, whether he be a prince or a peasant, a slave or a lord, a child of fortune or of poverty, a stéward of many or few talents. Such a religion will work on in its leavening process, until the whole mass of our corrupted and perishing humanity shall be leavened.

My second remark will be almost a mere expansion of that which has just been made. But it will be seen to have its peculiar phase of interest and importance. The Gospel, as a power in the hearts of those who receive it, kindles and sustains *a desire to be like God in Christ*, as to the *exercise* of love and compassion.

It is a law of mind, that we should desire to resemble those persons whom we admire and love ; and we spontaneously copy their most conspicuous traits of character. It has been often said, that a people will become like the God they worship. This is especially true, if the God worshiped be regarded as possessing and exercising attributes of character which strongly appeal to the active sympathies of the worshipers. Accordingly, we find that those pagans who worship cruel and impure gods, are cruel and impure themselves. Their worship is both an effect and a cause of their lamentable depravity. In like manner, the Christian's worship of God, as he is revealed in his Son, tends continually to assimilate the worshiper to the glorious object of his adoration. But there is in this case a *peculiar* reason for earnest desire and endeavor to transcribe the moral traits of the God to whom the homage is paid, which does not operate to any considerable degree among the worshipers of false deities. The God of the Mohammedan and the gods of the heathen, as we have seen, do not inspire much love towards themselves in the hearts of their votaries. They engender and develop superstitious fears, and appeal to the morbid and misguided consciences of their devotees ; but they draw forth no pæans of real gratitude and affection, and conduct to no adoring views of any divine beauties and glories which they are believed to possess and unfold. And, therefore, while their worshipers do naturally copy their unholy attributes, on the principle of moral affinity, they are not

impelled, by grateful love, to imitate any personal excellencies with which they are thought to be invested.

But the children of God by faith in Christ, while attracted towards their Lord by his divine *loveliness*, are in a corresponding degree filled with earnest longings to become conformed to his moral image; and especially are such desires developed in their minds in relation to those traits and graces in the character of their Savior, which have most affectingly appealed to their own hearts. As often, therefore, as they remember that divine love which has been so amazingly displayed in the sending of Jesus from heaven to earth, and in his humiliation and toils and sorrows and agonies for their redemption, they hear a voice addressing their grateful affections, and calling upon them to imitate the example of their divine Father and their blessed Master, in point of self-sacrificing benevolence and pity towards the needy and perishing children of men. As often as they think of their Lord and Redeemer, they are reminded of his self-denials and sufferings for them, and the whole perishing race to which they belong; and they feel prompted, by every consideration of grateful love, to *follow* Christ in the work of seeking and saving the lost. This fact reveals itself in the hymns and devotional services of the church, everywhere and in all ages; and in all the exhortations which Christians address to each other, in relation to the great duty of laboring to rescue sinful men from their ruined estate of guilt and misery. We get our strongest hold on

the hearts of our brethren, whom we would stir up to new zeal in the missionary cause, when we warmly remind them of what Jesus did as the Prince of missionaries, in his life of humiliation and toils, and in his bitter death for the world's sake. There is that in the very centre of the Christian's new life that will always respond, more or less promptly and strongly, to this appeal. And the desire to be like Christ will ever stimulate a multitude of his followers to repeat and press this appeal to their brethren. We are not to forget the practical place which belongs to this element in the Christian consciousness of the church, in the progress of the missionary work. *We must contemplate and hold up the example of Jesus as a missionary, to keep alive and diffuse and invigorate the missionary spirit.*

What a motive do the disciples of Jesus feel pressing upon their hearts, to lead them to an unfeigned consecration of their property and themselves to the great enterprise of saving this dying world, when they look at their Master's example of voluntary self-denial and humiliation in the same holy cause! And how are the courage and patience of the Christian laborer, both in enlightened and pagan lands, sustained by the memory of the greater trials, and more wearing toils, and heavier sorrows, which Jesus bore in the days of his hard missionary life, when he was depositing the leaven at first in the mass of our fallen humanity! The working disciple would surely grow weary and discouraged, could he not daily look to Jesus, the

author and finisher of his faith. But he can boldly follow where his Lord has gone before him, deeming it a distinguished honor to do and suffer as he did. And there have been those who would rejoice and be exceedingly glad, even when they were called to suffer shame for the name of Jesus. Nay, some would not consent to be crucified without having the head downward, deeming it too great an honor to have the head upward, as the Master's was in his last agonies. The appeal which the example of our blessed Savior makes, to the desire in the hearts of his followers, to be like him in the self-denying exercise of love and mercy towards lost sinners, will never cease to work mightily towards the diffusion of saving influences, until every perishing soul shall be invited and urged to come to the Gospel feast. Let us all, in times of weariness and discouragement, look back and recall to mind the cheerful perseverance and the unflagging zeal of Him, who has shown us how to toil on manfully through dark days, in the face of coldness, opposition and organized wickedness, and in expectation of a most ignominious and terrible death. And let us keep this example of our Lord before the eyes of all his followers; that they may be stimulated to work arduously, as he did, while it is day, in the great cause of human salvation.

I now advance to the thought that the Gospel creates and develops *a sense of universal brotherhood*, which tends to produce and quicken, more and more, the desire that every sinner of Adam's race

may experience the peculiar blessedness of the new life in Christ.

The Bible tells the Christian, on its first page, that all the millions of our race, of every class, color and condition, have proceeded from the creative skill and power of the same God; so as to lay a foundation for the prophet's inquiry, Have we not all one Father? Again, it tells him that, in point of historical origin, there is no distinction between the Caucasian, the Tartar, the Malay, the Negro, and the Indian;—that God hath made of *one blood* all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth;—that *every man* is a brother in one great family, all of whose members are children alike of the same first parents. The Bible goes further, and assures the Christian that all these multiplied millions of his brethren, by blood, are born equally heirs to an immortal existence, which ought to be inconceivably blissful and glorious, but may be wretched beyond the reach of human description or thought. Then, also, the Gospel hangs all its offers of mercy on two great facts, which no Christian can lose sight of, and no one can seriously contemplate, without feeling a special sympathy with his fellow-travelers to eternity of every class. The first fact is, that all the children of Adam are alike fallen and condemned sinners. The second is, that the same Savior gave himself *a ransom for all*, and is thus the propitiation, not for the sins of Christians only, *but also for the sins of the whole world*; so that every disciple of Jesus sees, in the same atoning blood in which he trusts for himself, a sufficient

expiation for every dying brother he has on the face of the earth. And then, there is another truth which comes to a special bearing in this connection. The law of God and the Gospel of Christ both *require* us to love our fellow-man, wherever found, as we love ourselves; to love him as our great Father's child of the same blood with us; to love him, as an heir with us of the same immortality; to love him as the purchase of our own Redeemer's blood.

There can be no love to God or to Christ, and, therefore, no scriptural piety, without some real, hearty compliance with this fundamental requirement of God's law and Gospel. Hence the leaven of the kingdom, in any human heart, must always involve this love to all men as brethren,—this sense of special relationship to every sinner of our lost race, and of obligation to care for and try to save him. For this reason the new convert to Christ, as soon as he ventures to hope that his own sins have been forgiven, begins to pray and labor for the conversion of his fellow-sinners. Not only has the great law of love been written on his heart, but he is brought to feel that it has a direct application with respect to his *brethren* by nature and providence. He feels that his own feet have been taken out of the horrible pit and miry clay, and placed on the Rock of Ages, and he begins to pity all those who were his companions in guilt and condemnation, and longs to do something to make them participators of the same liberty and blessedness which he now enjoys. He thinks of each of their

souls as being, like his own, worth more than a thousand worlds like this, and he cannot bear the thought that they should perish forever, when they might all be saved.

This concern for the souls of brethren of a common race, brethren according to the flesh, pervades the whole Church of pardoned sinners, in proportion as the new life is kept fresh and warm in their hearts; and it constitutes an element in the leaven of the kingdom, which must ever tend to give it diffusion more and more, as the experience of Christians shall continue to grow deeper and broader. When all other means fail to arouse the Church to new activity and zeal in the work of evangelization, it will not be in vain for the earnest friends of the cause to come back again and again to this simple ground of appeal, and say to every sluggish brother and sister in the ranks of the Lord's people, "Remember! All these thousands and millions, who are living and dying without the Gospel, are of your own blood! Remember! Their souls are as precious as yours; Jesus died for them, as well as for you. Remember! They are going on rapidly to the same great eternity which lies before you; and what you do for them, must be done quickly." I tell you, my brethren, we are strong in our cause, when we can press motives like these upon the hearts of all the multitudes, who know how to feel for the woes of perishing souls. There may be outward changes in the condition of the Church, and in the relations of particular methods of labor to the great enterprise of spreading the Gospel;

but there is an enduring, an unchanging element of power for the diffusion of the leaven, in the fact of common brotherhood with all the race of sinners, which we have to urge upon the attention and the heart of every follower of Jesus, whatever his peculiar name or creed, or outward fellowship. The Gospel clothes this doctrine of our *race-unity* with a divine energy, which will quicken, more and more, the zeal and self-denying activity of Christians, in the work of evangelization, until all the nations shall be gathered into the same spiritual brotherhood, by the operation of a common faith in the same God and Savior. There is no other religion that makes such an appeal to the hearts of its votaries, to stir them up to earnest and untiring efforts for its establishment among the nations. The doctrine (caviled at, but gloriously true) of human unity and equality, in the very centre of our religion, must make it mighty through God; because it turns every convert into an Apostle for the conversion of his brother; and his brother is every sinner in the world.

I find another prophecy and pledge of the Gospel's diffusion and prevalence, in the appeal which it makes to every enlightened conscience *by the authority of special command* on this very subject.

It might seem, at first view, almost needless that any command should be addressed to the disciples of Jesus, to induce them to go and invite all the starving multitudes to come and receive the bread of life. It might be thought that every forgiven

sinner would, of course, make haste to say to all his brethren, "I have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write." And every new convert does feel a strong desire to

"——Proclaim abroad
The honors of his Savior, God."

But there are numerous hinderances to keep many silent, who did have it in their hearts to publish the name of Him who has taken away the uncleanness of their leprosy. There is, in one case, the hinderance of constitutional diffidence and self-distrust ; in another case, the hinderance of a lingering fear of self-deception ; in another case, the hinderance of much consciousness of remaining imperfection ; and, in many cases, the hinderance of irresoluteness in the execution of good purposes, already formed and often renewed. Besides, almost every disciple, at times, finds that his first love has become, in a measure, chilled by the cold atmosphere of this sinful world ; and he is tempted to relax his former activity and zeal, even if he have been a devoted servant in his Lord's work. On some occasions, whole churches grow languid in their spiritual life, and their love and gratitude to Christ seem to have become, in a great measure, quiescent and inefficacious. For these reasons, it is needful that *divine authority* should come in, to back all the appeals which the Gospel makes to the hearts of believers, by laying its strong grasp on the *conscience* of every slow and irresolute disciple, that he may not feel at *liberty* to become a slothful servant. Especially is this requisite to ensure the

continued prosecution of an enterprise so arduous and protracted, and at times so discouraging, as the conversion of a whole world of sinners, individual by individual. There must, in such a case, be no room left for speculative questions about the *practicability* of the undertaking, so far as the *duty* of persevering labor in the work of evangelization is regarded. Otherwise, considerations of *present expediency* will often prevail over the better devices of the Lord's people, and the great work will cease. The false religions of the world, though some of them may be widely diffused by civil conquest and the merging of nations together, are all destined to have but a restricted prevalence, if for no other reason, because they do not bind the consciences of their adherents by any broad command, as from God, enjoining the *universal* dissemination of their doctrines and principles. In this regard, we find a peculiar element of moral and spiritual power in the provision which our Savior has made to ensure the effectual enlistment of every *Christian conscience* for the spread of his Gospel.

He did not leave his great commission to be *first* promulged by his *Apostles*, as at second-hand, to the Church. *He* gave it to his disciples from his own lips, and delivered it as his parting charge to the eleven, when he was just on the point of mounting up to heaven on the cloud. And he took care to preface it by a most emphatic and solemn affirmation of his divine authority: "All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth. Go ye, *therefore*, and teach all nations." Thus has

he invested his great command for the evangelization of the nations with a dignity and authority which cannot fail to make an indelible impression on the heart and conscience of every disciple. In this, he makes a double appeal to all of his followers,—an appeal to their consciences by command, and an appeal to their love and gratitude by reminding them that He, who gives the command, is the same Lord and Redeemer who died for them and rose again, and who has gone up into heaven to act there as their ever-living intercessor.

This command is addressed directly, or in effect, to every Christian in the world. If the literal preaching of the Gospel is to be done only by those whom Christ calls to this work by his providence and Spirit, the duty yet rests on the whole Church, of sustaining the ambassadors of Jesus by their prayers, their co-operative labors, and the needful material aid. For the work is one, as the Church and her ministry are one body, having but one Head, and one heart, and one Spirit. Therefore the commission given to the eleven on the mountain of Galilee is the *Church's* commission, and it lays its authority on the conscience of every man and woman and child who knows the way of salvation. And how comprehensive are its terms! How sweeping its injunction! “Go ye into *all the world*, and preach the Gospel to *every creature*.” “Go ye, therefore, and teach [make disciples of] *all nations*.” This will hold fast the conscience of the Church, by the grasp of its divine authority, until every creature under heaven shall receive the

Gospel, and all the nations shall have been subdued to the obedience of the faith of Christ.

As if to set a holy seal upon this command, our Savior tells his followers, not only to make disciples of all nations, but to consecrate every one of these disciples to the same glorious Trinity, whom they have themselves acknowledged, by baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Thus every evangelized person is to be solemnly consecrated to the same work of evangelization, to which the first disciples were set apart, and is to be inducted into his work at the hour of his making his Christian profession. In this manner, the great commission spreads its authority over all the newly enlightened consciences that come into the kingdom of Jesus ; and the power of the *command*, as a special element in the diffusion of the Gospel leaven, multiplies itself by a definite law, as the kingdom advances towards its final triumph. I see, in that remarkable commission, a sign and pledge that its grand object and end will in due time be achieved. What a lever does the last command of our risen Lord place in the hands of every friend of the missionary cause ! What a strength does it impart to us in the sublime gathering of disciples here, whither we have come to get our evangelical consciences quickened, and, if possible, to give the claims of this momentous enterprise a new purchase on the consciences of all the Lord's people with whom we especially co-operate ! Let us take the old commission of our Master, and press it with new solemnity of

appeal upon our own consciences and on the consciences of all our brethren : “ Go *ye* into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.” It is our *Redeemer* who commands ; and he must be obeyed, obeyed cheerfully, promptly, and with a courageous heart and a strong hand.

But after all, if there were nothing in our religion to give special stimulus to *the faith and hope* of the Lord’s people, in relation to ultimate success in the great work of evangelization, the zeal of the Church would tire and faint after a while, and the chariot-wheels of salvation would drag heavily, or stop altogether. Many would begin to ask, “ Why has such an impossible task been assigned to the Savior’s disciples ? Will not the great majority of the nations perish at last, in spite of all our endeavors to deliver them from their darkness and bondage ? Is it worth while to make such sacrifices in an enterprise which gives promise of such small returns ? ” And the eye of sense could not discern any clear evidence that the latter-day glory would ever dawn upon the world, to reassure the doubting hearts of the weary laborers in this long toil of ages. Hope deferred would make sick the heart of the whole Church, if no divine pledges had been given to stay up her faith, and help her to look beyond the years of tedious preparation and slow progress, to the bright period of final success and triumph. Men may tell us that the *requirement* to preach the Gospel to the world for a witness, is enough, without any sure prospect of converting

the nations. They may tell us that it affords motive sufficient to keep the zeal of the Church alive in this cause; that the glad tidings must be spread everywhere, before Christ shall come the second time, to set up his kingdom by judgment, and mighty miracle. But there is that in the nature of the human mind which makes it needful that men should feel that their work is to be rewarded by the very results towards which it is specially directed, to give them energy and perseverance in the prosecution of it through long periods of duration. They will tire in the labor of sowing, if the conviction becomes settled in their minds, that no harvests are to spring up from the seed which they scatter, but their toils are only necessary antecedents of some mightier agency than theirs, which is in due time to achieve the desired results without their co-operation. There would be, in such a case, a sense of something *arbitrary* and coldly sovereign in the arrangement, which would rapidly subside into a slavish and reluctant, if not an unbelieving spirit. Accordingly, it is found in experience that those churches which are taught to disbelieve in the conversion of the world by the preaching of the Gospel and kindred instrumentalities, do gradually lose their earnestness of devotion to the missionary work. At least, the measure of their practical benevolence, in relation to this enterprise, seems to afford too much warrant for this remark. We do not see the contributions of such churches flowing largely into the Lord's treasury. There is evidently a great element of

evangelical power left out from the faith of those Christians who do not expect that all the nations will be subjugated to the reign of Jesus by the Word and Spirit of God.

There is, therefore, a peculiar practical interest attached to the inquiry, Has God given us any clear warrant for the hope and expectation that the Gospel is to be not only preached everywhere, but believed and obeyed by all the chief kindreds and nations of our fallen race? Is the present work of evangelization to have its issue in *the conversion of the world to Christ*? And we think we find in our inspired Bible a clear and most encouraging answer to this important question. It would be out of time and place for me to attempt here to present, at any length, the scriptural grounds on which rests the common faith of the church touching the universal establishment of our holy religion by the preaching of the Gospel. I can only *refer* to a few leading views of the subject.

(1.) In the Old Testament and the New, the Messiah is habitually represented as the Savior of the world;—as atoning for our race, and as having undertaken to reconcile this revolted province to the divine government. These representations do not imply at all, as some have contended, that the Redeemer was to save, absolutely, every individual of the human family. But they do clearly imply that the work of atonement was designed to open the way for the restoration of our race, as a body, to their appropriate allegiance to God, and that this world is actually to become

the redeemed possession of Christ, as the final result of his humiliation and death in it and for it. On no other construction can we fully justify the declaration, that it was the Father's pleasure to reconcile all things to himself by Christ, whether they be *things on earth*, or things in heaven.

(2.) Then we are told that Christ has broken down the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles, *that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross*. What mean such teachings in regard to the great purpose of the Savior's death, if only a small part of the world is to be in fact reconciled to God?

(3.) The light becomes still clearer, when we look at the terms of the great evangelical commission, which we have already considered in its relation to the conscience of the Church. The command is, Go, and *make disciples of all nations; baptizing them* into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Can we believe that our Savior would thus *enjoin* it upon his Church to christianize all nations, and baptize them in token of their conversion, while knowing well that no such evangelization of the world was possible, or to be expected? Certainly his command on this subject implies a glorious promise of ultimate success in the work of converting the nations.

(4.) And then we remember, in this connection, the comprehensive *petition* which our Savior has taught us to offer: "Thy kingdom come." This is to be our daily prayer for the full establishment

of that kingdom which cometh not with observation, but silently in the hearts of men, like the diffusion of leaven in the meal. What is this but a prayer for the universal spread of the Gospel, and its complete success in the conversion of all nations? We cannot help believing that Christ intends to *answer* this petition, which he has put both into our mouths and our hearts.

(5.) But our faith is more fully assured by those numerous and explicit pledges and predictions of the Old Testament and the New, which are so full of encouragement to the minds and hearts of plain readers of the Bible, all over the Christian world. When we connect these pledges and predictions with our Savior's command, that we should evangelize all nations, we find that we have a great sheet-anchor for our faith. The great commission fixes the meaning of those ancient declarations: "All kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him." "The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters fill the seas." "The kingdom, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High God." "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth, and his name one." Then, when we read in our text, that the leaven of the Gospel shall continue to work in the mass of fallen humanity *until the whole shall be leavened*, what must we believe? And what are we to understand, when we read that "*the fullness of the Gentiles is to come in*," and then, "*all Israel is to be saved*;" and this *through*

that faith in the Gospel, which cometh by the hearing of the word? Such are some of the grounds on which we rest our faith and hope, when we look forward through all the discouragements and dark clouds that sometimes hang over the progress of our glorious enterprise, to that surely coming day, when "great voices shall be heard in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." Nor

(6.) Do we see any scriptural objection to those views, which ought to set them aside or modify them. The interpretations of Scripture which are urged by those who would destroy the faith of the Church in the doctrine of the conversion of the world, all seem to us to be made out rather from a Jewish than a Christian stand-point, and to be encumbered with insuperable difficulties.

We have full confidence that the great body of Christians who read the word with a practical intent, will continue to look and pray and labor for the evangelization of the whole world, by the preaching of the Gospel, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. And we cannot doubt that this faith and hope of the Church, in regard to the final success of our holy enterprise, will still prove, as heretofore, a most operative element of self-diffusion in the spiritual leaven that is so widely at work already in the hearts of sinful men. And the friends of this cause will not cease to minister to the faltering courage of their brethren, in seasons of conflict and difficulty, by pointing them to the sure word of prophecy, to which we

all do well that we take heed, as to a light shining in a dark place. When we cannot prove by our mathematics, or our moral philosophy, that the world is yet to be converted to God, let us strengthen our hearts by remembering *whose word it is* that stands pledged for the birth of a nation in a day, and the chaining of Satan for a thousand years.

Let me now refer for a moment, in close connection with the last topic, to the place which is held *by the divine promise of personal reward to the faithful laborer*, among the efficacious motives that must continually impel the servants of Christ forward in their practical devotion to this great cause.

Love is the *controlling* power. But God always makes the hope of reward an *auxiliary* motive, to quicken the zeal and activity of his people. Moses had respect unto the recompense of the reward; and even our blessed Savior is said to have endured the cross, despising the shame, *for the joy that was set before him*. On the same principle our Lord teaches all his disciples to expect that every one, who reapeth in the great spiritual harvest, will receive wages unto life eternal; and that the servant who makes his one pound, or talent for usefulness, five, will at last be set over five cities; while he who makes his one pound, ten, will be set over ten cities.

The disciple of Christ finds that *in* his present keeping of his Master's commandments there is great reward; and he is not permitted to forget

that he who watereth others, shall himself be watered ; that thus it is more blessed to give benefits than to receive them. And as often as he feels that his toils are becoming so arduous as to induce weariness, he hears a voice from on high, saying to him, "Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, till he receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient ; stablish your heart ; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." He is encouraged to labor on, in the prospect of a blessed rest near at hand ; to bear poverty and shame, if it must be so, in expectation of riches and glory that will be proportioned to the measure of his self-denials for Jesus' sake.

Thus every earnest worker in the Master's vineyard, alike in Christian and heathen climes, is comforted and stirred to new diligence when his heart begins to faint, and he dreads the trials next before him. He thinks of his promised crown of rejoicing, and then cheerfully toils on. He looks to the unspeakable gladness which is to fill his heart when one after another of those who have been saved directly or indirectly through his instrumentality, shall rise up to heaven, and call him blessed. And at times he thinks of the delight which will swell his bosom, if he shall be permitted to look down from his celestial home upon this theatre of his labors, and see the whole earth covered with the knowledge and glory of the Lord. Nay, his faith anticipates the sublime consummation of the Redeemer's mediatorial reign, and gives him a

foretaste of that everlasting feast of which he is to partake in company with all the countless millions who are to acknowledge him as one of their faithful *co-workers* in the grand and holy enterprise of saving this lost world. The hope of such rewards, stayed up and strengthened by the unfailing promises of Him who cannot lie, "may trials well endure." It anchors the soul of every disciple of Jesus within the veil. It nerves the missionary to constancy and yet higher resoluteness of endeavor. It fortifies the better purposes of every willing subject and servant in the kingdom of Christ on the earth. And it ensures the steady *progress* of the kingdom towards its universal triumph. If the followers of Mohammed could be stimulated to a quenchless zeal and an invincible courage by the hope of a sensual paradise, much more may the followers of Jesus be excited to act their part of daring and irresistible soldiers in his great army, by the prospect of a glorious home in the midst of that holy Paradise, where every face is radiant with light, and every head is crowned with immortal honor.

I find that I must condense, very much, what I have to say respecting several other important points. I hasten to add, that Christianity vitalizes all its other forces for evangelization *by keeping the heart and soul of the Church in close and habitual contact with God, by a special method.*

We know very well that the life of the Lord's people cannot be sustained and kept invigorated

for evangelical labor, without constant personal sympathy and intercourse between them and Him. Without a warm and abiding consciousness that God is in the midst of his Church, and that Christ is with his disciples in their work, the laborers in the great field, both at home and abroad, would speedily grow discouraged, and give up their toils in weariness and despair. But ours is not a religion which chills its votaries, by obliging them to feel that the God they serve is either a cold and distant sovereign, or a vague and shadowy being, devoid of personal presence or affection. On the contrary, it teaches us how we may keep alive, and make more and more operative, our love, faith and hope, so as to practice self-denial, and exercise patience in our long-continued and arduous enterprises, with resolute hearts and strong arms. Every time we contemplate our work of evangelization, in its relations, we remember that it is God's work—CHRIST'S WORK; that we are carrying out the very same enterprise, which was begun and set in motion by the divine love which sent Jesus down from heaven, and made him obedient unto death in laying the foundations of his gracious kingdom in the world. We are *co-workers with God*. God is *in* the great outward movement of his churches; Christ is in it; the Holy Ghost is in it. We feel that we are thus allied with almighty forces. The omnipotence and the heart of God are with us. And this co-operation with God involves not only his working *at the same time* with our working, but, as it were, the infusion of his agency into

ours,—the investing of our weakness with his glorious power, so as to ensure, without open miracles, an increase from our planting and watering, such as no created causes alone could possibly develop.

Thus, while we are taught to cultivate a sense of our feebleness, we are guilty of no presumption in feeling and declaring that *we are mighty through God*,—that *we can do all things through Christ who doth strengthen us*. And as if to bind our weakness to the strength of God, and perpetuate our sense of personal union with him, so as to quicken more and more our faith and love, it is made the *condition* of our success in the evangelical labors to which we are devoted, that we shall come daily to the throne of grace, in humble, fervent, believing prayer. God tells us, in so many words, that he will be inquired of, by the house of Israel, to do for them the great things which he has promised. And our hearts are affected when we notice that the very first petition, in the memorable prayer which our Savior taught his disciples, is a request for the coming of God's kingdom in the world.

Thus, while we try to fulfill our Lord's commission in the effort to christianize all nations, in co-operation with him, we are encouraged, nay, required, to draw our support and strength from God by fervent pleadings for help and success in our life-long endeavors. And so long as prayer shall continue to be the first duty of Christians, so long will God continue to quicken the spiritual activities of his people, by causing them to feel

that in Him they have everlasting strength. If, then, there is always to be a praying Church, this work of evangelizing the world is to go forward. And if God is true and faithful, there will be a glorious answer to the prayers of his people, in great part through the moral and spiritual influence of the special intercourse which is kept up between him and them, according to his own appointed method. When, therefore, we long to see the springs of life in the missionary work re-invigorated, let us renewedly *call the Church to prayer*, and let us look upward ourselves, and earnestly ask that God will pour out upon his children everywhere the spirit of grace and supplication, according to his own heart-cheering promise.

I can only allude to *the relation which the Christian doctrine of probation sustains to the self-diffusiveness of our religion*. If there were any valid ground for the hope, that the heathen who die without the love of God in their souls might be reached by the offers of mercy, as some contend they will, in the future world, the people of God would be at times strongly tempted to fold their hands and sit down, to wait for the coming of a more auspicious period for sending the bread of life to the perishing millions of our race. But the word of God sheds *no ray of light* on the spiritual prospects of those darkened and depraved multitudes, who are crowding on to eternity in such vast armies, from year to year, and from generation to generation. It tells us that as many as have sinned without law, shall also

perish without law ; it declares that men must call upon the name of the Lord, in order to be saved ; and it puts the question to every Christian's heart, " How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed ? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard ? And how shall they hear without a preacher ? And how shall they preach except they be sent ? "

The great scriptural doctrine that this is the only place of probation to the members of our fallen race, and that those who die out of Christ are lost forever, sets before our minds an awful view of the destiny that awaits the majority of the living generation of our race ; while it presses home an appeal to the sympathies of all who know the value and preciousness of the Christian hope, which must, if any thing can, stir them up *to make haste* and send the word of life to their dying fellow-sinners. It bids us keep in mind that the *time is short* within which there can be anything done to save the six hundred millions of heathen, and the three or four hundred millions of Mohammedans and dead formalists and heartless unbelievers, who are now hastening to the close of their probationary life without any preparation for a happy eternity. And it admonishes us to remember that we ourselves can have, at the most, only a few years to be spent in efforts to rescue the souls of our fellow-heirs of immortality from the woes of the second death. Let this solemn view of the relations of the present life to the next, be placed and kept fully before the minds of God's people,

and they cannot sit down in idleness, while there is any thing for them to do in the work of saving men ; they cannot refuse to cast their contributions freely into the treasury of the Lord, so long as they may hope that every dollar will tell for the deliverance of some perishing soul from darkness and death.

There is no other religion which, like ours, so defines and applies the doctrine of probation as to make it mighty among the forces that are to work the conversion of the nations. Let us make use of this doctrine with due discrimination, but with special earnestness and solemnity, in our endeavors to enlist, for the great cause of evangelization, the prayers and energies and gifts of all who believe the Gospel. And let us not fail to follow the example of Paul, who made himself all things to all men, that *by all means he might save some*. Thus shall we make the true application of our serious faith to this subject, in our generation ; and God will call the attention of his people in the next generation to the same aspects of their responsibility in this probationary world ; and so the work will be urged forward to its glorious consummation.

It is obvious, let me further suggest, that our religion continually operates towards *the practical union of the Church in and with her evangelical work*. The more the disciples of Christ labor to spread the Gospel and plant its institutions in human society, the more do they come to feel *identified*

with the cause to which their prayers and efforts and resources are given. Their most sacred associations soon cluster around the work; and in proportion as the several departments of the enterprise assume definite shapes, they feel more deeply the specific appeals that are made to their hearts by the Macedonian cry. Thus we all feel that we are personally addressed by the calls that come to us through the press of the cherished agency here represented, from our brethren in the several missionary fields; and this in proportion as our *acquaintance* with the progress of the cause becomes more particular and intimate. In this way our practical participation in the enterprise, under our Savior's commission, binds us more and more closely to our holy work. And then we find ourselves more and more drawn into sympathy and fellowship with our brethren, by our consciousness of devotion to the same blessed cause in which they are engaged. We feel ourselves to be united to them by the ties of a *practical* fellowship. And whatever diversities there may be as to modes of labor, the tendency of a common consecration to the great business of converting this perishing world to Jesus, will ever be towards more unity of spirit and co-operation between all the different families of the one church of Christ. And the melting of the church into practical oneness will steadily multiply her moral and spiritual power and efficiency, by commending her faith to all men, and by giving her that resistless might which is ensured by the due combination of forces. There is

no strength acquired by any artificial or mechanical union of forces, that are not in themselves essentially harmonious. But the work of evangelization is adapted to effect a progressive assimilation of *spirit*, and even of *faith*, among those who give themselves earnestly to it. And all the discussions and external appliances in Christendom are not doing as much to bring the Lord's servants to see eye to eye, as their consciousness of consecration to a common work in obedience to the same master. Let this consciousness be deepened and matured by the continuous operation of the same causes by which it is awakened, and the day will come ere long, when all the tribes of Israel will be practically one in their co-operation with the great King in Zion. And then the beams of the latter-day morning will be seen, not only gilding the mountain tops, but scattering away the fogs and clouds far down the mountain sides, and even in the deep valleys and the low plains.

I have now to add a thought in regard to *the mutual influences of the working force, and the progress of the work itself upon each other*, in the expansion of our great enterprise.

We all understand the principle that moral and spiritual power in creatures, like intellectual and muscular energy, is enhanced by continuous exercise. And we can readily see how the progressive identification of the Church with her evangelical work tends to develop and quicken her spiritual life by giving practical exercise to her love, her

faith, her conscience, and her spirit of self-sacrifice. The more she *uses* her piety, the more does it grow, and the more vigorous does she become for efficient service. But scarcely do her membership begin to get their hearts and hands fairly enlisted in the general cause of human salvation, before the fields on all sides are seen whitening for the harvest, and the call for more reapers comes to every disciple, to stir up new interest and zeal among all the Lord's servants, and draw out their prayers and activity towards the great work in such a manner as again to re-invigorate and stimulate their active piety, and so give a new fitness and energy to their working forces. And then these greater working forces are applied again to urge forward the cause with increased rapidity and success. And this process of progressive action and re-action and acceleration of forces will naturally be carried forward, as long as there are sinners to be converted, and God continues to give increase from the planting and watering of his people. Success will still stimulate hope and zeal, and self-denying activity ; and these enlarged moral forces will go out again towards their appropriate object, and terminate, as before, in richer and broader successes—thus on, till the world shall be redeemed.

It must add greatly to the momentum of this onward movement by reflexive influences, that personal sympathy and co-operation between the laborers in different fields, of necessity, increase and become more intimate as the cause advances. The Church expands herself as the enterprise of

evangelization achieves new triumphs; and by the facilities of commercial intercourse which Christianity has enlarged, if not created, there grows up a close Christian communion between the multiplying workers in home and foreign lands. Brothers and sisters, here and abroad, are drawn together by holy bonds, which grow stronger and stronger, year by year. Thus, the reflexive working of brotherly love and conscious co-operation multiply the graces, and enlarge the efficiency of all the laborers alike, in Christian and heathen communities. And I think I see, in this progressive drawing together of hearts in different and distant lands, a sign and pledge of a day when all the nations of the world shall be gathered into one vast and glorious brotherhood. Let the process already fairly commenced go on with no more than an easily credible acceleration in its ratio of increase, and a common love of Jesus and his kingdom will surely leaven the entire mass of human society, from the eternal snows of the Arctics to the land of ever-blooming summer—from the rising to the setting of the sun.

I wish I had time to expand one other remark, which I can only offer in the form of a mere hint or intimation; but which I desire to commend to the attention of thoughtful minds. I seem to read a distinct promise of an ultimate melting together of evangelical influences throughout the world, *in the peculiar adaptation of the Gospel to meet the minds of all the nations that have been trained under the various religious systems which now hold sway over the unevangelized millions of our race.*

I have already referred to the fitness of the Gospel to meet the common wants of man, as a moral being and as a sinner. Let me now suggest, that there has been a providential preparation for the efficacy of the Gospel in the development of the various religions that have grown up during the lapse of ages in different parts of the earth. Christianity embraces precisely those elements that are needed to commend it to the consciences and hearts of the nations of the world, when they shall come to understand its nature, and learn to discriminate between the true and the false elements of the religious systems which they now acknowledge.

The genuine Judaism of the Old Testament was God's schoolmaster, to bring those who were trained under it, to Christ. It taught the doctrine of one personal God, the King and head of the universe, a holy, just and merciful being. But it answered the question, 'How may a man be just with God?' only by shadows and promises, which seemed enigmatical to all minds. And it brought God's love home to the hearts of men as almost subordinate to his sovereignty and omnipotence. But the Messiah came and brought God, as a Father and Friend, down to the apprehensions of sinful and troubled souls; and made plain the way of pardon and peace to the awakened and inquiring spirit.

But, after all, the experiment of secularizing a really spiritual religion had not been sufficiently carried out to convince the Jewish nation, as a body, that they could never realize the promised reign of their predicted Messiah, according to their carnal

hopes. And, therefore, the mass of them did not recognize their King when he appeared, and are still blinded. But the Gospel found a providential preparation for its efficacious introduction, in the minds of the heathen nations that held the chief sceptres of the world, when the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles was broken down. The Persian, with his doctrine of a terrible kingdom of evil and darkness over against a kingdom of light, could find a power of attraction in the teachings of Christianity regarding God and Satan and subordinate good and evil spirits. The Greek, with his belief in a God of light, who sustains a fatherly relation to men as his offspring, was groping after an unknown deity, and inquiring for a perfection in man which he could think of only as united with divinity. And the Gospel met his yearnings by telling him of God the Father, as revealed in the person of Jesus, the perfect son of man, the truly divine Son of God. The Gospel found the Egyptian inquiring after his hidden God, Ammon, and trying to look through a multitude of mysterious symbols into the depths of divine truth; and it declared to him the true substance of all the shadows and symbols of nature and providence and ancient revelation. The Roman was full of the idea of sovereignty and law in a single empire, under one head. And Christianity came to him, demanding that his human emperor should bow to the superior lordship of Jesus, the one King of kings, and Head over all things to the Church. And the same proclamation of one divine kingdom,

with Christ as its glorious Lord, made its efficacious appeal to the rude Goths, those worshipers of a wrestling and conquering God, who were struggling wildly for victory over all opposing powers, on land and sea.* Thus the kingdom of heaven availed itself of a great characteristic element in each of the religions with which it came into contact, up to the day of its undisputed ascendancy in western Asia, northern Africa, and southern and middle Europe.

But converted nations are slow to escape from all their long-cherished errors, and get hold of a pure religion, without overlaying it with any of their old superstitions, or favorite principles or policies. The Persian dualism proved too strong for large portions of the Christian Church, and leavened them with the Gnostic heresy. The Greek philosophies insidiously crept into the theological systems of Alexandria, Ephesus and Constantinople. The symbolism of the Jewish, the Egyptian, and other systems, stole unnoticed into the Church and perverted the simplicity and purity of her spiritual worship. And at last the passion of the Roman for imperial sovereignty in the State, asserted for itself a lordly sway over the Church, in the exaltation of a man as the vicar of God, where the Cæsars had held their sceptres and thrones. A long and mournful experiment, under corrupted Christianity, was thus entered upon, which must teach its necessary lessons to the Church and the world by a schooling process of ages, before the way would be prepared for a final and secure

* See Maurice's Religions of the World.

return to the unadulterated word of God. The Mohammedan delusion was suffered to spring up, to offset and counteract the dualism of the East, and reassert the doctrine of one supreme God, against Gnosticism and the idolatrous corruptions of Greek and Roman Christianity.

At length the reformation of the sixteenth century broke forth in Middle Europe, and disinterred the long buried doctrines of salvation by grace alone. But after it had partially redeemed from spiritual despotism the major portion of Western Europe and Great Britain, it still left in the Protestant churches too many remnants of antiquated error, to afford any well-founded hope that the world would be converted by the purest type of Christianity, which was represented as yet among the reformed communities. God, in his wise providence, left his people to suffer persecution from their fellow-Christians, and be driven to find a new home for their faith in a land where they might build up the institutions of the Gospel without special entanglement with the established associations, and perverted usages, and stereotyped errors of the old world. Meanwhile an infidelity, sometimes bold and daring, sometimes insidious, sprang by reaction from the abuses and corruptions of the churches of Europe, and spread itself abroad not only on the continent, but in Great Britain, and even in this western home of exiled Christians. And this unbelief was commissioned by divine Providence to drive Christian teachers, both in Europe and America, to a more careful scrutiny of their theological systems, and oblige them to eliminate from their religion the

indefensible and pernicious elements which still remained incorporated with the truer and better elements of their faith. Thus by stern trials many Protestant churches were largely purified, and prepared to undertake anew the grand enterprise of sending the Gospel, without admixture of serious error, to every creature. But yet there remained, in the purest and most working communions of the Lord's people, much of imperfection in point of doctrinal belief, and more as to living and well-developed piety. The missionaries of the cross have been sent forth into most of the great countries of the heathen world; and large results have been achieved.

But our Christianity is not yet found to be *many-sided* and practical enough to commend it fully to the various nations whose religions it seeks to supplant. It operates slowly in India, in the Burman empire, in China, and even in Persia; while it works its way more hopefully in Turkey and Syria. Will not the repulses which it sustains, among the different nations of heathen and Mohammedan countries, at length teach us all where lie the defects in our doctrinal schemes, and in the prevailing type of our piety, and lead us to correct our errors on all sides, and come up, as individuals and churches, to a purer and more apostolical style of spiritual life and activity? And when we shall learn, from the mistakes of the Church in past ages, and from the ill success of our religion as we now hold it, among the various heathen nations, where our faith and practice need amendment, to make it most truly operative, shall we not get back at last

into the footsteps of the Apostles, and be able to apply the very truths which they declared, with an unexampled and irresistible power?

We shall come nearer and nearer to the primitive standard, in our doctrine and spiritual life, until our religion, as we teach and exemplify it, will become worthy of acceptation, and the nations will be made to see that it is just what they have been feeling after through so many long ages. The Mohammedans will then gradually come to see that our Gospel recognizes the same authority and supremacy of one God for which he has fought so long, while it teaches him to receive from Christ and exercise and conquer by that holy love, which his own system never infused into his restless heart. The Hindoo will at length perceive that the pure light of Brahm, the incarnations of his divinities, and the offerings of his whole sacrificial system, embrace only so much of truth as the Gospel most clearly teaches him in its revelation of the one personal God, the incarnate and atoning Son of God, and the unfolding of a divine *heart* to reach and melt the cold and despairing heart of man. The Buddhist will discover, in the light of the Gospel, the very truths which he has been for ages grasping after, with a sense of disappointment, as if the substance which at times he had almost attained, still turned to shadow when he approached it. He will detect in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, as God imparted to good men, in distinct outline, the old idea which had glimmered before his mind regarding a divine spirit in humanity at large. And he will see, in the union of the Holy Spirit

with the man Christ, the realization of the hazy conception which he has sought to embody in the person of the grand Lama, whom he now adores as possessing the pure spirit of divinity in humanity.

Will not the prejudices of the three hundred and fifty millions of Buddhists, and the one hundred and fifty millions of Hindoos, and the one hundred and forty millions of Mohammedans, after a season melt away, until they shall be enabled to discriminate between the true and the false in their own systems, and rally by mighty hosts around the standard of the cross, because they will find in the Gospel all the positive truths in their old systems, which so long bound their consciences, while they will get possession of the other elements, which their religions could not supply, to satisfy the warm yearnings of their souls? Then will not the infidel become ashamed to reject a religion, which so proves itself adapted to the moral nature of man, and fitted to be the one uniting religion of the world? And will not even the Jew, after his many centuries of wandering, seeing that his Messiah does not come, and witnessing the conquests of the cross, pause in his resolute career of unbelief, and consent to be grafted again by faith into his original olive stock? Need there be one miracle to achieve these sublime results? When the leaven shall spread in the mass from a multitude of centres, may it not meet and become universally diffused, before the Church can summon faith enough to expect so speedy an answer to her long continued prayers? Let the tide of public senti-

ment and of predominating influences among all the *leading* nations of the world once begin to set strongly towards the kingdom of Jesus, and the Gospel will hasten to its predicted triumph with a rapidity of conquest that will amaze the most sanguine among the Savior's followers.

We, Fathers and Brethren, may not live to see the glorious consummation ; for moral causes move slowly in their preparatory working, beneath the surface of human life. But the day at last comes for the outward and visible development of their sure results. The waters are gradually accumulated that press against the strong barricades, which resist their flow as they seek to mingle in a common tide. But at length they acquire weight and momentum enough to burst through all opposing obstructions, and suddenly they sweep with a resistless torrent over all the plains below. The waters of Christian influence have been hedged up and restrained at a thousand different central points. But the day is drawing on when they will break through all their restrictions, and spread abroad, in one glorious flood of grace and salvation, all over the earth. The faith and hope and prayerfulness and self-denying spirit of the Church, in her various communions, are flowing more and more into the apostolic and primitive channels. And God is more and more pouring out his Spirit in connection with the progressive purification and invigoration of the Church's doctrine and life. The heathen nations are coming into closer intercourse and acquaintance with the Christian nations. The consciousness of weakness in the old religions of the East is grow-

ing deeper in the Mohammedan, and the whole Asiatic mind. And providential events are breaking down old walls of hinderance and opening to the interior of all the chief territories of the world for the admission of light and hope and salvation. Meanwhile, the reflexive influence of the missionary work continues to be felt as a power to save our evangelized communities from the progressive corruption of a stagnant Christianity, and to quicken the aggressive forces of the Church for wider conquests abroad.

I have faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ as a fit instrument to be used, by the Spirit of God, in effecting its diffusion and leavening the entire mass of human society. We all have faith in it. But we all believe that it is to work to its sublime results in and through the intelligent and responsible freedom of the Lord's people. And, therefore, we are here on this great occasion. This convocation demonstrates the vitalizing nature of our religion. It is itself a stimulating prophecy of the world's conversion to Christ. I see deep shadows yet on the landscape we are contemplating. But the light gathers its beams more and more on the scene. The watchmen call us to prayer and more resolute and self-sacrificing labors, and then silvery voices are beginning to blend gratefully in the glad announcement, *THE MORNING COMETH*. Let us work on, not as those who have no hope, but with the constancy of a *settled expectation*, and with the vigor of a life that draws its forces from a divine and never-failing source.

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