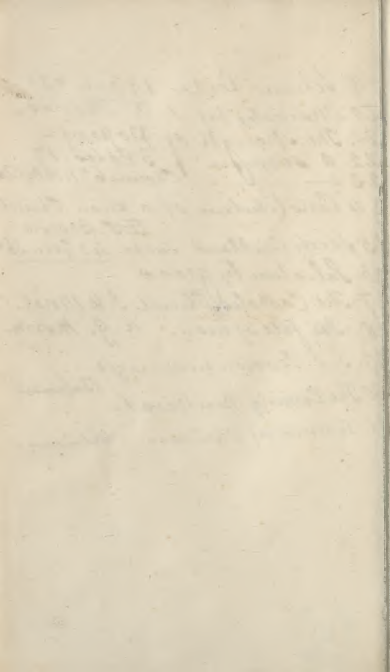


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THE TWO GREAT INSTRUMENTS

APPOINTED FOR THE

PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL;

AND THE DUTY OF THE CHRISTIAN PUBLIC TO KEEP THEM
BOTH IN VIGOROUS OPERATION :

A

SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE

THE DUNDEE MISSIONARY SOCIETY,

On Monday, October 26, 1812.



BY THE

REV. THOMAS CHALMERS, KILMANY.

THIRD EDITION.



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SERMON, &c.

ROM. x. 17.

“ Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

IN the prosecution of the following discourse, I shall *first* lay before you, in a few words, the general lesson which the text furnishes; and, in the *second* place, I shall apply it to explain the objects of that Society, whose claims to the generosity of the public I am appointed to advocate.

FIRST, As all is suspended upon God, and as he reigns with as supreme a dominion in the heart of man as in the world around us, there is no doubt that every affection of this heart—the remorse which imbitters it, the terror which appals it, the faith which restores it, the love which inflames it,—there can be no doubt, I say, that all is the work of God. However great the diversity of operations, it is he that worketh all in all; and the apostle Paul expressly ascribes the faith of a human soul to the operation of his hand, when he prays, in behalf of the Thessalonians, that God would fulfil in them all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.

But, on the other hand, it is evident, that throughout the wide extent of nature and of Providence, though it be God alone that worketh, yet he worketh by instruments; and that, without any wish to question or to impair his sovereignty, it is an established habit of language, to ascribe that to the instrument which is solely and exclusively due to the Omnipotent himself. We say that it is rain which

makes the grass to grow. It is God, in fact, who makes the grass to grow; and he does it by the instrumentality of rain. Yet we do not say that there is any impiety in this mode of expression; nor does it imply that we, in thought, transfer that to the instrument, which is due only to him in whose hand the instrument is; it is a mere habit of language, and the apostle himself has fallen into the use of it. None were more impressed than he, with the pious sentiment, that all depends upon God, and cometh from God; yet he does not overlook the instrumentality of a preacher, and tells the Romans, in the words of my text, that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

If, in that extraordinary age, when the Author of nature broke in upon the constancy of its operations, and asserted by miracles, his own mighty power to subdue and to controul it—if, in such an age, one of his own inspired messengers does not overlook the use and agency of instruments, surely it would ill become us to overlook them. It is right that we should carry about with us, at all times, and in all places, a sentiment of piety; but it must not be piety of our own forging,—it must be the prescribed piety of revelation; we have no right to sit in indolence, and wait for the immediate agency of Heaven, if God has told us, that it is by the co-operation of human beings that the end is to be accomplished, and if he orders that co-operation, we are not merely to acquiesce in the sentiment that it is God who does the thing, but we must acquiesce in his manner of doing it; and if that be by instruments, nothing remains for us but submissively to concur, and obediently to go along with it.

Now, let it be observed, that the operation of the two instruments laid before us in the text, is somewhat different at present from what it was in the days of the apostles. Those were the days of inspiration; and the faith which was so widely diffused through the world in the first ages of Christianity, came by the hearing of inspired teachers.

The two steps of the process were just what we find them described in the passage before us: Faith came by hearing,—it came by the hearing of the apostles; and hearing came by the word of God,—for, in the great matters of salvation, the apostles spake only as God put the word into their mouth, and as the spirit of God gave them utterance.

But, whatever is capable of being spoken, is capable of being written also; and it was not long before the teachers of Christianity committed to writing the doctrine of salvation. It went over the world, and it has come down to posterity, in the form of gospels and epistles. The collection of these documents is still called the Word of God: it is, in fact, that word come down to us by the instrumentality of written language. If you read it with the impression on your mind that it is the genuine production of inspired men, you are in circumstances likely enough for receiving faith. Now, however, there is a change in one of the instruments: it makes all the difference betwixt the messenger delivering the message in person, and sending you the substance of it in a written communication. In each of the ways, faith may result, and faith has resulted from it: there have been many thousand examples of the efficacy of the latter process as well as of the former; in which case, we may say that faith came by reading, and reading by the word of God.

We are not to suppose, however, when reading was substituted in the place of hearing, that hearing was entirely laid aside. It is true that you can no longer hear the immediate messengers of Heaven; but you can hear the descendants of those messengers: you can no longer hear men who have the benefit of inspiration; but you can hear men whose office it is to give their study to the written documents, which the inspiration of a former age has left behind it. We know that you have access to these documents yourselves; and may light and learning grow and multiply among you!—we know, that, upon the solitary reading of the word, Heaven often sends its most precious influences; but we know

that Heaven also gives a salutary and a saving influence to the living energy of a human voice—that the man who speaketh from the heart speaketh to it—that the tones of earnestness, and sincerity, and feeling, carry an emphasis and an infection along with them—that there is an impression in the power of example—that there is an authority in superior learning—that there is a charm in fervent piety—that there is a usefulness in the wisdom which can apply scripture to the varieties of individual experience—that there is a force and urgency in pathetic exhortation—that there is a constraining influence in the watchful anxiety of him who entreats you to mind the things which belong to your peace. These are undoubted facts, and the minister who can combine all these in his own person, and bring them to bear upon the minds of his people, may, under the blessing of God, convert the hearing of the word into an instrument of mighty operation even in these latter days, and may exemplify my text upon many of those who are sitting and listening around him. Faith may be wrought in them with power; and when asked to explain the process by which they arrived at it, they truly say, that their faith came by hearing, and their hearing by the word of God.

In no age of the church, indeed, does it appear, that the one instrument ever superseded the other; or that, upon the mere existence of the written word among the people, the hearing of that word was ever dispensed with as a superfluous exercise. When Ezra received the written law, there is no doubt that copies of it would spread and multiply in the country; yet this was not enough in the eye of that great Jewish reformer: He himself opened the book in the sight of the people, and they stood up: He had priests and Levites along with him; and we are told in Nehemiah, that they not only “read in the book in the law of God distinctly, but they gave the sense, and caused the people to understand the reading.” And we have reason to believe, that this reading and expounding of the law was not acted upon on one solitary occasion, but that, from the

days of Ezra it formed a permanent institution among the Jews. We meet with traces of its existence in the New Testament. In the Acts of the Apostles, we have some information respecting the service of the synagogue. When Paul and his companions came to Antioch, in Pisidia, they went into the synagogue, on the Sabbath-day, and sat down; and after the reading of the law and the prophets—a circumstance introduced without any explanation, as if it had been a mere matter of course, and a customary exercise among them—after this reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, “Men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation unto the people, say on.” But, in the Gospel by Luke, we have a piece of history still more decisive; when our Saviour himself not only sanctions by his presence, but gives the high authority of his example, to the reading and exposition of the word: He stood up, and read a passage out of their scriptures, and expounded the passage to them. It is not likely that there was any violation of the established order of the synagogue in this proceeding of our Saviour’s. It was not his practice to fly in the face of any existing institution; and, from this passage we collect not merely the high sanction of his example to the practice of reading and expounding, but we also collect, that it was a practice in established operation among the Jews. And it has descended, without interruption, through all the successive ages of Christian worship. The inspired teachers of Christianity deemed it necessary to leave something more than the written volume of inspiration behind them; they left teachers and overseers: and, to this very day, the readings, and the explanations, and the sermons of Christian pastors, are superadded to the silent and solitary reading of Christian people; and both are found to be instruments of mighty operation, for the perfecting of the saints, and for the edifying of the body of Christ.

Neither instrument is to be dispensed with. If you have hearing without reading, you lay the church open to

all the corruptions of Popery. You have priests, but you have no Bibles ; you have a minister, but you have no word of God to confront him ; you take your lesson from the wisdom of man, and throw away from you all the light and benefit of revelation ; the faith of the people lies at the mercy of every capricious element in the human character ; it fluctuates with the taste and the understanding of the minister : the precious interest of your souls is committed to the passions and the prejudices of a fellow mortal—that interest for which God himself has made so noble a provision—for which he sent his Eternal Son into the world, and conferred miracles and revelations on his followers. By pinning your creed to your minister, you put the whole of this provision away from you ; you change a heavenly instructor for an earthly ; you turn from the offered guidance of the Almighty, and resign the keeping of your conscience to one who, in as far as he wanders from the word of God, is as blind and ignorant and helpless as yourself. No, my brethren ! keep fast by your Bible : try if you can to outstrip us in the wisdom of the word of Christ ; and bring the salutary controul of a zealous, and enlightened, and reading population, to bear upon the priesthood. Let not your faith come by hearing alone ; but let your hearing be tried by the word of God : let it not be said, that what you believe is what you have heard ; and that what you have heard is what prejudice, or fancy, or habit, or unauthorised speculation, may have suggested to your minister : Let it be said that what you believe is what you have heard—not because what you have heard cometh from him, and is supported by his authority ; but because you know it to be the doctrine of the Bible, and you are satisfied that he has acted the part of a faithful interpreter,—not because you have tried the word by the hearing ; but because you have tried the hearing by the word,—not because you have brought revelation under the tribunal of your minister ; but because you have brought your minister under the tribunal of revelation. In the mighty concern of your faith, we give you

every encouragement to bring your own reading and your own discernment into action. Have the Bible, that high and ultimate standard of appeal, perpetually in your eye : cultivate a growing acquaintance with this standard ; it will keep all right and steady, and save you from being agitated by the ever-varying winds of human doctrine and human speculation ; your faith will come by hearing, but your hearing by the word of God.

But, I again repeat it, neither instrument is to be dispensed with. If you have reading without hearing, you throw away the benefit of a public ministry ; an institution sanctioned by the Bible, and transmitted to us through all the successive ages of the church, from the very time of the Apostles. Let every man, if possible, be as enlightened as his minister ; and let us make perpetual approaches to that state of things when “ they shall teach no more every man his brother, and every man his neighbour, saying, ‘ Know the Lord ;’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them even to the greatest.” It is our delight and our confidence that scriptural knowledge is every day extending among you ; but we cannot shut our eyes to the obvious fact, that the degree of illumination foretold by the prophet is not yet arrived,—that though the majority be thinning every year, yet the unenlightened are still the majority,—that priests have still to do what they did in the days of Ezra ; they have not merely to read in the book of the law distinctly, but they have to give the sense, and cause you to understand the reading,—that though after the era of universal light, some may think that the institution of a public ministry might be dispensed with, yet as the era has not yet arrived, but we are only on the road to it, the institution itself is one of the most powerful expedients for hastening its accomplishment. But what is more, I would not rashly give up the hearing of the word even after the light of perfect knowledge has dawned in all its brilliancy upon the world. “ Wherefore, I will not be negligent,” says the apostle Peter, “ to put you always in

remembrance of these things, though you know them and be established in the present truth." Though you have no knowledge to receive, you have memories to be refreshed: minds which, however pure, need to be stirred up by way of remembrance. It is true, you have the Bible within your reach; but every man knows how different in point of certainty is the doing of a thing which may be done at any time, and the doing of a thing which habit and duty have accustomed you to repeat at stated intervals. You may not be disposed at all times to bring your minds into contact with your Bibles; but upon a simple and mechanical act of obedience to the Sabbath-bell, a population is assembled, and a minister is in his place, whose office it is to bring the Bible into contact with your minds. I do not speak of his ministrations from house to house; I speak of his ministrations from the pulpit, whence it is often the high prerogative of a single man to make the word of God bear with energy and effect upon the consciences of hundreds. And he can do more than this; he can spread around him the infection of his own piety; he can kindle the fine ardours of sentiment and sincerity among his hearers; he can pour out all his tenderness and all his anxiety upon them; by the power and urgency of a living voice, he can touch the hearts of his people; and, with the blessing of God upon his endeavours, he can pull down the indolence, and the security, and the strong holds of corruption within them. The worth of the man can give a mighty energy to the words of the minister; and, what with the example of one, and the stirring eloquence of another, I hold an active, a pure, and a zealous ministry, spread over the face of the country, and labouring in its districts and parishes, to be ~~one~~ great palladium of Christianity in the land.

This brings me, in the SECOND place, to the object of that Society, whose claims upon the generosity of the public I am appointed to lay before you.

But pardon me, if I put a case to you, taken from ordinary life for the sake of familiar and convincing illustration.

Let me suppose, that upon any one individual among you there has devolved the entire maintenance of a helpless orphan, and that you lie under a solemn obligation to acquit yourself to the full of this benevolent undertaking. You know that the term "maintenance" embraces in it many particulars; but, for the present, I shall confine my attention to two,—the food to eat, and the raiment to put on. Both must be provided for the object of your charity; and for this purpose, you must look forward to the payment of separate accounts; and the thing which you are bound to do cannot be accomplished without satisfying the demands of two or more tradesmen. You may feed the child,—but withhold from it raiment, and you leave it to perish in the inclemency of the weather; you may clothe the child; but withhold from it food, and it dies in the agonies of hunger. You have done something, it is true; and that something was very essential: but you have also omitted something; and that something was equally essential, so much so, indeed, that, by virtue of the omission, the unhappy orphan has perished; and upon you lies the guilt and the cruelty of having abandoned it. I speak in these strong terms, because I am supposing that the individual is both bound and able to accomplish the entire maintenance of the child. Yet when called to account for the barbarity of his conduct, I can conceive an explanation by which he might attempt to palliate his negligence. "It is true, I was quite equal to the task; but then I was so teased by the number of separate accounts and separate applications! Had one tradesman undertaken to provide all the articles of maintenance, my patience would not have been exhausted: I had not one, but several, to satisfy; and I fairly confess, that I got tired and disgusted at the number of them." The answer to this is quite obvious. It is found, that if one man devotes an undivided attention to one kind of work, he carries it to far greater perfection than if his attention were distracted among several. It is this principle which has given rise to the division of employment in

society; each individual betakes himself to his own trade and his own manufacture; the accommodations of life are poured in far greater abundance upon the country; and each article is both better done, and furnished far more cheaply, than if one individual had undertaken to prepare every thing which enters into the maintenance of a human being.

When our Saviour left the earth, he left a task behind him, to his disciples—"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." A great part of the task has devolved upon us; for it is not yet accomplished; there are nations who never heard of the name of Jesus; and the cause of sending light and Christianity amongst them is left an orphan upon the world. There are thousands, even in this professing country, who would spurn at the orphan, and pour upon it the cruelty of their derision. But there are others who feel an emphasis in the last words of their Saviour, and have taken into their protection the cause which he has bequeathed to us. On the benevolence of a Christian public, the maintenance of that cause is devolved; it is their part not to leave it to perish amongst the garbled and unfinished operations of a cold, timid, and hesitating selfishness. The propagation of the gospel is a task which your Saviour has consigned to you. It is a cause the maintenance of which consists of various particulars; but I confine myself to two—you must put the mighty instruments of my text into operation; and you must keep them a-going till your object be accomplished. That object is the salvation of the Heathen. There is only one name given under heaven whereby men can be saved. There is only one way in which salvation can be brought about, and it is this—"The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth." My text tells you that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Send Bibles among them; but there are many countries, where, without missionaries, a Bible is a sealed book, and a packet of Bibles a mere spectacle for savages to stare at. Without a human agent in

the business, you keep back one of the instruments entirely,—you keep back the hearing of the word; and what is more, without a human agent, you leave the other instrument unfinished,—you may give the Bible, but you keep back the capacity of reading it. Both must be done; and if you withhold human agents, you starve and you stifle the cause which it is your duty to support and to stand by through all its necessities.

To make the case before us correspond in all its points to the imaginary one which I have already brought forward, the first question I have to answer, is, Whether there be ability in the public to discharge the various claims which are made upon its benevolence? My reply is a very short one. Much has been already done in the way of turning men from darkness to the light and the knowledge of Christianity; and what we aim at is, that this rate of activity be not only kept up, but extended. Now, to estimate whether there be a fund in the country for future operations, let us calculate the actual expences of the past. I do not confine myself to the expences of the Missionary Society; I add to them the expences of the Bible Society, and all the others which exist in the country for religious purposes: I am fairly within limits, when I say that the joint expence of the whole does not exceed a hundred thousand pounds in the year.* Before you stand appalled at the magnitude of the sum, divide it among the British population; and you will find, that what has been already done for the extension of Gospel light among the nations of the world, amounts to a penny a month for each householder, or twopence a year for each individual within the limits of the empire. This plain statement sets the question of ability at rest; and any objection on the score of extravagance in our demands upon the public will not bear a hearing.

The next question we have to answer, is, Why are we teased, then, with so many separate applications? Could

* It is now considerably beyond this.

not one society embrace all the various objects connected with religion; and could not all the various demands be reduced to the simplicity of one yearly subscription?—One society might embrace all the objects connected with religion; but, on the principle of the division of employment, separate societies, each devoting itself to one of these objects, are productive of greater good: they do more business, upon cheaper terms. Instead of one society, overpowered with the extent, and embarrassed with the multiplicity of its concerns, we have many, each cultivating one department, and giving the labours of its committee to one assigned object. It is just another example of the separation of employments. The Societies of England have naturally formed themselves into that arrangement which they find to be most useful and efficient: and when I see one with its printing utensils, multiplying copies of the Word of God,—another, with its Missionary College training adventurous spirits for all the climes and countries of the world,—another, with its Jewish Chapel, for fighting the battles of the faith with its oldest and most inveterate enemies,—another, with its apparatus of schools and teachers, for carrying the Lancasterian method among the unlettered population of all countries,—another, singling out Africa as the sole object of its exertions; and by the introduction of knowledge and the arts, contriving some reparation for the wrongs of that deeply-injured continent;—in all these I see a refreshing spectacle, a warm spirit of religious benevolence animating them all; but each, by betaking itself to its own object, and assiduously culturing its own vineyard, rendering the work and the labour of love far more productive than any single society with the wealth of all at its command could possibly have accomplished.

The propagation of the gospel is a cause, the maintenance of which consists of various particulars; but I restrict your attention to two,—the providing of Bibles, and the providing of human agents. The former is the word of God, one of the instruments of my text. The latter, by teaching them

to read, teaches unlettered people to use that instrument ; and to the latter belongs the exclusive office of bringing the other instrument to bear upon them—the instrument of hearing. The Society whose office it is to provide the former instrument, is well known by the name of the Bible Society : The Society whose office it is to provide the latter instrument, is also well known by the name of the Missionary Society. It is the duty of a Christian public to keep both instruments in vigorous operation. Each of these Societies has mighty claims upon you : I will not venture to pronounce a comparison between them ; but if the question were put to me, shall any part of the funds of the one Society be transferred to the other ? I would not hesitate to reply, *Not one farthing*. You are not to provide food for the orphan at the expence of its raiment ; nor are you to provide raiment for it at the expence of its food : you are to provide both, at the expence of those upon whom its maintenance has devolved ; you are to interest the public in both objects ; you are to state, and you state truly, that neither of them is yet sufficiently provided for,—that every shilling of addition to the funds of either Society, is an addition of good to the Christian cause,—that though as much has been done as to justify the most splendid anticipations, yet much more remains to be done, in both departments, before these anticipations can be carried into effect. Each Society should send its advocates over the country ; and if one of them were at this moment sounding the merits of the Bible Society in another church and to another people, I would not view him as a rival, but hail him as a brother and as a friend ; and when told of the success of his efforts, and the magnitude of his collection, I would bless God and rejoice along with him.

They are sister societies. I have not time to detail the operations of either ; for these I refer you to their Reports, which are published every year, and are accessible to all of you : but, to satisfy you, I shall select a few particulars, from a source which you will deem pure and unexception-

able: I shall give the testimony of one Society to the usefulness of another; and from the Reports of the Bible Society, I shall present you with arguments why, whatever extent and efficiency be given to the one, the other is not to be abandoned.

The very second in the list of donations by the Bible Society, is "To the Mohawk nations, two thousand copies of the Gospel of St John." But who prepared the Indians of Upper Canada for such a present?—They were Missionaries. There are Missionaries now labouring amongst them employed by our Society; and had it not been for the previous exertions of human agents, this field of usefulness would have been withheld from the Bible Society altogether.

Another donation is, "To India, to be applied to the translation of the Scriptures into the Oriental languages, one thousand pounds;" this has been swelled by farther donations to a very princely sum. It is in aid of the noble undertaking of translating the Scriptures into the fifteen languages of India. But who set it agoing?—A Missionary Society.* Who showed that it was practicable?—The human agents sent out by that society. Who are accomplished for presiding over the different translations?—The same human agents, who have lived for years among the natives, and have braved resistance and death in the noble enterprize. Who formed a Christian population eager to receive these versions the moment they have issued from the press, and who have already absorbed whole editions of the New Testament?—The same answer,—Missionaries. Our own Society can lay claim to part of this population: they have formed native schools, and have added to the number of native Christians.

The next two donations I offer to your attention are, first, "For circulation in the West India Islands and the Spanish Main, one hundred Bibles and nine hundred Testaments in

* The translators in India were sent out by the Baptist Society.

various languages ;" second, " To negro congregations of Christians in Antigua, &c. five hundred Bibles and one thousand Testaments." Why is there any usefulness in this donation?—Because Missionaries have gone before it. Do these copies really circulate? Yes, they do, among the negroes whom those intrepid men have christianized under the scowl of jealousy,—whom they have taught to look up to the Saviour as their friend, and to heaven as their asylum,—and who, for the home they have been so cruelly torn from, have held out rest to their oppressed but believing spirits in the mansions which Christ has gone to prepare for them.

The next example shall comprise several donations. " First, To the Hottentot Christians at Bavian's kloof and Grune kloof, in South Africa, so many Bibles and Testaments ; second, To the Rev. Dr Van der Kemp, at Bethelsdorp, South Africa, for the Christian Hottentots, &c. fifty Dutch Testaments and twelve Dutch Bibles ; third, To the Rev. Mr Anderson, Orange River, South Africa, fifty Dutch Testaments and twelve Dutch Bibles ; fourth, To the Rev. Mr Albrecht, in the Namacqua country, South Africa, fifty Dutch Testaments and twelve Dutch Bibles ; fifth, To the Rev. Mr Kicherer, Graaff Reinet, South Africa, one hundred Dutch Testaments and twelve Dutch Bibles." Now, what names and what countries are these?—They are the very countries which the Missionary Society is now cultivating, and the names of the very labourers sent out and maintained by them. The Bibles and Testaments are sent out in behalf of the many hundreds whom our Society had previously reclaimed from Heathenism : The one Society is enabled to scatter the good seed in such profusion, because the other Society had prepared the ground for receiving it. Nor are the labours of these illustrious men confined to the business of christianizing ; they are at this moment giving the arts, and industry, and civilization, to the natives : they are raising a beautiful spectacle to the moral eye amid the wilderness around them ;—they are gi-

ving piety, and virtue, and intelligence, to the prowling savages of Africa; and extending 'among the wildest of Nature's children the comforts and the decencies of humanized life. O, ye orators and philosophers, who make the civilization of the species your dream! look to Christian Missionaries, if you want to see the men who will realize it: you may deck the theme with the praises of your unsubstantial eloquence; but these are the men who are to accomplish the business! They are now risking every earthly comfort of existence in the cause; while you sit in silken security, and pour upon their holy undertaking the cruelty of your scorn.

But I must draw to a close; and shall only offer one donation more to your notice, as an evidence of the close alliance in point of effect betwixt the Bible and Missionary Societies—those two great fellow-labourers in the vineyard of Christian benevolence. "For the Esquimaux Indians, one thousand copies of St Matthew's Gospel, in their vernacular tongues." Who gave these Indians a written language? Who translated a gospel into their vernacular tongue? By what unaccountable process has it been brought about, that we now meet with readers and Christians among these furred barbarians of the North? The answer is the same, All done by the exertions of Missionaries; and had it not been for them, the Bible Society would no more have thought at present of a translation into the language of Labrador, than they would have thought of a translation into any of the languages of unexplored Africa.

The two Societies go hand in hand. The one plows while the other sows: And let no opposition be instituted betwixt their claims on the generosity of the public. Let the advocates of each strain to the uttermost. The statement I have already given, proves that there is a vast quantity of unbroken ground in the country for subscriptions to both; and how, by the accumulation of littles which no individual will ever feel or regret, a vast sum is still in reserve for the operations of these Christian philanthropists. They are

at this moment shedding a glory over the land, far beyond what the tumults or the triumphs of victory can bestow : Their deeds are peaceful, but they are illustrious ; and they are accomplishing a grander and a more decisive step in the history of the species, than even he, who, in the mighty career of a sweeping and successful ambition, has scattered its old establishments into nothing. I have only to look forward a few years, and I see *him* in his sepulchre ; and a few years more, and all the dynasties he has formed give way to some new change in the vain and restless politics of the world. But the men with whom I contrast him have a more unperishable object in contemplation : I see the sublime character of eternity stamped upon their proceedings ! The frailties of earthly politics do not attach to them ; for they are the instruments of God,—they are carrying on the high administration of Heaven,—they are hastening the fulfilment of prophecies uttered in a far distant antiquity : “ Many are going to and fro, and knowledge is increased : ” “ For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord ; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater,—so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth : It shall not return unto me void ; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”

I stand here as the advocate for the Missionary Society—for the men who are now going to and fro and increasing knowledge, and are preparing ground in so many different quarters of the world for the good seed of the word of God. I have already urged upon you the plea of their usefulness ; I have now to urge upon you the plea of their necessities. They have exerted themselves not only according to their power, but beyond their power : They are in debt to their

Treasurer. Their embarrassments are their glory ; and it is your part to save them from these embarrassments, lest they should become your disgrace. It is not for me to sit in judgment upon the circumstances of any individual amongst you. Are you poor?—I ask you to give no more than you can spare ; nor will I keep back from you what the Bible says, “ That he who provideth not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” But the same Bible gives examples of the exercise of charity and alms-giving among the poor : The widow who threw her mite into the treasury was very poor : The members of the church in Corinth were in general poor ;—at least we are told that there were not many mighty, and not many noble, not many rich, among them ;—and yet this does not restrain the Apostle from soliciting, nor does it restrain them from contributing to the necessities of the poor saints which were in Jerusalem. Throw the little you can spare into the treasury of Christian beneficence : It may be small ; but if you give with cheerfulness, it will be counted more than many splendid donations. And as we are among scriptural examples and scriptural authorities, let us offer to your notice another advice of the Apostle : “ Once a week, let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him.” This brings down the practice of charity to the level of the poor and labouring classes of society. Let me suppose that God enables you to lay by a single penny a week to the cause I am pleading for,—a small offering you will allow ; but mark the power and the productiveness of littles : If each householder of this town were to come forward with his penny a week, it would raise for the Missionary Society upwards of a thousand pounds a year. I know that, in point of fact, they will not all come forward,—that a few are really not able, and that more are not willing. Let me suppose, then, the trumpet sounded, by which all the destitute, all the faint-hearted, all the mockers at piety, are warned away from the cause, and that the number is reduced to one out of ten : There is nothing very sanguine,

surely, in the calculation, that one-tenth would stand by this glorious cause,—a small proportion, no doubt; but if carried in the same proportion over the face of the country, it would produce for our Society an annual sixty thousand pounds,—a sum exceeding by six times any yearly income which they have yet realized. I wish to exalt the poor to the consequence which belongs to them: There is a weight and an influence in numbers, and they have it. The individual offering may be small, but the produce of these weekly associations would give a mighty energy to the benevolent enterprises that are now afloat in the country. You have it in your power to form such an association; you can hold forth the example of a vigorous and well-conducted system; you can lead the way; you can spread abroad the statement of your success: Be assured that others would soon follow; and the combined efforts of our poor men and our labourers, would do more for the cause of the gospel than all the splendid offerings which the rich have yet thrown into the treasury.

Let me now turn to the rich, and entreat from them a liberality, and an aid worthy of the situation in which Providence has placed them. They have already signalized themselves; and one of the most animating signs of our day, is the opening and extending sympathy of the great for the spiritual necessities of their brethren. I call upon them to open their hearts, and pour out the flood of their benevolence on this purest and worthiest of causes,—a cause, on which the civilization of the globe, and the eternity of millions, is suspended. I hope better things of you, my wealthier hearers, than that you will do any thing but spurn at the paltry calculations which prey upon the fancies of the unfeeling and the sordid. “I give so much already!—I am so beset with applications!—I give to the Bible Society; I give to the charitable institutions of the town; I give to the vagrant who stands at my door; I give to the subscription-paper that is unfolded in my parlour; I am assailed with beggary in all its forms; and, from the

clamorous beggary of the streets to the no less clamorous beggary of the pulpit, there is an extorting process going on, which, I have reason to fear, will in the end impoverish and exhaust me!" Pardon me, my brethren; I am in possession of no ground whatever for imputing this pathetic lamentation to you; nor do I know that I am now personifying a single individual amongst you: I am merely bringing forward a specimen of that kind of eloquence, which is sometimes uttered upon an occasion like the present; and I do it for the purpose of bringing forward the effectual refutation of which it admits. We do not ask any to impoverish or exhaust themselves. We assail the rich with no more urgency than the poor; for we say to both alike—Give only what you can spare. We hold the question of almsgiving to depend not on what has been already given, but on what superfluity of wealth you are still in possession of. We know, that to this question very different answers will be given, according to the principles and views and temper of the individual to whom it is applied; nor are we eager to pursue the question into all its applications. We do not want the offerings of an extorted charity; we barely state the merits of the case, and leave the impression with your own hearts, my friends and fellow Christians. But when I take a view of society, and see the profusion and the splendour that surround me,—when I see magnificence in every room that I enter, and luxury on every table that is set before me,—when I see the many thousand articles where retrenchment is possible, and any one of which would purchase for its owner the credit of unexampled liberality,—when I see the sons and the daughters of fortune swimming down the full tide of enjoyment; and am told, that out of all this extravagance there is not a fragment to spare for sending the light of Christianity into the negro's hut, or pouring it abroad over the wide and dreary wilderness of Paganism;—surely, surely, you will agree with me in thinking, that we have now sunk down into the age of frivolity and of little men. Think of this, my bre-

thren,—that upon what a single individual has withheld out of that which he ought to have given, the sublime march of a human soul from time to eternity may have been arrested! Seize upon this conception in all its magnitude; and tell me, if, when put by the side of the sordid plea and the proud or angry refusal, all the gaities of wealth, and all its painted insignificance, do not wither into nothing.

But I *must* come to a conclusion. There are hearts which will resist every power of urgency that is brought to bear upon them; but there are others which do not require it,—those hearts which feel the influence of the gospel, and have the experience of its comforts. Those to whom Christ is precious, will long that others should taste of that preciousness. Those who have buried all their anxieties and all their terrors in the sufficiency of the atonement, will long that the knowledge of a remedy so effectual should be carried round the globe, and put within the reach of the myriads who live in guilt, and who die in darkness. Those who know that the only refuge of man is under the covering of the one Mediator, will long to stretch forth the curtains of so secure a habitation—to lengthen the cords, and to strengthen the stakes—to break forth on the right hand and on the left, and to extend a covering so ample over the sinners of all latitudes, and of all countries. In a word, those who love the honour of the Saviour, will long that his kingdom be extended, till all the nations of the earth be brought under his one grand and universal monarchy—till the powers of darkness shall be extinguished—till the mighty Spirit which Christ purchased by his obedience shall subdue every heart, shall root out the existence of sin, shall restore the degeneracy of our fallen nature, shall put an end to the restless variations of human folly and human injustice, and shall establish one wide empire of righteousness over a virtuous and a happy world.

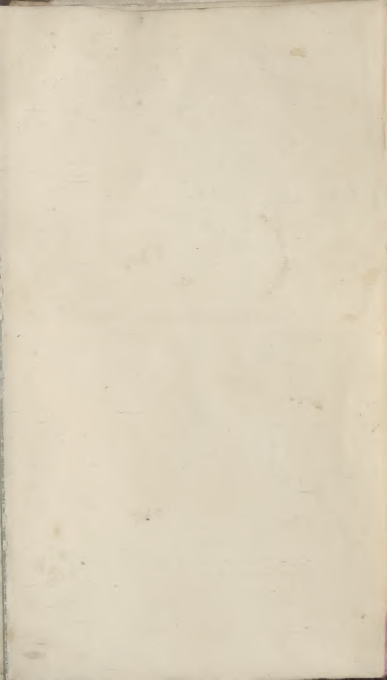
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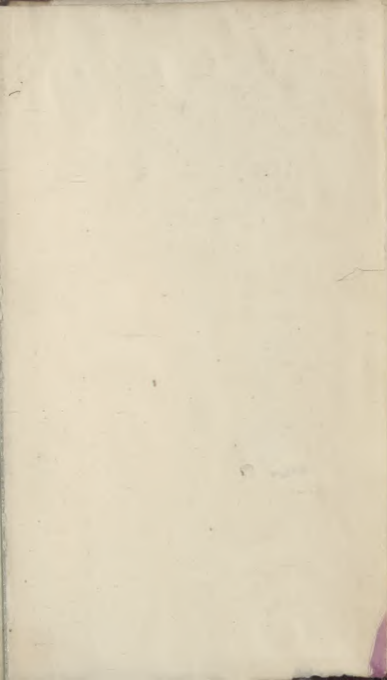
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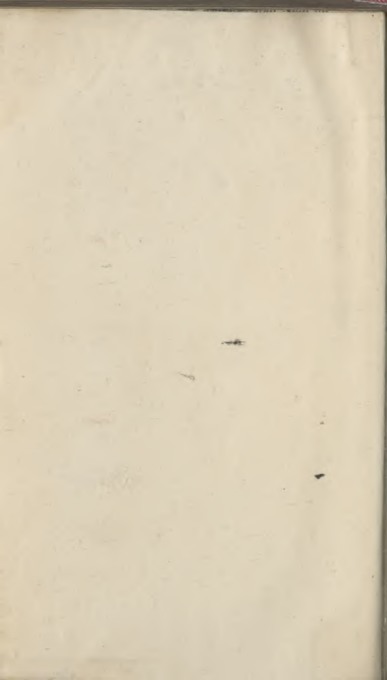
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