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# THE CLAIMS OF MISSIONS

ENFORCED BY

## A SURVEY OF THEIR RESULTS.

BY THE

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LEITH.

BEING THE TENTH OF A SERIES OF LECTURES TO YOUNG MEN,  
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"Plato et Aristoteles honesta quidem voluntate, justitiam defendere cupierunt: effecissentque aliquid, si conatus eorum bonos, si eloquentiam, si virtutem ingenii, *dicinarum quoque rerum doctrina jusisset*. Itaque opus illorum inane atque inutile jacuit; nec cuiquam hominum persuadere potuerunt, ut eorum prescripto viveret; *quia fundamentum a casu disciplina illa non habuit*."—Lact. Div. Inst. 5, 17.

# THE CLAIMS OF MISSIONS ENFORCED

BY A

## SURVEY OF THEIR RESULTS.

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It has been common enough with a certain class of writers to compare our Saviour and his religion with the various sages of antiquity, and the systems of philosophy they maintained. The time spent in such an exercise is not always well employed. It is an exercise in which a sanctified mind can feel little pleasure, and perhaps we may say that a Christian will scarcely ever be drawn into it except for the purpose of convincing the gainsayer. This purpose, however, it occasionally *may* serve, for in every important particular there is a difference and not a likeness,—a difference so great and striking as almost necessarily to draw forth the exclamation, “Never man spake like this man!” “Truly this was the Son of God!”

There is one point in which, looking upon our Saviour merely as the head of a sect—the founder of a particular system of religion—and leaving out of view his claims to divine worship, he stands totally apart from all the sages with whom he has been compared. *He alone has instituted a system of moral means for the universal diffusion of his religion.* We search the records of all the false religions of antiquity—we examine the doctrines and the mysteries of ancient philosophy, but in no one instance do we find such a provision for their propagation. This is a distinguishing peculiarity of the Christian faith. One of the main purposes for which Jesus tabernacled so long among men manifestly was, that he might select proper individuals for promulgating his religion—that he might instruct them by his personal example and exhortations, till he had in some measure fitted them for becoming his “witnesses among all na-

tions." He chose twelve individuals, to whom he communicated his purposes, and exhibited the character of his kingdom. He sent forth seventy missionaries during his own ministry to publish the gospel in Judea, and after he had finished his great work, after he had given himself an offering and a sacrifice to God—had endured the curse of the divine law, and satisfied the justice of Heaven—had come forth from the grave in the power of the Holy Ghost—had shown himself alive by many infallible proofs—had met with his disciples for the last time on earth—we find him cherishing ardently as ever his own great missionary idea. Now that his bloody baptism was over, that idea found full expansion. It was now the favourite feeling of his heart—the purpose which he most desired to see accomplished; and looking far beyond the boundaries of Judea, and Samaria, and Galilee, stretching his gaze to "the uttermost parts of the earth," he lays upon his few and apparently insignificant followers, the sublime, the solemn, the unspeakably important injunction, "Go ye into ALL THE WORLD, and preach the gospel to every creature."

The *novelty* of the command was striking. It had no parallel among the sayings of men. It conveyed an idea to which humanity had formerly been a stranger, and, but for the character of the speaker, and the awful interest of the occasion, might have been regarded as the offspring of enthusiasm, or the expression of lips chargeable with habitual exaggeration. Calmly surveyed, however, how noble is its spirit! Had it been uttered by a mere man, it would have stamped his name with immortality. Succeeding ages would have held that man worthy of everlasting remembrance, the depth of whose philanthropy and the grandeur of whose purpose could take the world into their grasp, and conceive the project of a missionary enterprise for the instruction of all men!

Jesus, however, knew that his resources were sufficient, and that how unlikely soever the means might be for the accomplishment of the end, it was enough that he should desire and appoint its achievement. He knew that he had received the heathen for his inheritance, and that he had only to stretch his sceptre over them in order to make them "willing in the day of his power." He might have set up a complex system of machinery, but he preferred doing the work by "the foolishness of



preaching." He might have drafted his missionaries from the realms above, but he chose rather to put the treasure into "earthen vessels." He might have engaged the mighty and the noble in his service, but it seemed meet to his wisdom to choose "the weak things of the world," and he committed the undertaking to twelve "poor fishermen."

The work thus originated is what has been called by way of eminence *THE MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE*, and this explanation given, you have a sufficiently clear conception of the subject I am this evening to consider. There is no grander subject, for there is none which contains so many elements of the sublime. There is no subject more important, for there is none which more directly concerns the temporal and eternal interests of men.

The committee of the Young Men's Society have divided the subject into two parts. I am requested to consider the *results* and the *claims* of missions. To discuss each of these topics separately would occupy more time and space than are at my disposal: I shall therefore consider them together, and my object shall be to *illustrate the claims of the missionary enterprise by a brief survey of some of its results.*

The extension of Christianity may be said never to have entirely ceased since the days of the apostles, but it has not always been extended in the way appointed by its Founder. Attempts have been made to propagate it by political influence, by royal mandates, and by the sword. In such cases, however, the results are generally unfavourable. They do Christianity no justice, for they exhibit it fighting with unlawful weapons, and of course suffering numerous and humiliating defeats. Strictly speaking, therefore, our inquiry must be limited to two very brief portions of what is called the Christian era. Our illustrations must come chiefly, if not entirely, from the missions of the primitive times, and those which have sprung up since the Protestant reformation. We cannot say indeed that missionary zeal and missionary effort, even in the strictest sense of the words, have been exclusively confined to these two periods; but making allowances for a few bright exceptions in individual Christians, the whole intervening history presents us with the spectacle of a church which, spiritually speak-

ing, is all but dead, and which, instead of moving over the earth by her own energy, is borne along, pampered and sickly, in the car of worldly conquest.

I. The first claim of the missionary enterprise to which I shall direct your attention rests on *what has been directly effected for the spiritual interests of man*. This claim, indeed, it is impossible fully to illustrate. We cannot count the souls who, through the faith of the gospel, have already reached heaven, nor can we tell the number of *genuine converts* at present in the world. The statistics of modern missions inform us that there are at present *nearly two hundred thousands* of converted heathen, "shining as lights in dark places," besides authorising us to set down "*another hundred thousand* for converts deceased." But they do not, and cannot tell how many of these "converts" are "saved with an everlasting salvation." That can be disclosed only in eternity. The saints in glory, after all the people of God have been "gathered together in one," may perhaps look back over the history of the past, each rehearsing the story of his own salvation, and hearing the corresponding narrations from his companions. Then, and then only, will unexceptionable testimony to the spiritual benefit of missions be brought from every kindred, and people, and tongue, and the chief results of the great enterprise be perfectly unfolded.

Still we can trace the influence of the gospel as a system of spiritual truth wherever it has gone. The human being, considered simply as such, bears a certain relation to the spiritual world, and let his views of that relation be what they may, their influence may be seen. Are we asked, then, to tell what missions have done for man, considered simply as a spiritual being? I answer, that wherever they have gone, they have diffused correct ideas both of the divine nature and the human. They have brought man into acquaintance with God and with himself, and they have shown him clearly the true road to happiness. It is a fact sufficient to place the cause of Christian missions on an immovable basis—to render it proof against every assault, that these missions have been the great means by which every thing pure, every thing rational in religious belief, have been diffused. The Bible has proved the great orb from which alone

the beams of pure light have issued. Tradition may perhaps have preserved, here and there, a few scattered rays—*dubia crepuscula lucis*—but these have not been sufficient to save the world from darkness, or to render it any thing else than a house of heavy sleep, unvisited alike by the rising, or the mid-day, or even the setting sun.

“——— *ignavi domus et penetralia somni,  
Quo nunquam radiis oriens, mediusve, cadensve,  
Phœbus adire potest.*”

1. But let us come down to particulars, and consider, in the first place, the spiritual boon which the missionary enterprise has conferred in *abolishing false religions*. Who, for instance, shall draw the picture of that soul which is so debased as to adore a stone, or a block of timber, or a piece of metal? Who shall tell how far that mind has wandered from the truth which not only invests the Godhead with a bodily shape, but makes Him who is infinite in holiness, the patron of brutish lust? “Every view that can be taken of the worship of idols is a lie against the Supreme Majesty. Their number is a lie against his unity; their corporeal nature is a lie against his pure invisible spirituality; their limited and subdivided departments of operation a lie against universal proprietorship and dominion; their follies and weaknesses a lie against his infinite wisdom; their defects, and vices, and crimes, a lie against his unsullied purity and perfection.”\* What, then, is it to deliver men from idolatry? It is to lift them out of the darkest of all abysses. It is to set them free from the greatest of all crimes, and the greatest of all curses—the crime of bestowing upon the creature the worship due only to the Creator—the curse of His vengeance who has said, “I am the Lord; that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another, nor my praise to graven images.” Has this deliverance, then, been in any degree accomplished by Christian Missions? The answer is—for millions—It has, both in ancient and in modern times: and if this had been the only result of the missionary enterprise, it would of itself have been sufficient to place it infinitely above all other efforts that have yet been made for the benefit of man.

\* Wardlaw's Sermon on Idolatry.

When Christianity came forth into the pagan world, she found religious creeds mingled together in the utmost confusion. Each country had its own peculiar theism, but it had also borrowed more or less from all the diverse systems of its neighbours. The first preachers of the gospel found no fewer than six hundred different kinds of religion in the Roman capital. What were these religions, but so many forms of devil-worship—so many systematic insults to the great Jehovah—so many death-channels through which the vengeance of Heaven might descend on the head of the ignorant devotees? Against each and all of these Christianity declared war, affirming that “they are no gods which are made by men’s hands;” that “the Godhead is not like to gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art or men’s device;” that “God is a Spirit,” and that “they who worship him, must worship in spirit and in truth;” that there is only “one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all;” that there is no “salvation in any other, for there is none other name given among men whereby we must be saved.” The consequence was, that she speedily incurred the charge of *impiety*, and was stiled by way of eminence, *THE ATHEISM*; but, in spite of the reproach, she continued to advance, and the horrid dreams that had brooded over the human mind during the midnight of superstition, vanished before “the day-spring from on high.” In less than four-score years she had proceeded from the capital unto the smaller towns, and over the adjacent country, emptying the temples of those “impure and unclean spirits which had so long imposed upon mankind by their villanies and sophistries, and arts of terror.”\* In thirty years more, one of her champions could exultingly exclaim, that there was not a nation, “either of Greek or barbarian, or any other name, even of those that wander in tribes and live in tents, among whom prayers and thanksgivings were not offered to the Father and Creator of the universe, in the name of the crucified Jesus.”† Similar have been the results of the great enterprise in later times, and we may safely say, that in consequence

\* Cave’s Primitive Christianity.

† Justin Martyr. Paley’s Evid. chap. ix.

of the efforts of modern missionaries, acceptable prayers are now ascending from native Christians in every quarter of the world, while the places are not few in which whole tribes may use the language of the chief of Raiatea, on his return from Tahiti where he and his followers had heard the gospel, "We are all praying people, and have become the worshippers of Jehovah the true God."\* The light of the gospel is shining benignly in Greenland and Labrador—in the land of the Caffres, and among various tribes of North American Indians—in the Indian Archipelago, and in the Southern Ocean, "where till of late idolatry reigned in all its cruel and debasing forms, but where now multitudes have been brought to know the truth, to love it, and to walk in it."† The condition of one of the Hervey Islands in 1823, is thus contrasted with its state in 1834, "At the former period I found them with idols and maraes: these in 1834 were destroyed, and in their stead there were three spacious and substantial places of Christian worship, in which congregations amounting to six thousand persons assemble every Sabbath day. I found them without a written language, and left them reading in their own tongue the wonderful works of God. I found them without a knowledge of the Sabbath, and when I left them, no manner of work was done during that sacred day. When I found them in 1823, they were ignorant of the nature of Christian worship; and when I left them in 1834, I am not aware that there was a house on the island where family prayer was not observed every morning and every evening."‡ What is true of this one island, is said to be true of the whole group to which it belongs; and we are assured, that there are now ninety distinct lands in Polynesia where paganism is no longer the national faith! It is such facts as these which suggest the question, "If the mere casting out of a demon was a benefit to the dispossessed, which called for his ardent lasting gratitude; is it nothing for whole demoniac communities to have the fiend of idolatry, whose name is legion, cast out of the body politic, and to be now found clothed and in their right mind?"§

\* Williams' Missionary Enterprises, chap. xii.

† Report of B. and F. Bible Society, 1840—1841.

‡ Missionary Enterprises, chap. xxxii.

§ "Great Commission," p. 220.

2. In the second place, consider that the missionary enterprise has in numerous instances been the means of *settling the faith of some of those wiser heathens, whose discernment led them to renounce the popular errors, while they had no better system to substitute in their place.* You all know that the *learned pagans* of antiquity, like those of modern times, were uniformly infidels—many of them atheists—and while they observed the rites of the popular faith,\* did so more in the spirit of prudential acquiescence in what was required by law or public opinion, than from any conviction that what they did was rational or becoming. Occasionally we find a bolder spirit, bursting the swaddling bands in which the education of his country had wrapped his mind, and exclaiming in language which has come down to us, “Truly there is one God who framed the machinery of the heavens, and the earth, and the glorious billows, and the vehemence of the winds; but we erring mortals have made images of brass, and wood, and stone, and ivory, and call ourselves religious when we offer sacrifices and celebrate feasts in honour of such gods as these.”† For the most part, however, even this *one God* was forgotten amid contempt for the idols who had usurped his place, and the mind which had escaped from the bonds of superstition launched forth on an ocean of doubt, where it soon either became “queasy with the tossing,” or was lost in the hopeless effort to reach the farther shore. We are, therefore, not astonished to find even those who seemed to be more enlightened, coming back in the hour of trial to the weakness and folly of their childhood’s creed. The most sanguine admirers of the great Athenian philosopher, Socrates, have not been able to clear his memory from the suspicion, that one of his very last acts<sup>h</sup> was an act of idolatry; and a writer who has seen what he relates, tells us that at the present day, though many of the learned affect to despise the popular superstition, yet their own system is incapable of

\* Socrates is said to have been an exception to this remark, but the assertion is questionable.

† These remarkable words are from Sophocles. I take them from Clemens Alexandrinus, who has twice quoted them at second hand from Hecatæus, without saying in what part of Sophocles they occur. Vid. Clem. Alex. apud vers. Gent. Hervet., pp. 26, 289. Basil, 1556.

raising them above what they affect to contemn, and at the hour of death they are glad to seek comfort even from the priests of the false gods.\* This evil Christianity alone has been able to cure. *Her missionaries only* have held forth a faith which could cheer the soul equally in life and in death; and the history of their labours bears ample testimony to its success. Not only has the ignorant idolater heard their voice and become wiser than all his former teachers, but the philosophical infidel himself has been delivered from his doubts, and blessed with "peace and joy in believing."

3. In the third place, consider that the missionary enterprise has uniformly *promoted the piety of those by whom it has been prosecuted*. I do not refer so much to the devoted missionary himself as to those who have sent him out. He, indeed, separated from his earthly friends, and cast wholly upon his God, in the midst of a strange and hostile world, cannot but be a gainer in a spiritual point of view; and while his ardour as an evangelist makes him less anxious to store his mind with general information, he yet cannot avoid gathering facts which must fit him for leaving a legacy of useful knowledge to his successor, and, it may be, of conferring it upon multitudes even while he lives. But let us enquire what benefits of a spiritual kind have accrued to our own churches at home from the efforts they have made in the missionary work? I answer, these churches have seen the mighty acts of the Lord, and have had their faith in the divine origin and power of the gospel mightily confirmed. They have had their eyes opened to the true state of the heathen world, and have awaked to a sense of the awful neglect of duty with which they had formerly been chargeable, as well as to the necessity for strenuous, and untiring, and systematic exertion. Has not our coldness been rebuked by the fervour and the joy of the newly converted idolater? And as we have listened with wonder to the story of his salvation, has not our piety grown warmer? Have we not lifted up our hands in devouter gratitude? Have not our hearts devised more liberal things as we have seen the saved negroes of the West Indies not only contributing their thousand pounds to the missionary

\* Milne's China Mission, p. 30.

cause, but entreating for the love of Jesus that they may be permitted to go personally with the glad tidings to their injured countrymen in Africa? "This alone," said Makea, "can make you a peaceable and happy people. I should have died a savage had it not been for the gospel."\* "Oh that I had known the gospel was coming," said another chief, venerable and grey with age, "oh that I had known that these blessings were in store for us! Then I should have saved my children, and they would have been among this happy group, repeating these precious truths, but alas, I have destroyed them all; I have not *one* left."† Christians at home have not heard such sentiments from the lips of converted savages abroad without feeling the value of the gospel as they have never felt it before; nor have they seen the marvellous change produced on heathen communities without inquiring why their own neighbourhood is less exemplary. They have been led to look to their own things in the way of ministering to the wants of the heathen at home. "The development of the missionary spirit," says an American, testifying to this result in his own country, "in the single matter of home missions, is full of grandeur and promise. 1103 missionaries are now in the service of the American Home Missionary Society, and the American Baptist Home Missionary Society, to say nothing of those from similar institutions in these and other denominations."‡ A similar account may be given of the home missions of our own land. The Home Mission Society for England has received an immense increase of vigour. It has lately been taken under the care of the Congregational Union, and every month records its triumphs in hundreds of parishes over which the veil of formal Christianity has been spread only to darken and to blight men's souls. In Scotland too, amid all our strife, the home missionary spirit has received an impulse which will be felt for generations to come. The Congregationalists, always active, have of late roused themselves to new efforts, and although comparatively of yesterday, have covered a large portion of the Highlands with their itinerancies, and planted among us more than

\* Williams, chap. 25.

† Ibid. chap. 31.

‡ Travels in China. Dissertations, chap. iii. People's edition.



a hundred chapels. The Relief Church, which has added at least a third to the number of its congregations during these forty-six years of missionary enterprise, has lately instituted a scheme for aiding its weak churches, which promises to set them in a short time entirely free from pecuniary burdens. The noble example has been set her by the churches of the Secession, which a few years ago instituted a similar scheme, and have succeeded since that time in relieving burdened chapels to the amount of more than L.12,000! And all the while, has the zeal connected with foreign missions decreased in these churches? On the contrary, it has been growing and extending, and in every case verifying the proverb, "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth." True, indeed, the hardness of the times is at this moment pressing upon their funds, but their ardour is unsubdued, and the pecuniary diminution is only calling forth new exertion, with an increased amount of fervent and persevering prayer. In short, the whole tone of piety has been elevated, the spirit of Christian zeal has been quickened, the aims of the church have become all but boundless, and in every direction with more or less activity these aims are prosecuted. "Formerly the thought of sending the gospel to the heathen scarcely entered the minds of God's people;"\* or if it did, it was only to be dismissed with such terms as these, "While we feel for the unhappy situation of the vast multitudes of our fellow-creatures remaining in ignorance and idolatry, and lament our incapacity to bring them relief, let us humbly and earnestly recommend them to the compassionate regards of the great universal Parent."† Now we have universally come to acknowledge, in the language of one who has earned a title to be heard upon the subject, that the spirit of such language is that "of the rich man who dismisses the starving beggar from his door with 'God help you, poor man,' without giving him the alms he can very well afford."‡ The church of the Thessalonians read a lesson to the other churches in the primitive times, for from that church "sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also

\* Malcom.

† Kemp's Sermon, quoted by Rev. W. Swan, ub. inf.

‡ Swan's Letters on Missions. Letter 12.

in every place." Similar examples have demonstrated to the Christians of modern times what men who are really in earnest are able to accomplish. The fact, for instance, that a congregation of 600 "poor despised exiles" had, in the space of *nine* years sent missionaries into thirteen different and widely separated regions of the globe is a fact which the churches of the Redeemer in modern times cannot possibly forget. The Christian church which is doing nothing to advance the cause of missions cannot contemplate that fact without feeling upon its forehead the brand of burning disgrace.

II. The second claim of the missionary enterprise to which I shall direct your attention rests upon *what it has effected for the social improvement of man*. And here, without hesitation, we may take our stand upon the principle adopted by Alphonso de Lamartine, in his conversation with the Lady Hester Stanhope, "I am neither for the people nor for the nobility, but for all humanity; and I do not ascribe any exclusive capacity for improving humanity either to aristocratic or democratic institutions. This capacity is only in a divine morality, the fruit of a perfect religion. FAITH IS THE CIVILIZATION OF NATIONS."\* We may avow ourselves the adherents of this principle without going so far as to suppose that those communities which have embraced Christianity are thoroughly civilized. They have certainly adopted the principles best calculated to secure their ultimate and complete civilization, but the best principle produces its results only by degrees. Time is necessary for its practical development, and where it is only newly embraced, or where, though nominally held, it has been really disregarded, it may contrast very unfavourably with principles intrinsically worthless. All that we maintain is, that "true virtue is true civilization," and, as an ancient father has expressed it, that "all the virtues are the daughters of faith,"

*πασαι αρεται πιστεως θυγατρες.*

"The Christian church," says a distinguished modern philosopher, "shed upon the European world in the fifth century three essential blessings—the recognition of a moral influence, the upholding of a divine law, and

\* Travels in the East, p. 44. People's edition.

the disjunction of temporal and spiritual power."\* "It is doubtful how far this is a correct statement, but it cannot be questioned that the "blessings" mentioned are three of the most important elements that enter into the great "fact" of civilization. Let moral influence of the right kind—an influence based on sound conscientious conviction—only have its due weight—let the authority of God be fully recognized—let questions in morality be regarded as questions in religion—let conscience be always esteemed too sacred to be intruded upon by physical force, and you have established an agency which is sure to work the regeneration of communities as well as of individuals, for "the character of a nation is formed by the sentiments and conduct of individuals, and these again are the result of principles taught in the country or reigning in the heart."†

Time will not permit us to survey the whole world, or we might substantiate this doctrine by facts drawn from under every parallel of latitude. Let us contrast two nations—one of them the greatest of Christian, and the other the greatest of pagan states.—Let us mark some of the points of difference and of resemblance between Great Britain and China. Both have attained a high pitch of national refinement—both possess a most extensive power, and of course exert something like a corresponding influence upon the happiness of a large portion of the world. But the one is avowedly without any fixed religion, and the other is nominally subject to the faith of Jesus. In this fact we find the germ of a thousand differences in their national character. China is noted for her intriguing, deceitful, inconstant, unprincipled mode of dealing with other nations. The sentiments embodied in her national character are precisely those which prevail among her subjects individually considered. She has maxims of morality, indeed, but "the motives urged for the practice of virtue and reformation of manners are commonly drawn from considerations of interest either to the individual or his ancestors, to his family or his sovereign, to his immediate circle of relatives or his posterity—either an immediate

\* History of Civilization in Europe, lect. ii. People's edition.

† Milne.

or a remote interest, but invariably of an earthly nature."\* The shallow and unsatisfactory foundation of her morality is accounted for by the confused and unsettled state of her religious creed. She has no just sentiments regarding the divine Being, and consequently knows no satisfactory basis on which morality may rest. The result is, that as a nation she has become "vain in her own conceit," and, like the ancient Greeks, stigmatises as barbarians all who dwell beyond the precincts of her own territory. The consequence is, too, that "idle displays of majesty and authority must satisfy those nations that seek her alliance, for in vain will they look for truth or respectful treatment!"† How different is the public morality of Britain! Unprincipled as many of her acts have been—cruel and indefensible as many of her statutes at this moment are—selfish and intolerant, and overbearing as her foreign policy occasionally is—her ideas of international law are of a totally different stamp. Of late years, especially, some of her public acts have been characterised by a spirit of humanity and justice, and even of self-denial, such as puts to shame the hollow artifice and arrogant pretension which so notoriously constitute the distinction of the Chinese. It is true, indeed, that "civilization is yet very youthful, and that a great deal is wanting before the world can measure its career,"‡ but the tendency so manifest in Great Britain at this moment to bring every measure to the test of principle, and to estimate its worth by its accordancy with "that divine morality which is the fruit of a perfect religion," affords the happiest omen of coming good, and elevates the character and work of the Christian missionary to a pitch of grandeur such as has no more than bare justice done it by the utmost expansion of human thought. Nor is this spirit of true civilization confined to Britain. It is advancing wherever a pure gospel is enjoyed, for it is no more than the practical development of the upright and generous sentiments which the gospel inspires. It is rapidly moulding the free states of America, and, meeting with less resistance there than elsewhere, is promising to place them forthwith at the very head of civilized communities. In these states "the religious and benevolent society

\* Milne, p. 35.

† Ibid. p. 24.

‡ Guizot, lect. i.

system" as one says who has no love to what he describes, "is thoroughly predominant. America," he tells us, "beholds in this creation a stupendous spiritual dynasty which, in the exclusive monopoly of its multiplied, various, well-devised, well-managed, exceedingly productive, comprehensive, and ever active agencies and influences, does more to form and control the public mind of the country in regard to religious politics and every thing, than all other influences put together."\* In America this influence is still younger than with us, but, as has been hinted, the form of government, and the civil institutions, are more open to its power; and can we doubt that the christianized voice of popular opinion which, even in this land of exclusive corporations and privileged classes, and worldly titles and vested rights, has achieved the manumission of the negro, and all but extinguished the taste for war, will ere long accomplish equal or still greater things for the young but giant republic?

This, however, is perhaps too general reasoning to convince the multitude. We must descend to particulars, and adduce instances from history, to prove the influence which Christian missions have more directly exercised in ameliorating the condition of our race. If we turn, then, to the primitive times, we find instances of whole nations whom Christianity had reclaimed from the most odious vices. Dr Cave,† quoting from Theodoret, mentions the Persians who had lived in the practice of incest, and used to leave their dead unburied; the Massagetes, who, deeming it a disgrace to die a natural death, caused all persons of a certain age among them to be slain in sacrifice and eaten; the Caspians and Hyrcanians, who kept sacred dogs for the purpose of devouring the bodies of their dead; the Scythians, who buried along with the deceased the nearest surviving relation; together with a variety of other nations who had maintained practices equally revolting. All these nations the gospel, by the middle of the fifth century,‡ had rendered intelligent, orderly, and humane, having cast down their lofty imaginations, and brought their thoughts into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

\* Voice from America to England, p. 184. Lond. 1839.

† Prim. Christianity, p. 58.

‡ It was then that Theodoret flourished.

Have not similar effects been witnessed in our own day? To what an extent was the horrid crime of infanticide practised in Tahiti; when the conviction "is forced upon us by the testimony of the natives themselves, that during the generations immediately preceding the subversion of paganism, not less than two-thirds of the children were massacred!" "But the most horrible part of their worship was the presenting of human sacrifices, which were offered in appalling numbers, and with revolting barbarity." These things have disappeared from that quarter of the world. The victims of the great Indian idol Juggernaut have decreased in number. The practice of burning widows, so like that of the Egyptians referred to by Theodoret, has been all but abandoned in Hindostan. The gospel is the same in modern as it was in ancient times, and wherever it has gone it has dispelled the spirit of fear, and imparted "the spirit of love and of a sound mind."

It were endless to enumerate all the benefits which have flowed from modern missions. It were little less than an account of the gradual humanizing and elevating of barbarous tribes over a large portion of the globe. As we follow the steps of the missionary, we see nations exchanging a wandering and idle life for a life of settled industry. We see agriculture and commerce successfully pursued by people formerly supposed to be incapable of learning any of the useful arts. We see schools rising by hundreds, and multitudes, both infants and adults, learning to read, to write, and to keep accounts; nay, in some instances, attaining to proficiency in what are called the higher branches of education. We see civil and municipal government springing up among those who but lately had scarcely a single idea of the obligations of social life. We see nations rescued from reproach, who but lately were supposed to be physically disabled from rising a single step above the level of the brutes. In short, we see the great work of the world's civilization advancing with a sure and a rapid pace, and when we ask the cause, we find the germ of the whole in the quickening power of divine truth. The missionary enterprise is to thank; the God of missions is to receive the glory; and the meek devoted missionary is to be admired and praised as the honoured instrument of the marvellous revolution!

But let me illustrate the claims of the great enterprise somewhat more particularly, by specifying a few of the *social* advantages which it has already conferred on the two great nations by which it has been chiefly patronized and conducted. I have already adverted to its influence upon the public morality of Great Britain, and the following particulars, by accounting satisfactorily for that influence, will strengthen the argument it suggests.

1. In the first place, then, it may safely be asserted, that the missionary enterprise is fast producing the conviction that the true glory of a country consists not in mere wealth, or in extensive commerce, or in military pre-eminence. It has opened the eyes of thousands to that which constitutes the true glory both of individuals and nations. "To do justly and to love mercy" are the great social principles which the missionary inculcates, and on these principles the two great nations to which I refer, have set the seal of national approbation, for the missionary enterprise may be said to have received from both the national patronage. But history demonstrates that these great principles have no necessary connection with wealth, or conquest, or extensive commerce. Seven years after crossing the Hellespont, the "double-horned" Alexander had carried the arms of Mæcedon to the banks of the Indus, and his posterity yet cherish his fame within the confines of the Punjab. The terrible Zengis, as we learn from the history of the Huns, ruled from the Chinese Sea to the borders of Germany and Egypt, and since the days of Vasco de Gama and Columbus, our own has become an empire on which the sun never sets. But Alexander and Zengis owed the extent of their conquests to something different from either justice or mercy, and the progress of British rule claims nearer kindred with their spirit than with that of "another king, one Jesus." The Bosphorus was known as the *Golden Horn*, pouring its riches into the lap of Byzantium ere Christianity had prescribed laws to commerce. The divine religion had not been promulgated to the nations, when Rome, heathen, but luxurious, wore the furs of Scythia, and trode on Babylonish carpets, imported amber from the shores of the Baltic, and purchased silk for its weight in gold upon the shores of Ceylon. The wealth which

has flowed into our own country from both the Indies, has been wrung from the bones and sinews of men who have been bought and sold like cattle in the market! The progress of the missionary, however, and the homage which his divine principles now so widely receive, have taught us to regard those men who laid the foundation of our Indian empire as even more barbarous than Zengis Khan, and the conviction is fast becoming general among us that our conquests henceforth must be made by other weapons than the sword and the musket—that our commerce must be extended and our wealth increased only by those peaceful means which have already “opened new havens at the antipodes for our fleets,” and by which “the friends of our country are everywhere multiplied.”

2. The progress of missionary enterprisc has increased the taste and the facilities for literary and scientific pursuits. The great social principles to which we have referred tend directly to elevate the mind, preventing it from fixing its affections on grovelling objects, forbidding it to seek its objects by selfish means, expanding its better nature, and thereby fitting it for rising to the highest regions of philosophical and literary research. Besides, for such research the missionary enterprisc has furnished increased facilities. “All the knowledge we possess of external objects,” says a competent judge,\* “is founded on experience which furnishes facts.” Many of these facts, besides being gathered at great expense of persevering toil, must be collected from various quarters of the world, and there is probably no part of the earth to which the missionary has gone without either collecting such facts, or preparing the way for their collection by others. Our knowledge of geography, and statistics, and human life and character, has been more advanced by missionaries than by any other class of men. It is a well known fact that commercial intercourse between different countries does but little comparatively to bring them into acquaintance with each other. To visit a few towns on the sea-coast serves the purpose of the trader, or if he penetrate the country, he sees at a glance almost all that he deems interesting. The missionary, on the other hand, settles in the land, makes himself familiar

\* Mrs Somerville's *Con. Phys. Sc.* § 1.



with every thing in the habits, and customs, and opinions of the people, becomes acquainted with the climate, the soil, the productions—vegetable, mineral, and mechanical ; and when he publishes the result of his observations, he must be a weak man indeed, and a very faulty observer, if he do not add something to the amount of general information. Hence the value of a host of works which within these forty years have issued from the press, making us acquainted with countries which, but for the missionary enterprise, should have been still comparatively unknown. We have a whole library of such works, from the pens of missionaries both British and American.

3. On this, however, I do not deem it necessary to dwell, but proceed to observe that the missionary enterprise has brought into view some of the noblest specimens of human character. I am by no means prepared to say with Dr Campbell, in one of those bursts of fervour with which his "Martyr of Erromanga" abounds, that "the necessity, and glory, and fascination of the literary character are nearly gone by," or that, "in philosophy, the harvest has obviously been reaped, and that little now remains but the gleanings!"\* We must not thus circumscribe "the march of intellect." There are departments in natural philosophy in which the harvest is only begun. But all must agree with him when he says, that "the missionary is by far the first of human kind." Even the infidel must admit that the missionary enterprise has exhibited human nature in a light altogether peculiar. Where else shall we find men selling themselves for slaves in order to effect the conversion of persons to whom they could not otherwise carry the gospel. Yet such things were common in the primitive times, and are not unheard of even since the reformation. We remember the story told by a writer of the fourth century,† of Serapion Sindonitis, who sold himself to the manager of a theatre, with whom he lived in slavery till he had converted him, his wife, and his whole family to Christianity. He was but the prototype of Tobias Leopold, and Leonard Dober, in more modern times, who resolved to sell themselves as slaves in order that they might carry the gospel to the negroes of St Thomas

\* Letter to the Duke of Wellington.

† Palladius.

We have read of the "Apostle of the Goths," who, before he could convert his fierce mountaineers, "had to compose a new alphabet, four letters of which he invented to express the peculiar sounds which were unknown to the Greek and Latin pronunciation."\* He was in this respect† but the prototype of our own noble hearted Moffat among the Bechuanas, and his brethren in other places, who, in our own day, have performed similar feats. But we must not arrogate all the praise to the *male* missionaries. *Females*, also, have "laboured in the Lord." Dr Harris has justly remarked that "Christianity found the world without a single house of mercy," and he might have added that the honour of having built the first hospital belongs to a Christian lady, the celebrated Fabiola, who sold her estate that she might lay out the money for that purpose, and who personally tended and taught the persons to whom her charity extended. The spirit which animated her was the same that filled the Tryphenas and Tryphosas of apostolic times, and which in our day has shone out so brilliantly in our Harriet Newells, and Mrs Judsons, and a host of others whom it were tedious to name. It is pleasing to look back even into the dreary regions of popery, and to find there such names as Father de Chavagnac, and Joannes de Monte Corvino, and Francis Xavier, but it is far more delightful to see in the present day, and in countries where the human mind is set free from superstition, such hosts of thoroughly enlightened men and women making such sacrifices for the good of others as cannot be contemplated without rebuking selfishness in all its forms. It is these persons who are wiping off the reproach that has adhered to the Christian name in almost every savage land since the middle of the fifteenth century. It is these persons who are to verify the angel's prophecy, in the vision of Columbus :

" Not thine the olive but the sword to bring,  
Not peace but war! yet from these lands shall spring,  
Peace without end: from these with blood defiled,  
Spread the pure spirit of thy Master mild."‡

How infinitely superior is the character of the practi-

\* Gibbon's Decline and Fall, &c. vol. ii. p. 270.

† Not in *all* respects, for Uphilas preached Arianism.

‡ Roger.

cal missionary to that of the cold speculating philosopher, who has been so long with a certain class the most exalted of his species? There is, to be sure, a great step between a rude cannibal and a thoroughly educated sceptic, but how much wider the step before you reach the exalted character of a Brainerd, or a Swartz, or a Williams, or a Moffat! We are horrified to find Jerome declaring that he had seen the natives of Caledonia feasting on human flesh, but what shall we say of the infidel historian who thus comments upon the fact? "If in the neighbourhood of the commercial and literary town of Glasgow, a race of cannibals has really existed, we may contemplate in the period of the Scottish history the opposite extremes of savage and civilized life. Such reflections tend to enlarge the circle of our ideas; and to encourage the pleasing hope *that New Zealand may produce in some future age the Hume of the Southern hemisphere!*"\* That historian died forty-eight years ago, just before the commencement of the mission to the South Seas. Had he lived to read Williams' missionary enterprises, would he have dared to assign his secondary causes for the rapid spread of Christianity, and would he still have regarded himself and his brother sceptic as the types of perfected human nature?

III. The claims of the missionary enterprise are strengthened, when you consider the *vast extent to which its operations have increased.*

One of the *results* of the enterprise is, that it has increased its own machinery to an enormous extent. I refer, you perceive, to the present position of the foreign missionary undertaking. An amount of machinery has been prepared and set in motion, which it is difficult to estimate; but which, if we could give you a full view of, it would not only fill you with admiration, but convince you of the absolute necessity of continued exertion. One fact peculiarly worthy of notice is, that the amount of instrumentality is and ought to be constantly increasing. The machine cannot work without growing larger, and cannot stop working without falling to pieces. The amount of agency at present in the foreign missionary field, is estimated by Dr Harris at 1500 ordained missionaries, with

about 5000 native teachers and other assistants. This estimate allows only 450 persons for the American societies, but I find Mr Malcom writing in 1839, "the United States have in the foreign field, in the various departments of missionary service, more than 746 persons."\* The probability is, that Dr Harris has purposefully underestimated the amount of agents in actual service. We may, therefore, with all safety add another hundred to the number of ordained, and five hundred at least to the number of unordained agents which he has mentioned. These agents are distributed over 1200 principal stations, with each of which one or more sub-stations is connected. In many of these stations the missionaries have printing establishments, whercin the work of preparing bibles and testaments for the various kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, goes on with increasing energy. In 1839 the American missionaries had 43 printing presses, and were issuing the Scriptures in 56 different languages.† At present we may estimate the number of presses under the inspection of European and American missionaries together at about 300, while the versions of the Scriptures printed, "embrace the languages of more than half of the human family, and some of them are the most difficult in the world."‡ Of course there are numerous fonts of type cast in different characters, some of them for alphabets consisting of more than 1000 letters. Where types are produced there must be the whole machinery of type-founding. Let it be understood also, that at these stations, schools are established, where, according to Dr Harris, "about 200,000," but according to Mr Malcolm, "upwards of 300,000 children are educated." When there are schools, there must be the various articles of school furniture, libraries, school books, maps, globes, and perhaps also some other philosophical apparatus. All this is in addition to school houses, mission chapels, and missionary dwellings. Now, I am fairly entitled to point to the existence of all these things in such places, as so many of the results of the missionary enterprise, and I ask you what inferences they suggest? In the first place do they not suggest, that immense obstacles which at first must have appeared all but insupe-

\* Malcom, p. 76. Dies.

† Malcom, p. 76.

‡ Ibid. p. 72, where see an illustration of this whole argument.

rable, have been overcome? Now we have experience and knowledge of country, where lately all was ignorance. Now we have familiarity with strange people, among whom it was at first exceedingly difficult to effect a location. Now we have written languages in about 30 dialects, where but lately there was not so much as an alphabet. Now we have friends ready to receive and to instruct others when they go out, so that what the earlier missionaries could only acquire in the course of many laborious years, we have reason to think may be learned by the later in the course of a few months. Another inference is, that while in past years we could in reasonable calculation expect but little fruit in the way of converting souls, we may now look for such fruit in abundance, for all these stupendous operations cannot have gone forward without exciting a spirit of inquiry among the people before whose eyes they have been carried on; and now that the means of satisfying that inquiry are fairly provided, we may surely pronounce the field to be white unto the harvest. But the last and most important inference is, that the existence of such an immense amount of machinery, erected at so much expense, and during so many years of toilsome exertion, constitutes an invincible claim upon all the lovers of the cause. All we have now to do is to work the machine carefully and diligently—keeping its joints well oiled, and its springs, wheels, and axles in continual motion—and this being the case, shall we feel justified in suffering it to rust and decay?

IV. After all, it must be confessed that the results of the missionary enterprise do not constitute its strongest claim. The first and the strongest—that which most completely distinguishes it from all other schemes for the amelioration of man—is its divine authority. Were it a mere human invention, how admirable soever, or how successful soever it might be, its claims would at best be only of a secondary kind. Such, however, is not its character. It is the enterprise of the divine Messiah, and those who prosecute it, are “workers together with God.” Not only so. They are discharging a duty which God has imperatively enjoined. It is of great importance, young men, that we should remember this. It furnishes us with an answer to every objection which

can be brought against the missionary cause, just as it has supported the mind of the missionary himself under every apparent failure. Every cavil that the enemy can suggest, may be silenced by the reply, "It is the Master's will."

From enlarging on this point I am of course precluded, but I submit that the results of the enterprise, as they have already been viewed, *go far to establish its Divine authority*. When Paley wrote his unequalled treatise in proof of the Divine origin of the gospel, he drew an argument, as others writing on the same subject are accustomed to do, from the rapidity of its progress in the primitive times. His argument was strengthened by showing that Christianity at its outset advanced much more rapidly than it has done in any succeeding age, for the fact suggested the conclusion that the apostles enjoyed miraculous assistance. But had Paley lived to write his argument in our day, he would almost have felt the necessity of constructing it somewhat differently. He could not have spoken of the "*widely disproportionate effects which attend the preaching of modern missionaries of Christianity, compared with what followed the ministry of Christ and his apostles.*"\* The missions to India, which, when he wrote, were so unpromising, now furnish matter of joyful gratulation; and the missions to Greenland, which, in his day, were esteemed a failure, have been crowned with complete success, for eight years ago there were only a hundred and fifty heathens in all that country, and now, I believe, there is not one.

Nearly akin to this is the testimony which modern missions have every where borne to the great principle that religion ought in no case to lean for support upon the arm of human power. Nothing in the history of man is so utterly melancholy as the present aspect of those very countries where the gospel first showed its power. The great principle laid down by our Saviour that his "kingdom is not of this world," having once been lost sight of, paganism has come back in all its foulness and impiety. The history of the noblest undertaking in which men were ever honoured to engage has become associated with chicanery, rapacity, impurity, and

\* Paley's Evid., c. iv. § 2.

the very gods which a pure gospel had banished, are to be seen restored to their former situation, and perhaps more than their former honour, under the auspices of a corrupt faith. "In some places the very same images still remain: they have only christened them: and what was Venus or Proserpine is now Mary Magdalene or the Virgin. \* \* \* The same incense is burnt by priests, arrayed in the same manner, with the same grimaces and genuflexions, before the same images, and in the same temples too."\* "At every corner we see images and altars with lamps and candles burning before them, exactly answering to the description of the ancient writers, and with what Tertullian reproaches the heathen with, that their streets, their markets, their baths were not without an idol."† The consequence is, that the churches of Italy and Sicily of the present day are described as "vast magazines for objects calculated to excite the devotion of the superstitious, the pity of the wise and good, and the scoffs of the profane."‡ The Christians of the first ages very soon fell into the error to which all this profanity is traceable—the mixing of civil with sacred things. It has remained for the present age to detect, to expose, and to guard against that error. "Having witnessed the introduction of Christianity into a greater number of islands than any other missionary, I can safely affirm," says Williams, "that in no single instance has the civil power been employed in its propagation."§ All, therefore, who deem religion contaminated by state alliance, all who deem that alliance sinful, all who wish to see that alliance speedily dissolved will feel that modern missions have an additional claim on our regard, from their having, in those places where they have been most successful, borne so ample testimony to the inherent energy of the truth.

Having thus, as I proposed, illustrated the claims of the missionary enterprise, it only remains that I offer a few hints as to the way in which you may best promote its interests.

1. In the first place, then, I would bid you endeavour

\* Brydone's *Tour in Sicily and Malta*, p. 23. Peop. Edit.

† Middleton's "Letter from Rome."

‡ Blunt's *Vestiges of Ancient Manners and Customs* discoverable in Modern Italy and Sicily, p. 6.

§ Williams' *Missionary Enterprises*.

to obtain right views of its character and claims. These are not yet fully appreciated. It is not perhaps true now, as it was twenty-six years ago, that "in this corner of the island there is an impetuous and overbearing contempt for every thing bearing the name of missionary;"\* but still neither the man nor his work is properly regarded. I would have you esteem the cause of the missionary as the first of causes, and himself as the first of men. Consider the work, therefore, in all its magnitude, and in all the glory of its astonishing results. But especially regard it as the cause of God—appointed by Him, directed by Him, blessed by Him, and destined, through His blessing, to be finally triumphant.

2. Make a practice of perusing regularly the reports of our various institutions for the promotion of Christianity, and such other works on the subject as may come in your way. It is not too much to say that the cause of missions has given birth to some of the most valuable works which have issued from the press in the course of the present century. For myself, I can say that I have read no human treatises so well calculated at once to interest and to elevate the mind as some of the larger works on missions which have lately appeared. I must say that I cannot help regretting that most of these works have been published in a form so expensive. Proud as I am to see such works written by the learned men of England and Scotland, I almost wish that "The Martyr of Erromanga" and "The Great Commission," and "The Jubilee of the World," and Mr Hamilton's learned treatise had been written in America, for then the enterprising publishers of the "people's editions" might have sent them over the world in a form accessible to all, along with the travels of Howard Malcolm, and Samuel Parker, and Daniel Clarke. As it is, every young man ought, if possible, to procure and to peruse each and all of the treatises I have mentioned, and if any one can rise from the perusal without being thoroughly convinced that the missionary enterprise is incomparably the most glorious work to which a human being can be called, and the humble missionary himself by far the most loveable of all men, there is reason to think that his understanding is sadly deficient,

\* Chalmers' Sermon on the Utility of Missions.



or his heart more than usually depraved. Having read these larger publications, you ought, if possible, to keep pace with the missions throughout the world by regularly perusing the reports of our more efficient missionary societies. In this way you will always be ready to advance the cause by giving information to those who need it, and by urging the claims of those institutions which are most worthy of support.

3. This leads me to observe, that you ought to undertake the office of collectors or directors of missionary institutions. This is one of the very best fields for the exercise of the talents of young men. It has a tendency to confer habits of order and activity, and by associating them with the most important of all works—the work best fitted to stir up and strengthen liberal and philanthropic feeling—to make you the most exemplary and the most useful members of society. Besides, this kind of activity is at present very much needed. There is more necessity for increasing the number of missionary societies, and the amount of their funds, than there is for persuading young men to become missionaries.\* You will naturally throw your influence into the scale of the churches with which you are respectively connected, but it becomes you always to remember that the cause in itself is catholic—that although we cannot all form one missionary society, as we may form one Bible society, there is no jarring between us, for as Montgomery has finely said, “In the Bible society all names and distinctions of sects are blended till they are lost, like the prismatic colours, in a ray of pure and perfect light. In the missionary work, though divided, they are not discordant; but like the same colours displayed and harmonized in the rainbow, they form an arch of glory ascending on the one hand from earth to heaven, and on the other descending from heaven to earth—a bow of promise, a covenant of peace, a sign that the storm is passing away, and the Sun of Righteousness with healing in his rays breaking forth on all nations.”

4. In the fourth place, hold yourselves ready, if it should please God in his providence to call you, to embark personally in the glorious work. The promotion of the missionary cause in one way or another

\* Reports of the Lond. Miss. Soc., Bapt. Miss. Soc., &c., 1841.

ought to be the purpose of the Christian, and the aim of his life. In regard to this work, it should be said of each of us, as John Foster said of Howard and his philanthropic schemes, that "the law which carries water down a declivity was not more unconquerable and invariable than the determination of his feelings to the main object."\* And let it be remembered, that while there is at present a lack of funds to send missionaries abroad, there is ample room at home for the employment of all who have any thing of the missionary spirit. It is a very singular fact, that the only European country which has arrived at any thing like just views of the missionary work is a moral desert as regards the great majority of its own inhabitants. *The mass of our own country is yet unconverted.* And why has the Most High brought the Christians of this country to form the exalted estimate which they now do form of the missionary enterprise, while he has hedged them in, so to speak, by want of funds to equip missionaries for foreign lands? Why, but because it is his design that they should look, in the mean time, more closely to the state of their own country? The great God has his own reason for every thing he does, and the reason seems plain in the case before us. You are impressed with the importance of the missionary work, and cannot get abroad, because it is designed that you should be home missionaries! You are called to establish Christian instruction agencies and Sabbath schools; to inquire into the state of the population around you; to ascertain how many there are who do not hear the gospel, or who have no copy of the Word of God, and to devise the means of supplying the want. This is manifestly your present duty, and while I call your attention to it, let me remind you of the servant who "knew his Lord's will and did it not," and let me caution you against exposing yourselves to his punishment.

5. Above all things, be careful to cultivate *personal piety*. Whether you engage directly in the labours of the missionary or not, this is indispensable. If it be true that "every Christian ought to be a missionary at heart," it is equally true that every Christian ought to be a missionary in outward deportment. Bad example

\* Essay on Decision of Character.

is remarkably abundant, and it seems to propagate itself more successfully than good. There is therefore great reason, not only why you should guard against the contagion, but also for setting your faces with greater firmness in an opposite direction. If you are convinced that Christianity is of God, and that its triumph is identical with the regeneration of the world, the conviction will stir your souls with generous impulses towards your fellow-mortals. But it will fill you also with powerful aspirations after high attainments in personal religion; and in proportion as, through the divine grace, you succeed in elevating yourselves in the scale of piety, will your generous emotions towards others be lasting and productive. In that proportion will you be men of prayer—in that proportion will you enjoy the divine blessing. Without that blessing no scheme you can adopt, no effort you can make, for your own improvement or that of others, can be permanent or pure, but with that blessing every such scheme or effort goes well—is rightly directed—is fully sustained—is finally triumphant.

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