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Christ's Presence the Basis and Life of Christian Effort :

A

See volume

S E R M O N

PREACHED BEFORE

THE PALESTINE MISSIONARY SOCIETY,

AT THEIR

THIRTY-THIRD ANNUAL MEETING, AT NORTH BRIDGEWATER, MASS..

JUNE 18, 1856.

BY CALVIN TERRY.

OF THE PILGRIM CHURCH, NORTH WEYMOUTH.

PUBLISHED BY VOTE OF THE SOCIETY, BUT AT THE EXPENSE OF THE AUTHOR.

BOSTON:

PRINTED BY JOHN WILSON & SON,

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MATT. xxviii. 20. — "Lo, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD."

WHENEVER and wherever Christianity has been cherished and exhibited in its purity, it has been felt, and, directly or indirectly, acknowledged, to be a commanding force. And this, whether regarded as a religious institution or a life. It has carried with it a something which spread beyond ordinary human experience, and baffled human calculation, — a peculiar power over minds and hearts and lives, which was never acquired by any other system or retained by any other means. The world has been astonished at the spirit, energy, persistence, devotion, and endurance of its votaries, and at the influence they have carried with them, the changes they have wrought along their pathway, and the triumphs they have accomplished in the earth.

They have themselves been no less astonished at their own experience and history, at the signs and marked providences which have attended them, and at the strange, divine authority with which they have often found themselves invested; and more particularly at their own emotions, their peace, assurance, hope, and triumphant faith, their un-earthly joy, self-possession, and repose of soul, amid the

tempests of outward fury and hate, and the armies of difficulties and dangers, which have surrounded them. A strong heart beats within them when the heart of others would melt as water; their eye beams, though with mild yet with steady and melting ray, when others' would droop and languish; their step is firm; their hands are valiant; and they turn, with a front before which no cowards or guilty souls can stand, directly towards their assailants. They are themselves swayed as by an unseen will; and, through them, others are swayed as by an unseen power.

You already anticipate the announcement of the *secret* of all these wonders; and, so far as you have been blessed with a truly enlarged and Christian experience, you know the way thereof, in the manner and effects of its communication.

When the chosen apostles and disciples were gathered before their divine Master to receive their charge and commission, and he said, "Go ye," the right arm of the government of the universe was pledged in their defence. They went as servants of that government, — ambassadors, ministers, witnesses, soldiers; and, *while acting within their commission*, they carried the authority and power of the government with them. Witness the sublime ceremonies of the occasion, and the words which could not have been out of their minds at the time: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth;" "Go ye;" "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world;" therefore ye shall triumph, do wonders, and nothing shall harm you. Such powerful logic can nowhere else be found, nor premises which so amply sustain all the legitimate conclusions.

Paul received them in their power, and he realized them in his life. He gloried in the cross of Christ; and, wherever he carried that badge of his office, he bore the authority of Heaven. He beheld himself and his fellow-sufferers for Christ acting a part in which the universe was interested, — "a spectacle unto the world, to angels, and to men." And,

seeing they were encompassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, he could say with the old prophet, "Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." He taught these things to his son Timothy; and upon this logic he based his charge, when he said, "Let no man despise thy youth;" and "We both labor and suffer reproach because we trust in the living God." Through this line of succession, all real Christians receive the same: they labor and suffer, enduring hardness for Christ's name, because God is with them; and their foundation hath this seal, — "*The Lord knoweth them that are his.*"

From this view, we are brought to see that all appropriate Christian action in this world partakes of the same common nature and spirit, and must spring from and be sustained by the same general principles. Whatever is done or attempted, whatever enterprises are projected, in the name of religion, depend upon this power for success. *Christ's presence is the basis and life of all right and successful efforts.*

This doctrine may be profitably studied in its application to specific parts of Christian life: —

1. Christ's presence in the soul is essential to produce the vital elements which combine in the missionary spirit and in every aggressive work of piety. "The love of Christ constraineth us." This love is the only affection which is able to meet the demands of Christianity, either to enlist men in the whole Christian service, or to bind together and carry through those who engage in it. We feel that love only as Christ is with us, in us, in the sense of his word. It is produced by him when he comes by the power of his Spirit, knocks, and gains admittance, and becomes himself formed within, as to his image, the traits of his holy character, the hope of glory. The works of love cannot purely and continuously flow, except as this is felt. Love never faileth: it meets the lawful demands which religion makes. Without love, we are nothing. If one is destitute of this,

though he begins to run apparently the Christian race, he will soon faint and turn aside. Without it, the zeal of the individual, the missionary, will cool; that of the churches will languish; and all the streams of apparent piety and benevolence will run dry, to the shame and certain disaster of all concerned.

Paul says, "I bear in my body the marks [brand] of the Lord Jesus." "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest." (Gal. vi. 17; 2 Cor. iv. 10.) It was from this presence, a presence as real and perceptible within as were these marks without, that Paul derived his undying zeal, devotion, and patience. *Ignatius* triumphantly stood before his persecutors who sought to drive him from his Master's service, and said, "I bear about with me the Lord Jesus. Seize him if you will! Carry him up to Rome! Cast him to the lions!"

To manifest the life of Christ is the great calling of the Christian in this world, — that life which in exercise is love, divine and holy. Every missionary, every professing Christian, every soul of man, must have this life, therefore, or he is no Christian; he must have it as the first great requisite for doing the work and enduring the evils which everywhere are met in his path. It is not by fear, not by arbitrary law, that the Saviour seeks to recruit and govern his army, and make it the mightiest and most devotedly faithful of human forces, but by love. He calls with words of love; draws with cords of love; binds with bands of love; and asks (is it too much?) the fruit of love, saying, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." "Lovest thou me?" is the test-question which proves the qualification; and it is the form of installation in his service and ministry.

The perception of his beauty, the consciousness of his spiritual presence in the soul, should be fixed facts in the experience of every Christian. The great baptism to be sought is a baptism into love, so that the entire life shall

be a consecration to Christ, and the ever-present ideal of him shall give patterns for every act. Any other spirit would prove false in time of trial and peril; even as the treacherous heat, which fails to move the machinery, and carry forward the precious ship with its freight of wealth and life, when the tempest is high, and the fearful breakers roar around her. False zeal will burn out, promises will perish, vows will be forgotten, covenants will be broken, high-sounding words of courage and devotion will vanish into air, even solemn compacts of fidelity and union will dissolve: but love abideth for ever; and it is all the purer, sweeter, stronger, when it has passed through the fire. It links the heart with Christ's heart in bands of heavenly temper and power, so that, where Christ is, there the heart of his people goes, and into the work which he attempts do they spontaneously enter; and, while his heart lives, theirs cannot die or sleep, or shrink from his calls to duty. No opposition or threats will deter them, no fear will shake them: love for Christ and for souls will triumph over all, and prove itself a reliable affection, an infallible motive in the soul. Love never faileth, not in the greatest emergencies. Fired by this love, the devoted Macer could mount the steps of the Roman Capitol, in the face of the fiery edict of Aurelian, and say, "Romans! the emperor, in his edict, tells me not to preach to you, — not to preach Christ in Rome, — neither within a church, nor in the streets. Shall I obey him? When Christ says, 'Go forth, and preach the gospel to every creature,' shall I give ear to a Roman emperor who bids me to hold my peace? Not so, not so, Romans. I love God too well, and Christ too well, and you too well, to heed such bidding." And so he rent the edict, and gave it to the winds, and went on preaching Christ the more boldly.

2. Christ's presence is essential to cause such a perception and reception of his doctrine and truth as are needed in his service.

Jesus says of himself, "I am the light of the world: he

that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Also, "I am the true light." Peter says, "Lord, thou hast the words of eternal life." And he is called the Teacher that came from God; who spake as never man spake; who declares the Father; and who knoweth all things, and, by his agency, guides to all truth.

His servants must participate in his knowledge, that they may consistently enter into his plans and promote his cause. The mere letter of Christ's word, alone, does not give this knowledge. The words are plain, yet they are perverted by the depraved heart. The carnal mind does not receive them. The confusion of prejudices, the darkness of sin, the mists of error, the blindness of unbelief, are all against the true perception and heartily receiving of the words of life. Away from Christ, men are under the power of the god of this world, "who blinds the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." The light that is within them is darkness; the understanding and reason fail to perform their true office in religious things. Christ must be revealed to men, and be within them, as the sun of heavenly wisdom, causing "the day to dawn and the day-star to arise in their hearts." The life of his presence must be felt as the "light of men," and his love must warm the heart.

It was his company and discourse while in the flesh that gave such knowledge and wisdom to his disciples, as seen in Peter and John, who, though unlearned and ignorant men, yet impressed the multitude by their boldness of speech, so that they marvelled, and took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.

He is still with his devoted people, though we see him not. In all our devout communion with him, his divine influence is felt, effectually working upon the mind and heart, making the truth plainer and sweeter, enlarging our understanding of it, and establishing us in its knowledge and love. As we walk closely and habitually with him, we

imbibe his wisdom, and the more deeply will his precious doctrine be graven on our souls. It will abide in and possess us, enter into our habits of thought and control them, till it becomes a part of our very being and life. "*I believe, therefore I speak,*" expresses the logical connection between having the truth in the heart, and a true zeal in proclaiming it to the world. Men may assent to creeds from worldly motives, while the truth has no power in their hearts; but Christ wants no such hirelings to echo his words or encumber his cause. Their professed attachment to it degrades it, and corrupts the doctrine. It is only those who feel its power and life in the heart so strongly that they cannot keep silent, that can be relied upon earnestly and faithfully to proclaim it.

By this process, the knowledge of the word will be always joined with the love of it; it will be our meditation and support; its ample resources of wisdom and knowledge shall be in us as a wellspring of life.

It is essential both to know and heartily receive the doctrines of Christ, all his word, or we can have no effective instrument of religious power. If his words abide not in us, we shall be barren, desolate, and waste; we shall lack the material for internal support and for aggressive operations against the wicked; the heart will melt, and the look of courage vanish away. The letter killeth; but the spirit giveth life. He that receiveth the word into his heart, alone abideth and beareth much fruit.

It is through the avenues of the heart that the richer truths of the gospel come to the understanding, and are firmly seated there; and, in this sense even, Jesus is "the way." His presence in the heart introduces divine knowledge, and removes the obstacles to its free course in the mind.

3. Christ's presence is necessary to give undying interest in and reliance upon the word, as the instrument of Christian warfare and power.

We may learn in the schools that the word is the great instrument of Christian warfare, — the sword of the spirit ; but in active service we shall need more than scholastic or speculative knowledge of this, — a mere theory of operation. When, by the opposition of men, and of the infidel arts of “science, falsely so called,” every principle is put to the strain, and the very soul of man is upon the rack, till every cord of mere human origin is severed, then, unless a divine principle underlies our plans, and sustains our faith, courage, and hope, we shall be driven from our course, and be left to resort to such extempore expedients as may occur to our fancy or fears, or as the noisy and tumultuous people may offer.

He who has once felt the power of the word, as vitalized by Christ’s presence in it, cannot soon forget ; he has seen and felt that there is a power there truly divine. His knowledge and belief of the word are grounded on a foundation which infidelity and unbelief cannot reach : no floods of men, no shock of time, can shake his trust. And to be confirmed in the habit of communing with Christ through his word, and of finding him speaking and blessing in every page, is to hold intercourse with Deity, such as Mahomet or the founders of Rome could never claim. In all his faith, hopes, and labors, he stands on a foundation which abideth ever, having this seal of God, “The Lord knoweth (with acceptance and approval) them that are his ;” and so his heart is anchored in the depths of God’s eternal love, and inspired by the energy of his eternal power. As he moves on to duty, he resorts not to the “cunning craftiness of men,” when they play off tricks to deceive and impose upon the multitude ; but he employs the “power of God unto salvation.”

His personal interest in the word is kept alive, not by the mere memory of what it has done for him, but by the consciousness of what it is still doing ; his reliance upon its instrumental power is based not only upon its logical and

intrinsic fitness to impress men, but upon the certainty that God is with it and in it, and that the Spirit of his power goes where his word is fitly spoken or read.

Nought but Christ's presence can sustain a high realization of these truths in all circumstances and amid all temptations. The flesh is too weak for reliance when we encounter sinners, and such sinners as the faithful exhibition of the gospel calls up. The temptation to "daub with untempered mortar," and "speak deceitfully for God," delivering "for doctrines the commandments of men," is too great to be withstood, unless we can fall back upon the ultimate foundations of faith and promise, and see "the Lord always at our right hand." If Christ forsake us, or if we forsake him, the next logical step is certain, — that of leaving his word, and "turning to fables." To do that, is effectually to abandon all the Christian work, and to enter the field with idolaters and unbelievers.

4. Christ's presence is necessary to give practical wisdom in perplexing difficulties, trials, and distress.

Christ himself did not more excel other men in the purity and holiness of his character than in the wisdom with which he spake and acted. And, in becoming an example to his followers in these things, he is not merely an example. His words, "I will be with you," and "The Comforter which shall come in my name, he shall be in you to teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, and guide you into all truth," have not become obsolete in his church. If miraculous aid has ceased, the divine presence has not ceased to go with his children, and to work in them effectually for the accomplishment of the divine will.

None can need to act with more skill and shrewdness than Jesus did when beset by Satan, by the Pharisees, chief priests, and scribes, or by the enraged populace. He was never deceived by arts, never entangled in his speech; nor was he cast down by appearances; nor did he waver in his course or thoughts. Sustained by a good understanding and

by the Father's presence, no difficulties could overpower him. What he needed, his servants often need. A profound respect for his example may go a great way towards supplying them ; but when that example is made luminous by the divine presence, acting, if not in the manner of miraculous inspiration, yet with such efficiency and certainty as to bring to their aid and guidance the divine wisdom and power, then are they secure, and led by the Spirit of God : they are supported by Him who was tempted in all points as we are, and who feels ready sympathy with his own.

His instructions to his first disciples exhibit this presence in bolder features, perhaps, than we are authorized to expect. He says, "When brought before governors and kings for my sake, and they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak ; for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." (Matt. x. 18, 19.) It is, however, still true, that those who trust in God are wonderfully sustained and aided in such trying circumstances. Luther, before the Diet at Worms, where he had expected to encounter so many devils, was not alone : Jesus was with him, and gave him that remarkable power and triumph. The holy martyrs and many tried saints have found him a God at hand, subsisting as something more than an idea, or mere object of faith and love : they have found him present in experienced reality as an effective host, far surpassing in wisdom and number the forces of hell. Every devoted, self-sacrificing Christian is authorized to hope for the same ; it is included in those words of comfort to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee : " he may ask for it boldly when he asks for "grace to help in every time of need." And when he has exercised his own powers, exhausted his own resources, and sees all help of man fail, he can still look to Jesus for deliverance : "having done all, he can stand," and "see the salvation of God."

Jesus' presence with the tried saint is better than the

fabled speech of a Mercury, or than the transient support and applause of the whole world of sinners. Dr. King's experience at Athens gives a recent sublime illustration of this truth. When he found himself beset with every species of opposition, and annoyed by every form of insult, from private and from governmental sources, he found grace and wisdom to maintain his integrity and to wait with patience, till at last, to the wonder and admiration of the church, the government of his far-off country — *to which he appealed, no one denouncing him for it* — was moved by the Lord to interpose, by her diplomacy and her arm of power, to procure redress. And by that act the gospel of truth and justice triumphed outwardly, through his agency, on the grandest scale; and the presence of Jesus was manifest in the wisdom and stability of his servant, as well as in bringing such aid, and in securing ultimate success.

In every aspect, this event is of the Lord, — *Οεῶ μόνω δόξα.*

5. Christ's presence is needed to give good cheer, comfort, and hope, in days of darkness, discouragement, and fear.

It cannot be denied, that, in the long struggle with sin, unbelief, and hardness of heart, the boldest disciple will grow weary, and the strongest heart will faint, unless sustained by other than their own resources; for, besides all the inert obstacles which the gospel meets, the enemy is incessantly striving by positive efforts to crush its advocates. He is clamorous against the truth; against the means employed to promote it; against those who heartily embrace it, or who are beginning to listen thoughtfully to its claims. He is present with every form of specious error, delusion, and fanaticism; he practises every art, and profusely spreads his lies, to shake the confidence and draw off the attention of the weak and fickle, or at least to drive them to despondency and inaction if he cannot lift them from their course. To use the figure of Bunyan, he dashes on water wherever he can see a true Christian zeal, that, if possible, he may damp the ardor and hope with which they labor. It is not strange

that he should to some extent prevail, and, by overthrowing some of the weaker, discourage the stronger.

Laboring in such circumstances, unless the disciple could look up to a higher power, "raise himself above himself," and rest the success of his cause and his own salvation upon other than human resources, he would fail. If Jesus were not present to cheer and support him, he would be like Samson in prison, — doomed to grind and make sport for his enemies, without sight, or any reward for his toils; or even as a soul lost in deep, dark night, when no stars appear.

It is human to faint and be weary. The prophets fled to caves, thinking that they were alone in worshipping the true God; Jonah fled to the sea; Christ's own disciples scattered before the powers of darkness. All who enter the list for truth and God will come to scenes or times of despondency and fear, when only the steady voice of Jesus, rising above the tumults of sin and devils, saying, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid," can restore their souls, and carry them forward. His presence feeds the flame of Christian zeal and love with the oil of ever-flowing grace. Sustained by that, though to all human appearance and reason their way seems entirely hedged up, yet from Faith's heights they will see a way in the trackless desert, and a path in the depths of the sea.

6. Christ's presence is needed to carry his faithful disciples through the fires of persecution which are wont to be kindled against them.

The opposition which the truth meets in this world does not spend itself, usually, in mere words or scornful looks. The doctrines of the gospel, when clearly and forcibly presented, assail the long-cherished customs, clannish combinations, and most darling idols and pursuits, of sinful men. They strike at the root of that upon which their pride and power and worldly hopes are based. Finding them living after the flesh, and requiring them to live after the spirit, the gospel introduces a struggle, which, in their view, is for

dear life itself. As when Paul preached to the Athenians, it demands the casting away of all their idols, false gods, and empty forms of religion, for the one new God and religion which it offers, — the crucifying of the old man with his lusts, for the new man in Christ Jesus. In a struggle where so much is at stake, all the powers of darkness engage ; hell itself is moved from beneath ; all the fury of evil passions and of demons is kindled against the messengers of such truths.

Missionaries, ministers, all truly faithful Christians, share, in their measure, in the persecution. It is an every-day occurrence for them to be beset in every way. Evil men encompass them about ; yea, they encompass them about like bees (sometimes in sheep's clothing), and assail their character, reputation, influence, their personal rights and peace, and, in some places, life itself. If the Lord were not on their side, men would swallow them up quick when they thus rise up against them ; but in the name of the Lord will they destroy them.

How many, like dying Stephen, are hunted and pursued to the last extremity, and can see no escape except as they look up, and see heaven opened, and Jesus revealed to their hearts ! The *forms* of persecution vary ; the *spirit* of it will never die, so long as Antichrist lives.

Nor is the worst persecution experienced among savage heathen : it is often met with where the gospel is, or might be, best known. When a few lone missionaries are surrounded with savage cannibals or bigoted idolaters, and are beaten, plundered, and threatened with death, perhaps finally devoured, there is something for the Christian world to talk about and show sympathy for. And, when Jesus appears to sustain and deliver his afflicted ones, we adore the faithfulness and grace which are manifested. But there is keener anguish, there is deadlier venom, in the persecution, when it is experienced among one's own countrymen, — from false brethren, or plausible pretenders to piety, — although it may elicit no sympathy. The advocates of a corrupt Chris-

tianity ; Christian communities, so called ; even churches, degenerate and worldly with their false teachers, — are not unknown to the arts and fame of persecution ; and they do sometimes afflict and torment the heralds of truth, and others of Christ's children, till only the heart of the sufferer can know its own bitterness, and none but Jesus' ear, to whom their daily cries ascend, can hear their complaints, and understand. *Their* lives are in peril by the slow torture of hidden anguish and grief at the treachery, ingratitude, and hate of those from whom they hoped, and had a right to hope, better things ; yea, many are slain in this way for the word and for the testimony of Jesus, just as truly as those who have perished at the stake, though by a slower process. Many ministers and earnest Christians, who are not prepared to make shipwreck of faith on the demands of worldly policy or local tyrants, will understand this from a bare allusion, more fully than words can describe it.* But, though persecuted, they are not forsaken ; cast down, they are not destroyed : though their flesh wastes and dies, their hearts live ; for Jesus is with them, and they can fall upon his bosom, and be comforted. They cannot prove false to him, nor be shaken in their fidelity and attachment ; for they hear a voice, coming as from the skies, which opens a line of light into the future, " Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth." By such cheer they are sustained against that grand dernier charge of the enemy ; and

* It is an ominous and significant fact, that the intolerance of some who stand as the servants of Jesus seems to have carried them so far in a way of misguided zeal and fanaticism, that they appear to combine in afflicting and crushing out those of their brethren who cannot see, and conscientiously act, as they do ; and many suffer from clandestine movements, scarcely less than those who are exposed to the caste of Hindooism. If such a spirit is fostered, or allowed to prevail, the time is not distant when some apostle of Christianity will be needed to relay the foundations of gospel piety and order in our churches.

next they are seen waving palms of victory. We hear their song, —

“The Lord is our Shepherd, our Guardian, and Guide;
 Whatever we want, he will kindly provide;
 To sheep of his pasture his mercies abound;
 His care and protection his flock will surround.

When through the deep waters he calls thee to go,
 The rivers of sorrow shall ne'er overflow;
 His presence shall guide thee, his mercy shall bless,
 And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

When through fiery trials thy pathway is laid,
 His grace all-sufficient will lend thee its aid;
 The flame shall not hurt thee; he does but design
 Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.”

We have thus far contemplated Christ as intimately with his missionaries, ministers, and most devoted, individual disciples. But we shall see, —

7. Christ's presence is no less needed in the *churches* to raise them to a proper standard of piety, praying, giving, and laboring to spread the gospel, and give it success in the world.

The apostle exhorts, “Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” And he says, “If any one have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” The churches need the spirit of Christ, and must have it, to be fired with the same love, zeal, benevolence, and holy fortitude, which filled and inspired him. The realization of Christ's presence alone can produce this: that tends to enlarge the heart, and expand the benevolent feelings and views, so as to take in the great objects and aims which Christ himself embraced in his divine love, and in his mission of mercy to this world. “Without me ye can do nothing.” It is certain, that, without Christ, the churches would attempt nothing in a right spirit and with adequate zeal; they would have no just appreciation of the importance of the work unto which they are called. Neither the value of souls nor of

the gospel would be felt. Like branches whose communication with the parent stock is severed, they would be fruitless and uncomely. As water in the vegetable world, and blood in the animal, so Christ's spiritual presence in the religious is a *sine qua non* to vigorous and productive life. If this presence is not felt pervading the churches as a vitalizing fluid, they will be dead even in themselves, — "no life in them," whatever "name to live" they have. Christ must flow into the churches, so as to constrain them by his love and control them by his will: as a part of his own body, they must move and act according to his benevolent purposes, so that what the churches do shall be the carrying out of his plans, ever ready and prompt to obey his volitions; thus realizing truly the gospel idea, "The life we now live in the flesh, we live by the faith of the Son of God." The life of Christ is thus manifest in us.

Were the churches warmed by the life of Christ, and moved by his will, up to this degree, there would be no difficulty in maintaining the strength of unity and peace, or in raising funds to send the gospel, and men to carry it, through the world; and, moreover, there would go with it so much power of prayer and faith, that it would find its way to the understanding and hearts of men. Christianity would be in the ascendant; the church would have power with God and with men, and would prevail.

Christ's life is obstructed in the churches before it is obstructed in the world. Let them copy the example of the primitive church (Acts iv. 23-33) when Peter and John reported unto them from the chief priests and elders, and they appealed to God, and with one heart prayed, "till the place was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost;" then not only would the word be proclaimed boldly, but the Gentiles, people, and kings would oppose it in vain, and their threatenings would be but empty puffs; savage hearts would melt, and become temples of Christ and his truth.

The prayer of faith is now lacking, as well as the gift of faith. It is feared this defect is general. Dr. Duff, in his farewell address at Edinburgh, says, "It has been an intense and growing conviction in the minds of some of us, that there is not at this moment one single church in Christendom, as a whole, in any way adequately alive to the reality, the true nature, and transcendent grandeur, of God's greatest work on earth, — that of the evangelization of the world."

Besides, there is not unity of purpose and of power. Christ does not reign in the nominal churches; consequently his authority, spirit, and power are not represented. Individuals cannot represent the power of Christ's kingdom fully. Individuals are weak; but the church is strong, — i.e., if Christ is in her, and reigns. The church should represent the power and authority of Christ in the earth. She would do it to her honor and the world's salvation if Christ reigned in all her members. But if he is present only in name; if they merely pay a compliment to him as a worthy specimen of humanity, an example of goodness and philanthropy, and adopt his *name*, as they would the name of Washington, to distinguish and grace their party, while they omit to take *him* as their life and power and sole reliance in saving the world, — they represent only the weakness of men, not the power of God; themselves, not Jesus Christ. If churches, ministers, missionaries, do not enthrone Christ in their hearts and upon all their altars; if they do not carry him and his pure gospel as their sole reliance in all their efforts to convert men and save the world; if they are given to human theories, philosophies, dogmas, and commandments; and if their devotion or servility to these drives them to variance, strife, and bickerings among themselves, — they will become even a reproach to religion, an obstacle to its spread and triumph; and will represent, instead of the life and authority of Christ, their own folly and death.

Christ is all and in all in the religion of the gospel; and,

except as we make him so, our religion is defective, and our cause is weak. His presence is as the Spirit of God upon Samson: while we have it, no numbers can give superiority to the foe. If human aid fail, we have but to ask, and the government of Heaven comes with legions of angels to our aid; yea, it is ever at our side: it is represented in force wherever Christ is; and faith, properly stimulated by the Spirit, can see an armed host, the mountains filled with horsemen and chariots of fire as they were about Elisha. In such a position, the church is invincible; her heart is established on a rock; the power of men and devils, the gates of hell, cannot shake it; there is peace of mind, confidence, assurance, power all unearthly; and, moreover, there is such a pressure of motives upon her as a cloud of witnesses, all the heavenly hosts of spectators, can bring to bear. "We are a spectacle unto the world, angels, and men." Let the church feel what a part she is called to act, in whose presence she is acting, and what issues depend on her fit performance, then she would speedily fill the world with the fame of Jesus, and be permitted to raise her final song of triumph. But, if Christ be not in her, these motives are dormant, and her heart is torpid.

Let the heart of Christ beat in the church, let her be straitened to accomplish her work as the Master was for his, and what a difference we should see! Christ is not with those who will not labor to evangelize the world,—their torpor proves it; and the churches, now drooping, will languish yet more through lack of his presence, if they cherish not to a much higher degree the practical missionary spirit. And, if the churches at home languish, what will become of those abroad? Their life is intimately connected with these, as the little springs are with the larger, all living by a mutual connection with the great fountain. There is a chain of communication running from the home to the mission churches, as from a working battery to the receiving, in telegraphic lines. If the electric power is not sent from

these, the machinery there will be inoperative ; and how can the missionaries read off to the heathen the words of divine life ?

Christ's presence alone can check a growing worldliness, and counteract the danger from increasing wealth. When men prosper in business, and begin to regard riches as their own, and not Christ's, and withhold from him the tribute which is his due, their hearts will rust, their religion will canker and die ; for —

“ Gold and grace did never yet agree :
Religion always sides with poverty,” —

at least in spirit. When any hoard up riches for themselves, and are not rich towards God, they are in peril. There is no expedient by which they can save themselves, till they return to Christ, and hold their riches subject to his order, and do business as his stewards, making money for use in his cause.

All pride and vanity, all love of distinction and honor, all worldly power and authority, must be brought forth, and sacrificed at his altars. This will include desire for supremacy in the churches as well as in the world. Let Christ fill every desire, thought, and aim, so as to be head over all. He must be head over every believer, over all the churches, over the mission churches, so as to control them by his word and spirit. His presence must destroy the wish to lord it one over another, or to exercise any undue interference anywhere or for any cause. “ Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty ;” and Christian liberty is liberty indeed. Christ's freemen are free indeed, having no yoke in religion but Christ's.

Could Christ's spirit pervade the churches, the *form* of godliness would be less idolized, the *power* of it would be more appreciated. Local laws and prejudices would lose their force and power for mischief ; consequently the proper work of Christ's servants would be less impeded.

Alas! how much is the true power of individuals and of the church now crippled by the petty strifes of men, growing out of sectarian bigotry and fanaticism, or of human arrogance and ambition! When any attempt to make all others bow to their will, and dictate to brethren and the churches how they shall serve the Lord, they usurp the functions which pertain to the Master's office only. Respect for and obedience to the laws of Christ's kingdom, as he has ordained, alone can maintain the harmony of his people; and this is the common, divine basis, on which alone all true disciples can unite. To set up other laws than these, will make disturbance, so long as any hold to these as God requires.

Let us rejoice to have the gospel preached by whatever means, even as Paul did; and let the church consider herself a debtor to the world to this amount, — that she must give the gospel to all men; see that it is faithfully and fully preached to Jew and Gentile, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, master and slave, North and South, East and West, — to every creature, made subject to the government of God, having an immortal soul dependent for salvation on that knowledge and grace which the gospel alone can present. No considerations or questions should hinder this work. Would she go work in Christ's spirit, absorbed in this feeling and aim, her garments would no longer trail in the dust, the millennium would not be so slow in coming.

Upon this divine, catholic basis, and supported by the principles which this subject presents, Christian brethren and friends, let us labor, and not faint in any Christian duty. "Lo, I am with you alway." What sweet words! How should faith exult in them, and lead our way in perpetual triumph! If we truly take them to our hearts, and feel their power, then may we, to any extent required, both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, the special Preserver of those that believe. As we go under

the banner of the cross, we know that Christ, the Lord of armies, shall both go before us and be our rearward. And, "if he be for us, who can be against us?" And if we are faithful to the end, when this brief life shall draw to a close, and we come to lie down in the physical agonies of death, the Saviour will then be at our side, and will bid us fear not, but rest our hearts in unshaken confidence upon his bosom; while all sorrow and regret will flee away before the sweet reflection that we "have toiled for other worlds than this."

