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## ENTHUSIASM—A CONVERSATION.

Henry. You promised me something on enthusiasm beside the conversations we have already had on different subjects. We have not agreed on every point; still there is something laudable, or commendable in itself to use lawful means to get useful knowledge, beside the advantage we may derive from the possession of it. I hope, therefore, you will indulge me with a few thoughts on this one word, "Enthusiasm." In the first place I wish to know what it means; for I often hear people talk about visionary enthusiasts, and that such and such men are mere enthusiasts; and in the next place whether it be so dangerous as some people think; and then how we can detect it in others, or keep clear of it ourselves.

Thomas. I will try to make something of it. I have examined Mr. Locke, and all the biographers I can have access to, and they nearly all attach the same idea to the word. I know, too, something of the etymology of the word; but as I am not a Greek scholar I shall say nothing about that, supposing, where so many men coincide in giving the definition of a word, some of them, if not all, must come pretty near the truth. "Whatever groundless opinion comes to settle itself strongly upon the faculties, is an illumination from the Spirit of God, and presently of divine authority; and whatever odd action they find in themselves a strong inclination to do, that impulse is concluded to be a call or direction from Heaven, and must be obeyed; it is a commission from above, and they cannot err in executing it." So says Mr. Locke. If I understand what he says, it is this. Men of lively and vivid imaginations, but not of sound judgment, are apt to take their own impressions or fancies for the illuminations of the Spirit of God. We say nothing of their motives—they may be good—we speak of motives hereafter. Mr. Walker's definition is as follows:—"A vain belief of private revelation, a vain confidence of divine favour, heat of imagination; elevation of fancy, exaltation of ideas." Mr. Johnson says, "Heat of imagination." This last is the shortest, and, perhaps, the best of all. All rational beings desire knowledge; but knowledge or truth must be sought after; means must be used to obtain it. This applies with as much force to spiritual and divine things as to temporal. God has given us certain faculties to be employed for this purpose; and we might just as well suppose that He would make men good scholars, or that He would infuse into their minds a complete knowledge of the different branches of science, as that men could or would be made wise unto salvation, or that all the truth necessary for that purpose could at once be apprehended by them without the exercise of their reason; or that it required no thought, or reflection, or meditation to rightly understand it.

H. But is the word always used absolutely in a bad sense? And are we justified in branding a man with enthusiasm who happens to be of a warm temperament, and who, convinced of the goodness of a cause, engages in it with all his heart, say, for instance, in the cause of religion? Should we indulge our spleen by calling a man a visionary enthusiast who labors earnestly and faithfully in the cause of God?

T. The word need not always be used in a bad sense. We may say a man is enthusiastic, when he is very sanguine in his designs and expectations. Indeed to be successful and useful in the cause of religion a degree of enthusiasm, in a certain sense, may be necessary. We should also be careful how we brand a man with reproachful epithets. This may be a very easy method of quieting our consciences when the zeal and labour of some of our brethren is a tacit reproach to us for our indolence or indifference. We ought not to forget the meaning we attached to the word when we commenced. It was, that many men of warm temperament, but not of sound judgment, were apt, when they felt a strong impression upon their minds, to conclude that this impression was made upon them by the immediate power of God; and this was a sufficient warrant for them to utter any of their extravagant fancies, or perform any extravagant action. But when a man acts consistently with right reason, and when his actions are not only not injurious to himself or others, but absolutely benevolent in their design and tendency, however zealous or enthusiastic he may be, we cannot be justified in using means to prevent his usefulness. The Lord can make impressions upon the minds of men, and no doubt does so often; but whatever he may communicate to man in an extraordinary way, he is a man still; and how much sooner he may enjoy as the result of immediate communication from Heaven, still it is never designed to supersede his own endeavours. He made the Prophets of the Old Dispensation; but he did not make the men. The inspiration of the Spirit did not destroy their faculties as men. Moses was a man learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and I have often thought that he was very incredulous; for when he saw the burning bush, and heard the voice of God speaking to him out of the bush, he could not be satisfied without further evidence. It was not until his hand was smitten with, and cured of the leprosy, and his rod turned into a serpent, that he could be satisfied his was a call from God. Gideon also had to prove God in different ways before he could believe God had called him to the particular work he performed. There is another fact or two when speaking of the Prophets of the Old Testament that we should bear in mind. One is that some of them were learned men; and we have reason to believe they were men of sound mind, possessed of strength of judgment; and I am inclined to think that many of them were in easy, if not affluent circumstances; for Elijah was found ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen when Elijah threw his mantle over him. And above all, most of them were men of fervent piety—least inclined to deceive. In their declarations they had a specific object in view. They were assured in the strongest manner, beyond the possibility of mistake, that their message was from God. They had often to contend with false prophets who were really enthusiastic. You, doubtless, recollect the challenge of Elijah to the priests of Baal, and the result. How different is the conduct of men who are mere enthusiasts! Their crude fancies, which have no existence but in their own heated imagination, are said by them to be revelations from God, because they firmly believe them to be so; and they believe them because they are revelations.

H. You promised to say something of the evils of enthusiasm, or whether it be so dangerous to the interests of men as has been imagined. It appears to me, that some men who suppose it to be their province to defend the church, are apt to attack everything that does not coincide with their peculiar views, who it would seem needed a revelation to convince others beside themselves that their views were right. Or they may attack men in an angry manner who are quite as consistent and as reasonable, and much more zealous than themselves, because either their "craft" may be "in danger," or because the faithful labours of others may be a reproach to their indolence.

T. That men of enthusiastic minds are dangerous, there can be no doubt; but there should, unquestionably, be made a good deal of abatement from the random statements of hasty and inconsiderate men. And even candid and judicious men, in the heat of debate, are apt to say things that ought not to be said, and things that they themselves are often sorry for afterwards. Still we should be extremely careful in admitting anything from any man, however talented or respectable, that would have the remotest tendency to unsettle our faith in the holy scriptures. "All scripture," says the Apostle Paul, "was given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good work." 2 Tim. iii. 15, 17. Now, to unsettle the minds of men in regard to the truth of scripture, must be dangerous in the extreme. In the first place they are profitable for doctrine; they teach us what no other book can. The doctrines they contain are every way worthy of their Author. How much grimmer—how much sublimer! Suppose we glance at a few of these doctrines. The being of a God—"I AM" being one of His significant titles; which most plainly speaks His independence and self-existence. If all the beings of the universe were blotted out of existence, and the whole universe with them, He would still be "I AM." How dare any mortal set up any claim to Divine inspiration without the strongest assurance that God has spoken to him. I said a little ago that I thought Moses too incredulous; but when I think more about this I do not wonder he trembled, and was afraid he might be mistaken. Look at some of the attributes of this Great Being—Omnipotence being one of them. This doctrine has been a source of consolation to good men in all ages of the world. They have looked to God in times of the greatest trouble, when their enemies, numerous and powerful, have threatened to destroy them. But God has scattered them with his strong arm. His language to the enemies of his people has been, and still is, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." While this has been a source of consolation to good men, it has been a terror to ungodly men. When they think, as they are sometimes constrained to think, that He can, not only frustrate their wickedness, but also make them to tremble! And should they not tremble? Omniscience is also another attribute of this Great Being. His wisdom is infinite. It extends to everything that can be known. The faithful, though humble and obscure, christian may be sure that God knows all his temptations, and sorrows, and afflictions. God knows his weakness, but He knows also the desires of his heart. A visionary enthusiast ought also to know that God can enter into all his designs; and however strongly he may labour to escape the judgment of men, he ought to know that God sees him. How dare he say then that "this saith the Lord," when he may know assuredly that he utters a base falsehood whenever he uses the expression! There are other attributes of the Supreme Being we might profitably notice would time permit. But let us pass on. The doctrine of the depravity of the human heart deserves to be noticed; and also the necessity of conversion. Did you ever read or hear of a man of an enthusiastic mind, who did not, in giving utterance to the impulses of his disturbed imagination, in one way or other, cast a shade over the important doctrines we have mentioned, if he did not deny them altogether? That I am not altogether astray in my conjectures of the evils of enthusiasm, events of recent occurrence, both in England and in this country, fully prove. I do not say that all enthusiastic men mean to do wrong, or that they set out with absolutely bad motives in the commencement.

The contrary may be the fact in many cases. But that the consequences are always dangerous, no one will deny. There is an inherent propensity in the human mind to be thought wise. The most ignorant man you can find will feel a degree of pride, or something that looks like pride, that he knows something, or that he supposes he possesses more knowledge than some others. An ignorant pretender who wishes to palm himself upon the world as someone, who is either incapable of acquiring knowledge by ordinary means, or too lazy to perform the requisite labour, will often, for the purpose of raising himself above his fellow-creatures, or merely to make a noise in the world with a view to attract public notice, pretend to Divine inspiration. Then, if we were to suppose it barely possible that only a single individual was in danger of being led astray by such extravagant folly, the consequences might be most fatal. That such has been the case before now, every one having the slightest acquaintance with history must admit.

You doubtless recollect how much noise the enthusiasm of the unfortunate Mr. Irving made in England not many years since. He, no doubt, deceived himself as well as others; and the conduct of some who attached themselves to him was as extravagant and ridiculous as it was wicked. The minds of many were unsettled, which diverted them from the great object that should constantly be kept in view by every rational and intelligent creature. God has guarded his word by the strongest sanctions. "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." Rev. xix. 18, 19. Now, whether a man attempt to add to, or take from the word of God, the crime is the same; and by a parity of reasoning, if any man by his extravagant labour to unsettle the minds of men as to the truth of scripture, the consequence is the same—of course the man is equally guilty.

Our own country, in different places, has been disturbed in the same way. In Kingston and Toronto ministers of different denominations have been troubled with these pests of society. Good-meaning people have been led astray, by an appearance of superior sanctity and wisdom, by some who have proved themselves to be "wolves in sheep's clothing." This may seem to be harsh language, but is it not true? The Saviour says, "By their fruits ye shall know them." When the efforts of a man tend to scatter and divide the flock of Christ, I think we are justified in speaking the truth plainly. According to the prophetic knowledge of some of these men, our Saviour was to have commenced his personal reign on earth some years ago; but I think he has not yet come. If he has, I know not in what part of the earth he could take up his abode to be out of the reach of the noise and strife of men. Surely he would dwell in the midst of confusion at his second coming.

But of all the enthusiastic schemes that ever appeared in the world, I think that of Mormonism the worst, and I should hope the last; for in this affair it appears that the great enemy of man has done his utmost. It is impossible to form even a probable estimate of its evils. Faithful men in their temporal circumstances, if not in their spiritual, Joe Smith and his coadjutors must have some heavy arrears to settle if the Bible be the word of God. And I am at a loss to conjecture what sort of influence operates upon the minds of men when they profess to believe that grossest of absurdities, Mormonism. They pretend "to speak with tongues." They may utter a sort of gibberish that themselves, and those who hear them, must be unintelligible jargon; and this is taken for the miraculous gift of tongues. Was there ever an imposture to equal this! I will tell you something that has a direct bearing on this subject. A converted Indian, who had for some years faithfully served the Lord, heard a good deal about some people that could speak other languages which they had never learned. Having an opportunity one Sabbath day, he thought he would go and hear for himself. Accordingly he went. The minister preached, as he called it; after which he gave permission to any person in the congregation to speak if they felt disposed. As the story goes, a number were moved in an extraordinary way to utter something, I shall not pretend to say what. After some time had elapsed, a man rose up who pretended to speak in an unknown language; and no doubt he did to most of the congregation. But a part of his unknown tongue happened to be some words of the Chippeway language, which the Indian well understood. But what caps the climax is, that some of those Chippeway words were obscene words, which the Indians consider it indecorous to use! I enquired how the white man had learned these words, and was told he had been a good deal among the Indians—perhaps for honest purposes—about the Bay of Quinte. When the Indian heard the man speak some detached words of his own language, he concluded he had heard enough, and quietly walked out of the chapel. There is no doubt in my mind but the above is a fact. I know the Indian well, and could depend upon what he would say. I think we need say no more about the evils of enthusiasm.

H. But you must admit that the Apostles used to speak with tongues; and if God was able to bestow the gift on men in former ages, he is still able of course. And if he did it then, why may he not do it now?

T. He can do it now. He may do it now if he see fit; but is there the same necessity for it now that there was then? He does not generally use extraordinary means to accomplish his purposes. In what way, with some latitude, he called extreme cases. He has employed miraculous means to spread the gospel, and to protect his people when in danger. On the day of Pentecost, the Spirit was poured out in a miraculous manner, I believe, for two reasons: one was to convince the multitude at Jerusalem that the Apostles were divinely-inspired men; and the other was to enable them to preach the gospel to the individuals of the different nations then assembled at Jerusalem. Now, consider how widely, by this means, the gospel could be spread by a single sermon, and then you will see reasons for it that do not now exist. We will take the Scripture account of the matter. See Acts, ii. 5-11. "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." If the Apostles had been obliged to learn all these languages before these different nations had the gospel, it would have taken many years, and during their natural life they could have accomplished but little. At the present time the christian church could furnish men who already understand the different languages of all these nations. But for a man in this country who scarcely understands his mother tongue, in a congregation much wiser than himself, to pretend to speak with tongues, while he only mutters over an unintelligible jargon to cover his ignorance, is not only absurd in the extreme, but a piece of daring impudence. Though the Apostle Paul enjoyed miraculous gifts, and could "speak tongues more," perhaps, "than all" others, still he did not look upon this gift as the most valuable. The learning possessed by the christian church at the present day is a pretty plain indication that God designs that they shall do something more than merely act on the defensive. He never bestows any amount of talent on the church or on individuals, but He designs it to be used for his glory, and for the advancement of his cause. And we should rejoice that we do possess so many advantages to spread the gospel in different and distant regions. I look still further than this—I believe God has stirred up the church to the cultivation of languages to furnish them with weapons to conquer the world. A grand design! And we may hope that, as sound and scriptural principles gain ground, the power of ignorant and enthusiastic men to do wrong will be circumscribed. I am sure of this. An impostor has very little hope of success among a people who steadily adhere to the Bible; and any man who sets up a claim to divine inspiration, when his dogmas contradict the word of God, must be either a rogue or a fool, and perhaps a little both.

H. You promised to tell me something to enable me to detect enthusiasm in others, or keep clear of it myself.

T. After all that has been said, I need say little more. "To the law and the testimony." If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. If a man come to us pretending to be wise above what is written, we have sufficient ground to suspect either his honesty or his wisdom. No man of pure motives and sane mind would make such pretensions. If any man, in pretending to teach us religion, advances any thing not found in the Bible, or fairly deducible therefrom, we are not only justified in rejecting his teaching, but it is absolutely our duty to do so. By neglecting to do it, we must share in his guilt. I shall say nothing of the opposition of infidels and other wicked men to the scriptures and to the efforts of the christian church to disseminate the gospel. These things must be expected so long as men are influenced by the carnal mind. But the scriptures are the foundation of the christian's hope. They shine as a light in a dark place—to them we must take heed.

The same knowledge that will enable us to detect enthusiasm in others, will enable us to keep clear of it ourselves. There are many things in the Bible that we cannot understand. These are matters of faith purely. But that part that comes within the reach of our understanding, is to be judged of precisely in the same way that we would judge of any thing else. As a proof that I am correct, idiots and insane persons are not considered as being accountable for their actions, because they cannot be called moral agents; they are not capable of distinguishing between right and wrong. Let us study the Bible faithfully, with a sincere desire to know the truth, and the Lord will save us from error.

From the N. Y. Commercial Advertiser.

## A REMARKABLE MISSIONARY EVENT.

We are indebted to the Rev. Dr. Armstrong, agent of the American Board of Foreign Missions, for the subjoined extracts from a letter recently received by his lady from the wife of one of the American Missionaries in the Sandwich Islands. It is a letter full of interest; and the account of the wreck of a

Sandwich Island vessel, and the prayer-meeting of a portion of the crew, while drowning, are without a parallel in the history of missions or of man: Hana, Maui, Sandwich Islands, July 21, 1840.

You are doubtless aware that we are alone at this distant station. We are lonely, but the Lord sustains us, and makes the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice. We find ourselves fully employed with the good people, and if we get a leisure moment we turn our attention to our library. We have been and are still favoured with many tokens that our labour is not in vain. There is apparently a constant turning of the people to the Lord. We are visited weekly by hundreds—some from a distance of twenty or thirty miles on foot, over a most tiresome way.

We have just returned from our general meeting at Honolulu. Our passage was made in a canoe to Lahai, a distance of eighty miles; a perilous undertaking, for the sea was high, and fearfully threatening to our little bark: From this place we obtained a passage in the King's vessel to Honolulu—we had a pleasant meeting with our friends.

Shipwreck and loss of life.—About the time of our leaving home, a sorrowful providence occurred. The brethren at Honolulu, fearing that we should not venture upon a canoe, engaged a vessel, which was to go to Hawaii for Mr. Lyons, and to call on its return and take us. The vessel made its passage to Hawaii, and, when near its place of destination, was capsized, and lost. All on board, consisting of thirty souls, were drowned except four. These seemed to be miraculously preserved to tell the sad tale of the fate of their companions.

When the accident occurred, they were near the shore, but the wind and current were against them, and, thinking it vain to attempt to reach Hawaii, they congregated themselves upon the rolling billows, and there, together in their distress, offered up their supplications to Him who alone could preserve them from the threatening deep.

They attempted to swim to Kahoolawe, some thirty miles on the opposite side of the channel. One man and his wife took a covered bucket and tied it to their bodies, and, in this way, swam until the bucket came to pieces. The female swam for some time, but on turning, she saw her husband becoming too weak to support himself. She stopped and rubbed him until he could proceed. They went on until Kahoolawe was full in sight; he then became too feeble to proceed without assistance, and supported himself by holding to the long hair of his wife's head. In this way she towed him for some time; his hand soon let go the hold and she tried in vain to rouse him. She told him he must pray—he commenced, but only uttered a few words. She put his arms around her neck—held him with one hand, and made for the shore. When within about half a mile from the shore, she found he was dead, and she was compelled to let go her hold to support herself. They had then been in the water about thirty hours.—When she landed she was three days before she saw a human being, and was without food. At last some fishermen found her, and conveyed her to the village, where she is now in good health. The captain of the vessel was a foreigner, and could swim but little; his wife saved herself by the assistance of an oar.—The others disappeared from time to time until all perished but the four.

[The "Invitation to United Prayer" should be read attentively, prayerfully, and practically by all the lovers of Zion in Canada. What invitation can be more welcome, more necessary, more useful! It breathes the evangelical and ardent spirit of him who said "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem," and of another who commanded that we should love our neighbour as ourselves. The holy combination recommended is of apostolic character, and when it is one universally sustained by the visible church of Christ, God will arise to save the nations. Be it the solicitude of the churches of our land as with the voice of one man to say, "For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace; and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."—Ed.]

From the London Watchman.

## INVITATION TO UNITED PRAYER.

FOR THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, ON FRIDAY THE FIRST OF JAN. 1841, BEING THE FIRST DAY OF THE NEW-YEAR.

Dear Beloved in the Lord.—For the past four years I have had the delightful privilege of sending an invitation to those "who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," to unite in a general concert for prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the first day of the new year.—Each succeeding year, has, through the divine goodness, been responded to by increasing numbers; and their united prayers have been graciously answered by fresh tokens of the divine favour. Among other proofs of this I may mention, the merciful continuance of Peace in Christendom; our own domestic tranquillity; the prosperous state of our religious societies; the increasing number of faithful ministers and newly-erected churches; and the higher tone of piety of the members of the candidates for Holy Orders. For from whence do these blessings arise? Assuredly from the Lord, "restraining the ungodly passions of sinful men," and enabling the partakers of His grace to bring forth these "fruits of the Spirit." These delightful causes for praise and thanksgiving assure us that the Lord is the God "who hears and answers prayer." They also say to us, as Moses said to the children of Israel, "Go forward." Stop not with just entreaties to a throne of grace, but follow his steps who says, "For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." We are urged to this devotional ardour by the same causes which first led to this general concert. For still, alas! infidelity stalks abroad; still nominal Christianity prevails; still Papal superstition and Mohammedan imposture hold their sway; and still uncounted millions of heathens are bowing down to idols. "The whole world lieth in wickedness." These loud calls to go forward become more imperative from the very remarkable manner in which the approaching year opens upon us. To mention only a few of its striking aspects, for this paper requires brevity:—

First.—The state of the Jews.—They are, by the Providence of God, placed in a peculiarly interesting position. The persecutions they have endured at Damascus, and Rhodes, have excited a general sympathy in their favour. Various circumstances have brought them into the notice of merchants, literary characters, philosophers, and above all, of politicians. With such anxiety are they regarded by the different cabinets of Europe, that it is upon this issue, who shall possess the land which God gave to their forefathers, that the question of peace or war now depends; and their return to Palestine under the guarantee of the allied powers has been suggested as the most effectual mode of preserving peace among the nations.

Whilst they are thus providentially placed before Christendom, there is a very unusual stir among themselves. Many of them are confidently expecting the immediate coming of their Messiah, and are anxious to proceed to Jerusalem, to be there at His appearing. A remarkable spirit of inquiry prevails among them; in some a desire to reform their religion, in others to examine the New Testament, and in a still greater number to lay aside the traditions of the Talmud, and take the Books of Moses as their guide.

"The dry bones" are beginning to shake, and appearances bode the words of the Psalmist to our minds. "Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion, for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come, for thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof."

Such is the present state of the Jews. Surely it is a loud call for us, for prayer to the God of Abraham, to pour out upon them the Spirit of grace and supplication, and to prepare the Gentiles for the great events which the inspired prophecies declare are then to take place.

Another important circumstance which the opening year presents is, the condition of the Eastern Churches.

These churches, as it is well known, have been for a long season in a low and depressed state. They have for the most part "a name that they live, but they are dead;" bowed down both by their own superstitions and the hard bondage of their Mohammedan masters. For centuries their almost lifeless state was comparatively overlooked. But from the reports of several Christian travellers who have lately been among them, strong feelings of sympathy and earnest wishes for their revival have been produced. There are grounds for believing that some active measures will, ere long, be adopted for at least attempting their spiritual restoration. Who that has any zeal for the glory of God, or reflects on the former state of these eastern churches, but cordially desires that these measures may be successful? Who would not pray,—Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known, in wrath remember mercy?

A third particularly attractive object brought into view, as the new-year dawns upon us, is the great enterprise which has lately been undertaken for the extinction of the slave-trade, and for the general Civilization of Africa, through the medium of the gospel of Christ, assisted by commerce and agriculture.

In other parts of the dominions of the Most High, there may have been plans formed of a still more benevolent nature; but among those which have been put into the hands of any of the inhabitants of this lower world it is difficult to conceive one more in unison with the mind of our blessed Saviour. He, at the very time he was seeking "the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel," said, "other Sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and there shall be one fold under one Shepherd." Benevolent, however, as such an enterprise is, it is the Lord alone who can make it successful. The ships and vessels which are to carry the various persons who have offered themselves for this service are about to sail from England. Upon them, humanly speaking, the issue of this glorious undertaking depends. Who would not pray for them? Pray, not only that the great

and gracious God may preserve them from the perils of the sea, from wasting sickness, and pestilential fever; "from the terror of the night, and from the arrow that flieth by day;" but that He may give them "the spirit of love and of power, and of a sound mind;" direct all their counsels; grant them favour in the sight of the natives, and dispose their hearts to welcome their arrival, and receive with joy the glad tidings of the gospel.

These are some of the striking circumstances which are presented to us at the dawn of the new-year, and which urge sincere Christians with increasing alacrity to commence it by a General Concert for Prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. I would then affectionately invite them thus to unite on Friday, the First of January, 1841.

The following suggestions are respectfully offered, to assist them in this devotional concert:—

1st. Let Christians follow the example of our blessed Lord, (Mark i. 25,) who rose up a great while before day for secret prayer. Let them thus secure the blessing of Him, who says, "pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

2nd. Let them call upon the Lord in their families, for His Spirit to be poured upon themselves and their households, their neighbours, their country, the ministers of the Lord, the churches of Christ, the remnant of scattered Judah and outcast Israel, and upon the Gentile world.

3d. Let the ministers of the Lord afterwards privately meet with their brethren of their own communion, in earnest prayer for themselves, their flocks, the whole body of Christ, and the world at large; and then specially consult together upon the most effectual means for hastening the coming of the Lord's kingdom, and particularly for the continuance of such a general concert for prayer, that the year may proceed according to this devout commencement.

4th. Where circumstances will admit of a morning service, let the Congregation be assembled, and, in addition to the appointed prayers and a suitable sermon, let all who are devoutly disposed partake together of the supper of the Lord; or,

5th. As may be more convenient, let the whole congregation meet in the evening for public worship, and let an appropriate discourse be preached.

May the Lord accompany these means of grace, or such others as may be adopted, with his abundant blessing. Oh! may it indeed be a season of special refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

Let this be the prayer of all who read this paper; and, as the new-year is now approaching, it would be a great kindness if those who approve the object, and have influence over the press, would republish and circulate this invitation, which any one, into whose hands it may fall, has permission to do. Peace be with all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. Thus prays their affectionate brother and servant in the Lord.

St. Bride's, Liverpool.

JAMES HALLDANE STEWART.

## AN ORDINATION DISCOURSE BY AN IRISH ARCHBISHOP.

[The following brief outline of a Discourse preached by the Archbishop of Dublin, at the consecration of Dr. DICKINSON to the bishopric of Meath, in Ireland, is taken from "The Londonderry Sentinel" of last January, and is deserving a perusal from all persons in Canada who put forth High Church claims—claims which would make the fabulous "Uninterrupted Succession" everything. We never did believe it, and we do not expect ever shall; a succession which involves the exclusion and anathematization of all churches which are not bound together by it. We are not prepared to pledge ourselves to everything which the Archbishop says; but he says enough to make us wish the catholicity of his views and feelings had a predominance among the members of his church in this country. It should never be forgotten, that the foundation of a genuine "Succession" is orthodoxy and holiness, and not a kind of hereditary descent. Man proposes, but God disposes.—Ed.]

"He selected for his text, Acts xiv. 23.—And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." He remarked that the Scriptures afforded us but scanty information respecting the constitution of the christian church. The sacred writers do not enter into minute details, but merely give us those general principles upon which, as a visible society, it was to be conducted. The apostles, and first preachers of the gospel, united those who were converted, through their instrumentality, into church-fellowship, without instructing them in the minute particulars regarding the officers by whom the church was to be ruled, or the precise mode in which it was to be governed. The Acts of the Apostles, the Epistle to Timothy, and some of the other Epistles, furnish us with incidental notices upon the subject; and from them the general principles by which the christian society is to be regulated have been culled. The reason that might be assigned for the omission of any particular description of the officers of the christian church, and the form of its government, arises from the fact, that the Jewish Synagogue worship was then carried on; and the first preachers of the gospel laboured to convert the existing communities to christianity, and availed themselves of the institutions and officers already existing. The rulers and elders of the synagogue had been already appointed; and the apostles adopted them as the officers of the christian church, and likewise the mode of government which they had practiced. The minor details were left to the discretion of the church in all ages, which was to be guided by the general principles that they had laid down. The social character of christianity, and the duties consequent upon its social nature were clearly described and enjoined. The establishment of churches, meeting together for prayer, and breaking of bread, exhortations to order, the character and duties of those who were to be called to offices in the church, are all distinctly mentioned; while minute and unimportant details seem to be studiously avoided by the sacred writers. The omission of these minute particulars showed the superhuman character of the sacred writings; for though we have general exhortations to have all things done in decency and order, we have no details regarding minor points of church order. This fact shows the genuineness and inspiration of the sacred scriptures. What is essential to faith and practice is found in scripture; and those matters which are either indifferent, or left for adoption to the discretion of christians in every age, are omitted. But while some things of minor importance were omitted by the sacred writers, there are also some things expressly excluded from the service of christianity. It provided no sacrifice nor priest; it had no temple nor altar; it possessed neither high places nor groves; the usual modes and places of worship which were then adopted. It had, therefore, nothing to recommend it to the prevailing tastes of men; and could never have succeeded, had it not been accompanied by miraculous powers, fully attesting its Divine origin. There are some persons who seem to think that, because the scriptures do not furnish us with minute details respecting the constitution of the christian church, they are at perfect liberty to adopt or reject existing regulations. He said nothing against the christianity or morality of the persons who hold these sentiments; but they seemed to deny the great moral and social principle upon which the church of Christ is founded, and by which it is to be regulated. There is another class who assert, that all the regulations and forms of the christian church, which they have adopted, are to be found in the writings of the apostles and the traditions of the early church; and affirm that all who do not adopt these regulations, and entertain their views of church order, are not included in the christian church. Such views seemed to him extremely dangerous. The persons who held these sentiments removed the foundations of the church from the Rock on which they rested, and placed them on the sand. Such were not the views held by those who framed the articles of our church; for they say that "the visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." They clearly recognised the claim of every christian community who hold the great fundamental doctrines of the gospel, and administer the ordinances instituted by Christ, to be called a church of Christ. While they claimed the right to ordain officers, and appoint rites tending to decency and good order, they put forward no exclusive claims. They claimed no sacramental virtue for the ordinances which they administered, on account of possessing the apostolical chain of succession, which, if one link be broken, the whole is destroyed. They merely claimed for themselves the title of being regularly-ordained ministers of a scripturally-constituted church of Christ. Those who put forward any other claim were attempting to remove the foundation of the church, from the Rock on which it has been built, to place it on the sand. If their exclusive principles were to be received, what would become of the other christian churches, who did not adopt their views of church government and order? The persons who held such sentiments, and made these minor matters fundamental principles, were not only condemning themselves, but attempting to write the sentence of condemnation against their own church. Such sentiments might be called Church of England principles, and the persons who held them might claim for them the title of high churchmen; and they might consider that in pressing these opinions upon public attention, they were obtaining a greater reverence for the institutions and ministers of the church; but he conceived them fraught with danger to the church. They were merely successors to the apostles, in being ministers of a regularly-constituted church, and in observing the ordinances of the gospel. Successors, in any other sense, the apostles had none. The reformers put forward no exclusive claims. They did not regard those who did not belong to their church as excluded from the church of Christ. They kept the mean, and avoided all extremes. They pronounced no censure or condemnation upon those who differed from them. The Archbishop, after some other remarks, which we could not perfectly hear, concluded by calling upon the congregation to offer up their prayers to God, that his blessing might descend upon the sacred work in which they were about to be engaged, and those who were to take a part in the ceremony."



persons to attend five, six, seven, and eight meetings; and, in order to do travel scores of miles. Our meeting at Blytown was one of the very best I saw. The throng in attendance on Sabbath and Monday was immense. The was collected and subscribed at the meetings more than £60, the most which was paid: and they say they will raise it to £100.







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