

before it, in the anticipation of which it can smile on the past. If the omens of the future be not very deceptive, the day is coming when it shall be the triumphant, and Rome the down-trodden, church. Then Greek Christianity shall have its partial historians, who, with unwearied pen, shall tell the story of its conflicts, its reverses, and its final victories—ever and anon throughout their ponderous tomes, ablaze with the successes and oblivious of the errors of their mother church, pointing the reader to some dishonest footnote, which shall allude to the great Italian schism with a pious sneer; and Protestantism, in its battles with this last corrupter of the truth, shall forget the falsehoods and usurpations of the papal power.

ARTICLE II.

THE TRUE THEORY OF MISSIONS TO THE HEATHEN.¹

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A THOUGHT lies behind every deed, an idea is illustrated in every achievement. The ideal may be but dimly revealed in the consciousness of him who labors at the practical; yet by it is his work guided and his toil sublimed. Plans which are comprehensive in their scope, should find their justification and encouragement in true theories; for, if advocated upon false grounds, they will either entirely fail of success, or will be feebly prosecuted and attended by mortifying and disastrous imperfections. No cause can permanently triumph, which does not vindicate its claims to the minds of intelligent men. Action, to be vigorous and sustained,

¹ Christian Missions: their Principles and Practice. Westminster Review for July 1856.

Christian Missions. North British Review for August 1856.

must be based on perceived truth, must appeal to the ripe convictions of the more enlightened portion of the community.

It is on this account that we propose, in the present Article, to inquire after *the true theory of missions to the heathen*, particularly as respects their *object* and *necessity*.

The work of foreign missions, as the enterprise of evangelizing the heathen is called, has, since the apostolic period, always been prosecuted to some extent by the Christian church; but within the last half century it has attracted increased attention, partly by reason of a revived spirit of piety, and partly from the new facilities of exploration and labor furnished by the present age. Earnest, thoughtful, and sanctified minds have been its advocates and self-denying agents. The great mass of true Christians have supported it by their prayers and contributions. It has even conquered, to no small extent, the prejudices of worldly men and secured their occasional commendation. All classes, infidels scarcely excepted, declare that the work is honorable and important, and should be carried forward with energy till light has penetrated the remotest regions of darkness. But when we inquire for the basis upon which the enterprise should be prosecuted, for the necessity which vindicates the work, the answers are various and conflicting. The end to be secured by foreign missions differs in the opinion of different men, who may be arranged, however, in three classes, each with an independent theory of missions.

I. First, we have what may be termed *the worldly or unevangelical theory*. This advocates the cause of missions on secular rather than religious grounds; or, at best, on a basis of morality rather than of piety. Travellers meet with missionaries, are hospitably entertained, visit the schools and churches, behold the superior condition of the converted natives in all secular respects, and return home with a favorable report of the influence of missions in heathen communities. Men of science find, in the journals of missionaries, a record of facts connected with the geography, history, natural productions, and geological phenomena of distant lands,

and speak in a complimentary manner of the intelligence which they display and of the service which they render to the civilized world. Scholars also cheerfully acknowledge the debt which they owe to the researches of missionaries into the languages and literature of nations with whom there was before little intercourse. In like manner, the friends of education look with complacency upon the efforts of missionaries to remove the ignorance of the heathen nations, and praise their common schools, their seminaries, and their printing-presses. And then the moralist and philanthropist behold the degradation, the crimes, the cruelties and the sufferings of barbarous nations giving way before the meliorating influence of the gospel, and they add their commendation of missions. Even infidels do not hesitate to express a favorable opinion on such grounds. Thus the *Westminster Review*, the organ of the British philosophic "free-thinkers," in an Article entitled "Christian Missions—their principle and practice" (July, 1856), declares the true and liberal theory to be, "the hope of raising whole nations out of a state of idolatrous corruption of morals into a condition of Christian civilization;" and in reference to Greece acknowledges, that the best hope for that country lies in the young generation reared under the influence of various Protestant missionaries. But these sceptical admirers repudiate the religious basis altogether, and will admit no necessity for missions as regards the spiritual well-being and final salvation of the unevangelized communities. Thus the *Westminster Review*, in the Article just cited, scoffs at the idea that the heathen are in any danger of damnation; and with reference to missions among Jews and Mohammedans, says: "We confidently declare success in this kind of mission to be impossible, as long as it is based on a religious ground and prosecuted by any theological agency." Even writers who are supposed to have evangelical sympathies, seem disposed to adopt this theory. Thus the *North British Review*, conducted by members of the Free church of Scotland, ridicules (August, 1856) the idea that missions are needed to save the souls of the heathen, as either put forth to

“draw contributions,” or as an indication of “melancholy fanaticism.” It says: “We pity the dreary delusion of the Manichees, who enthroned the Evil Principle in heaven. But if we proclaim that God is indeed one who could decree this more than Moloch sacrifice of the vast majority of his own creatures and children, for no fault or sin of theirs, we revive the error of the Manichee; for the God whom we preach as a destroyer of the guiltless, can be no God of justice, far less a God of love. It needs no exaggerations such as these to supply a sufficient motive for missionary enterprises. Our object is, to introduce Christianity with all the blessings that accompany it: its true views of God, its ennobling motives, its pure morality; the elevation of life and manners, the civilization, the knowledge, even the material progress, which are sure to follow in its train.” In all which, the reader will observe, there is no recognition of any relations to eternity! Now against this secular theory of missions, we have three serious objections.

1. It rests upon too low a basis. The highest interests of man are spiritual; the noblest relations which he sustains, are to God and eternity; his choicest possession is character. To look out, then, upon nations sunk in the lowest moral degradation, nations who have utterly forgotten God and debased the soul; who are horribly corrupt in character; who resist the light which they have and try to shut out that which is poured around them, and who are as unfit for heaven as it is possible to conceive; and to talk merely of civilizing them and making them more comfortable and decent for this life, is to belittle the whole conception of man as a spiritual and immortal being accountable at the bar of God. A human soul is more than a mere animal to be fed and sheltered; more than a mere social being to be fitted for polite society; more than a mere citizen to be qualified to rule or to obey; more than a mere creature of intellect, capable of education. Earthly civilization by no means exhausts his powers, or secures the true end of his being. He is one possessed of moral character, subject to the Divine law, actually guilty of its violation, and needing pardon for

the past and holiness for the future, that he may be accepted at the final judgment, and may be fitted to dwell with God and the angels in a higher and an eternal sphere of action. To overlook these chief interests of his existence, while seeking to promote his temporal comfort and advancement, is to base missionary labors upon a foundation wholly inadequate.

2. This secular theory stands in opposition to the declarations of the Bible, with reference to heathen character and destiny. Its advocates repudiate the idea that the heathen are under condemnation as sinners and are justly exposed to eternal death. They regard these as persons simply ignorant, superstitious, degraded, and unfortunate; vicious perhaps in outward form but not in inward intent; mere babes in knowledge, whom it is well to instruct and elevate, but who are living according to their best conceptions of duty and are in no danger of divine condemnation. But however this view may suit the easy, superficial ideas and facile hopes of the sceptic, it will not satisfy the convictions of the Christian, who knows that the Bible teaches an opposite doctrine, and that Biblical descriptions of human character are always sustained by the most rigid investigation of facts.

It is certainly worthy of notice, that the Bible uniformly speaks of the character of idolaters in general as exceedingly corrupt. The description given of the various nations who dwelt in Canaan, and who are said to have been given up to destruction by the Israelites, for their horrible impieties and immoralities; the account of the inhabitants of the cities of the plain, as explanatory of their sudden and awful doom; the pains taken to guard the Israelites against social intercourse with the surrounding kingdoms, lest utter corruption should ensue; and the woes denounced by the prophets against all the heathen nations, not only for idolatry but also for every kind of vice, show that the ancient heathen were regarded by God as exceedingly guilty as well as degraded.

Nor are the references in the New Testament of a different nature. The Saviour speaks of the men of Sodom and

Gomorrah, and of Tyre and Sidon, as under condemnation and awaiting their doom at the judgment, and uses their case to warn his hearers, lest by sinning against greater light, they should come to a still worse end. Paul discusses the character and condition of the heathen of his day repeatedly and at length, especially in his epistle to the Romans, in which he declares, that, though destitute of the written revelation, they have yet the double teaching of nature without and conscience within, and are therefore without excuse for their sins. "Because that which may be known of God, is manifest in [to] them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." "For as many as have sinned without [the written] law, shall also perish without [the condemnation of that] law. * * * * These having not the [written] law, are a law unto themselves. Who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another." Many of those whom he addressed in his epistles had been idolaters; and in his mention of their original character before the gospel was preached to them, he never speaks of them as merely unfortunate, but as guilty, and refers to their former companions as in danger of eternal destruction by reason of their utter corruption of heart and life. One or two passages will suffice in proof. "Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth—fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness which is idolatry; for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience; in the which ye also walked sometime, when ye lived in them" (Col. 3: 5—7). Compare also the following: "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past

in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath even as others" (Eph. 2: 1—3. See also 5: 3—7). Now add that terrible description of heathen character as Paul found it, given in the fourteen concluding verses of the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans, in which he barely alludes to crimes that decency forbade him to depict, and which existed amid the highest civilization of Greece and Rome, and it will be seen that if sin can exist anywhere, it exists in heathen lands. Our missionaries assure us that this is a true description of heathen society now, in all parts of the world. Says the Rev. Mr. Eckard, missionary to India: "I have read this tremendous catalogue to assemblies of Hindoos, showing from facts which both they and I knew, that each of these sins belongs, in a high degree, to their national character. I have asked the heathen themselves, whether the crimes enumerated by the apostle were not their national characteristics. Never, that I remember, did I fail to hear them confess that such was the case." The Rev. Sheldon Dibble, in his earnest and valuable work, entitled "Thoughts on Missions," after quoting Paul's language, adds: "This description is not understood in Christian lands, neither can it be; but missionaries to the heathen, who are eye-witnesses of what is here described, place an emphasis on every epithet, and would clothe every word in capitals." Again, he says: "The character of the heathen is no better now than in the days of Paul. It is *worse*. It is impossible to describe the state of degradation and unblushing sin to which the nations, for ages sinking, have sunk. * * * It is impossible to give a representation of their unrestrained passions, the abominations connected with idol worship, or the scenes of discord, cruelty, and blood which everywhere abound. Deceit, oppression, and cruelty fill every hut with woe, and impurity deluges the land like an overflowing stream. Neither can it be said, that the conduct of the heathen becomes sinless through ignorance. From observation for many years I can assert, that they have consciences—that they feel accountable for what they do." And this last

assertion is Paul's inspired testimony also, for he concludes his awful catalogue of heathen crimes with the words: "Who, knowing the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." The heathen are not mere ignorant worshippers of idols, who through wrong education have fallen into the practice of erroneous ceremonies, while living otherwise in a state of savage simplicity and virtue; but they are men who sin against inward and outward light; who are consciously selfish, immoral, cruel, and beastly; who reject the truth when it is brought to them, because it condemns their vices; who, as a mass, doubtless wish to be different from what they are; and who, on being pressed, acknowledge that their course is wrong. The remorse which they express, the sacrifices which they offer, the tortures which they endure, the fear of divine wrath which they exhibit, all testify to their consciousness of guilt and their desire to propitiate the offended deity. Those who are brought into contact with them by travels, by trade, by war, or by efforts to instruct and elevate them, all testify to their mental capacity, their shrewdness, their quickness to distinguish between right and wrong,—especially where their own interests are involved,—and the superiority of their knowledge to their conduct. It is noticeable, also, that the men of the world who are ready to palliate or even deny the guilt of the heathen, when arguing against missions, are fully convinced of their accountability and guilt, when made to suffer by their crimes. Let a sea-captain be cheated in trade, or have articles stolen from his ship by the natives of a heathen land, and how full of indignation he is against their villany! Or, let a ship's crew be murdered and the cargo plundered, and how soon our rulers despatch a vessel of war to cannonade and burn the native village and to inflict "summary justice" upon the criminals! We hear nothing said, upon such occasions, of the ignorance and innocence of the heathen. All who speak intelligently and candidly, admit that they are sufficiently enlightened to be responsible for their conduct. Therefore the view of the Bible, sustained by all

careful observation, condemns the secular theory of missions, which is based on so inadequate an idea of heathen character, as superficial and worthless.

3. We need only add concerning it, that it is destitute of all efficiency; that it has no power to move the heart with a compassion which leads men to sacrifice all that is dear in home and country, and to go to heathen lands and labor for the elevation of the degraded. It is a cold and inoperative theory, contrived by sceptical philosophers or rationalizing theologians in their studies, or by pleasure-seeking travellers, who flit through heathen lands as summer butterflies over a meadow. No one was ever induced by it to become a missionary. All the infidels in the world never sustained a missionary, or organized a missionary society, even for the purposes which they admit to be needful; while those professedly Christian sects which sympathize with such views, have scarcely lifted a finger to secure the regeneration, in any respect, of the heathen world. No: those who have devoted themselves to such labors, have invariably been men who believed the heathen to be sinners, under condemnation, and needing pardon through the blood of Christ. The *Westminster Review* admits the power of the distinctive Christian motive, which aims at the spiritual and eternal salvation of the heathen. It says: "The aim of the old missions abundantly accounts for the devoted spirit of the missionaries. * * * * We know and feel that if we saw any reason whatever to believe that any body was in danger of hell fire for an eternity, for want of anything we could do for them, we should do that thing instantly, at any cost, whether of living in the Sandwich Islands, or dying of starvation in Patagonia, or any other painful doom. When we consider that the Jesuits and other Romanists, and the Wesleyans and other Protestants, have always believed this without a shadow of doubt or a dream of hesitation, there remains nothing to wonder at in their going forth to the ends of the earth, to toil and suffer and die for the salvation of souls." Thus the infidel is compelled to bear witness to the power of Christian motive in this great and difficult work; while, on the other hand, he

can point to nothing as an efficient substitute. No mere philosophic love of civilization, no mere interest in arts and science, no mere desire of improved morals among savages, will lead men to abandon their homes, in Europe and America, to spend their lives in elevating the degraded nations of Asia, Africa, and the islands of the sea. There must be added the love of Christ as the Redeemer of lost men, and a deep sympathy with him in the work of human salvation. His voice must be heard, saying: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." The spirit of obedience to this command, and fellowship with that love which brought the Son of God from heaven to suffer upon the cross, will alone avail to raise up the host of missionaries who are needed to enlighten the dark places of the world. When infidelity shall present us with even one of its votaries who has devoted his life to this self-denying work, we shall be more disposed to accept the secular theory of missions. Till then, even the secular elevation of the heathen must depend upon the efforts of those who visit them for a higher and holier purpose, and who, in preparing them for heaven, fit them also to live upon earth. The mere worldly philosopher takes no such view of the necessities of the heathen as creates an imperative feeling of obligation to hasten to their rescue. Regarding them as essentially guiltless, he feels no alarm for their eternal destiny, and but small commiseration for their present condition. Therefore his efforts will be confined to a cheap commendation of the benevolence of those who consecrate life to the work of missions among the heathen, and to an imagined philosophic exposure of the error of their most influential motive.

II. We come now to a second theory of missions, which may be called *the extreme evangelical theory*. It is evangelical, in that its motive is that of the gospel; but it is extreme in that it goes beyond the gospel in what it claims as the actual relation of the heathen world to salvation. All evangelical Christians agree in these three positions: that

the heathen need salvation; that the preached gospel is the chief means of salvation so far as instrumentality is concerned; and that the atonement of Christ is its only basis. But when the question is asked: Is the heathen world in a salvable condition, aside from the *preached* gospel? Can a heathen be saved who has lived and died without hearing of Jesus Christ, or of the one living and true God? the theory which we are now to consider, answers in the negative. It teaches that man can in no way be pardoned without specific faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour of sinners; and that all the heathen who have not been visited by the missionaries of the cross, have descended, generation after generation, in unbroken ranks, to perdition; their case having been, through life, as hopeless as that of men seized with a fatal malady, the only cure for which is on the other side of the globe, with no means of obtaining it.

To what extent this theory is actually held, in all its rigidity, we are unable to say. It is the accepted theory of the Romish church, and of a part of the Protestant church, perhaps of the majority of the latter.¹ The ordinary language of missionary letters, addresses, sermons, and reports, implies or

¹ The Presbyterian Confession of Faith (Chap. X. § 4) uses language of remarkable boldness on this point, saying: "Others not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the word and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come to Christ and therefore cannot be saved; *much less* can men not professing the Christian religion, be saved in any other way whatever, *be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature* and the law of that religion they do profess; and to assert and maintain that they may, is very pernicious and to be detested." This is sufficiently positive; especially as it contradicts both our Saviour and the apostle Paul. It represents heathen who live according to their light as "*much less*" able to be saved than men who hear the gospel and reject it, thus directly contradicting our Saviour, who declared that those who rejected his words would receive a heavier condemnation than even the depraved, unrepentant inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, or Tyre and Sidon (Matt. 11: 20—24). The "Confession of Faith" declares the salvation of conscientious heathen to be "*much less*" possible than that of unbelieving hearers of the gospel; while Christ asserts, that even the most flagrant sinners of the heathen shall find it "*more tolerable*" in the day of judgment, than such unbelievers. Equally at variance with the "Confession of Faith" is the declaration of Paul in Rom. 2: 14, 26, 27, in which he shows how those "*having not the law may be a law unto themselves,*" and how their "*uncircumcision shall be counted for circumcision.*"

favors this extreme view. There are, however, insuperable objections to its adoption, of which we will specify four.

1. It is revolting to our moral sense. By this we do not mean that it is simply painful to our sensibilities, and that we shudder at its contemplation. That fact alone would never disprove its truth. We shudder at the execution of a murderer; yea, even at the sight of a company of convicts as they march from their workshops to be locked in their cells. All punishment, and all suffering from whatever cause, is painful to the beholder, and yet is often just and necessary. We object not, therefore, to the idea of the unexpected perdition of all the heathen, on the mere ground that it is in itself an awful conception, but to the idea in its relations. Nor here, again, do we object to it in its relation to the divine justice, considered as the retribution on wilful sin; but to its relation to divine mercy in a world which is not governed by mere legal justice. The facts of human history and the declarations of the Bible alike declare, that mercy is a prominent attribute of the divine character, and that this world is for some reason, known or unknown, under its care. We cannot, therefore, resist the conviction, — it is an affirmation of the moral sense of all men, — that guilty though the human race may be, and deserving of destruction, yet every man lives under a dispensation of mercy and has an opportunity for salvation. To assert gravely, then, that the heathen who have never heard of Christ, are shut out from all possible hope of pardon and are not in a salvable position in their present circumstances, is to offend the moral sense of thoughtful men, as well as that of the common multitude. It is worse than denying that an atonement has been made for all mankind, and restricting it to the elect alone; for that doctrine, however theoretically untrue, is saved from much of its practical evil by our inability to point out the elect in advance; so that our hopes are not cut off for any particular man. But this theory points to actual masses of men, to the entire population of whole countries, and dooms them to a necessary perdition with no present hope of pardon; and it extends this judgment back-

ward to generations in the past, who are represented as having had no share in that mercy which we have such reason to believe to be universal in its offers. Such a theory practically denies the divine grace by suspending its exercise, so far as the heathen (the majority of the human race) are concerned, upon the action of those already enlightened. It declares that there is no possible mercy for the heathen unless *Christians* choose to carry the gospel to them. Does it seem rational, or in harmony with the universality and freedom of God's grace, that the only possibility of salvation for the mass of mankind should be suspended, not on anything within their control, but on the conduct of men on the opposite side of the globe? By such representations the minds of men are shocked, and a reaction takes place, which is unfavorable not only to the cause of missions, but to evangelical religion as well. They are led to think of evangelical religion as a severe, gloomy, remorseless system, which represents God as without mercy, or which confines that mercy within an exceedingly narrow compass. By describing the salvation of Pagans as absolutely impossible, an influence is exerted in favor of universalism and infidelity.

2. There is no passage in the Bible which asserts this extreme theory. Men guilty of certain known sins are denounced, and, in case of persistence in them, are threatened with death; but nowhere is it declared that the not having heard of Christ, or the not having received the Bible, places men beyond the pale of mercy. The passages which are usually cited to support such a view, relate only to the doom of those who hear and reject the gospel, or to the ultimate basis of salvation through the blood of Christ. Thus when it is said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned," the preceding verse shows that reference is to those to whom Christ has been offered; for that verse contains the command to preach the gospel to every creature, after which the declaration in question naturally comes to show what the result of the preaching would be. So also we read concerning Christ: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh

unto the Father but by me." "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." But these and kindred passages simply assert that the atonement of Christ must be the *ground* on which every sinner must be saved, and which every one who hears of it, must of course accept. They do not, however, conflict in the least with the idea that a penitent sinner may be saved by God for the sake of Christ and in view of Christ's work, although the man may never have heard of the Saviour in this world. All such passages no more exclude penitent heathen who are ignorant of Christ, than they exclude infants, who surely do not exercise faith in the Saviour. They were not spoken either of infants or the heathen, and therefore have no application to them. They condemn only those to whom Christ is distinctly offered and by whom he is wilfully rejected. It is impossible for those either to believe or disbelieve, to whom the gospel has not been preached; for, as Paul well asks: "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?"

3. Nor does any principle of God's government, or any doctrine of the Bible, imply or sustain this extreme theory. A truth may be sometimes implied which is not directly asserted. It may be a necessary inference from a revealed doctrine, although not independently taught. But no such claim can be made for the theory in question. What doctrine logically implies it? Not the doctrine of the new birth, or the necessity of regeneration in order to salvation; for who can prove that a soul may not be born again without a knowledge of the Bible? Who shall say that the Holy Spirit does not take truth taught by nature or conscience, or handed down by tradition, and use it in the conversion of men who live and die amid the darkness of heathenism? No theologian is competent to declare the *minimum* of truth that may avail for this purpose, or can decide how much error may dwell in the intellect and even influence the conduct of a man whose prevailing tendency of soul has yet been rectified by the Spirit of God. Neither does the doctrine of election conflict with the salvation of penitent hea-

then; for what text of Scripture asserts that the elect are confined to Christian lands, or to those who have heard the gospel? May not a man be elected in Christ who does not actually hear of the Saviour till he reaches the eternal world? Does any one claim that the doctrine of atonement implies that the heathen who have never heard of the death of Christ, are necessarily lost? The inference is false. That an atonement is necessary under the moral government of God in order to the pardon of any of our race, is true; but it does not therefore follow, that every penitent transgressor shall know, in this life, on what ground pardon is granted. It is our belief, and that of the Christian church in general, that as part of the redemptive scheme which is made consistent by the life and death of Christ, infants who die are cleansed from the evil tendencies which they inherit as part of the race, and which would have developed into sin on earth, and are thus fitted for heaven and enabled to participate in the song of the redeemed. And yet they cannot possibly know that they owe anything to Christ, until they are taught it in the heavenly world. And why, upon the same principle, may not a poor heathen, who repents of sin, so far as he understands what it is, be accepted for the sake of Christ, though he may not learn, until he reaches heaven, that divine mercy has been purchased for him at the price of blood? When he does learn it, however, he will immediately exercise the faith which his situation on earth made impossible. He may be said to have a seminal faith which requires only favoring circumstances for its perfect development. He has on earth faith in truth, faith in holiness, faith in God; in heaven he will also have faith in Christ.

We have at once an illustration of our meaning and a demonstration of the correctness of the position for which we contend, in the case of the saints who lived before the coming of the Saviour, and who, though ignorant of the nature of the work which he was to accomplish, were yet, as penitents, accepted for his sake. It is indeed often said, that they looked forward to him *as we look back*, so that their faith was the same. But it was not so. There is no reason fo

believe that (with the possible exception of a few inspired writers) the good men of those days had any definite conception of the atonement. They expected a Messiah who would deliver the nation; but that they at all understood his sacrificial work, is improbable. We know that the apostles, with far more favorable opportunities of learning the truth, from the instruction of the Saviour himself, failed to acquire it, until his death and resurrection with his subsequent teaching enlightened their minds. Even the prophets, who foretold his vicarious sufferings, may not have understood what the Holy Spirit meant by the words of their prophecy, but probably wondered at the mystery. Does not Peter imply this, when he says: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow"? The truth is, that all the saints (except possibly a few specially enlightened persons), from Adam to Christ, repented of sin, threw themselves upon the divine mercy by prayer, sacrifice, and such other rites as they were taught to use, and were accepted for Christ's sake, without knowing anything distinctly of his atonement. And we see no reason why a dark-minded but penitent sinner among the heathen, may not be saved in a similar manner. President Edwards, in his "Mysteries of Scripture," has the following clear and forcible remarks: "On account of the various degrees of men's capacities and the various circumstances of the times in which they live, one man may know truths which another cannot know. Whence it follows, that the very same articles are not fundamental to all men; but accordingly as revelation hath been more or less complete, according to the several dispensations under which men have lived, their various natural abilities, and their various modes and circumstances of living, different articles are and have been fundamental to different men. This is very plain from the different degrees of knowledge before and since the coming of Christ; for before his com-

ing many truths lay hid, which are now set in the most clear light; and the instance of the apostles abundantly shows the truth of what I have now advanced; who, although they were already in a state of grace, and their salvation was secured, yet for some time were ignorant of the necessity of the sufferings and death of Christ, and of the true nature of his kingdom." We see nothing, then, in the implications of scriptural doctrine, which requires us to place all the unlightened heathen out of the pale of possible salvation. Christian theology will sustain no damage from admitting their salvability.

— 4. There are express teachings of Scripture which contradict this extreme theory. If there is any doctrine clearly and repeatedly taught in the Bible, it is, that all mankind are in a salvable condition; that is, are placed by the grace of God in Christ, in such a position, that they may obtain salvation; that eternal life is within the reach of all; that no one need despair because he deserves condemnation, but may find mercy on condition of repentance.

(1) There are the numberless passages which speak of the universal relations of the atonement of Christ. We are told with special emphasis and distinctness, that he died for "*the world*," that "he tasted death for *every man*," and that "he gave himself a ransom *for all*." The object of his death is acknowledged to be, to place eternal life within the reach of those for whom he died. But in what possible sense did he die for the heathen who have never heard of him, if they are on that account, from birth to death, in a hopeless condition? What a mockery it is, to affirm that an atonement was made for them, if its benefits are suspended upon their hearing of it and accepting it during their earthly lives — a condition impossible of fulfilment to successive generations! Do these theorists mean to turn the doctrine of a general atonement into ridicule, or to make it a solemn nullity? And then we must remember the passages which speak of the universal efficacy, in certain respects, of the work of the Redeemer. What can be meant by the declaration: "That was the true Light which lighteth every man

that cometh into the world?" We are aware that eminent scholars think that the last clause refers to Christ and not to man, and that the verse should have been rendered: "That was the true Light, which was to come into the world, and that lighteth every man;" but even then, the sense as applicable to the present subject, is in no respect altered. It is affirmed, that his light of hope and joy shines upon "every man." In what sense? Not that he actually saves all men, for other passages teach the contrary; but that he places salvation within the actual reach of all, so that the darkness of despair is illumined by his light. Can it mean less and mean anything? But if that be its meaning, those who live and die amid the darkness of heathenism, are not shut up in hopeless gloom by reason of their guilt. Christ has shined upon them, though they know it not: his atonement has opened the way for their penitent return, though they never heard of his death. They may be saved by him though ignorant of him!

(2) And here we may apply the passages which explicitly declare the acceptance of all true penitents in whatever circumstances found. God has supreme regard to character, and not to mere knowledge. He requires *all* to be penitent because all are voluntary sinners and may cease from sin. He requires *such as have heard* of Christ, to accept him, because with them faith is possible and reasonable. Others will be accepted on the *ground* of Christ's atonement, and on the single *condition* of repentance. Therefore in the Old Testament no other condition was ever mentioned. The prophets promised pardon to all, Jew or Gentile, who would repent, saying nothing of specific faith in a future Saviour, though in fact that Saviour was typified by the sacrifices, little as they understood it. The simple word to the sinner was: Turn and live. Ezekiel, for instance, came with this message: "Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us and we pine away in them, how should we then live? Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from

your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" And so when Jonah went to Nineveh, he preached simple repentance. He neither preached nor understood the doctrine of vicarious atonement through the blood of Christ. God indeed had regard to it in his own mind, as the ground of all mercy in all ages to this lost race, but he did not then reveal it to those whom he called to repentance with a promise of pardon. The Ninevites, under this very restricted preaching, repented and were accepted; and Christ said (little reconcilable as his words are with the Presbyterian "Confession of Faith"), that "the men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation and shall condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold a greater than Jonas is here" (Matt. 12: 41). Why then may not a heathen, who turns from sin as far as he is aware of it, and grieves over his short-comings in duty, and worships God according to the best of his knowledge, though in forms rude and incongruous, why may he not be accepted on the same principle?

The New Testament, also, seems to allude favorably to the same class of cases. When Peter met the company of Gentiles at the house of Cornelius — men who were not living as Jews and had not yet been instructed in Christianity, and who therefore knew nothing of atonement through Christ, but who were nevertheless pursuing a course of sincere endeavor according to their scanty light — he began his address with this noble and liberal declaration: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." And why should we not give the soul in China or India, that is honestly struggling in darkness, sometimes victorious, sometimes defeated, the benefit of this truth, and believe that God accepts him and will save him for the sake of a Saviour whom he knows not? And was not this Paul's ground? An attentive perusal of the first two chapters of the epistle to the Romans will show that he not only proves the heathen to be sinners and therefore deserving of death, but also that they are blameworthy if they

do not obtain salvation *in their present circumstances*, even without a revelation. His language is: "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, who know not the law [in the Bible], do by nature [influenced by natural conscience] the things contained in the law, these having not the law are a law unto themselves." "Therefore, if the uncircumcision [the Gentile or heathen] keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?" shall he not be accepted as within the covenant? And so when he stood before the Areopagus at Athens to condemn idolatry, he plainly intimated that, so far as they had fallen into absurd and evil forms of worship from ignorance, God would overlook it, and would hold them only accountable for their use of the light which had been, and which should be hereafter, granted: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." And the same idea he had communicated to the people of Lystra, a few years before, when they were about to sacrifice to Barnabas and himself: "Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all things that are therein; who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." The whole tone of this is not more reproving than extenuating, and implies that God, while holding them accountable for grateful love in view of his benefits, made allowance for the darkness which for ages had brooded over the earth.

But here it is objected by the advocates of the extreme theory, that the heathen would indeed be saved, if they did their whole duty according to the light of nature; but that, in fact, no one ever did this. To this we reply, that the objector speaks of performing duty in a legal and not in an evangelical sense. Does he mean to imply that the heathen

are born into the world under a purely legal system, a covenant of works, that requires uninterrupted obedience as a condition of life? If so, on what authority? The Bible affirms the contrary, by declaring the whole world to be under mediatorial government, and by assuring us that Christ "tasted death for every man." Therefore it simply requires the heathen to render obedience in an evangelical sense, that is, to repent of all known sin, to aim at a holy life, to be contrite for their failures in duty, and to endeavor to make progress in the way of piety. And here we must remember, that if Abraham and Jacob could be good men in their age, and yet fall into polygamy, concubinage, and falsehood; and if David could be accounted a man after God's own heart, and yet under peculiar temptation become an adulterer and a murderer, it is quite conceivable that, in the far greater darkness of the heathen, men may be accepted of God, who indulge in practices that shock our sense of right. They may nevertheless be aiming to do right as they understand it, though with frequent shortcomings over which they grieve and against which they struggle as do we against *our* besetting sins. In favor of such the declaration of the Saviour comes with all its amplitude of meaning: "But he that knew not and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes" (Luke 12: 48).

III. We pass now, finally, to the *true evangelical theory* of missions, which regards the preached gospel as an *indispensable instrumentality to induce repentance on any general scale* among the heathen nations. This view admits all the real facts of the case, both the melancholy and the hopeful, while yet it avoids the difficulties which press upon the two other schemes. It admits, on the one hand, the moral agency, the guilt and the condemnation of the heathen world; and, on the other, the existence of hope for all those who have never heard the gospel, but who, to the eye of God, give evidence of penitence for sin and of a desire and purpose to overcome it — evidence that the great and merciful Judge will of course value according to the darkness of mind and unfavorableness of influence amid which it may be presented. But after

granting these preliminary positions, the solemn question returns: How much is the aspect of the heathen world thereby relieved? We may reasonably conclude that the infants and quite young children are saved, the number of whom we know to be millions; since from one-third to one-half of all that are born in those lands die, in early childhood, from disease, exposure, want, or infanticide. This alone is no small relief to the view sometimes presented, of unbroken generations descending to the pit, age after age, since the flood. Then we suppose that of the adult population some are living, in the sense before explained, conscientiously though imperfectly. But are they many? No. The missionaries declare that they seldom or never find such; that all seem to be selfish and corrupt, loving sin and hating the light; that it is rarely (not once in a million cases) that a man is found who seems to be in heart prepared to welcome the truth when it reaches him. Some missionaries of long experience say, that they never met with a single instance of the kind. Now let us concede, that the facts within the knowledge of the missionaries are by no means all which exist, and moreover, that the missionaries may have looked for too much in the circumstances, and have been more severe in their judgment than their Maker would be, still it is impossible to resist the conclusion, that there must be very few compared with the number of the adult population.

The great mass of this population are still in the bondage of sin. To this great mass of responsible transgressors, we propose to send missionaries carrying the gospel of Jesus Christ, and hoping to accomplish three important ends.

1. To reveal to their dark minds the fact that eternal salvation is within their reach. They do not know it; that is, they have no certain convictions, and no intelligent view of the grounds of hope. They are conscious of sin; they are burdened with a sense of guilt; they are aware of having wronged their fellow men and offended God; they live in fear of deserved divine wrath; they do not understand the way of securing a certain pardon, even if they are disposed to repent; they offer sacrifices, they pay large sums of money, they perform immense

labors, they endure cruel self-inflicted sufferings, all to propitiate the Deity, and yet obtain no relief and die at last in despair. The light of nature teaches nothing concerning a way of salvation. God's evident goodness, and the fact that sinners are spared upon the earth, afford a hint of the divine mercy; but there is nothing to indicate the extent or grounds of the mercy — nothing to *assure* the heathen that repentance will secure pardon. It is no small thing to carry to them the certain tidings of salvation for lost men procured by the incarnation, life, and death of the Son of God. It is a message of great joy. It opens a door of hope to their souls. It teaches them that "God is just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus;" that "there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." It assures them, that, although they sit in the darkness of ignorance, sin, and death, yet the gloom is not unbroken; that Christ, as the "Sun of Righteousness," has risen upon this benighted earth, with "healing in his wings [beams]," and that "He is the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Even those who were striving to please God according to their crude ideas of right, and who would have been saved, will now be brought into an assurance of salvation, will be advanced in knowledge and in holiness, and will be enabled to live in holy joy, while "the peace of God that passeth all understanding shall keep their hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." All who hear the preached word will be taught this life-giving truth, and God will be honored in the proclamation through the world of his grace and mercy to dying men as exhibited in the gift of his Son to die in their behalf.

2. The preached gospel will present the most powerful motive to induce repentance. We have seen that it is not sufficient that the heathen might be saved without a knowledge of the gospel, if they would repent and serve God according to their present light. The difficulty is, that, as a general thing, they *do not and will not repent* under the influences at present operating upon them. We know how diffi-

cult it is to persuade men to repent even in Christian lands, with so many favorable influences concurring to secure the result. What then must be the improbability of a heathen turning from his loved vices to a life of purity, without the Bible, without the ministry, without the church, without the Sabbath, without the example of individual saints, without the encouragement of any one or anything, save of his own half-enlightened conscience, and amid surrounding pollution such as we cannot possibly conceive! Motive stimulates to action, and the motive which needs to be brought to bear upon a dark pagan mind is "the truth as it is in Jesus." He must be made to understand what God is, in the majesty and purity of his nature; what the divine law is, in its claims upon the heart and life; what his own character is, in its vileness and evil desert; what the moral impotence of his diseased will is, in its bondage to sin; and then what Christ has done for the world, to place salvation within the reach of all; and what He is ready to do for the individual sinner who receives him as the all-sufficient Saviour. This is the truth which convicts of sin and subdues the soul to penitence and love. If we wish to reclaim men from wickedness, we must hold up the cross. It is not enough to preach morality and industry; it is not enough to discourse to them on the vague truths of natural theology. The Moravians did this for years to the degraded Greenlanders, without eliciting a single response. But when Christ was preached and they were told that the Son of God exchanged the glories of heaven for the woes of Calvary, that they might be rescued from sin and hell, their sluggish minds were moved and their hard hearts were melted. This was the influence which shamed Paul out of a life of selfishness, as we learn from his own lips: "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again." Thus the gospel works upon character as no other influence can, and hence it is the chosen instrumentality of the Holy Spirit for effect-

ing the conversion of sinners. Therefore Paul went everywhere preaching the gospel, knowing that nothing else would make any impression on the masses of sinful mind around him, and declaring that "it pleased God by the foolishness [as the world deemed it] of preaching to save them that believe." With this same view we send forth missionaries to the remotest parts of the earth, that we may bring to bear upon the nations that influence which alone suffices to attract men from sin to holiness. If abstractly the heathen may be saved without the gospel, provided they repent of sin, practically few of them will repent, except as they are made acquainted with the grace of Christ.

3. Lastly, as an incidental and subordinate result, and in some cases as an auxiliary influence to illustrate the beneficent character of Christianity, missions operate to elevate communities in temporal respects. The grand aim of missions is spiritual, and the missionary addresses himself directly to the mind and heart of every heathen to convince him of sin and danger and to induce him to repent, and exercise faith in Christ. Still, where he can make temporal benefits auxiliary to his chief work, he will do so, both as conferring favors on the destitute and as preparing them to listen favorably to his message of salvation. He will do what he can to heal diseases, to impart education, to encourage industry and the mechanic arts, to aid the poor, to comfort the afflicted, to redress the wrongs of the oppressed, and, in general, to elevate society to the level of Christian civilization. He will thus do immediate good of a temporal nature, will illustrate the beneficent spirit of the Christian religion, and will gain access for spiritual truth to many minds that could not otherwise be reached. And so, also, civilization will necessarily result from the operation of piety, which stimulates the whole man to action, makes him responsible for the best use of all his powers, and brings him in contact with truths and influences of the most elevating character. The degree of attention that must be given to this secular work, will vary with the condition and customs of nations. Nomadic tribes, such as the Indians of our own continent, can

hardly be reached to much effect, except as they are induced to form stationary communities and cultivate the soil. All experience, from that of Eliot to that of the most recent missionary, proves the truth of this assertion. But such secular aid is purely incidental, as when you require a man to stand still, while you converse with him, and is never absolutely essential to the operation of divine truth upon the heart. The truths of the gospel are simple, and the most degraded heathen can be made to understand their practical import. They do not need to be educated or civilized up to a given point in order to enable them to repent of sin and accept of Christ. A previous work of civilization might be more needful, were the missionary cause dependent on mere natural appliances for its success. Such appliances are used, but behind them is the Holy Spirit to give efficacy to the truth by his supernatural power. Relying on his promised aid, we look for speedy results from an early and direct presentation of purely spiritual truth. From the inward change thus wrought, we proceed to outward renovation and improvement, thus simultaneously fitting men for two worlds.

Such, then, is the theory of missions. No grander enterprise was ever undertaken or conceived. It aims to subdue this world to Christ, for his glory and the salvation of lost men. The foundation principles are, that Christ of right owns the world, and that the world stands in perishing need of his salvation. No man can be saved without him, and but few without the knowledge of him. The truth which centres in him, is the power which, in the hand of the Spirit, is to regenerate human character and to bring all nations at the last to the obedience of faith. Based thus on immutable truth, the missionary cause, sustained by reason, enjoined by Christ's own command, fortified by the divine promises, goes forth, through toil and suffering, to secure a certain victory. Who will march by its side? Who will consecrate himself to its work?

The missionary cause appeals with special power to the Christian heart. More than anything else it represents the great object which Christ came to this world to accomplish,

and for which he so freely shed his precious blood. It pictures to us the world in its sin, in its deep, dark, inveterate, wilful, chosen sin. It tells us of six hundred millions of heathen, in utter ruin, bound hand and foot by Satan, through various systems of idolatry, and false religion. It causes us to see how improbable is their repentance under present influences, even when through an unknown Saviour, repentance might avail. It spreads before us the glorious gospel of the Son of God as the remedy divinely provided for this desperate condition of disease, as a message of hope to the world, as crowded with the truth which can alone move the masses of the heathen to repent and live. It confronts us with Christ's solemn and explicit command to "preach this gospel to every creature." It demands that we shall obey this injunction and make obedience to it the great business of life. Has the Christian church yet risen to the magnitude of this conception? Is it yet baptized with this spirit?

ARTICLE III.

WAS PETER IN ROME, AND BISHOP OF THE CHURCH AT ROME?¹

A HISTORICO-CRITICO INQUIRY BY J. ELLENDORF. TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY E. GOODRICH SMITH, M. A., WASHINGTON, D. C.

§ 1. *Introduction.*

THE Romish bishops maintain that they have been constituted by God for the supreme rule of the church; that Christ the Lord has appointed them his vicegerents on earth, and that they ought to govern the church in his stead.

But as there is no declaration, and nowhere any mention

¹ Ist Petrus in Rom und Bischof der Römischen Kirche gewesen. Eine historisch-Kritische Untersuchung von J. Ellendorf.