TWO SERMONS
PREACHED AT KETTERING ON THE 31st OF MAY, AND THE
1st OF JUNE, 1842,
BEFORE THE
BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY,
AT A
SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING HELD IN CELEBRATION
OF ITS
FIFTIETH YEAR;
WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE MEETING.

LONDON:
SOLD AT
THE SOCIETY'S HOUSE, 6, FEN COURT, FENCHURCH STREET;
AND BY
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1842.
How many touching recollections are connected with a review of fifty years! This is a large proportion of our "threescore years and ten," and no inconsiderable part of that duration which measures the history of our race. It far exceeds the average length of human life, and but comparatively few of those who are now assembled to commemorate the fiftieth year of this Society's existence can look back to a period so distant as its commencement. And yet there are some of us who can carry back our recollections thus far; but they bring us to the unthinking and joyous days of childhood or of youth. And the interval has passed like a dream; its busy scenes, its constant changes, its stirring events, are now become "a tale that is told." How different are we now to what we were in 1792, and how different is the world in its condition and its prospects! How different is
the position of the church of Christ, and how different is our own section of it! Change has been passing on us, and on every thing beneath the sun with which we are connected, and in which we are engaged. Scarcely is a minister of Christ now found who then sustained the sacred office; a far greater number than the whole population of the globe at any time have gone into eternity. All who were then active and prominent in the world's affairs—the sceptred monarchs, the renowned warriors, the able statesmen, the eloquent orators, the distinguished writers of those days—have sunk into the tomb.

But at that period, while the great mass of the world's inhabitants were absorbed in the cares of this life, busied in the pursuits of pleasure or of gain, maddened with the excitement of ambition and of politics, there were some who looked higher and farther than the interests and concerns of the present state, and who having themselves "been translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son," longed with enlarged hearts that others might enjoy the same blessings, and that this celestial kingdom might extend at home and abroad. And among them was a little band of Baptist ministers of this county and its vicinity whose hearts God had touched, who with their respective churches held a monthly prayer-meeting for the revival of religion and the spread of the gospel. One of their number is seen especially active in this holy work—a man of small pretension, but of intrinsic worth—a man of a lowly birth, but of a noble spirit—a man of a cool and steady enthusiasm, whose mind was possessed and engrossed by one large overpowering object, and this was nothing less than

the conversion of the heathen world; and who at length succeeded in diffusing his own sentiments throughout the little circle in which he moved. And this day, this very day fifty years ago, at an association held at Nottingham, this devoted man, William Carey, preached that memorable sermon which was followed by a resolution, that a plan of a society for the conversion of the heathen should be presented at the next meeting of ministers at Kettering; and in this very town, in the autumn of the same year, the Baptist Missionary Society commenced its existence. On this day, half a century ago, the man of God lifted up his voice and cried, "Expect great things from God—attempt great things for God." And the expectation was raised—the attempt was made—and with humble and holy joy we make this year a jubilee, and say,

"The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

This then is that portion of God's word which we shall now make the subject of our discourse, and which you will find in Psalm cxvii. 3.

So spake the pious Jews in the warm gratitude of their hearts, when they were restored from their captivity. For seventy years they had "hung their harps upon the willows," while "by the rivers of Babylon" they "sat down and wept." But as "the ransomed of the Lord returned to Zion with singing," so unexpected and so great was their deliverance, that "they said among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them." And their joyful response was,