

SHORT

MISSIONARY DISCOURSES,

OR

MONTHLY CONCERT

*LECTURES.*

---

BY ENOCH POND, A. M.

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN WARD, (MASS.)

---

WORCESTER :

DORR AND HOWLAND.

*E. and G. Merriam, Printers.*

---

1824.

# DISCOURSES.

---

## DISCOURSE I.

THE WORK OF MISSIONS A DIVINE INSTITUTION.

Matthew xxviii. 19.

*“ Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations.”*

**THIS** command of the risen Saviour is plain and imperative. It was addressed in the first instance to his immediate disciples ; and in the opinion of some was addressed exclusively to them. But if so, then that which follows it in the same sentence, and with which it is most intimately and necessarily connected, must have been addressed exclusively to them : *“ Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”* And if both these commands were limited to the Apostles, then the assurance annexed to them must be understood with the same limitation : *“ Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”* This gracious assurance has been the comfort and support of faithful Ministers and Christians, from the time when it was uttered to the present hour. But on the supposition under consideration, none since the Apostles have had any rea-

## 2 THE WORK OF MISSIONS A DIVINE INSTITUTION.

son to take comfort in it; for it was addressed exclusively to them. Is it not plain, therefore, that this supposition is unscriptural and untenable? The gracious assurance of the Saviour, that he would be with his Ministers and people “always, even unto the end of the world,” was not, and from the nature of the case could not have been, limited to the Apostles; but extends to the whole body of the faithful in all succeeding ages. Neither was the command to “baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” limited to the Apostles; but constitutes the authoritative precept, under which baptisms have been administered ever since. And neither was the command to “go and teach all nations” limited to the Apostles; but must continue to bind with undiminished force, till all nations are brought to the knowledge of the truth.

But if Christians are bound by a positive injunction of their Saviour to “go and teach all nations,” or (as the command must be understood) to do whatever they consistently can do for the universal diffusion of his religion and kingdom, then the *work of Missions*, or the *work of teaching all nations*, must be regarded as a *Divine Institution*.

By a Divine Institution, I understand some external service or ordinance, enjoined in the Scriptures, in regard to which our duty could not have been so clearly discovered, if indeed it could have been discovered at all, had it not been thus enjoined. In this sense, sacrifices, circumcision, and the Passover, were Divine Institutions, under the former dispensation. In this sense, the *Christian Sabbath*, the *visible Church*, *baptism*, the *Lord's Supper*, *public prayer*, and *praise*, are Divine Institutions under the present dispensation. In the same sense, and on the same account,

I shall endeavour to shew, that the *work of Missions is a Divine Institution*. And in proof of this, I observe,

1. That if the *Pastoral* work is of Divine Institution, *that of Missions* obviously must be.—It is usually, and very justly considered, that the Pastoral office is an institution of Christ. “*Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*” But the work of Missionaries is evidently prior and preparatory to that of Pastors. Churches must be founded, before they can be fed. Truth must be disseminated, the Holy Spirit must be poured out, souls must be converted, and Churches gathered, before an establishment exists, over which the Pastor can properly preside.—When our Saviour ascended, the little company of disciples at Jerusalem constituted the only Christian Church in the world. At that period, therefore, there was no immediate room for Pastors; for there were no Churches. There was little or nothing, out of Jerusalem, which the Pastor, in his own appropriate sphere, could perform. Accordingly our Saviour commissioned his disciples primarily as *Missionaries*. “Go ye therefore and teach all nations.” “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”—If then, as it is usually and justly acknowledged, the Pastoral work is a Divine Institution, and if the labor of Missionaries is primarily necessary, in order to prepare the way for Pastors; shall we not with at least equal reason regard the work of Missionaries as a Divine Institution?

2. That the work of Missions is a Divine Institution, is evident from the appointment of *Apostles* and *Evangelists* among the constituted Ministers of Christ.—The word *Apostle*, whether we regard its

etymology or its use, is precisely synonymous with our word *Missionary*. Either term signifies, and with equal propriety, one who is *sent forth* to preach and propagate the religion of the Saviour. The word *Evangelist* is also used in a similar sense. The Evangelists, in the primitive Church, were a class of itinerants, who labored in most cases under the direction of the Apostles, and were engaged with them in disseminating Divine truth, and spreading the gospel. In this sense Philip, and Timothy, and doubtless many others, were called Evangelists. (See Acts xxi. 8. and 2 Tim. iv. 5.) Both these classes of teachers were in fact *Missionaries*. They were those who ran to and fro that knowledge might be increased—who were sent abroad with the messages of heaven, and were chiefly concerned in the propagation and establishment of the religion of Christ.—But the orders of Apostles and Evangelists are expressly mentioned, among the ascension gifts of the Saviour, and the constituted Ministers of his word. “He gave some *Apostles*, and some prophets, and some *evangelists*, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” If the fact that pastors and teachers are here mentioned is evidence that the Pastoral work is of Divine Institution; does not the fact that Apostles and Evangelists are also mentioned furnish equal evidence that the Missionary work is of Divine Institution?

3. In the wonderful manner in which *the way was prepared* for the spread of the gospel among the Gentiles or heathen, we have evidence that the work of spreading it among them is of Divine Institution.—An angel was sent to direct Cornelius, who was an offi-

cer in the Roman army, to the place where he might find a messenger of salvation. And a miracle was wrought to remove the scruples of Peter, and convince him that "to the Gentiles also, God" was about to "grant repentance unto life."—Soon after Paul was converted, it was revealed to him, as the grand purpose for which he had been raised up, that he should bear the "name of Christ before the *Gentiles*." And when he and Barnabas actually went unto the heathen, they went by the command of the Holy Ghost. "*Separate me Paul and Barnabas, for the work whereunto I have called them.*"—Do not these various and manifest intimations of the will of heaven afford conclusive proof, that the work of spreading the gospel among the heathen is an Institution of God?

4. We have farther and it should seem incontestable proof on this subject, in the *positive injunctions of our Saviour*.—We consider the Sabbath a Divine Institution, because we find its observance enjoined in the Decalogue, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." We consider Baptism and the Lord's Supper Divine Institutions, because they are authorized by the express-commands of Christ. "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." "This do, in remembrance of me." We consider preaching the gospel, in the general, a Divine Institution, because our Lord said to his primitive ministers, and through them to all others, "Go ye, and preach the kingdom of God." But why should we not, for the same reason, consider the *cause of Missions*, or the particular work of *spreading the gospel among all nations* a Divine Institution? We know that this is expressly and repeatedly enjoined by the Saviour. "Go ye, and *teach all nations.*" "Go ye into all the world, and *preach*

*the gospel to every creature.*" "It behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name *among all nations.*" "Ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the *uttermost part of the earth.*"—It would seem, certainly, that Christ said as much on this subject as he needed to say, in order to place the work of spreading his gospel, among the positive institutions which he bequeathed to the world. I only add,

5. That the manner in which the immediate disciples of Christ understood and obeyed his commands, proves, that they considered the work of spreading his gospel as worthy to be ranked among his noblest Institutions. No sooner had their Divine Master ascended, and "endued them with power from on high," than "*they went forth and preached every where,* the Lord working with them."—In consequence of the persecution, when Stephen was put to death, the disciples at Jerusalem "were scattered abroad," and "*they went every where, preaching the word.*"—It was while "Peter was passing *throughout all quarters,* that he came down to the saints which dwelt at Lydda;" upon which many there who "saw him turned unto the Lord."—It was a declaration of Paul, and made long before his death, "that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, he had fully preached the gospel of Christ." Indeed, so laborious were the primitive disciples, in the work of spreading the gospel, that Paul repeatedly intimates in his Epistles, that the world was comparatively filled with their doctrine. "Their sound went forth into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world."—The early Ecclesiastical historians have given a

more full account than that left us in the scriptures, of the labors and travels of the primitive preachers of the gospel ; and it is evident from all, that they considered themselves under indispensable obligations to scatter the seed of Divine truth, and to do all in their power to fill the world with the doctrines of their Lord and Master.—We may then most safely and certainly conclude, that the work of spreading and propagating the gospel is founded on the authority of heaven, and is worthy to be regarded as an institution of the most High.

### REFLECTIONS.

1. If the work of Missions is a Divine Institution, then it is as binding as any other Divine Institution.—There are persons, and it may be pious persons, who do not appear sufficiently sensible of this. They have a regard for Divine Institutions, and a disposition to maintain and observe them. They remember the sabbath day, and endeavour to keep it holy. They reverence the sanctuary of the Most High, and are exemplary in their attendance on the appointed means of grace. They observe the special ordinances of the gospel, baptism and the Lord's supper, and profess to love and value them. But they are inclined to do little or nothing, for *the spread of the gospel in heathen lands*. In regard to this, they feel under no solemn and binding obligations.—But it may be properly inquired of such persons, what reason they can have for regarding any Divine Institution, which is not a reason for regarding this ? Will they say, that the other institutions of the gospel are founded on the command of Christ ? And so is this. Or will they say, that the Apostles and primitive disciples regarded the others



as Divine Institutions? And so they did this. Or will they say, that it is honorable to God, and beneficial to themselves, to observe the other Institutions of Christ,? And will it not be honorable to God, and beneficial to themselves, to observe this also? It will doubtless be honorable to God and religion, to manifest so deep a regard for religion, as to endeavour to extend its blessings to our destitute fellow men. And to do the same, instead of personally injuring us, may be expected to issue in our highest good. A most important trait, doubtless, in the character of a christian is *uniformity of obedience*. Most professors of religion appear well in some points; while it is too frequently the case that they are deficient in others. Their characters are shaded with *dark spots*, which deface the glory of their profession, and render their prospects doubtful and ominous. If we would be prosperous and happy in our spiritual concerns, we must copy the whole example of our Lord, and endeavour to obey him in all things. We must have respect to all his Institutions, and be uniform in our obedience and love. And the more any christian examines the subject, the more I am persuaded he will be convinced, that all the reasons which bind him to observe any of the Institutions of Christ, bind him to observe that which has been considered in this discourse.

2. If the work of Missions is a Divine Institution, then those Churches cannot expect to prosper who wickedly neglect it.—It has been thought and said, that the work of Missions is so great and expensive, that a vigorous prosecution of it must endanger the prosperity, if not the existence, of the churches at home. But so far from this is the fact, that without a vigorous prosecution of it, I think the Churches

at home cannot expect to prosper long. The work of Missions is an Institution of Christ ; and can that Church of Christ expect a blessing from him, which long and wickedly neglects one of his positive Institutions ? Should we expect a Church could continue to prosper, which should pay no regard to the sabbath—or should neglect public worship—or should presume to dispense with, if not to abolish, the Christian Sacraments ? And why not ? Because of its neglect and abuse of the Institutions of the gospel. And is not that Church, which neglects and discountenances exertions for the spread of the Gospel, chargeable with neglecting and abusing an Institution of the gospel ? Christ says to his Churches, and to the whole body of those who bear his name, “ *Go ye and teach all nations.* Do all you consistently can do, for the universal spread and triumph of my religion and Kingdom.” But here is a Church called by his name, which virtually says, “ *I will do nothing in this business.*” And still does this Church expect a blessing from Christ ?—Christ walks, my brethren, in the midst of his Churches—he walks, with a vigilant eye and a powerful hand—he walks among them to inspect and govern them—his favor to them is life ; and his loving kindness is better than life ; but his frown is destruction which nothing can avert—if he sees them faithful in his service and devoted to his institutions and commands, he will bless them and build them up ; but if he sees the contrary, he will chastise if not destroy them ;—It is from plain principles such as these we gather the conclusion, that those churches, which neglect and discountenance exertions for the spread of the gospel, cannot expect to prosper long. They stand opposed to a plain Institution of Christ, and Christ must stand opposed to them.

And in this view we may see, I think, why it is, that the Churches of Christendom have experienced so many frowns, and such long and distressing darkness, in ages that are past. They have neglected and abused the institutions of the Saviour; and especially that which has been considered in this discourse. While the primitive Churches were faithful in this important work, and labored to spread the knowledge of the truth, they enjoyed constant and evident tokens of the Divine favour. They “walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost, and were greatly multiplied.” But when they began to decline from their duty, and, instead of wasting their strength in the service of the gospel, were disposed to waste it in biting and devouring one another, they forfeited of course the approbation of their Lord, and he began to visit them with the rod of his wrath. And as their declension from duty continued, they became more and more deserted and afflicted, and one candlestick after another was removed out of its place, till their light and comfort were at length succeeded by ages and centuries of most distressing darkness.

3. In view of the principles which have been established we may see why it is, that those portions of the Christian Church have been the most highly favoured, and have exhibited the brightest evidences of grace, which have been most engaged for the spread of the gospel.—Of the truth of the fact here stated, the history of the Church furnishes abundant evidence. From the eighth to the sixteenth century of the Christian era was emphatically “an iron age,” and a season of deep spiritual darkness. And it is observable, that nearly all the rays which glimmered upon the gloom of this long and dreadful night

were emitted from those regions where individuals were employed in diffusing the gospel. Accordingly Mr. Milner, in tracing the true Church of Christ through this dreary spiritual wilderness, found himself obliged to leave those places where Christianity had been long established, and to “travel with faithful missionaries into regions of heathenism, and describe the propagation of the gospel in scenes altogether new.” Here, he says, he discovers “one of the brightest prospects of this whole period.”\*—It is observable also that since the reformation from popery, those portions of christendom have been most signally blessed, which have been most warmly engaged in propagating the gospel of Jesus. Of this we have a striking proof in the churches of the *United Brethren*. No people have within the last century done so much in proportion to their means as these, for the spread of the gospel; and no people have within that period enjoyed such unequivocal marks of the Divine approbation and love.—“Those that honour me,” saith God, “I will honour: but they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.” Those churches that continue faithful in the service of the gospel, and in their adherence to the commands and Institutions of Christ, he will own, and prosper, and bless; but those that pursue a different course, and prefer the gratifications of self to the injunctions of their Redeemer, cannot reasonably expect the tokens of his love.

4. If the work of Missions is a Divine Institution, then no good reason can be given why it should not be vigorously prosecuted.—We know that several considerations intended as reasons have been offered in opposition to this work. It has been said, for instance, “We have heathens enough at home. Let

\* See Preface to Milner’s Ecc. Hist. Vol. iii.

these be enlightened and converted, before our attention is directed to foreign regions.”—But, in the first place, “this assertion can by no means be admitted.” Where are the heathen in our towns and villages, “who have never so much as heard of a Bible—who know neither what it reveals, nor where they may obtain one”? That there are those among us, who are in a great degree ignorant, careless, stupid, and hardened, is admitted and lamented; but these are not heathens, in the sense in which the word is used, when applied to those who have never heard of a Saviour, and are totally removed from the influence of the gospel.—And even if they were heathens; what, in the second place, would it avail? Must an institution of the gospel be neglected, and a plain command of Christ be disobeyed, till we have not an ignorant or an unconverted person left? Were there none ignorant and unconverted among the Jews, when it was revealed in vision to the Apostle Peter that “the door of faith was opened to the Gentiles”? Were there none ignorant and unconverted in Antioch, when “the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Paul and Barnabas for the work whereunto I have called them”? Or were there none ignorant and unconverted in all the lesser Asia, when a voice came to Paul in the visions of the night, “Come over into Macedonia, and help us”?

But it will be said again, “The heathen are not in that deplorable condition which the friends of Missions represent. They have their own way of worshipping the gods of their fathers, to which they are sincerely and devoutly attached; and for aught that appears, they may be as happy in this life, and as safe for eternity, as ourselves.”—But will those, who endeavour to satisfy themselves and others, by plac-

ing the religion of the heathen on an equality with their own—will they consent, for once, to make an exchange? Will you “give them your Bibles, and Pastors, and Sabbaths; and receive their idol gods, and brahmins, and religious rites”? Will you “demolish the temples of Jehovah; and rear up to roll through your streets the car of Juggernaut, besmeared with blood of human sacrifice, and covered with emblems of pollution”? Will you “put out the Sun of righteousness; and bring back the darkness visible”? Will you forsake the fountain opened in the gospel; and “welcome to your hearts a religion which, if sin shall annoy, and the fear of punishment invade, will send you to drink of the waters that lave your shores, and wash in their flood, as your most effectual remedy”?\* If the superstitions of the heathen are good for them, why would they not be good for you? Or if the religion of the gospel is a blessing to you, why would it not prove a blessing to them?—But we have a shorter method than this of replying to the objection which has been introduced. That Saviour, to whom we owe and profess allegiance, has *commanded* us to carry the gospel to the heathen. We cannot therefore doubt whether the heathen need the gospel, without placing our own fancies above the decisions of the Saviour, and presuming to sit in judgment on the Institutions of his word.

It may be urged again by way of objection, that “Christ can take care of his own Church—he can convert the heathen whenever he pleases, without our assistance or co-operation.”—And so indeed he can. “He can raise up Missionaries, and send them forth

\* See Dr. Beecher’s Sermon at ordination of Mr. Dwight, pp. 48, 49.

in multitudes. He can send his ravens to feed them, as he did to the prophet ; or rain down manna from heaven for them, as he did for his ancient people. It is an important, a glorious fact, that Christ can do all this. But what has this fact to do with our present subject ? He has left us an Institution to observe—has left a solemn duty for us to perform ; and does it become us to inquire, before we consent to perform it, whether our Saviour cannot accomplish his work without us ? Does it become “ the servant, when his task is set before him,” to stop and ask, whether his master cannot accomplish some part or the whole of it, without his assistance ?

It may be urged still farther in opposition to Missions, that the expense of them is so great as to be dangerous to the country. The burthen of supporting them is so heavy, that the people cannot and ought not to bear it.—But what is this enormous burthen ? “ The amount of all which is paid by the different Foreign Missionary Societies in the United States for the spread of the gospel among the heathen, does not exceed one hundred thousand dollars annually.” Average this sum upon our whole population, and we have the appalling tax of nearly *one cent* for each individual. It is certainly ridiculous to speak of such a sum as a burthen.—But grant that the expense of Missions were a real burthen to the country. Who among us would have any reason to complain ? Is not “ the earth the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof ” ? Has not the Saviour of the world a right to impose burthens on his people ? And has he not a right to expect that they will be cheerfully borne ?

After all, it may be urged, that Missions to the heathen are attended with very little success.—It

might be shewn, in the first place, that this assertion is not true—that, on the contrary, all the success in this work has been realized, which the most sanguine friends of Missions had reason to expect.—But suppose it were true; this would not alter the case, as it respects our duty, at all. “We are no where commanded to be successful.” The Institution of Christ does not run, that we are to *convert* all nations; but that we must use the appointed means, and declare to them the gospel. And this Institution it would be incumbent on us to observe—this command we should be bound to obey, even were we favored with no success at all.—In fine, if the work of Missions is a Divine Institution, then no good reason can be given why it should not be vigorously prosecuted. The precept enjoining it is plain, imperative, and unconditional, and no objection can stand before it. “It answers every question, solves every doubt, sweeps away every obstacle. Bring up any excuse or apology you please for neglecting the heathen, and it passes over them all, as fire over the wood and hay and stubble.”\*

5. If the work of Missions is an Institution of the Saviour, then it becomes all his followers to understand it and observe it. An observance of this institution does not imply, that we all become literal Missionaries to the heathen, or that we all become public teachers of religion. We know not but James observed it as really as any of his brethren, though he laboured in Jerusalem till the day of his death. The Institution under consideration requires of us, and this is all it requires, that we love and value the cause of Missions, and that we do every thing we

\* For these quotations, and several preceding ones, I am indebted to Miss. Herald, Vol. xix. pp. 68—70.



consistently can do to help it forward. If we are called in providence to go personally to the heathen ; we must be willing to obey. Or if we are called in providence to contribute of our substance ; we must cheerfully do it. Or if we are called in providence to contribute of our time, or labour, or any thing else ; we must not withhold. If we can do no more for the cause of Missions, we certainly can pray for it ; and this is a duty which we all are under obligations to perform. Whatever we bestow, we must follow it with our prayers ; and if our circumstances are such that we have nothing to bestow, we must follow with our prayers the endeavours of others.

The cause of our Redeemer at the present time demands that every christian should be at his post. Indeed I believe the period is near, when every true christian *must be* at his post. When the season had arrived for the primitive believers, who fondly lingered about Jerusalem, to be scattered abroad for the spread of the gospel ; *persecution* was employed as the instrument of scattering them. And those Churches and believers now, who cannot be made sensible of their duty in any other way, must expect to be aroused to it by afflictions and stripes. O my brethren, let us save ourselves this painful necessity. Let us study to know, and be willing to do, whatever our dear Redeemer has required. Thus only can we expect his favor and blessing, in this life, in death, and in heaven forever. Amen.