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"THE DOCTRINE OF MISSIONS"

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For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth ... And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Acts 13: 47, 48.

The progress of the doctrine of this text is a history of the strangest nature of any in the course of human events. Like all other great truths it has had its experience; has risen and fallen with the tide of human affairs. Immediately after Pentecost the disciples went forth with enthusiasm to carry into effect the purpose of their risen Lord, and yet at that very moment, there was a limitation put upon his commandment by the prejudices accumulated through the ages of their religious teaching, and never from that time to this present hour has this doctrine, which is the crowning glory of the religion of Jesus Christ, had an untrammelled interpretation. Some periods of the history of Christianity have shown wonderful enthusiasm in carrying forward the purpose of the Master. These have been succeeded by periods of lethargy and inactivity appalling. At times this great first truth of Jesus Christ's life and purpose in the world has had something of the proper appreciation in the minds of his followers, but generally some other truth, which in itself ought to have been conducive to the fulfillment of this purpose, has so occupied and absorbed the minds and energies of God's people as to prove an absolute barrier in the progress of the Gospel as indicated in the command. Not only is it true that every generation must learn over again in very much the same way as the preceeding generation learned it, the meaning of the Lord when he commanded them to preach the gospel to every creature, but also each succeeding generation must, it seems of necessity, dispose of intervening and obstructive questions and difficulties, and the number of these does not seem to have been lessened by the intervening years. God has his purpose

in these things, but it is beyond the reach of human ken. Why his children should have been allowed to split themselves up into fragments over the truth of his revelation, and thus weaken themselves, and divert their purpose from the one of consuming duty, we may never know; and yet we may readily allow that in some way God is overruling for ultimate good.

# 1 - THE TEXT PRE SUPPOSES A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF GRACE

God forbid that I should inveigh against the membership of the churches. When brethren and sisters have heard the profession of faith in Christ, and have admitted into their fellowship those composing our present church membership, who am I to sit in judgment upon them? It is sometimes said that the churches are overloaded with an unconverted membership. About this I do not know. One thing is true. It is only the saved to whom the Saviour makes appeal. The unregenerate are twice dead to the call of the Son of God for enlistment in service to save others. The church member sitting in the shadow of death will not become the light of the Gentiles, nor will the unsaved stand for salvation to the ends of the earth. No amount of teaching can ever vitalize the call of the Lord in a dead sinner's heart, although he may have a front seat in the synagogue. It behooves us to look well to our own Christian experience. One will appreciate the object for which he lives as a child of God about in proportion as he is enabled by reflection to relive his own experience, recalling the work of the Spirit by the Word of God in his own mind, and then transferring that experience individually to every one of the lost sons of earth the world around. Salvation should never become theory. It is the living presence of God's spirit, and as there shall be a desire to receive the full impression of the commandment of the Saviour, let us recur to the time of our own conversion and live over again those awful minutes, remembering, as we do, that it is this experience through which we wish to lead the lost of the world to a knowledge of Christ.

Most of us are unable to recall the first time we heard the gospel.

"The shower that decends upon the new mown hay" came down upon our heads in infancy. "The seed of the sower" fell into the grounds of our being almost, if not altogether, inperceptibly. God's divine whisper, through mother's prayer or pastor's kindly greeting or gentle sermon, was so low and tender that we hardly realized when we first heard it; and yet there came a time when it <sup>seemed</sup> as if we never had heard it before, when the voice of God, through the ministry of his truth, spake no longer in gentle whisper, but came in thunder tones. The voice seemed to come from the region of light and to astound and alarm us in the pit of darkness. We became strangely conscious that we were guilty sinners in the sight of God, and, as if suddenly discovered, we were about to be dragged to his bar of justice without excuse or appeal. Human tongue can never speak the agony of a sin guilty soul. The old hymnist gives good evidence of his own experience of grace in these descriptive lines:

When I was sinking down, sinking down,  
Beneath God's righteous frown,  
He laid aside his crown,  
For my soul.

While to the sinner experiencing convincing grace, it seems that God's word has made him guilty. We all know that the light of the divine Word only discovered his guilt. If we lack appreciation of the noble ends for which we live, let us place lost mankind in the midnight darkness of our own guilt, seeing their condition before God and truth, as we can recall our own, when not a ray of light or a beam of hope entered the dark dungeon in which we lay, and when we felt well assured that it required only the clipping of the brittle thread to sink us into irretrievable woe, and only the summons to bring us guilty before the flaming bar of justice, "crying for the rocks and the mountains to fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne". Oh blessed truth of salvation that provides the possibilities of faith and repentance to a guilty sinner.

1 - The gospel of despair has never failed of becoming the gospel of hope. In every blackened line of wrathful condemnation that seals the doom of a sinner, God has caused to appear in some mysterious way a coloring of hope. There never was a sinner so guilty in his own sight, so lost to all that was good, but that in his conviction of guilt there came the suggestion of repentance. He is made to feel in some strange way that could he but atone for his sins, could he but be separated from them, could he but gain the ear of God and make to him one promise, God's wrath would be turned away; and when sufficient discipline of this kind has been had, when the soul has been thoroughly mellowed in its own sad bereavement faith, like a ray of light, comes into the pit where the sinner suffers, and introduces the suggestion of the way of escape.

Repentance is the voice of the aching void of spiritual death speaking up to God. Faith is the voice of divine provision from heaven down by the cross, speaking to human death the promise of divine life. Twin sisters are repentance and faith, of the same age, and so similar that divine inspiration has changed their names, and sometimes puts one for both - longing of the human soul to be free from sin, and the longing of the human soul to be free with Christ.

2 - One step more. In passing from darkness to light through the maze of repentance and faith we may not mark the stages; we may not classify the experiences; we may not systematize the influences and results; we may not theorize about the process, recording simply an agonizing experience. Hanging in the chambers of our hearts a picture of the memorable night, and gazing on it with joy now that the sun has risen, we may note the first shaft of divine conviction hurled from some instrument of God's appointment straight to our human consciousness, and we may note with peculiar joy the time of our conscious forgiveness. If one may exclaim, "Oh blessed salvation of faith and repentance" what expression shall be adequate to the joy of conscious forgiveness? We may not write out in cold type the feelings of the human heart, when it is brought through faith

and repentance to receive from God his loving forgiveness. The soul experiencing divine forgiveness has awakened in its every element of life of which it is capable, Having passed through the furnace of repentance, the cooling zephyrs from Zion's hill sweeten and refresh the soul, Having come through the storm and raging of contending convictions, the sweet calm like a summer evening, gives joyful quiet. Having been borne down to the earth by the load and weight of sin, the poor sinner feels the burden has rolled away, and somehow, by God's grace, he stands free from its condemnation. Oh, the infinite wisdom and grace of God that makes it possible to forgive a guilty sinner!

11. THE TEXT IMPOSES A DUTY - THIS DUTY IS A MATTER OF EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT.

The terms of this development might be indicated under these three propositions: First, there must be an intellectual acknowledgement of the command itself. Second, there must be a moral sense of obligation or conscience in view of the commandment. And third, there must be an intelligent and Spiritual decision upon the method by which it shall be done.

1 - As certainly as children need to learn that the alphabet is the alphabet, one and the same always and everywhere, the foundation of all human literature and the source from which all words are constructed; as certainly as the untutored must learn that the multiplication table is the basis of calculation, and the source from which all relations of figures arise; so must every one learn that the commandment of the Lord to preach the gospel to every creature is a fundamental truth. This truth must be taught just as any other truth is taught. It must be learned just as every other truth is learned, and in order to imbed this truth in the minds of a generation of people, all the patience and effort necessary to implant any great truth widely in the minds of the people are necessary to make this a part of the fundamental thinking of any given generation of Christians.

Moreover this truth has more opposition than ordinary truths. All the native selfishness and avarice with which the human heart is possessed resist it. Human life has exerted itself in the accomplishment of what promised good to itself, and the acknowledgment of the duty in the sight of God to preach the gospel all over the world has not appealed to this element of human nature. Indeed the most unselfish and least apparently good thing to do is to give one's life and means to accomplish this end. Never while the world stands will unregenerate people acknowledge this duty. There is no place in the unregenerate soul where this seed truth will germinate, and the good soil of a truly regenerate heart will need much cultivation and care if the seed is productive of an abundant harvest. In our impatience we wonder that any Christian fails of a full recognition of the awfully solemn duty to heed the Lord's last commandment with all his heart, and soul. As well might we wonder that children are so hard to be made realize the good ultimate results of an education while they are yet being drilled in the rudiments, the final purpose of which they are utterly unable to realize. The one first great duty, then, that devolves upon those who recognize this doctrine is the employment of every means within their reach for the establishment in the minds of Christians the sublime fact that the Son of God meant what he said, and meant all that he said, stripping the commandment of every prejudice that fetters it or limits it in any particular whatever, making it the one naked, glorious truth that he would have us recognize and keep forever prominent, never forgetting for once that this is the great end to be reached. Tell it over and over again, print it in every page, preach it in every sermon, plan for it in every missionary organization. As persistently as provision is made for the teaching of the alphabet of our language and the multiplication table of our mathematics, should we provide for the constant and unremitting teaching of this single truth.

2 - Having established in the mind of a Christian clear and unmistakably the will of the Lord in this regard, and having stripped it

no question of personal pleasure or pain in the prospect, can affect it. There must stand out clear and well defined a moral obligation. It should come in every mind to a plain "Shall I, or shall I not"? the same question that confronted Adam in the Garden of Eden - obedience or disobedience, and the same question that confronts every human soul at every point of moral obligation. There is not a commandment in the decalogue the violation of which is any more guilt; there is not a sin known to human heart, any more clearly defined as sin. "All disobedience is sin". Now, whatever plans in the Providence of God we may inaugurate that will enable us to bring clearly to the minds and hearts of his people these truths so as to form in them a conscience about missions will have achieved the proper end.

3 - Having learned the two preceding lessons, there is one growing out of these two, of very peculiar interest. It is the method or means by which we are to carry out the Lord's will in the matter. It is not always true that the brother who has most to say about the methods has most devoutly learned the other two lessons. Like the child in the primary often turns over the leaves and seeks to recite lessons far beyond his present stage of learning, so do we. Not only this, but we often allow discussions about methods to obscure the fundamental truths just recited. Through these years of modern times the common sense and good judgment of the Sons of God have developed the methods this Convention has employed. They may not be the best methods in fulfillment of Spiritual direction, and yet in the opinion of the great bulk of our brotherhood, they do meet the Scriptural provision for carrying out the Saviour's commandment, and they meet it as nothing else that has ever been suggested can meet it. For my own part, I shall be content to allow any brethren to inaugurate, develop and perfect a better plan in accordance with the Scriptures, gladly lay down our present plan and accept theirs. It is said we have names to things that are not given us in the Scriptures, and that

the things we do have are in danger of becoming unscriptural; but they have not done so yet, and if under the grace of God, we shall exert as much prayer and effort to keep them Scriptural, as will be necessary to originate other methods, we may be well assured of their permanency. "He shall not strive nor cry, neither shall His voice be heard in the streets. He shall not quench the smoking flax nor break the bruised reed till He send forth judgment unto victory". With the most considerate respect for the opinions and preference of the humblest child of God who wishes co-operation with us in doing our Lord's will, we should prayerfully study his Word, seeking the divinely given method of missions.

In the onward march of the conquering army of the Lord, it grieves me to fear that many of the true soldiers of the cross are deprived of the joy of comradeship on account of the difference of opinion about the order of attack. But far more is there cause for lamentation over the hundreds who are loitering in the tents while "the hosts of sin are pressing hard" to drive us from the field.

### III. EXPERIENCE AND DUTY ACCORD WITH THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE

We stand for salvation. Significant appointment! Among all the objects for which human beings stand, among all the glorious purposes in human life, chief of all the aspirations that ever filled a human soul, Jesus Christ has made the object of our lives the greatest. Nothing else that engages the energies and activities of mankind is to be brought for one moment into comparison with this effort. Men have set for themselves tasks, aspiring to which have lifted themselves above the ordinary walks of men. The circumstances surrounding the peculiar call of the times in which men have lived, have made them well-nigh superhuman, as God and men have called for the activities and sacrifices that have settled the destinies of nations and opened a pathway for civilization, and yet nowhere in the canvass of the heavens, or the survey of the earth, or the traversing of the seas has there been found an object for the purposes of



human life comparable for a moment with that which Jesus Christ has set every redeemed soul, whether he be in the eyes of the world small or great. Subsidiary interests, varied in kind and multitudinous in number, will make claim upon us while life lasts. Many duties incidental will require our attention. We live in a world of common place things, and shall be engaged until the Master comes again in common duties, common trials and common toils, but the one all-absorbing, soul inspiring theme and purpose of the followers of Christ in this world is salvation unto the ends of the earth. All else incidental and secondary. Putting together the commandment of our Lord and the experiences of his redeemed children, to whom he gave this solemn trust, one would suppose there would be no difficulty in recognizing most fully the teachings of inspiration respecting the doctrines of grace. But alas! beyond running the gauntlet as all religious truth seems always to have done, these great and essential things have suffered obscuration.

1.- Total depravity. Whatever the aesthetics of modern thinking may require, and however prominent humanitarianism may become, and however lovely it may seem to speak always of the better things, it is not wise to shut our eyes to the truth that this world is lost - dead in trespasses and in sins. It is not my purpose to enter into long discussion of the federal headship, or either the physical or spiritual transmission of guilt. With that the books on theory may contend. By whatsoever means it has come to be true, it becomes us to confront the fact that we stand on the brink of the spiritual sepulchre of a world, or at least at the bier on which is borne to eternal burial the sons and daughters of Adams race. We are not sent to warn men that they possibly some time may be lost, but are charged with the awfully serious business of undertaking to awaken from the dead, men who are already lost. Not that a part of the human race is lost, nor that all of the human race is partly lost, but that all are truly lost. If God's word shall mean anything of comfort and consolation in those

passages that speak joy and hope, so should its awful sentence of condemnation have weight of meaning. If there is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, then there is now condemnation to them who are not in Christ Jesus. The Son of God has as truly said, "He that believeth not shall be damned," as he has said "He that believeth shall be saved". Modern literature, and, to a dangerous degree, modern preaching, has obscured the yawning pit of condemnation.

God's word of wrath against sin has been neglected, and in its stead appeal is made to the better elements of human nature - alas, sometimes to rekindling of the spark of divinity said to exist in every human soul. A spacious plea is made for the heathen who lives up to the best lights before him, and, whether intentionally or not, often morality is encouraged to boast of its upright life, and is set forward as an example by which men are to become pleasing to one another and acceptable to God. Never until we return to the solemn acknowledgment of the doctrine of total depravity will there be Christians who feel in their hearts an overwhelming sense of duty to God and their fellowmen to exert their utmost ability to save them by the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. No amount of technical criticism or quibbling about the rationale of depravity should be allowed to obscure the fact. Let there stand out in our minds the soul curdling truth that unredeemed humanity is now and forever lost.

2 - There must also be an adequate salvation. Over against the lost condition of men the divine Scriptures place a wonderful Saviour, and in the life history of the Saviour - the spectacle of men, the tragedy of worlds and the sacrifice of the universe - he is given as God's remedy for sin. Jesus Christ bleeding on Calvary is the only adequate hope of a soul trembling on the brink of eternal woe. "And I, if I be lifted up from earth, will draw all men unto me". If it be true that the cultivation and discipline of the human mind and heart will accomplish such an evolution in human character as to produce life out of death, why then,

Oh my God, this Agony in Gethsemane, and this death on Calvary? If Jesus Christ's death were not essential in the covenant of God for the redemption of sinners, and if he did not suffer their guilt, Oh why did his bursting heart exclaim "My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me"?

If men are not much fallen; if their condition is only tolerably bad; if this world is only in slight disharmony; if men have deviated only slightly from parallel lines; if we are not lost utterly, but are simply wandering in the desert; if we are not blind, but only somewhat dizzy of sight; if we are not deaf, but only heavy of hearing; if we are not dead, but only numbed and chilled; then possibly moral training, culture and discipline may bring back the strayed; may open wide and clear the vision; may quicken the hearing and warm into geniality the benumbed sensibilities. But do the Scriptures teach this to be true? Do they not bring to us the fact that all our moral sensibilities are utterly distorted and dead, and like Lazarus in the grave awakened by the authoritative voice of the Son of God speaking by the right of Calvary into life from the dead.

Most assuredly Jesus' death was an awfully necessary part of his wonderful redemptive work. If there is anything made plain in God's truth, it is the fact that Jesus Christ's face, saddened and tearful, was turned ever towards Calvary. Over and over again, grief stricken and sin burdened, Jesus' utterance indicated that the weight of that malignant death on Calvary rested upon them. Now if Christ died merely as a hero, if he died simply as a martyr of truth, if he died to set men an example of how a man ought to die, why does not God say this when revealing to us the dreadful purport of the tragedy? What he does say is sublimely indicative of this purpose of the cross. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life". "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful even unto death". "I have a

baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished" Oh cruel cross of Calvary, thy blackened shadow fell along the pathway of Jesus Christ from Jordan's bank to Golgotha's knoll, and out of the shadows of forked tongues of the serpents of death gleamed in terror all the way. It is told by some one that in the construction of the carpenter's shop of Joseph of Nazareth, when the skylight was finished two pieces of timber were so left that their shadow made a cross on the work bench in front of the young carpenter. I suppose this to be merely a legend, and yet, Oh suffering redeemer was there ever an hour from the first announcement of thy public ministry until noon on black Friday, that the shadow of the cross did not sadden thy soul?

It is not my purpose to speak at length of the extent of the atonement. That might be an interesting subject at another time. But if ever we are to be great missionaries and carry out in any worthy sense the purpose of our glorious Redeemer, not a jot or tittle of the magnitude of His suffering or the depths of His agony can be lost. If the religion of Jesus Christ is something better than something else, if it is simply an improvement on humanity, well may our ardor cool. The salvation we are set to proclaim, the light we are to hold up before this world and the glorious Gospel of redemption and life that we are to preach in Jesus' name is the one unique thing in this universe, sanctified and dignified by the death to the Son of God on Calvary as the only provision of Divine wisdom by which men could be saved. Hear him as he agonizes in Gethsemane, saying "Father if it be possible, let this cup pass". If it be possible to save men in any other way, to fulfill Divine purpose by any other means, to keep the Divine covenant apart from this agonizing experience, let it pass.

If ever in our minds there is a shadow of doubt that the atonement of our Saviour is a reality and a real necessity in the salvation of the sinner, the power that illuminates Christian effort and fires the heart

of Christian enthusiasm has been put out. The soul that is not kindled at Calvary can never be the light of God, blazing in heathen darkness.

"There is a fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,  
Lose all their guilty stains".

Take this thought out of the gospel we preach and the system is no more than a plan of political government or an order of social life, and while we may become in some sense civilized, and come forth as philanthropists and benefactors of mankind, we shall be impotent and helpless to lift up a lost world. If Anthony declared that Caesar's wounds had tongues, what may be said of Jesus Christ's? The nail prints in his hands the thorn on his forehead and the spear mark in his side give point and power to the truth of his grace. We are not sent forth as apologists, nor are we to compromise. It is ours to preach the gospel of life through Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen Saviour, and only when we thus preach have we the right to expect the presence and power of the divine Spirit of God, who is given to emphasize what is said in the hearts of those who hear. A Spirit filled ministry is a missionary ministry, imbued with the life and death of the Son of God. Speaking with all reverence, the divine Spirit can make no practical use for salvation of the man who "bears not the marks of the Lord Jesus".

As to the extent of the atonement, let none of us fear that God's provision of extent will fall of the fullness of his commandment. If he has said to us, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature", let us not fear that the atonement will be ineffectual where we go. Let us not imagine that there is danger of our speaking without the lines of God's gracious provision for sinners. It is ours to tell the glad story of redeeming grace, and it belongs to the commission of the Spirit of God to apply the work of Jesus Christ, and about this we need not give ourselves chief concern. Let it be ours to bear the blood stained banner forth and prayerfully and confidently let us leave it with God's Spirit to apply the efficacy of that death of Calvary for sinners. On cross of

Christ! A gleaming radiance, without the cloud that hung over Golgotha, has streamed across the ages, and never will there be doubt enough or darkness enough to obscure its quenchless light. "Jesus saves Oh wondrous story!" The happiest reflection that comes to us with regard to the loved ones that is gone before is the record of their salvation by simple trust in Jesus Christ. The sweetest comfort that comes to the aching heart overwhelmed with the duties and trials of life, is the abiding faith we have in the present power of the Son of God to save. The greatest heritage that we can leave to our children is the assurance of this efficacy of the blood of Christ to cleanse them from all unrighteousness. The most heavenly enthusiasm that thrills our souls is the privilege of commending to other people the joyous hope of our Saviour's Love.

#### IV. EXPERIENCE, DUTY AND DOCTRINE ARE INCLUDED IN DIVINE PURPOSE

Note how this remarkable circumstance about which we are speaking concludes, "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed" Possibly one of the weaknesses of our representation of the Son of God in the world is that we have been disposed to ignore one element of divine truth in the advocacy of another. It will not avail to magnify the duty and privilege of the children of God to carry the gospel to the lost by slurring or ignoring the eternal sovereignty of Almighty God. Our Convention sits to-night in the heart of a territory of country that has been divided and weakened, contending for and against this sublime truth. A large element of our people who have magnified the doctrine of sovereign grace have done <sup>it</sup> at the expense of sovereign duty, and others, unable to comprehend the relation of the two, have magnified Christian duty at the expense of sovereign grace. God, more willing to place his approval upon the progressive, has added his sanction to the preaching of the men who have emphasized duty so that those who have laid the heavier emphasis upon sovereignty have greatly diminished from the day of their separation. While we may not be able to harmonize human freedom with divine

sovereignty, what objection can there be to a fuller recognition of the simply sublimity of both.

When will we learn that the sovereign purpose of God is inclusive rather than exclusive. Our disposition toward this great truth of God's word has been one of dread and fear. When will we know that it <sup>is</sup> only our Father's will set forth in definite terms and not the iron fate of a despot. Election, predestination and foreordination are words emphatic of God's holy purpose of good. If we could only see the great loving heart of our Lord couched in these terms, how different they would appear. The infinite love of God in heavenly harmony with infinite wisdom and justice result in divine purpose - the very best possible purpose, and that is God's purpose. His divine character expresses itself in an ordination, and that is divine foreordination. God's holiness expressed in accord with man's nature results in election, and that is eternal election. Let us widen out the meaning of these deep things. And instead of restricting sovereignty to the election, predestination and calling of the few, give it a meaning commensurate with the commission. God is not a dreamer. Jesus Christ has not sent us outside the limits of electing love, nor ordered us beyond the lines of atoning mercy. The Lord sweeps us out into the high seas of his glory and enable us, with Paul, truly to exclaim "Oh the depths of riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out. For of Him and through him and to him are all things; to whom be glory forever".

#### CONCLUSION

Patience, my Brethren! The kingdom is coming. The Saviour said to his weeping disciples; "I will not leave you comfortless". "We fight not as they who beat the air". The Holy Spirit is in the world, and is using us to teach the world of sin, of righteousness, of judgment, and he is not brought to extremity.

These years of faithful service of our fathers shall not fail of a

rich fruitage. "Blessed is he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, for he shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him".

We have been kept in this kindergarten and primary what seems to us too long, but the time is coming when we shall have something of a missionary education. The Sunbeams, the Sunday-school and the Seminary are destined to give us a generation of Christians who will have received a drilling in the teaching of our Lord on this subject far in advance of former generations. Oh blessed day of grace! Next to the coming of Our Lord himself, when he shall come in power and great glory, shall be the day of missions. When the glad hearts of the saved of the Lord shall take up the Master's bequest to the world - the glorious heritage of gospel privilege; and carry it forth to every nation and kindred and people and tongue, "Angel" and its kindred "evangel" are two of the sweetest words in our language. And well may the words have similar origin, for the evangel of earth and the angel of heaven are kindred spirits.

John in his vision on Patmos saw an angel flying through heaven carrying the everlasting gospel to every nation and kindred and people and tongue. Sweet angel of vision, I would not detain thy heavenly flight nor stay thy rapid wing, but I would have thee hover over this assembly of the saints of God and breathe on us until we shall know that thou art only a divinely inspired pen picture of ourselves, when we shall indeed become the evangelists of God, carrying the everlasting gospel to every nation and kindred and tongue. Thou canst not preach repentance and faith as we can, Oh angel. Thou hast never been lost in sin. We know a love thou canst not learn. The love of a sinner saved by grace.