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“ FROM THE ALLEGHENIES TO THE ROCKIES ”

THE PLANTING OF THE CHURCH
IN THE VALLEY OF THE
MISSISSIPPI

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Mr. Chairman, Fathers, and Brethren:—

THE subject assigned me on this occasion is one requiring volumes to present it adequately, rather than a brief address. It has, first of all, a territorial and physical magnitude that is impressive. The Mississippi Valley embraces that vast area which lies between the Alleghenies on the east, the Rocky Mountains on the west, the Great Lakes on the north, and the Gulf of Mexico on the south. Within these boundaries lies the largest and most important valley in the world; that of the Nile, the Euphrates, or of the Rhine, famous in history, sinks into insignificance in comparison with it. There is none other equal to it in extent, richness of soil, and variety of products ministering to the wants of civilized man. It contains a larger area than all Europe, and its natural resources are practically unlimited. It has already become the world's farm, its greatest wheat field, corn field, and cotton field. Out of its inexhaustible mines comes the larger portion of the gold, silver, iron, copper, zinc, and lead that supplies the demands of the world's commerce and manufactures.

The great cities of the seaboard are nourished out of its material fullness, and the marts of the world look to it for their supplies. It is physically the heart of the continent, and animated as it now is with human life, its mighty throbs measure the march of our material progress, and they are felt throughout the world.

The familiar name for this vast region is the West, and so dominating is this title that we speak of the northern portion as the Northwest, and the great south land is called the Southwest. No thoughtful reader of history, no observer of human affairs, can fail to see in this great valley a stage prepared for new and wonderful manifestations of God's purpose concerning men. There are material as well as spiritual factors in the development of the kingdom of God. Our biblical faith teaches us that God's eternal purpose in Christ Jesus holds all things and all events in its embrace, and rules them in harmony with itself. When he drew the lines of the Valley of the Mississippi, traced the channels of its rivers, wrought through long ages for the enrichment of its soil, stored the treasures of gold, silver, iron, and lead in its hills and mountains, planted its forests, and spread abroad its prairies, it was with reference to his kingdom. No one who has studied the history of the settlement of North America can have failed to notice the striking order of events by which it came to be the inheritance of the children of the Reformation; and so, a land of liberty and gospel institutions instead of a Spanish colony poisoned and blighted by Roman ecclesiasticism.

Not less significant were the events which led to the final and permanent settlement of the West. In 1682, less than sixty years after the foundation of New York, La Salle, in the name of the French king, took possession of the region from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, extending eastward as far as the head of the Ohio and westward to an undefined extent. For nearly one hundred years the lilies of France floated in undisputed sovereignty over this vast territory. The entrances to it were jealously guarded. There were four of them. One was through the great chain of the Northern Lakes and by the head waters of the Mississippi. The French and the Jesuits held the key to it. The second was through the well-worn Indian trail along the southern shore of Lake Erie and leading to the region now known as Ohio, but the war-like Iroquois were its custodians and forbade the advance of the emigrant. The third was down the Ohio River, but the French and the Jesuits were at Fort Duquesne. The fourth was through the mouth of the Mississippi River, where the same watchful guards kept out all who were not in sympathy with France and Roman ecclesiasticism. But while France held the territory she did not occupy it. Her representatives kept watch over it until the chosen people should enter in and take possession. A monarchy that could devise and execute the massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day, and kill or drive into exile thousands of its best subjects for worshipping God according to the dictates of their own consciences, was not the one destined to rule the New World.

Most significant is the way by which the West was entered by the English-speaking and Protestant people. It was through the heart of the Alleghenies into the region of Kentucky and Tennessee; and the men who dared to go that perilous way were the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians.

President Roosevelt, in his history of the Winning of the West, writes thus: "The backwoodsmen were Americans by birth and parentage and of a mixed race, but the dominant strain in their blood was that of the Presbyterian Irish, the Scotch-Irish, as they were often called. Full credit has been awarded the Roundhead and the Cavalier for their leadership in our history, but it is doubtful if we have wholly realized the importance of the part played by that stern and virile people, the Irish, whose preachers taught the creed of Calvin and Knox. They formed the kernel of the distinctively and intensely American stock who were the pioneers of our people in the march westward, the vanguard of the army of fighting settlers who with axe and rifle won their way from the Alleghenies to the Rio Grande and the Pacific. The West was won by those who have been rightly called the Roundheads of the South, the same men who before any others declared for American independence. The creed of the backwoodsmen, so far as they had any, was Presbyterian."

All this meant much for the work of home missions and the future of our country. In 1802, when the Home Mission Committee was organized, Kentucky had half as many people as Massachusetts; and Tennessee had

already been admitted into the Union as a State. At the opening of the nineteenth century there began a movement which has had in its far-reaching results a greater effect upon the destiny of the world than all the wars of Continental Europe for the past three hundred years. It was the migration to the West.

Prior to that time the region north of the Ohio River was almost uninhabited by white people; and west of the Father of Waters stretched a vast country as undefined as the fabulous realms of Prester John. Through various agencies the door to this region was thrown open. In 1803 the French flag was lowered and the Stars and Stripes lifted in its stead on the western banks of the Mississippi. At once a great movement of the people westward began. Its advance was like a flood of inundating waters, carrying with it things good and bad. It grew and gathered, not only from the eastern States, but also from the lands beyond the ocean. There came Irishmen, Scotchmen, Englishmen, French, Swedes, Norwegians, Hungarians, Germans, Italians, Hollanders, Russians, a mighty and mixed multitude in a ceaseless and ever-enlarging procession, to build their homes in the fertile West. It was a movement as big with destiny to this land of ours as was that of the Goths and Vandals to Italy and the old Roman Empire.

It was at the beginning of this movement that our Board of Home Missions was organized. True, prior to 1802, heroic and self-denying missionaries like McMillan and Beatty had gone to the frontiers to look after "the lost sheep in the wilderness." Presbyteries

and synods had carefully and prayerfully considered the needs of the new settlements, but now, as moved by some prophetic instinct, the whole Church, through the General Assembly, pledged itself to this work; and, God be praised, from that day until now there has been no backward step or faltering in the work then undertaken.

The organization then made has grown from strength to strength, and in variety of functions, so that now it manifests itself not only in home missions, but in the work for the Freedmen, Sabbath schools, the Board of Publication, the Board of Church Election, the Board of Aid for Schools and Colleges, and the Woman's Board of Home Missions. That such a work was demanded by the West is so evident that no one will question its necessity, but not all, even at this late date, realize its supreme importance, and how much it has had to do with the best development of our country and the evangelization of the world.

Much has been said concerning the perils that threatened our country during the dark days of the Civil War. We honor the men who in the hour of their country's peril hazarded their lives in its defense; and we build monuments to those who died on the battlefield. But no less deserving of honor are those missionaries of our own branch of the Church, and of others, also, who went forth in the name of Christ and under his banner to meet the perils that threatened our country and our civilization during the settlement of the West. The early settlers were a brave, hardy,

and courageous people. Too much cannot be said in praise of certain traits of their character; the wild freedom which they enjoyed and the primitive conditions of life in which they lived tended to make them sturdy, independent, and self-reliant. But that same freedom also led to lawlessness. The same evil results appeared which ever manifest themselves in sinful human nature when man is left unrestrained to do that which seems good in his own eyes. The restraints of society under the influence of Christianity were not felt by them. The visible Church with its ordinances and testimony for God was not there to speak to the conscience. As a consequence many of the frontier settlements were characterized by lawlessness, vice, and crime. Wickedness became bold and boastful and infidelity spread with startling rapidity. In the isolated settlements, under the dominion of ignorance, vice, and irreligion, the people were fast sinking into barbarism. This was true not only of the rural settlements, but also of the towns. Trace back the history of the great cities of the West, the equal to-day of any on our Continent in intelligence and morality, and you will come to a chaotic period when lawlessness and vice in every form abounded, when violence was prevalent, when manners were coarse, and speech indecent and profane. Good men were filled with dismay by what they saw; some yielded to the evil contagion; some were vexed in their souls, but, like Lot in Sodom, remained quiet; and some, girding themselves for the conflict, said, "A change must be made or society will perish."

The danger was real and widespread. The incoming of a certain class of emigrants from abroad only added to it. So great was the peril that earnest patriots and Christians of seventy-five years ago were filled with consternation over the conditions. And what was it that saved the civilization of the West? What arrested the downward tendency and made the progress of that region the wonder of the world? Doubtless certain physical agencies wrought together to this end. Steamboats, railroads, and the telegraph conquered time and space and nullified the baneful effects of isolation. They helped to make the West feel the power of a common life, and brought it into direct sympathy with the civilization of the East. But more powerful than anything else was the work of the Church through its various missionary agencies. The true winning of the West was accomplished by the missionaries of the cross of Christ. Will any one dare say that the Valley of the Mississippi would be what it is to-day, in all that gives it true greatness, honor, and power, without the gospel of Christ? The condition of the unevangelized portions of our country gives the lie to such an assertion. It is too late in the day to question the power of the gospel to civilize men, to restrain vice, to purify public morals, to promote intelligence, to give peace and order in society, and to reproduce in man the lost image of God. With the eloquent Webster we can say, "Where have the waters of civilization sprung up save in the steps of the Christian ministry?"

The men who went forth to plant the Church in the

Valley of the Mississippi are worthy of remembrance on an occasion like this. They were men, for the most part, of superior qualifications for their work. It is true that there has been a great variety of missionary laborers in the West. Some were zealous but uneducated, and often kindled the fires of religious fanaticism ; some had only a rudimentary knowledge of the gospel, but were animated by a love for Christ and the souls of men that served to make them successful evangelists. But it can be said of the missionaries of the Presbyterian Church that, joined with their love for Christ, was a thorough mental training and equipment which fitted them for special and important service in the upbuilding of the West. In the early part of the last century they, more than any others, were the Christian instructors of the people. They were graduates of the best eastern colleges, and had received careful instruction in theology. The policy of the Presbyterian Church in requiring an educated ministry has an ample justification in the work done by her home missionaries in the West.

Take a single case as an illustration : In the early part of the last century there was a graduate of Yale College under Timothy Dwight who studied theology at Princeton. His first charge was an important one in the State of New York, and from it he was invited to the old Allen Street Church in the city of New York, then in the meridian of its power. His ministrations were most acceptable, and gracious revivals attended his preaching, but his thoughts were ever turning toward the great field in the West. He heard the cry of its

destitution as did Paul the voice of the man of Macedonia. One day Dr. Peters, Secretary of Home Missions, came to him with a call that was backed by the wants of thousands of miners and merchants who were living on the shores of the Upper Mississippi, without a church or a school. He promptly responded, "I go, sir," rejoicing like the great apostle to find an opportunity where he could build on no other man's foundation. With a promptness and boldness that ever characterized his actions he immediately set forth on his journey to his distant field of labor. The little surplus that remained, after purchasing a slender outfit for himself and family, he gave to the American Tract Society as a parting gift. Twenty-seven days after leaving New York he landed in Galena, and the next day being the Sabbath, he gathered a congregation in a large dining room and there began the first preaching of the gospel of Christ in northern Illinois. His field of labor was a typical western one of that date. Galena had a miscellaneous population gathered from Europe and the eastern States. Some few may have been professors of religion in their old homes, but they were "blighted and famished Christians." The vast majority were utterly irreligious. "Sabbath-breaking, profanity, and gambling had obtained an alarming and sickening prevalence." There was no church of any denomination, Protestant or Catholic, within two hundred miles. The great Northwest was still occupied by Indians; the war-trail of Black Hawk had not disappeared from northern Illinois; the settlement at Chicago had not yet commenced;

another great missionary, Jeremiah Porter, had not as yet come to the garrison at Fort Dearborn. He was alone in the wide field. He wrote, "Here is opened a great and effectual door to preach the gospel."

But there were many adversaries. A less resolute man would have left the field, but his faith never faltered. Coming one day to a bluff that commanded a wide view of the Upper Mississippi he alighted from his horse, and, uncovering his head, lifted his hand to heaven and said, "I take possession of this land for Christ." The act of La Salle in raising the French flag in 1682 and taking possession of the valley in the name of the French king was not so significant. This bold pioneer of the cross, burning with the spirit of conquest, had a royal mandate from his King for his act. Nor was it an idle or enthusiastie boast on the part of the missionary. He remained to hold the ground, and with unfaltering faith and enduring patience he faced the difficulties before him. It took three years of toil before he could organize a church of six members, and of the original six only two were from Galena; the others resided outside, from five to forty miles distant. He went abroad to every settlement and village within a radius of one hundred miles preaching the word. But these years of toilsome plowing and sowing were followed by a bounteous harvest. Revival succeeded revival, during which two hundred and fifty-six persons were added to Christ in his church. He did not despise the day of small things, but counted himself honored in being permitted to lay the foundations of a Christian

civilization. To him the school was the ally of the Church, and education the handmaid to religion. In faith and prayer he laid the foundations of three colleges and two ladies' seminaries, which exist to-day, monuments to his foresight, his wisdom, and his enlightened public spirit. Associated with him in his labors and trials was his accomplished wife, a typical western missionary's wife, educated, refined, gentle, patient, heroic. Their three children died in infancy, but in their broad and practical charity they made their house an orphans' home. They reared and educated twelve orphan children, all of whom became useful and honored members of society. In addition, they helped to educate nine young men for the ministry, and this was done on a salary of \$600 a year. They studied economy that they might be the helpers of others. A pioneer home missionary bending all his energies to develop his own field, he was also the friend of foreign missions, and aided his people in contributing to that cause. In his old age, in his seventy-fourth year, he was an active and efficient superintendent of home missions in the Northwest, still abundant in labors. He did not stop to rest until his Lord called him to his eternal home and reward November 8th, 1868.

Such is the mere outline of the life and labors of a western missionary, Aratus Kent. He has left for himself a monument more enduring than brass or marble. He still lives in the widespread community upon which he left the impress of his self-sacrificing life. But his name is only one of scores and hundreds equally

worthy of remembrance and honor that could be mentioned.

Ohio can tell of James Hoge and David Badger, and their apostolic zeal; Kentucky, of David Rice and Cleland; Tennessee, of Doak, the educator, and of Blackburn and Nelson who, as burning and shining lights, went through state after state, and from settlement to settlement, kindling the fire of spiritual revival until it swept like a mighty conflagration over the land. Indiana can tell of Father Dickey; and Missouri, of Giddings, Cochran, and Finley; Kansas, of the great home missionary leader, Timothy Hill, the father of western synods, who has left an enduring monument for himself in the presbyteries and churches of three States.

But time fails me to repeat the names of those old worthies; they shine as stars of the first magnitude in the spiritual heavens. But clustering around them are others less conspicuous in service, but equally faithful in work and testimony, for whom earth had nothing great enough to reward them. To them belongs the high honor of having laid the foundations upon which others built. They were the brave leaders who carried the banners of the gospel to the frontiers, took possession of the land, and held it for liberty, for Christian civilization, and for Christ. We do not properly estimate the difficulties of their task and the sublime heroism with which it was accomplished, if we think only or chiefly of the physical privations or of the dangers which they faced in the wilderness. It is true that they

lived on most meager salaries, and suffered the hardships of early western life, but so did others. It is true that they were in perils in the wilderness, and heard the war-cries of savage foes, but so did others. We cannot claim pre-eminence for them on account of these things, save as they endured them, not for personal gain, but for Christ's sake, and that they might save their fellow-men. They went forth not to conquer the wilderness, but to fight the battles of faith, to face the demons of darkness, ignorance, superstition, vice, unbelief, and irreligion, more terrible and harder to overcome than the wild beasts or hostile savages of the primeval forests. It is difficult for us, enjoying as we do the benefits of a Christian civilization, to realize the conditions of society that confronted them, and how hard it was to keep from despair in view of the obstacles before them. That they won at all is due to the power and grace of God, but none the less is honor due his faithful servants who believed in the power of his gospel to overcome all evil and to save men. In their preaching they used the terms of the old theology because these terms expressed their convictions. They were not to them worn-out or exaggerated phrases. They saw sin, man's ruin, his need, and the greatness and sovereignty of grace with such clearness and fullness of vision that the old terms alone could express what they saw. It is to be feared that in many cases defective and not clearer vision is the reason for the modern demand for new terms; and that what is really wanted is not the old faith in new phrases, but a new

one in its own appropriate speech. Certain it is that these old conquering missionaries were not anxious to make the gospel acceptable to the people by preaching it in terms agreeable to the natural man.

They came to godless men with a message from God, calling them to repentance and faith. They preached the utter ruin of human nature through sin; they set forth in plainest terms the immutable law of God, and summoned their hearers to its bar to hear the dreadful condemnation that rested upon them. They made the thunder of the violated law to resound in their consciences until they cried out in anguish of soul: then they pointed them to the cross, the only refuge and hiding place for the guilty, a sweet and gracious manifestation of divine love. Say what we will about it in these days when a rose-scented and cultured liberalism would persuade us that sin is only a temporary defect and hell but an ugly dream, this was the preaching that, under God, saved and regenerated society in the West. These missionaries were, first of all, preachers of the word, ambassadors for Christ beseeching men to be reconciled to God, but they were also men of enlarged public spirit, concerned for the establishment of a Christian civilization. The doctrines which they preached were those which ever tend most powerfully to the establishment of pure morality, justice, and liberty among men. Their Presbyterianism represented the very spirit of free institutions and of stable self-government; and especially were they concerned for the sacred cause of education on the basis of Christianity. They planted the school

alongside the church. It is pathetic to read of their tireless and self-sacrificing struggles to secure academies and colleges for the higher education of the people. With a statesmanlike foresight for the future they laid in prayer and faith the foundations of institutions that have become leading educational centers in the West. There is not a college in the Mississippi Valley over fifty years old that does not owe its origin, either directly or indirectly, to the labors of the missionaries.

But how can we adequately measure the results of their labors during the last one hundred years? We can point to communities that once were scenes of violence and crime, where vice flaunted itself with unblushing effrontery, now fair and peaceful, adorned by the homes of God-fearing, intelligent, and law-abiding people, and confidently say, "that but for the labors of the home missionaries, who brought to them the purifying and exalting message of the gospel, they would have remained in their degradation." We can name schools and colleges and seminaries by the scores and hundreds whose early annals record the names of our missionaries as among their founders. Of the four thousand churches of our order in the Mississippi Valley, we can say that 90 per cent of them were organized by our missionaries or supported in their infancy by the funds of the Board. We can say that through this early planting we have now a harvest of nearly 500,000 communicants, almost one-half of the present membership of the whole Church, in the Valley of the Mississippi. The churches represented by them

contributed last year \$352,000 to the Board of Home Missions and \$269,000 to Foreign Missions. But this does not tell all. There are some results that can be tabulated in figures, measured by dollars, or by pounds or lineal measure; but not so with spiritual forces and results. Even for that most spiritual of all material forces, electricity, a new terminology had to be invented, and we measure it by ohms and ampères.

But the terms have not yet been invented that will measure the power of the spirit of missions in its results upon society and the souls of men. We can see enough that is permanent, tangible, visible, and useful to justify the work of home missions, and to lead us to honor the men and women who were engaged in it.

To serve society in any way that advances its material interests is praiseworthy, but to serve it in such a way as to promote its moral and spiritual advancement is to render the highest possible service, and to confer enduring honor upon him who does it. There are many methods by which this can be done; but none are more directly engaged in it than those who as missionaries bear the tidings of God's love to sinful men. Their work extends not only to the individuals whom they meet personally, but it reaches on through the coming generations and breaks through the boundaries of time and space. All honor to them!

Our country holds in grateful remembrance the men who in the hour of her peril went to the front, hazard-ing their lives for what they believed to be humanity's great cause; she builds monuments in memory of those

who fell in the great conflict, and places upon the pension roll the enfeebled survivors of the Grand Army. Not less worthy of remembrance are those who went to the frontiers to engage in a struggle that was fraught with life or death to our country. They were as patriotic as they were Christian. For the most part they lived in obscurity and died in poverty. The country builds no monuments to their memory, nor do they need any beyond those that now stand to their honor. The countless churches, whose spires point to the heavens, from the Alleghenies to the Rocky Mountains; the schools and colleges that shine throughout the land like stars in the sky of night; the redeemed communities that rejoice in the blessings of the gospel—these are their monuments, these the symbols of their reward. Their names are on the pension rolls of the great King who ever crowns his faithful soldiers, and who never fails to reward, in the abundance of his grace, the lowliest service done in his name.

The history of home missions in the West readily divides itself into three periods. The first is from the beginning of the last century to the year 1838. That was a time of experiment, of organization, and of rapid growth. The various independent home missionary societies were brought together into one, with a national scope and with increased power. The growth of the Church in the West was rapid. Churches were multiplied in every direction, and the spirit of religious zeal was strong and active. It was a time of great opportunity for our Church; the empire of the West was

within our grasp ; alas, that we failed in the supreme hour.

The second period is from 1838 to 1870. It was a time of divisions, with its strifes and losses. "Old School" and "New School," "Northern" and "Southern," are names that belong to that period. Home mission work was arrested by ecclesiastical strife, and the strength of the Church was spent in building up rival organizations in the same community. While we halted to impress upon our people the supreme importance of certain distinctions in theology, other denominations outran us. There are some very salutary lessons to be learned from this sad period of alienation and division, lessons of warning as well as instruction.

The third period began with the reunion of 1870. The reunited Church addressed itself at once with increased vigor to the evangelization of the West. Another great opportunity had come. The close of the Civil War, establishing our national unity, saw the commencement of a new emigration to the West, and of a marvelous development of its resources. There were two great and providential leaders in the Board of Home Missions at that time, Henry Kendall and Cyrus Dickson : one, cool, resolute, and statesmanlike in his plans of action ; the other, warm hearted, full of fiery zeal and impassioned devotion to the cause. One was the complement of the other in the sphere of leadership. One was the Grant, the other the Sherman, of the great campaign in the West. One was like Moses, sagacious, determined, and slow of speech ; the other, as Aaron,

eloquent of tongue. What was done under their leadership is so manifest in its greatness and power that there is no need to dwell upon it. They sowed liberally, and the abundant harvest which the Church is now reaping justifies what they did. The period which they inaugurated has not yet closed. The work planned on so broad a scale by them has fallen into other and, we believe, most capable hands for its administration. But it remains for the Church to realize more fully and clearly the magnitude of the unfinished work. Never was there a time when there were more urgent reasons that it should be carried on aggressively, courageously, and with abounding liberality than now.

It is true that the old conditions have changed. The frontiers, of which so much has been said, are gone, but the need for evangelization has not disappeared. On account of the rapid increase of population it is greater than ever. The vast field of the West has been inclosed, and the work lies at our door. Our cities and towns, growing with amazing rapidity, are as truly mission fields as were the old-time frontiers, and there are unevangelized regions with a population tenfold greater than those that enlisted the labors and prayers of the Church fifty years ago. It would be easy, did time permit, to mention scores and hundreds of localities where there are open doors to preach the gospel, but which have not been entered because missionaries could not be sent. I could readily speak of the vast tide of foreign emigration pouring into this country, enough at the present rate to make a city the size of New York in

a period of five years, and the larger portion of this emigration finds its way to the West.

But let us turn from this and consider some of the reasons that should lead us to a profounder interest in the work of home evangelization. In this great commercial metropolis of our country, where men of enterprise are on the alert to do all that will promote the interest of commerce and trade, home missions ought to have special consideration on the ground of material advantages resulting from it, even if there were none other. It can readily be demonstrated that the gospel of Jesus Christ in its practical outworking in society encourages thrift and industry, and creates the highest order of civilization. Every great business house in this city can give the difference between the commercial rating of an evangelized and an unevangelized community. Also it would be easy to bring forward the reasons that should lead every American citizen, who cares for the welfare of his country, to take a profound interest in this work. Political economy never found a better rule for securing the public welfare than that one given by the inspired law-giver of Israel, which is the ancient charter of home missions: "Set your heart unto all the words which I testify among you this day, . . . all the words of this law. For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life: and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land." It requires no prophetic inspiration to affirm without a doubt that the life and glory of our nation depend entirely upon the continuance and spread of the gospel

among our people. That gospel gave us our civilization and our free institutions, and if the day should ever come when it is no longer regarded by us, on that day our doom will be sealed: however brilliant the first pages of our history, the last will be the saddest in the annals of time, for they will not only register the judgments of God upon a people who knew not the day of their visitation, but they will also record the final overthrow of the best hopes of men.

But there are higher and more urgent reasons for the prosecution of the work of home missions. The first is the absolute need for it. That gospel, in which you and I believe and on which we base our hopes of eternal life, comes to us with the assertion of a most solemn fact. It is that all men, cultured or uncultured, are under the power of sin, and unless saved by divine grace are certain to be lost eternally in the misery and shame of sin. From this condition there is no escape except by the way of God's providing, which is through Jesus Christ. The wretched and hopeless condition of men without the gospel is revealed in part by what can be seen in our own land. There are dark places, hideous sores on the public body, localities where vice reigns, and where as a consequence human nature is stripped of all its fairness. But it is to be feared that this sad fact of man's utter ruin is not clearly realized by multitudes who call themselves Christians. There is a widely prevalent skepticism concerning the condition of men without faith in Christ, which paralyzes missionary effort and leads many to justify their indifference con-

cerning the religious instruction of others. It was this urgent need that called the Son of God from heaven to earth. "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." It was the conviction that men were perishing in sin, and that there was no other deliverer for them than through Christ, that led the apostles forth on their glorious errand, and gave such earnestness and power to their preaching. And this same conviction must take hold of our hearts, fathers and brethren, if we would have a profound and heartfelt interest in the evangelization of our land and of the world. It is in view of this need that the great and last command of our Lord is given to us to go forth and preach his gospel.

A second reason that should enlist our larger coöperation is the greatness and glory of the work itself. It is not anything common or unimportant that it calls us to do. It has indeed lower and temporal aims; it proposes to reform society, to help the poor, to educate the ignorant, to refine manners and customs, to secure just laws and establish liberty and justice—in short, to help man in his earthly lot. But it aims at vastly more; all this is only incidental. It seeks above all to carry on and complete Christ's work; it calls men to glory, honor, and immortality in the presence of God. The great aim of mission work everywhere is to bring men into the fellowship of the Son of God. It is to make those who have been ruined by sin heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. Was there ever a more glorious mission assigned to mortals? There are causes

that have enlisted the efforts and kindled the enthusiasm of men to the highest degree. For national independence, for human rights, for the cause of liberty, men have made costly sacrifices, borne hardships, and freely shed their blood. But what are all these things when weighed against the cause in which the Son of God labored and died, the cause in which the missionary labors? To build a church in a destitute neighborhood, to establish a Sunday school among the ignorant and neglected, to send a missionary to preach the gospel in some new settlement, may seem in the judgment of the men of the world a small matter devoid of honor. But when it is seen in connection with the great end Christ had before him, the lifting up of men into his eternal greatness, how unspeakably important and glorious it is!

Another reason that should lead us to engage with renewed ardor in the evangelization of our land is the certainty of success. I do not mean to say that this assurance should be a chief motive. We ought to engage in it irrespective of success or failure because our Lord has commanded us. But the assurance of success has much to do with stimulating activity. The Holy Spirit does not hesitate to use it, as it is written: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." No one can labor enthusiastically in a failing cause. But the seal of success is upon this enterprise, its triumph is guaranteed by the sure promises of the Lord. The history of the past hundred years should encourage us.

To doubt or to hesitate now, with the results before us, would be like doubting the power of God to renew the face of the earth when springtime has come and the seeds are sprouting, the grass robing the fields, and the fragrance of the blossoms is in the air. Whether mission work will be a success or not is no longer an open question; the one question of supreme importance to you and me is, What part shall we have in the final triumph when it comes? Is not this a time for us to reconsecrate ourselves to the great work which our fathers undertook, the evangelization of our land, and through it the evangelization of the world? It is often said in the interests of a world-wide preaching of the gospel that "the light which shines furthest abroad is the one that shines brightest at home." But the converse of the proposition is equally true; the one that shines brightest at home will be the one that sends its beams furthest abroad. This land must be illuminated before it can shine in Christ's name for the world. To falter now in our work would be to proclaim ourselves faithless to our great trust; it would be to invite defeat and disaster. Again, in the providence of God, a great opportunity is before us, and never were we so endowed for service as now. Whatever excuses we might plead for failure to evangelize our land completely, it can never be urged in these days that we had not the financial ability to do it. The facilities for work were never so excellent as now. Science aids the Church, and modern inventions, by breaking down the barriers of time and space, have brought us all close together. The

want and the supply, the need and the help, are close at hand. The hour for action has come. Blow the trumpet, servants of God, and sound the advance! Let us lift up our war-worn banners. The faith that inspired our fathers a hundred years ago, and which made them courageous in days of poverty and weakness, let that faith be ours also, only made stronger by the abundant assurances which God has given us to confirm it. Inspired by it, let us go forth, joining with our brethren of every name, to bring this fair land of ours into subjection to Jesus Christ.