

**MISSIONARY MAGAZINE;**

**OR**

**EVANGELICAL INTELLIGENCER.**

THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S

MISSIONARY MAGAZINE;

OR

EVANGELICAL INTELLIGENCER:

FOR 1805.

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WILLIAM P. FARRAND, EDITOR.

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VOL. I.

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MODERN MISSIONARY SOCIETIES.—CONTINUED.

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THE MASSACHUSETT'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

This Society was instituted in May, 1799. Its officers are a president, secretary, treasurer, and ten trustees, all of whom are chosen by ballot at the annual meeting of the society. The duties of the trustees consist in examining candidates for the respective missions, to employ and direct them, and, if necessary, to recall them; also to manage and dispose of the property of the society, and generally to transact all its concerns. Each member pays two dollars into the treasury at his admission into the society, and a like sum annually during his membership. It is from this source that the funds of the society are principally derived.

At the first meeting of the trustees two ordained ministers were appointed to undertake the labours of a mission, and to proceed without delay in the undertaking. Several obstructions, however, frustrated these appointments.

At the annual meeting in May, 1800, the numbers and funds of the society were found to be considerably augmented, and it was voted that four missionaries should be appointed. This number was accordingly engaged by the trustees. Two of them undertook, and were laboriously engaged, in a mis-

sion among the New Settlements, and aboriginal natives inhabiting the country between Whitestown and the Genessee River. The accounts which the society received of the effects of this mission were most flattering, and exhibited the brightest prospects of extensive usefulness. Another of the four missionaries was engaged among the people recently settled in the northern part of the state of Vermont. The cordiality and spiritual advantage with which his labours were received, were highly gratifying to the board. The other missionary went to the remote parts of the Province of Maine. The most favourable accounts were also received from this part of the vineyard, and there appeared the most auspicious prospects of substantial benefit to the souls of the hearers. The next year the society sent forth four missionaries (two to the new settlements at the westward, and two to the Province of Maine) and their exertions have since been continued with a zeal and constancy worthy of the important work in which they are engaged.

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## RELIGIOUS AND MORAL DISCUSSIONS.

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### MIRACLES OF JESUS CHRIST.

*(Continued from page 177.)*

I now proceed, as in the preceding number promised, to point out some of those doctrines which the Miracles of Jesus Christ were more particularly and expressly intended to confirm. Of these the first which occurs is that implied in the passage quoted from John xiv. 11. 'Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very work's sake.' By this declaration our Saviour must have meant his possessing the same divine nature with the Father as will appear, if we look into the context. Philip, one of his disciples, makes a request to him, verse 8th, in these words; 'Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.' Our Lord answers him by way of rebuke: 'Have I been so long time with you, and hast thou not known me Philip? he that

hath seen me, hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, shew us the Father?' that is, why do you desire me to shew the Father after having for so long time seen the Father in me? Have you not had such exhibitions of divinity in my character and works as were sufficient to give you a true and satisfactory knowledge of what the Father is? *He* that hath seen me hath seen the Father, because the Father and I are one and the same as to our essential nature and attributes, by whatever appellations, under other views, or on other accounts, we may be distinguished. Besides, let it be considered that the expression must have intended some higher communion with God the Father than could be affirmed of the Apostles, who also wrought miracles; and that, there was nothing in his miracles which proved his being in the Father in a higher sense than they, but what at the same time proved that, he was in him as partaker of the same divine nature and attributes, because the only thing which distinguished his miracles from theirs was, that he performed them in his own name. This he could not have done were not his own authority divine, absolute, and independent.

To this doctrine add, that he was *the true Messiah*, sent into the world agreeably to the antient prophecies respecting him. That his miracles were particularly intended to confirm this doctrine, we learn from the 5th John, 36th verse: 'The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father *hath sent me.*' It is also confirmed by several other passages which I need not enumerate.

Now, these doctrines being thus established, it necessarily follows, that by whatever other doctrines he taught must likewise be infallibly true. For it cannot, without the greatest absurdity and impiety, be supposed that, any one article of a religion revealed in virtue of a divine mission, and by a divine person, could be inconsistent with truth.

Nevertheless, it pleased our Saviour so to adapt many of his miracles to other doctrines besides those above mentioned that we may not only infer their truth in this general way, but also, as by the miracles they were particularly and expressly, or, at least, with apparent intention, exemplified. For instance; one of the great doctrines of the gospel is, that there is forgiveness of sin through Jesus Christ, and that he hath power to dispense it unto men. Now, we know that diseases are the consequences of sin, and part of the punish-

ment of it. Accordingly, many of our Saviour's miracles consisted in healing various diseases. These, as we conceive, were the most natural specimens he could give of his power to remit sin. In this light they were represented by himself in the 11th Matthew. He said to a man sick of the Palsey, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee.' 'And certain of the Scribes said within themselves, this man blasphemeth: who can forgive sins but God alone?' This misconstruction led him to state the connexion between the intended miracle and the doctrine more explicitly, thus: 'whether is it easier to say, thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, arise and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, arise, (said he to the sick of the Palsey) take up thy bed, and go into thine house.' Thus did he plainly affirm, that his healing of diseases was intended to prove that, he was empowered to forgive sins. And indeed it was the most striking proof possible, as it made men see with their very eyes, as it were, that he did forgive them.

Another of our Saviour's doctrines is, that he hath power to remove the ignorance of men; and that his gospel is a proper mean of illuminating their minds in spiritual things. To prove this, he, by way of specimen, miraculously restored sight to the blind. He cured that bodily blindness, which is the most natural image of the blindness of the understanding. Thus, in the 11th of John, speaking of the cure of a blind man, he observes, 'as long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world;' thereby directing those who were present to consider the miracle as a proof of his being in a spiritual sense the luminary of the world; of his being that prophet of superior degree and endowment, by whose instruction and influence alone the world was to be recovered from the gross darkness in which it had heretofore been involved, and informed in the true nature of God, and all those things which appertain to their eternal life and felicity.

Many of his miracles consisted in casting out Devils. These seem to have been intended as proofs, by way of exemplification, of his having come to overthrow the kingdom of Satan, and of that victory over sin, which he promised his followers. That they were thus designed, is intimated in his reply to the seventy, when they seemed to be surprised at the greatness of the power which accompanied them, insomuch that even the Devils were subject to them through his name: 'I beheld, said he, Satan fall from heaven: behold I give

you power to tread on Serpents and Scorpions, and over all, all, the power of the enemy.'

Another of our Saviour's doctrines is, that he is the author of eternal salvation, and that he hath power through his gospel to form and nourish up the souls of men to an eternal life of holiness and felicity. To prove this, he shewed that he could miraculously nourish and support the present animal life. He oftener than once fed several thousands with a very few loaves and fishes. And, on one of those occasions he plainly intimated that he would have the miracle to be considered in this light. The multitude, struck with the greatness of the miracle, followed him to Capernaum in expectation of some great worldly benefits, on his setting up his earthly kingdom, which, they vainly presumed, would soon take place. To lead them therefore to a proper conception of the design of the miracle, he added: 'Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth to eternal life, which the son of man shall give unto you: *for him hath God the Father sealed:*' that is, as though he had said: in the late miracle, God the Father hath given you full security, as though he had set his hand to a seal for that purpose, that he hath empowered me, the son, to dispense unto mankind that grace, which, as meat nourisheth the body for this life, shall nourish your souls to life eternal.

The last doctrine I shall mention is that of the resurrection of the dead. This we may find confirmed by a declared connexion between it and the miracle of raising the dead. 'The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.' He had already raised the daughter of Jairus and the widow of Naini's son, and these instances he thus connects with the general resurrection: 'The hour is coming, and now is,' that is, the time will come, when the whole human race shall be raised from their graves and live; for you see, it is already come in part. You may firmly believe that there will be a general resurrection, as in some instances you have had a full specimen of my power, and withal a pledge of my intention to effect it.

Thus the miracles of Jesus Christ appear to have been intended as arguments of the truth, as well of several particular doctrines of the christian revelation, as of the revelation more generally considered. Under this view, while they serve to conduct us into the belief of that system as true and divinely authorised, they at the same time lead us into inter-

esting considerations of the doctrines themselves. This, I conceive to be of no small importance. The faith of a christian, which is unto salvation, is not built on external evidence only. It derives its principal light and force from a real, and heart-felt perception of the divine nature and import of the things revealed. This is evidence internal. Much is therefore added to the moment of the former, when, by its adjustment, and stated connection, it leads us into a proper impressive contemplation of the truths themselves they were designed to validate ; that is, in other words, into a real possession of the latter. From the connection which has been pointed out between the miracles of our Saviour and some particular doctrines of his revelation, it is evident that, our Saviour intended they should serve to this purpose, and that it highly importeth every christian believer so to consider and to improve them. The apostle exhorteth us to ‘be always ready to give every man, who asketh us, a reason of the hope that is in us.’ He doubtless had a reference here to arguments both of the one class and of the other. And, in this age especially of infidel presumption and address, it seems to be peculiarly needful, that our minds should be competently furnished with the leading topics in support of that hope.



#### PROSELYTE.

The appellation is borrowed from the Greek word *Ἰσροήλυτος*, which signifies a stranger, or one who comes from abroad, or from another place. The Hebrew word *Ger*, or *Necher*, has the same signification. In the language of the Jews those persons, were called by this name, who came to dwell in their country, or who embraced their religion, though they were not Jews by birth. Amongst the Hebrews there were two kinds of Proselytes: Proselytes of the Gate, and Proselytes of Justice. The Proselytes of the Gate, were those who dwelt in the land of Israel, or even out of it, and who, without obliging themselves to circumcision, or to any other ceremony of the law, feared and worshipped the true God, observing the rules that were imposed on the children of Noah. These were seven in number. The first enjoins obedience to judges magistrates, and princes. The second forbids the worship of