

“Impediments in the Way of Carrying the Gospel”

By William Carey

1. Their Distance from Us.

“Men can now sail with as much certainty through the great South Sea, as they can through the Mediterranean, or any lesser sea. Yea, and providence seems in a manner to invite us to the trial, as there are to our knowledge trading companies, whose commerce lies in many of the places where these barbarians dwell.”

2. Their Barbarous Way of Living.

“This can be no objection to any, except those whose love of ease renders them unwilling to expose themselves to inconveniences for the good of others...It was no objection to the apostles and their successors, who went among the barbarous German, and Gauls, and still more barbarous Britons! They did not wait for the ancient inhabitants of these countries to be civilized before they could be Christianized, but went simply with the doctrine of the Cross; and Tertullian could boast that those parts of Britain which were proof against the Roman armies, were conquered by the Gospel of Christ.”

“After all, the uncivilized state of the heathen, instead of affording an objection against preaching the Gospel to them, ought to furnish an argument for it. Can we as men, or as Christians, hear that a great part of our fellow creatures, whose souls are as immortal as ours, and who are as capable as ourselves, of adorning the Gospel, and contributing by their preaching, writings, or practices to the glory of our Redeemer’s name, and the good of his church, are enveloped in ignorance and barbarism?”

3. The Danger of Being Killed by Them.

“It is time that whosoever does go must put his life in his hand, and not consult with flesh and blood; but do not the goodness of the cause, the duties incumbent on us as the creatures of God, and Christians, and the perishing state of our fellow men, loudly calling upon us to venture all and use every warrantable exertion for their benefit?”

“Paul and Barnabas, who hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, were not blamed as being rash, but commended for so doing, while John Mark through timidity of mind deserted them in their perilous undertaking, was branded with censure.”

4. Difficulty of Procuring the Necessaries of Life.

“This would be not be so great as may appear at first sight...A Christian minister is a person who in a peculiar sense is not his own; he is the servant of God, and therefore ought to be who wholly devoted to Him. By entering on that sacred office he solemnly undertakes to be always engaged, as much as possible, in the Lord’s work, and not to choose his own pleasure, or employment, or pursue the ministry as something that is to sub serve his own ends, or interests, or as a kind of by a work. He engages to go where God pleases, and to do, or endure what He sees fit to command, or call him to, in the exercise of his function. He virtually bids farewell to friends, pleasures, and comforts, and stands in readiness to endure the greatest sufferings in the work of his Lord and Master.”

“It is inconsistent for minister to please themselves with thought of numerous auditory, cordial friends, a civilized country, legal protection, affluence, splendor, or even a competency the slights, and hatred of men, and even pretended friends, gloomy prisons, and tortures, the society of barbarians of uncouth speech, miserable accommodations in wretched wilderness, hunger and thirst, nakedness, weariness, and painfulness, hard work, but little worldly encouragement, should rather be the objects of their expectation.”

“Thus the apostles acted, in the primitive times, and endured hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and though we, living in a civilized country. Where Christianity is protected by Law, are not called to suffer these things in staying while we continue here, yet I question whether all are justified in staying here, while so many are perishing with out means of grace in other lands.”

5. Learning Their Language.

“In some cases interpreters might be obtained, who might be employed for a time; and where these were not to be found, the missionaries must have patience, and mingle with the people, till they have learned so much of their language as to be able to communicate their ideas to them in it. It is well known to require no very extraordinary talents to learn, in the space of a year, or two at most, the language of any people upon earth, so much of it at least, as to be able to convey any sentiments we wish to their understanding.”

6. The Character of a Missionary.

“The missionaries must be men of great piety, prudence, courage, and forbearance; of undoubted orthodoxy in their sentiments, and must enter with all their hearts into the spirit of their mission; they must be willing to leave all the comforts of the life behind them, and to encounter all the hardships of a torrid or a frigid climate, an uncomfortable manner of living, and every other inconvenience that can attend this undertaking.”

“They must endeavor to convince them that it was their good alone which induced them to forsake their friends and all the comforts of their native country. They must be very careful not to resent injuries which may be offered to them, not to think highly of themselves, so as to despise them poor heathens, and by those means lay a foundation frothier resentment or rejection of the Gospel. They must take every opportunity of doing them good, and laboring, and traveling, night and day, they must instruct, exhort and rebuke, with all long suffering and anxious desire for them, and above all, must be instant in prayer for the effusion of the Holy Spirit upon the people of their charge. Let but missionaries of the above description engage in the work, and we shall see that it is not impracticable.

“It might likewise be of importance, if God should bless their labors, for them to encourage any appearances of gifts amongst the people of their charge; if such should be raised up, many advantages would be derived from their knowledge of the language and customs of their country men; and their change of conduct would give great weight to their ministrations.”