

**MISSIONS: THE
CHIEF END OF THE
CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

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Missions: the chief end of the Christian church by Alexander Duff

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BY THE

REV. ALEXANDER DUFF, D.D., LL.D.

NEW EDITION.

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1877.

P R E F A C E.



IN the spring of 1839, I happened to be appointed by the Established Presbytery of Edinburgh to preside at the ordination of the Rev. Dr. Thomas Smith, as a new missionary to India. It was on that occasion that the following discourse was delivered. Subsequently it was published in a small volume, along with the Charge and Address. That volume very rapidly passed through a number of editions; but for upwards of thirty years, it has been entirely out of print. Often has the author been solicited to bring out a new edition, but,

from various causes, this has never been accomplished. Circumstances, however, connected with recent and present events, to which it is unnecessary more particularly to advert, have suggested the propriety of reprinting the discourse, as exhibiting what is believed to be a scriptural view of the subject, which has never yet been homologated by any Branch of the Reformed Church of Christendom, in a way commensurate with its transcendent importance.

ALEXANDER DUFF.

EDINBURGH, 1877.

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'God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause His face to shine upon us. That Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving health among all nations.'—
PSALM lxxvii. 1, 2.

THE royal Psalmist, in the spirit of inspiration, personating the Church of the redeemed in every age, and more especially under its last and most perfect dispensation, here offers up a sublime prayer for its inward prosperity, and outward universal extension. All is in the order of nature and of grace. Knowing full well that he who has not obtained mercy from the Lord, cannot be a fit bearer of it to others,—that he who has

obtained no blessings himself, can dispense none,—that he who enjoys no light, can communicate none,—he first of all, with marked and beautiful propriety, begins with the supplication of personal and individual blessings:—‘God be merciful unto us,’ forgiving and pardoning all our sins: ‘and bless us,’ conferring every gift and every grace really needful for time and eternity: ‘and lift up the light of thy countenance upon us,’ cheering us with the smile of reconciliation and love, and causing the Sun of Righteousness to arise on our darkened souls with healing in his beams.

But does the Psalmist stop here? Does he for a moment intend that he and his fellow-worshippers, as representatives of the visible Church of the living God, should absorb all the mercy, all the blessing, and all the light of Jehovah’s countenance? Oh

no! Having thus fervently prayed for evangelical blessings to descend upon himself, and every member of the Church, he immediately superadds, in the true evangelistic or missionary spirit, 'That thy way,' or, as it is given in our metrical version, 'That *so* thy way may be known upon *earth*, thy saving health among *all nations*.'

How significant the connection here established between the *obtainment* and the *distribution* of evangelical favours! 'God be merciful unto us, and bless us.'—Why? only that we ourselves may be pardoned and sanctified, and thereby attain to true happiness? No. There is *another grand end* in view, to the accomplishment of which our being blessed is but *a means*. 'God be merciful unto us, and bless us, *that so* thy way may be known on earth,'—that *so*—that thus—that in this way—that by our