

CONVENTION SERMON.

Our Mission, as seen in the light of Christ's mission.

A SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE BAPTIST CONVENTION OF NOVA SCOTIA, NEW BRUNSWICK AND P. E. ISLAND, AT SACKVILLE, N. B., ON MONDAY, AUGUST 28TH, 1876.

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"As thou hast sent me into the world even so have I also sent them into the world, and for their sakes I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth."—JOHN XVII. 18, 19. Christ was "called of God, as was also Aaron," and was sent into the world. He completed the work committed to Him. Before retiring, through the door of death, from the field, He bade his disciples take up the mission where He laid it down. He had done his own work, and had laid for them a foundation on which, by His grace, they were to raise the structure. His life was short and eventful; but his mission was full and comprehensive. Before half the time allotted to man on earth was spent, He cried, "It is finished, and gave up the ghost." We know not how many centuries may be added to the eighteen already passed before the mission of the Christian Church will come to an end. The command to go is positive and emphatic. The time of labour terminates in the second coming of Christ. From the text, we learn that the commission and work of the disciples are to be modelled after the commission and work of their Lord. As He was sent into the world, so they are sent into the world: He was sanctified—consecrated to his work—that they might be sanctified—made holy and consecrated to their work.

We are permitted by the text to trace analogies between the mission of Christ, and the mission of his disciples. This presents the Christian's work in its truest light and it is as conducive to pleasure as it is essential to instruction and to a knowledge of God's will in the work of missions.

Is my work, in any sense, like Christ's work? Am I sent as He was sent? are questions both suggested and justified by the words of the text. The words themselves appear first in the prayer of Christ, offered at the institution of the last Supper. After his resurrection they were repeated to the disciples in the upper room, where they were assembled for fear of the Jews. Seeing on these two memorable occasions His own life-work drawing to a close, and that of His disciples about to begin, and to extend into the near and remote future—the future all unknown to them—their Master being deeply interested in their behalf, gave expression to his sympathies in timely instructions and ardent supplications. He placed before them his departure from heaven and his work on earth as a mirror, reflecting their departure from their homes and their work in the world. As soon as "the promise of the Father" was fulfilled, and "power" had been received by the descent of the Holy Spirit they went into all the world to preach the gospel to every creature. Their obedience, however, was partial and defective. The expelling force of a persecution was added to the authority of the command before the disciples generally were scattered abroad, to go everywhere preaching the word. Neither the first generation, nor any generation since, has perfectly fulfilled the great Commission. Israel never wholly took the promised land. Each generation, for eighteen centuries, has gone down to the grave under a cloud of disobedience, more or less dark. It is true that every period is not marked alike with guilt.

Our lot is cast in a day when this sin of disobedience is troubling the conscience of the Christian Church. Of the denomination that will employ all the means of which it is possessed, and that full measure of power with which Christ is more than willing to clothe every generation of Christians, in propagating the gospel among the heathen, it might be said, as the prophet Isaiah said of Ancient Israel, "Thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations, and thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in."

Before the Baptists of the Dominion of Canada the Lord has opened up a plain way that leads into a broad, inviting field, white, and waving with an abundant harvest. The truth, found in

the precious words before us to-day is sufficient of itself to kindle anew in our hearts the missionary zeal of apostolic days, and to send every member of the entire denomination, either in person or in spirit, to the land of the Telooogs. It contains the motive power to give effect to the great commission, to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

"As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world."

GOD, BY THE INFLUENCES OF HIS HOLY SPIRIT, AND BY EVENTS OF HIS PROVIDENCE, OF A VERY MARKED AND PECULIAR CHARACTER, HAS SENT US TO THE TELOOOGS OF HINDOSTAN. Hitherto the Lord has led us. By a way that we knew not have we been brought, and through paths that we had not seen, God has conducted us to this great people. A few years ago, Thomas Gabriel, a heathen Telooogo, sought an English education for the purpose of preparing himself for some post in the civil service of his country. But as some of the apostles were called from the business of catching fish in the lake of Galilee, to become fishers of men, so Joseph Gabriel was called from civil duties to be an ambassador of Jesus Christ to his fellow-countrymen. At first he appealed to his own denomination in the Christian world for help, but they were unable to render him any assistance. He must be tried and the Canadian Baptists must be led by a series of striking providences to their mission field in the heathen land. The zeal and faith of Gabriel failed not; God's grace was sufficient for him. He began his work in the town of Cocanada alone; there in the name of the Lord he set up his banners. Before he fell under the cares and difficulties that came upon him in his solitary labours, our brethren in the West were led to believe that it was the will of God, that they should adopt the mission of this heroic pioneer. Their relations to the American Baptist Missionary Union were re-adjusted, and the Rev. Mr. McLaurin was at once sent to reinforce Gabriel. This assistance was very timely. Very soon after the arrival of brother McLaurin Gabriel fell at his post.

The scene of his death-bed should never be forgotten by the Baptists of this Dominion; his dying words should be treasured up in their memories, and, as a household word, his name should be embalmed in their hearts.

Some time before his death, he fell into a state of unconsciousness; His friends appealed to him, but he was dumb; his wife called to the dying husband through her tears and her sobs, but he heard her not; he knew her not. At last the name of Jesus was spoken into his dull ear; it penetrated that ear, paralyzed by approaching death; it pierced the depths of consciousness: He opened his pale, parched lips, and, in a dying whisper, uttered these words, "Precious Jesus"; and closing them again spoke no more.

Thus Thomas Gabriel, our pioneer missionary, passed to his eternal rest. Paul was forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; and was not permitted to go into Bithynia: We assayed to go into Siam but were hindered; and, while attempting to settle in Burmah, a man, from the land of the Telooogs, appeared to us, and prayed us to come over into that country and help them. Assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us to that people, we have located our mission in that field; so full of promise. God's will now seems plain; from our experience of doubt and uncertainty, we now rest in calm assurance. When, assembled in Convention last year, we heard the joyful telegram from our missionaries at Cocanada—"All here, joyfully working"; then our disturbed hearts were composed, and "we thanked God and took courage." We knew the Lord had led us; his dealings towards us were made plain.

In the light of these results, we understood the ways of the Lord with Thomas Gabriel; the "new departure" of our brethren in the West; the trying experience of our hearts here at home; the deeper and even more painful experience of our missionaries, seeking a field and finding it not in Siam; and the deep and almost prophetic exercises of brother McLaurin in Cocanada; the remarkable co-incidences of prayer there and prayer here; and of letters written there and meetings held here;

and all these things conspiring to the one happy end, now, evident to all. Read the vision, and make it plain. Fifty thousand Baptists are sent to proclaim the gospel to six millions of benighted heathen.

A FEW THOUGHTS MAY NOW BE EMPLOYED IN CONSIDERING THE CHARACTER AND RELIGION OF THIS PEOPLE TO WHOM THE MASTER HAS SENT US.

They are of the Aryan family; and have the characteristics of the superior races. Many centuries of idolatry and bad government have not destroyed in them those great elements of character which distinguish superior peoples.

They have three different sets of sacred books—the Vedas, four in number; the Shasters, six in number; and the Purans of which there are eighteen.

The Vedas were written about fourteen hundred years before the Christian era. The other books are of a more modern date. The gods of the earlier books were simply the elements personified. But in the later books are found the three principal gods of the modern Hindoos—Brahma, Vishnu and Shiv. Beside these gods, there are countless deities recognized in their sacred writings.

"Brahm is conceived to be the primary and pervading centre of all being; and is conceived to have remained from all eternity in a state of absolute unconsciousness. This is the original centre of the religion of the Telooogs. In process of time, Brahm, this inanimate neutrality, manifested signs of life, and activity. From this state of profound repose, it suddenly began to put forth developments of character which shew it to be possessed of every conceivable attribute, necessary to the Supreme Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things. This mighty power, once set free from the lethargy, that from eternity had found its energies, soon expands into the full-blown pantheon of the Brahminical imagination; and peoples the universe with gods and demigods, fiends and demons to the number of many millions."

The Telooogs are divided into four principal Castes, the Brahmins, the Warriors, the Merchants and the Labourers. These are divided again into almost an innumerable number of subordinate Castes. The four principal Castes are essentially unlike by their creation, having sprung from different parts of the body of the Creator.

The Brahmins are the highest class. They are partly divine and have all power in religion. They interpret the sacred books. Each Brahmmin, says Naryan Sheshadri, himself a converted Brahmmin, is a much more infallible dignitary than the Pope of Rome. The gods, says the same convert, lie, steal and commit adultery; they are covetous, blasphemous and quarrelsome; and they also represent every thing conceivable that is good. The people who worship them have become like them. Their code of morals and their moral principles are simply revolting.

Their system of religion is venerable with great age. It was written in the Sanscrit, a classic language, in which it is still preserved. It suits itself to every moral condition of the people. It is bound to them, and they are bound to it; and they are held by a strong delusion, well nigh fatal. This system, like a granite girt island, stands resisting the tireless waves of Christian civilization. But it is yielding, and must continue to yield, till the knowledge of the glory of God shall flood that land inhabited by the swarming millions of degraded heathen. This citadel of the world's idolatry is destined to fall. It may fall in our day, or the agents of its overthrow may be yet unborn. But when the time does come to charge up the heights and take that stronghold, may our regiment be distinguished in the battle and in the victory.

WE MAY NOW, FOR A LITTLE WHILE, TURN OUR THOUGHTS TO THE WORK WE HAVE UNDERTAKEN TO DO, FOR THE TELOOOGS.

When Christ was on earth He expelled demons from human hearts, and entered in and took possession of them Himself. Fiends, demi-gods, and all false Gods fill the Spirits of the Telooogs and reign supreme in their lives. We convey to them the gospel, that, by the Spirit of God, the devils may be cast out; that the immortal souls, once filled with these countless duties—the creation of oriental fancy—may be occupied by the spiritual citizens of Mount Zion—"the innumerable company of angels," "the spirits of the just made perfect," "God the Judge of all," and by Him whose "blood speaketh better things than the blood of righteous Abel." The new life created within will flow out, and its effects will be seen in every phase of life all over the whole land. The revolution will be most radical in the domestic and social departments. Wives and sisters will emerge from their seclusion and semi-slavery, lay aside their veils, reside over the homes, and live in public as well as private companionship with their brothers and husbands. It is the Bible, and only the Bible, that can unlock woman's prison-house, take her by the hand and lead her forth from her long night of imprisonment, into the full enjoyment of her divine rights and purchased joys. Then widowhood will no longer be synonymous with shame and cruelty.

We give the Telooogs the Bible, with all its attendant blessings. The whole

land will cast off all the forms, customs and habits, peculiar to idolatry, and, in their stead will adopt those which are the natural outgrowth of Christianity. But our Mission is to preach unto them Jesus and the resurrection. These are the words of Christ, and they are spirit and they are life. They create a conscience for the dark soul of the idolater. To his reason they are the words of power and of freedom. They open the long sealed fountain of humane and holy sympathies and affections. By them the idolater is delivered from his life of shame and fear into a life of honour and love. He has become a son of God and is made free in the highest and broadest sense; and whom the Son makes free, they are free indeed.

When this change shall have been effected many wants will be created—wants physical, mental and spiritual. But the supplies will be equal to the demands; for every Christian hand is a busy hand; every Christian brain is an inventive, busy brain; and every Christian heart is a benevolent heart.

THE METHODS OF LABOUR GIVEN US IN THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST MAY NOW BE CONSIDERED.

When He had allayed the fears of the afflicted disciples in the upper room, and when He had convinced them that they looked upon their Lord and Master, and not upon a mere spectre, Christ said unto them, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you," and then He breathed on them, and said "receive ye the Holy Ghost." He offered Himself as a sacrifice; He led a holy life, filled with active missionary labours. Thus He holds up before his disciples as the model after which to shape the mission on which He then directed them and all their successors to enter. The words of the text and the commission defining them were uttered at the close of Christ's life; but in the beginning of his life, He said, concerning Himself, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" So far as it was compatible with the primary object of His life, He went into the world and preached the gospel to every creature. He travelled up and down the country a patient, laborious, self-sacrificing Missionary. The command and commission given to his disciples were emphasised and enforced by the wonderful example that went before them. Here was an additional incentive to a full and joyful obedience. He permitted them to follow Him, to hear his teachings and to be both witnesses and co-labourers with Him in his great mission. By these means they gained experience which they utilized after the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them: and in his light they saw what their Master had done, and what He had commanded them to do.

During his three and a half years of public labours Christ performed a wonderful amount of missionary work. He travelled over the country of Galilee at least three times; for six months at a time He laboured on the east side of the Jordan; and for whole months together He tarried in the towns and border country of the North. He did not confine his labours to his own countrymen. The woman of Sychar, the woman of Syrophenicia, Roman centurions and Roman soldiers shared in his love and in his teachings.

Christ both possessed and exercised all missionary gifts in perfection. As a herald, or a preacher, or an ambassador. He could deliver the truth: He reasoned, He taught and He exhorted and entreated. He did all this as no man ever did it. Of Him, all missionaries are to be imitators. Not only in serving one another, even in the menial duties of feet-washing, has He left us an example; but also as messengers of mercy to the world, we have in Him a perfect model. Says a learned, living preacher, "We are to be heralds and talkers and reasoners and publishers of good things. We are to preach the gospel with the authority of ambassadors and in God's name; we are to announce it in quiet talk; we are to enforce it by argument, by explanations, by appeals to what we ourselves have felt and by earnest entreaty. Apostolic preaching is authority and argument talk and testimony, a combination of them all, saturated with tears and prayers." This is all in imitation of Christ.

A FEW WORDS MAY NOW BE UTTERED REGARDING THE SUFFICIENCY OF THESE MEANS.

To merely human wisdom, these means seem altogether inadequate to accomplish the great end for which they are employed. To the Jew they are no guarantee—no "sign";—to the Greek they are simply foolishness; but still they are both power and wisdom,—the "power of God" and the "wisdom of God." It is enough for us to know that they are means which God has ordained. It is our duty to employ them as unquestionable and all-sufficient.

A few turns around Jericho and the blast of the ram's horn, leveled the walls of that ancient city to the ground; the rattle of breaking pitchers; the blaze of the lamps they concealed, and the repeated shout, "The sword of the Lord, and the sword of Gideon," overthrew and destroyed a great army. The contact of hand with hand, of eyes with eyes, of mouth with mouth, and the prayers of the prophets brought dead children to life. "Young man, I say unto thee arise;" "Lazarus come forth," are two sentences, from the lips of Christ, which restored from the dead a

son and a brother to their respective homes.

These were apparently insufficient means to bring about such amazing results; but in them we see the truth of the declaration, "It is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, said the Lord."

The idolatries and false systems of the ancient world were powerless to withstand apostolic preaching—"Jesus and the resurrection." The old foundations were unsettled; people of every nationality, of every religion, yielded to the truth and became followers of Christ. The proud Greek, the haughty Roman, and the persecuting Jewish bigot were humbled into fellowship with the lowly in the early churches.

The gospel has not lost its power; every class already, among the people to whom we are sent, from the Brahmin, arrogant in his assumptions of divine powers, to the degraded Sudra, has contributed members to the Church of Christ.

(Conclusion next week.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

For the Christian Messenger.

A few misread Passages of Sacred Scripture.

1. "Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbor, &c." Exodus xi. 2.

"Borrow" here is an unfortunate translation, inasmuch as the word implies that the thing borrowed shall be returned, which, in the case before us the Lord knew would never be. In an old black-letter Bible of date 1549 (in possession of Dr. Cramp) in the index to the above chapter there reads:—"The Lord commandeth thee to robbe the Egyptians;" which is stronger still. If we read "ask" (with the idea of demanding) instead of "borrow," we shall, I think, get the true reading, for such is the meaning of the word rendered "borrow," as also the LXX, the German, and the Douay.

2. "Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die." Job ii. 9.

Some hold "curse" to be the right translation here, others, "bless." The latter is preferable for the following reasons: 1. It is not likely that the best man in the world (Ch. i. 8) would have chosen for a wife one who, if our version be correct, proves herself to be the worst woman in the world. 2. The word translated "curse" is entirely different from that which is so rendered in ch. iii. 1, where it says, "Job cursed his day." 3. In all passages (according to Parkhurst) where the word here rendered curse is joined with Jehovah or Elohim, it means to bless. See Gen. xxiv. 48, 1 Chron. xxix. 30, Ps. lxxi. 8, Ps. ciii. 1, 2, 20, 21, 22, &c. Besides this word being misread, verse 9, according to the LXX, reads thus:—"And much time having passed, his wife said to him, How much longer wilt thou endure saying within thyself, Behold I will still wait a little while expecting the hope of my salvation? For behold thy memory is blotted out from the earth; (with) the sons and daughters of my labor and travail. I am wearied with the griefs of bereavement, and thou thyself the prey of worms to be listless! passing the night under the open sky; and I as a slave, wandering about from place to place, and from house to house, waiting for the time when the sun shall set, that I may rest from my troubles, and those pains which now possess me. Come now speak some word for God and die." The German as well as the Douay has "bless."

3. "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, &c." Ps. xxiii. 4.

This "valley of the shadow of death" has needlessly alarmed many a believer and surrounded the name and event of Death with deep gloom and horror. A celebrated painting by Sir Noel Paton valued at upwards of five thousand dollars, entitled "Mors janua vitæ" (Death is the gate of life) gives the true idea, but the picture is spoiled by his having a long, black, gloomy valley leading up to the gate. It is probable he had in his mind the above passage. It appears to me at least, that David had no thought of his death in his mind when he wrote these words. Comparing himself to a sheep he is expressing his confidence in his Shepherd, and that he would not fear in the midst of the greatest dangers. He seems to say:—"He leadeth me in the highways of righteousness, for his name's sake, Yes, and if I even go in the midst of the shadow of death I will fear no harm. With my shepherd I walk on the safe