

Christian Messenger.

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"Not slothful in business : fervent in spirit."

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Religious.

THE MISSIONARY ANNIVERSARIES AT BOSTON.

Our Boston exchanges are filled with particulars of the Anniversary meetings held there recently :—

A preliminary meeting was held Monday evening, May 17th, Rev. Dr. Caswell in the Chair.

After singing

"The morning light is breaking,"

the President read Isaiah 62, and prayer was offered by Rev. L. Tracy, of Vermont.

The Foreign Secretary announced that the object of the meeting was to hear addresses from returned missionaries ; that we may know what they think of the work of missions, and whether they are ready to devote to it the remnant of their lives.

Mr. Ross, of the Burman mission in Rangoon, Burmah, was the first speaker. He alluded to his own early Christian experience, giving briefly the narrative of his early desire to preach the Gospel to the heathen. It was nearly seventeen years since he left this country as a missionary to Burmah. He had had opportunities to see the heathen and to know what the Gospel had done. His first question, when he set foot on the soil of Burmah and saw the crowds of ignorant and degraded heathen, was, Can we reach these people with the Gospel? Is it worth while to leave the endearments of home and Christian society with the hope of benefitting these degraded beings? It required great faith and much of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus to look at the subject in its true light. It is necessary to forget the ignorance, degradation and repulsiveness of the heathen, and to behold in them a soul more precious than worlds—a soul for which Jesus died, and which, if redeemed from sin, will shine as resplendently as the soul of any one of us in the crown of Immanuel. If in heart a man cherishes the spirit of the Master, he will soon forget all distinctions, and look upon the heathen as destined like ourselves to stand before God in judgment, and as needing to receive the offer of salvation by Christ as much as we.

If I am asked what is the prospect of ultimate success, I reply, I do not know. I know only this, Jesus says it is our solemn obligation and our inestimable privilege to give the Gospel to the heathen ; and however dismal may be the prospect, the Christian has a firm ground of hope ; so that high above the knell of disaster and the wall of despair the Christian may lift the shout of triumph, staying his heart on the Divine assurance that He who gave his only begotten Son for the salvation of the world has not forgotten or abandoned the project. His faithfulness and power are pledged to its accomplishment.

If I am asked what I think about the necessity of communicating the Gospel to the heathen, I ask in return, What do you think? Is the Gospel good for you? Have you received any benefit and joy from its precious hopes? All this has come from the Bible. What would you take for the hope you cherish? Would this whole city purchase it, if you did not possess it?—True, the heathen do not wear so much cotton, wool, silk, feathers as you ; but their souls are just as precious. They are as much in need of the Gospel.

If it is necessary to build fine churches for the churches at home, then it is necessary equally to send the Gospel abroad.—Christ told the apostles to begin at Jerusalem ; but also to preach the Gospel to every creature. And I do not despair of ultimate success. Many give, but I fear they seldom accompany their gifts with prayer. He had heard that the missionary spirit was dying out in the churches. If it be so, a woe is behind, which may God avert. A pastor cannot be loyal to Christ and not have a missionary spirit. Some pastors say, "My church is not able to give." Well, do they pray? Do they have the monthly concert? Some say yes ; some no. But can a pastor do all the good of which he is capable, if he allows his church to be indifferent to the

duty of giving and praying? It is time for the churches to warm up, and to feel the privilege of giving and praying, and showing their interest in this work.

Mr. Bronson expected one year ago that his resting place would be in the bosom of old ocean. He had been driven by sickness from his field ; but he desired again to lay his life on God's altar, and on this altar of missions. He was not tired after nearly thirty-three years of labor in the field. He would rather be a missionary, pointing the Garos to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world, than accept any position on earth that could be offered him. Some friends say, "You have spent your youth and your mature age in laboring among the heathen. Come home and enjoy the blessings of a Christian land, and let others go." But they little know my heart. Let your mind run to the Brahmaputra Valley, the north-easternmost point of British India, one the loveliest spots on earth. The Gospel has been preached here for thirty-five years to thousands and thousands of bigoted Hindus. The work is rendered hard by reason of the chains of caste, that great master-piece of Satan's cunning ; we have the bigoted priesthood to oppose, and the Hindu Shasters. But like Paul I can say, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Under its power I have seen the native Christians break away from all obstacles, I have seen them renounce home, parents, brothers, sisters, their paternal estates, everything that was dear to them, because the love of Jesus had touched their hearts. I can testify that the Gospel has the same power over the hearts of men over the waters as here. One heart does not differ from another ; and that is why Christians in all lands unite in the same story of their deliverance. I thought when I heard those Garo converts relate their experiences, it is the same old, old story, that they had destroyed themselves and Jesus Christ had died for them ; that they gave themselves to Him, and sacrificed all for His sake. The question is asked, Are missions worth prosecuting? Shall we give up the enterprise? Think of Judson, and count up what has been accomplished in that field. That one field, where he toiled, prayed, triumphed, leaving out what has been accomplished for the Chinese, the Shans, the Assamese, shows a glorious record ; 40,000 have been converted in that field, of whom half have gone home to heaven, and half are still living witnesses for the Gospel of Christ. The Garos were a savage, cruel, warlike people, rushing down from time to time from the mountains taking the heads of a good many of the people in the valley and carrying them back as a sacrifice to the gods of the hills. They were thoroughly feared. Even the English nation never dare to send an officer among them, though they were only ten days from Calcutta. They could not do it. The Garos kept themselves independent. Three of these wild men had learned to read and write. Christian tracts fell in their way.—They read them, and gained their first ideas of religion and of Christ. They were intensely interested. One of them came to Gwahati, listened to the instructions of the native preacher Kandura. He opened his whole heart ; he did not believe in idolatry ; he never had worshipped idols, and he never would.

Mr. Bronson, in consequence of a letter addressed to him, went to meet this mountain chief. He was all awake. He had become a true convert, speaking of Christ and proclaiming the Gospel to all his people. At his second visit Mr. Bronson baptized this man, Omed, and another of the same tribe, Ramkhe. They were soldiers in the British army. Mr. B. represented their case to the Commander-in-Chief, and they were liberated from their engagement that they might go and preach among their countrymen. British Christians in India contributed one thousand rupees to aid in supporting them in their work. They labored two years alone, sometimes amid bitter persecution. During a time of drought, their enemies said the gods were angry, because the Gospel was preached, and they

proposed to cut up the Christians, root and branch. On their way to execute their purpose, God sent rain and the Christians were saved. After a few months, Mr. B. made a third trip. He found a lovely village of twenty houses, and in the centre, the best house in the place, a chapel for the worship of God. Seventy worshippers were gathered, clean and dressed in their best apparel, waiting the missionary's arrival. They took him down from his elephant, set him down among them and said, "Now, please talk." He did talk, answering their questions from sunset till eleven o'clock. There were no sleepy eyes. It was easy work under such circumstances to preach Christ. The next day they came again, and the same process was repeated. Seventy had made up their minds to be on the side of Christ. He baptized them and formed them into a little church ; they selected the eldest of the assistants, who was ordained then and there to the work of the Gospel ministry. He has most faithfully fulfilled his office from that day to this.

Mr. CRAWLEY, of Burmah, spoke of the people of Burmah and their claims upon us. There are encouragements in preaching the Gospel to the Burmans. 1. They are an inquisitive people, anxious to know things, always asking questions. 2. Their thoughts run on religion. 3. They are fond of disputation and argumentation. 4. They have no caste. 5. All the male population are able to read, and the missionary never goes out without tracts, which he scatters broadcast, and sometimes natives are found who have believed in Christ and worshipped God for thirty years, having never seen a missionary,—all through the influence of tracts. After the efforts of fifty years there have been baptized only eight hundred Burman converts. If means had been furnished, humanly speaking, the number might have been eight thousand. The number of missionaries devoted to the Burman work is painfully small. He said he had labored fourteen years in Henthada district, and there were still whole villages where the Gospel had never been heard.—In Nova Scotia, about as large as Henthada district, with one hundred Baptist ministers and two hundred of other denominations, the people complain of destitution. How much more in Henthada, where there is not one! While we linger the Papists and the Ritualists are getting a hold in Burmah.—The latter are favored by the king, who has built for them a school in Mandalay, and at the end of the first month one thousand boys were under instruction. Why was not this work done by American Baptists? Let us take the matter to our hearts. We must do our own work ; God will not do it for us. We must do it, or it will be taken out of our hands and given to others.

The second day was occupied, in the morning by the address of the President, and the appointment of Committees, and the Annual Sermon by Dr. Boardman.

In the afternoon a paper on the education of Burmese preachers was read, and remarks subsequently made by Messrs. Rose, Cross, Crawley, and Hibbard.

A free Conference was held on Tuesday evening.

On Wednesday the Am. Baptist Home Missionary Society held its Annual Meeting. (Our thanks are due the Rev. J. B. Simmons, the Secretary, for an advance copy of the Annual Report.) Six years ago this Society employed 96 laborers, the past year the number was 276. The receipts amounted to \$144,032.05.

The evening of Wednesday was taken up by a Social Festival in Tremont Temple. An ample collation was served to more than fifteen hundred persons. The Rev. E. G. Robinson, D. D., of Rochester, presided. In the course of opening address he said :—

We are said to be disintegrated—to have no authoritative creed, no ecclesiastical tribunal, and yet we are the most united sect in existence. We are the monument

of no man's genius, but are born of the Spirit of God. We derive our denominational existence from no body of believers ; but when the Bible was given to Europe Baptists sprung up everywhere. Three hundred years ago England was alarmed, "Why, there are five thousand anabaptists among us," they said. Two hundred years ago in this city the church first formed had been obliged to remove to Noddles Island. Two hundred years ago Boston was agitated—Gov. Bellingham wanted to destroy the Baptists—and two hundred years ago to-day a vessel was on its way to this country, bearing a protest from such men as Cotton, Philip, Knight, and others, against the persecution of the Baptists. One hundred years ago the Baptists had planted their churches throughout this State, and shaken hands with Rhode Island. We have always been a missionary people. We belong to those who have migratory homes. One hundred years ago to-day the Baptists were persecuted in Virginia. Three classes had sprung up all over that State ; the planter, the yeoman, and the slave ; and at the same time Daniel Boone was tracking his way to Kentucky, carrying our principles. We have a history—not of man, but of God's Spirit and His truth. Not only have we a history, but God had a purpose in it. We held to the Bible—Ritualism departed from the fundamental principles of the reformation—personal faith requisite to church membership. Other denominations recognize this principle, but act inconsistently with it.

The Mayor of Boston, Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, said he did not come to make a speech ; speech-making was not his vocation ; yet it rejoiced him very much to see so many shining faces of Baptists assembled here to-night. I welcome you to Boston, and am much pleased to see this social party. It reminds me of the meetings Baptists used to hold at our houses in past times. While I trust you have been much profited by these meetings, yet the social element does more to harmonize and Christianize than any thing else. You have abundantly provided for all present, and there is enough left to feed another crowd. More than two hundred years ago one of my relatives was banished to Connecticut because he gave shelter to Roger Williams, and the same spirit that guided my ancestor to protect one Baptist, will lead me, in my official capacity, to protect all Baptists here until they close their pleasant and profitable meetings.

Other speeches were given by Rev. Dr. Anderson, of New York, Dr. Caldwell, of Providence, J. H. Smith, a humorous poem by Dr. Phelps, and Dr. Caswell, Dr. Price from Wales, and Rev. R. M. Henry, of Belfast, Ireland. The occasion appears to have been one of the most intense interest.

The Baptist Publication Society held its Anniversary on Thursday. A resolution was adopted at this meeting directing the Board of Managers to carry out the plan proposed for uniting the Publication Society and the American and Foreign Bible Society into one organization.

The Watchman and Reflector says in reference to these gatherings: "Never were the ranks of this denomination more compacted in the unity of the Spirit and in the bond of peace."

Now for another year of work, prayer, and generous giving."

CHANGING MINISTERS.

A large proportion of our churches have fallen into the habit of changing their ministers. This habit is productive of many evils, some of which I will bring to notice.

1. It is expensive to ministers and reduces them to poverty. To have to move every few years must be to a minister a sacrifice of both time and money, in looking for a new field of labor and in moving his family to it when one is found, and then he must sell at a loss any property he cannot carry with him. To be moving from place to place injures the reputation of a minister.