

Bobbili (1879).

Rev. G. CHURCHILL.
Mrs. CHURCHILL.
G. NURSE, Preacher.
KOTIAH, Teacher and Catechist.
SIAMMA, Bible woman.

The saying, true though trite, that Providence has wisely withheld from men, knowledge of the future, is as applicable to missionaries as to others.

Could we foresee the trials and shortcomings before us, we should most likely enter upon our year's work, if not altogether discouraged, at least with much less of energy and hope than we require. While the work at Bobbili has come far short of what was hoped at the beginning of the year, still something has been gained.

In August a trip was taken to Bimlipatnam, and thence in company with Bro. Sanford, to Chicacole to attend to business connected with the mission property at the latter place. On the way I was taken ill and was detained at Chicacole for a week, instead of making a short tour in the neighborhood as I had hoped.

As soon as health permitted, I returned to Bobbili. Three days after my return, our dear boy, Willie was removed from our home at Bobbili, to our home above.

A few days after his death, our ayah, who had been with us three years, died at Chittavalah and as we trust, joined the great multitude of those redeemed from every tribe, tongue and nation. She was baptized in June, at this place, (Bobbili), upon a profession of faith in Christ, which we have good evidence to believe was a true and saving one.

Through the kind disinterested efforts of Bro. Timpany, a young man who was formerly one of his students at Ramapatnam and afterwards connected with the mission at Kurnool, was induced to join our mission at Bobbili. He arrived here August 1st, accompanied by his wife and wife's brother.

The brother has spent part of the time in the school and part in going out to sell books and talk to the people. On the last Sabbath in October he applied for admission to the church, which was organized that day, was accepted and baptized.

Near the end of December, a tour of nine days was made among the villages to the East of Bobbili, of which twenty-one were visited.

With two or three exceptions, the people in the villages visited, had never heard of Christ. Even within the limits of the short tour made, there are many villages we did not visit, and to visit all within a radius of twenty miles of Bobbili, even once, will require much time and travel.

The girls' school in town, has been carried on during the year by Mrs. Churchill with a fair amount of success. There is much indifference and superstition to contend against, in trying to educate girls in a place like Bobbili, so far away from many civilizing influences, but during the year a daily average of 25½ was reached, notwithstanding fever and small-pox, which at different times were very severe in town. The two sabbath schools have also been kept up during the year, the average attendance at the girls', being 23½, and at the boys' 10½. Mrs. Churchill also continued her zenana work in two houses, as formerly, till August, when one of the women died suddenly, thus leaving but one house, in which regular work has been carried on.

We wait and hope for the day to come when the Holy Spirit shall open the blind eyes and lead the people to look to Christ for salvation.

The number baptized during the past year, were 2. Died 1. Present number in the church 4.

G. CHURCHILL.

In the Churches of the missions belonging to the Ontario and Quebec Board there are the following:—

Cocanada, under Rev. A. V. Timpany, 117 members.

Tuni, under Rev. G. F. Currie, 24 members.

Akidu, under Rev. John Craig, 640 members.

The Baptist Weekly tells the following story, which teaches its own moral:

An old Methodist preacher once offered the following prayer in meeting: "Lord, help us to trust thee with our souls." "Amen," was responded by many voices. "Lord, help us to trust thee with our bodies." "Amen," was responded with as much warmth as ever. "Lord, help us to trust thee with our money." But to this supplication the "Amen" was not forthcoming.

There is no use in preaching to the hungry.

We do not work too much, but we do pray too little for the work we do.

Sunday Reading.

Freshness.

A NEW SERMON BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

"My glory was fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand." Job xxix. 20. "I shall be anointed with fresh oil."—Psalm xcii. 10.

The first text tells us of the renown of Job, and of the way in which the providence of God continued to maintain the glory of his estate, his bodily health and his prosperity. He was for many days, months, years continuously prospered of God. Everything to which he set his hand succeeded. God had set a hedge about him and all that he had, so that none broke through to molest him. He grew richer, he grew more influential, he had more honor in the sight of his fellow-men each morning that he walked to the gate. In every way he was advanced from day to day, and that throughout a long stretch of years. His glory was fresh in him.

However, this did not last always, Job in this chapter is telling us of something that used to be—something that was—something the loss of which he very sorrowfully deplored—"my glory was fresh in me." He found himself suddenly stripped of riches and of honor, and put last in the list instead of first, while his purposes and aims seemed all to miss their way, and he had no strength and no glory left in him. Now had he reached the winter of his discontent, and those who aforetime did him homage became his assailants. So far as glory was concerned he was forgotten as a dead man out of mind.

Now, brothers and sisters, this reads us a lesson that we put not our trust in the stability of earthly things. It is said of the world that God has founded it upon the floods. How, then, can we expect it to be substantial? Beneath yon moon, continually changing, what can we discover that abideth the same? Where the very light of heaven is waxing and waning, what is there but mutability? Change is written upon the face of all things. If, then, you have built your nest on high, reckon not too surely that you shall die in your nest, for the axe may fell the tree, and bring it down at an untimely date.

This is the respect that makes all mortal things inconsiderable to a wise man; he scarce will put them among his treasures, for they melt ere they are fairly counted, like a coinage of ice. They are but as the counters that a child plays with, having only an imaginary value. The things which are seen are shadows; the things invisible are the only substances. Reckon, then, at their fit price this transient glory of wealth, health, or fame. Lay up treasure "where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt," and seek for stability in other things than these. Get the feet of your joy upon the Rock of Ages, and reckon all else to be but sand at its very best.

David in the second text is talking, I think, about spiritual things, and he tells us with great joy that he should be anointed with fresh oil. He did not expect that his glory would depart, but he expected that it should be renewed. He did not reckon that the bow would lose its force in his hand, but that God would increase his strength from day to day. And if any of you here who are God's people have any fears about the future as to your soul matters—if you are alarmed with the fear that you will share the same lot which Job shared as to his temporal glory—I would remind you that Job even in temporals received at last twice as much as he had in his palmiest days, and that God can turn His hand one way as well as another, and brighten your prospects as well as darken them.

Prognosticate delight rather than despair. Even the lower springs shall continue to flow till you are beyond the need of them. Just now it is about spiritual matters that I want to speak; and if you have a fear that you must necessarily decline in these, I would remind you of the words of David, "I shall be anointed with fresh oil," and, yet furthermore, of his other words. "They shall still bring forth fruit in old age, to show that the Lord is upright." Never fall into the notion that a spiritual falling off is inevitable—there need

be nothing of the kind; you may be fresh as the dew even unto the end.

The subject to-night will run in this way—First, the excellency of freshness: "My glory was fresh in me." Secondly, the fear of its departure. And, thirdly, the hope of its continuance, which hope is greatly encouraged by the words of our text: "I shall be anointed with fresh oil."

I. First, then, notice

THE EXCELLENCY OF FRESHNESS.

David had been anointed while still a youth to be king over Israel. He was anointed yet again when he came to the kingdom; that outward anointing with actual oil was the testimony of God's choice and the ensign of David's authorization, and oftentimes when his throne seemed precarious, God confirmed him in it, and subdued the people under him. When his dominion waxed weak, God strengthened him and strengthened his servants, and gave them great victories; so that as a king he was frequently anointed with fresh oil. David's royal brow was crowned with fresh laurels again and again, and his throne was settled and established by the hand of the Lord. Not with the same old stale anointing, a repetition of that which had lost its force, but oil fresh pressed from the green olive, namely, with a new blessing and a fresh blessing from God's right hand was David often anointed, as I trust you and I may be.

Freshness is a most delightful thing if you see it in another. It is a charm in nature. But, dear friends, spiritual freshness has a double charm. Sometimes we know what it is to have a freshness of soul, which is the dew from the Lord. You recollect when you were newly born again and first knew the Lord. How fresh everything was to you! The pardon of sin—how it sparkled! The righteousness of Christ—how brilliant! The idea of being a child of God—how novel and how delightful! To be joint-heir with Christ—how it almost startled you; it was such a new idea to your spirit. And oftentimes since then, when your soul has been in a lively condition, everything has been bright, charming, exhilarating—nothing flat, stale, unprofitable. Even though you heard the same things said again and again, yet because your soul was fresh, they came to you with unusual power.

Your spiritual food, if you are healthy, is to you always fresh, like the manna in the wilderness, which was never stored a single night except for the Sabbath, but fresh and fresh it fell, and Israel gathered it and fed upon it there and then. Oh, it is a blessed thing to have your soul in a fresh state, filled with the ever-flowing living water. It is glorious to find everything about you fresh and new through the teaching of the blessed Spirit, so that you go from strength to strength, and like a roe or a young hart, leap from hill to hill. If we are now in the possession of it, may we always keep that freshness of soul and never lose it.

How that freshness is seen in a man's devotions. Oh, I have heard some prayers that are really *justy*. I have heard them before so often that I dread the old familiar sounds. Some hackneyed expressions I recollect hearing when I was a boy. I even now hear the vain repetitions; old, worn-out, good-for-nothing, rubbishy expressions they were then; but they are brought out still by regular prayer-makers. Even where the words are new and original you will hear men pray in such a style as to matter, that you say to yourself, "That prayer came out of Noah's Ark." As far as that man is concerned there is nothing at all in it of life, sap, or savor. It has been dead long ago, and hung up to dry till not a particle of juice remains in it.

But, on the other hand, you hear a man pray who does pray, whose soul is fully in communion with God, and what life and freshness is there! It may be that his expressions are somewhat rough, but they touch you because they come from his heart. Some of the confessions and petitions are strange to you, perhaps, and yet you feel that they are such strangers as it behoves you to entertain at once. You are glad that such words and thoughts have passed through your spirit and blessed you. You feel that you can pray with such persons. Their prayers will go to

heaven, for they came from heaven. God has inspired them, and their originality is a part of the seal manual of the Spirit.

And so, dear friends, it is well to have a freshness about our feelings. I know that we do not hope to be saved by our feelings; neither do we put feeling side by side with faith; yet I should be very sorry to be trusting and yet never feeling. Surely it would be a dead faith. It would be a strange thing to be a living child of God and to have no feelings. I will tell you about feelings as they strike me. Sometimes I have deplored the condition of my heart before God, and thought my feelings to be the worst that could be; but what a foolish judge I have been, for in a week's time I have wanted to have those despised feelings over again, and thought that now at last I had fallen into a worse state than before. I am persuaded that we are very poor judges of the value of our own inward feelings, and mayhap, when we are lowest in our own esteem we are really highest in the sight of God; and when we feel as if we did not pray, we are praying, and the heart may be wrestling with God more when it fears that it does not pray, than when you come down complacently out of your closet and say, "I know that I have had a good time, for I feel perfectly self-satisfied."

I hate the excitement which needs to be pumped up. There is a something delightful to my mind in coming to the throne of grace weeping—a something delightful in coming to the Lord's Supper full of joy and gladness; to come to either place cold and dead is horrible. There is something delicious in knowing that what you do feel is true, and comes up from the very bottom of your soul, and has a point and edge about it which proves how sincere it is. God keeps us from stale feelings, and give us freshness of emotion.

I believe, dear friends, that there is a very great beauty and excellence in FRESHNESS OF UTTERANCE.

Do not hinder yourself from that. How I long for it as a preacher. When one has day after day to stand before the same assembly and talk of the things of God, one dreads lest he should be so monotonous and full of repetition that even the things of God should come to be a weariness to God's own people. I have often thought that if some brethren, who are very careful to say exceedingly well what they do say, would be a little more careless and speak as it comes, letting their heart flow over at their lips spontaneously, there would be a far greater freshness about their utterance than there is when every sentence smells of the lamp and reeks of midnight oil. God forbid that we should say a word against the deepest study and the profoundest research of God's word, but still we may get to be so much students that we scarcely speak like practical men who live among the people. By aiming at a very superior style we may fall into a thoroughly inferior one, and all our freshness may be gone.

I like, for my part, the wild bird's note. Men get the bullfinch and teach it to sing a few notes, and then the piping bullfinch is greatly prized. But I have finches outside my window any one of which will beat any finch in the world that only pipes a note or two, for they pipe much more melodiously, though they were never taught except of God and nature. There is a range of sweetness about their wild notes that a tutored bird cannot reach. Nature, pure and unsophisticated, is the best instrument for grace.

Now, you that have lately been converted, do not go and learn all the pretty phrases that we are accustomed to use. Do not go and sit down at the feet of your dear teacher in the class and feel that you must talk just like him. Strike out your own course. Be yourself. "But I should be odd," say you. All right; so is your pastor. You need not mind that. You will not be the only odd body about. Be encouraged by that. I think that little of what people call oddness is just, after all, leaving God's work alone. All the trees that God makes are odd. The Dutchmen clip them round or make them into peacocks, but that style of gardening is not to our mind. And some people say, "What a lovely tree!" I say, "What a horribly ugly thing it

is." Why not let the tree grow as God would have it? Do not clip yourselves round or square, but keep your freshness. There will be no two Christian men exactly alike if they do that.

FRESHNESS IN LABOR.

There should be a freshness, dear friends, about our labor. We ought to serve the Lord to-day with just as much novelty in it as there was ten years ago. I may even venture to say thirty years ago. Oh, I recollect the seriousness with which I went out to preach the first half dozen sermons I ever preached, and what a burden it was from the Lord, and how I did go at it with all my might—very clumsily, but still with all my soul and spirit. And do you recollect when you began to teach the class, or began to take your tract district? Did you not pray over it? It seemed almost too good to be true that you should be trusted with doing anything for your Lord and Master. And you did it, oh, so intensely, and therefore you had God's blessing. You did it well, though you blundered a good deal; for all your heart was in it, your motive was pure, and your faith was childlike. You blundered the right way, for you blundered with your heart, and so blundered into other men's hearts. Your heart was serving God, even in the mistakes you made.

Now, perhaps, you can go round the district, and you are pretty well half asleep over it; and you can teach the class, but there is not the vigor, the force, the energy, the intense desire, the burden that there once was; perhaps not all the joy. You can stand up and preach, dear brother, and you have got pretty well accustomed to it; and the people have got accustomed to it too, and they can nearly go to sleep, and you can, too, and preach asleep. It is an easy thing to do, if you once learn the wretched art. There is a kind of somnambulism in preachers; they can talk in their sleep in a very precise way—much more wonderful than walking. You cannot say, "I sleep, but my heart waketh." The fact is that it is the other way up—"I wake, but my heart sleepeth," and it is a great pity when it comes to be so.

We should pray to God that we may do everything freshly, just as if we had never done it before, only doing it with all the improvements which experience will bring to us. Pray with your children to-night as if it were your first prayer with them. Speak with them about their souls as if you had never mentioned the subject before. Talk of Jesus as if you were telling news. Why are you not? Is it not always glad tidings? always news fresh from heaven? So God grant us grace that, when we come to be gray, and when we totter with our staff for very age, yet still we may tell out the story, it with feebleness of utterance yet with juvenility of heart, feeling that we are bringing forth fruit still even to old age, for the Lord still anoints us with fresh oil.

II. Now, dear friends, in the second place, I will dwell upon the fear of losing it—

THE FEAR OF ITS DEPARTURE.

I have heard some express the thought that perhaps the things of God might lose their freshness to us by our familiarity with them. I think that the very reverse will turn out to be the case, if the familiarity be that of a sanctified heart. In other things "familiarity breeds contempt," but in the things of God familiarity breeds adoration. The man who does not read his Bible much is the man who has a scant esteem of it; but he that studies it both day and night is the very man who will be impressed by its infinitude of meaning, till he will be ready to cry, like Jerome, "I adore the infinity of Scripture."

When we first of all commenced to break bread on every first day of the week, I heard some say that they thought that the coming so often to the table might take away the impressiveness of the holy feast. Well, I have scarcely ever missed a Sabbath now these twenty years, and I never was so impressed with the solemnity and the sweetness of the Master's Supper as I am now. I feel it to be fresher every time. When it was once a month I had not half the enjoyment in it; and I think that where friends have the communion once a quarter, or once a year, as in some churches, they really

do not give the ordinance a fair opportunity to edify them. They do not fairly test the value of an ordinance which they so grossly neglect, as it seems to me. No; you may have more, and more, and more, and more of everything that Christ has instituted and ordained, especially more and more of Himself; and the more you have the more freshness there will be.

Yes, but we have had a fear sometimes that there will be a want of freshness about our selves. Well, that fear is a very natural one. Let me tell you some points on which, I fear, we have good ground for alarm, for we do our best to rob ourselves of all life and freshness.

Christian people can lose the freshness of their own selves by imitating one another. By adopting as our model some one form of the Christian life other than that which is embodied in the person of our Lord we shall soon manufacture a set of paste gems, but the diamond flash and glory will be unknown.

Many godly people have a very deep sense of their corruption and inward sin, and this, together with a sorrowful spirit, combines to make them a rather gloomy race. Often deeply taught in other respects, they fail to rejoice in the Lord. Certain of these have formed a school, and they have set up a standard, and they judge everybody to be a deceiver or a mere babe in grace who cannot groan as deep down as they can. This is not wise. If you do that you will lose your freshness, for you will forever be scattering dust and ashes over all the joys of your life. Why should the children of the bride-chamber mourn while the bridegroom is with them? Let us be happy while we may.

There is another set of brethren who are always glad and happy, for they are healthy and competently provided for, and out of the way of temptation, and so

THEY BELIEVE THAT THEY ARE PERFECT;

they also set up a standard, and they cut down everybody who cannot sing right up into the alto notes as high as they can. Well, you will get stale, too, brother, whoever you may be, for self-laudation never keeps fresh long together. Poor fools, how have they persuaded themselves to hope that self-praise will be thought to be the height of piety? It is nauseous even to those of us who are prepared to make a measure of excuse for the fervid imaginations of the brethren.

Sometimes, in this pilgrimage to the Celestial City, I join company with a brother worker who laments that he has many difficulties in dealing with poor sinners. I say to him, "I am glad of that, for I have more difficulties than you; but I see that I am not alone in my anxieties." Another I meet with says that he has been so happy in meeting with souls that have found the Lord; and I reply, "Yes, and I am glad to see you, for I am happy too, for I have met with many who have just found the Saviour." These changes and ups and downs are like the delicious vicissitudes of the seasons—they are not always autumn, not always spring, not always winter, not always even the plenitude of summer. So with our souls, we are never so long in one stay as to find monotony in life. No, the monotony is in death; the freshness is in life. These changes and varieties create a splendid freshness which we might not hope to have if we tied ourselves to some one man's chariot, and resolved that our experience should be uniformly like his.

Another way of spoiling your freshness is by repression. The feebleness of Christians dare not say, feel, or do, until they have asked their leader's leave. I have known a little village chapel in which, when the preacher had delivered a sermon, the people did not know whether he was sound or not till they had asked the principal deacon; or they waited till they got outside and consulted a little knot of good old men and women who had to act as tasters for all the others, and give a verdict as to the orthodoxy of the performance. A few good souls thought the sermon to be very sweet; the man seemed to be preaching the Gospel, but they did not like to commit themselves to the tune till they had got the