

MISSIONARY INTELLIGENCE.

For the Christian Messenger.
Letter from Rev. Mr. George.
ZEEGONG, BURMA,
May 15th, 1883.

Dear Editor,—

What a feast of good things you have been able to give us during the last six months, every issue containing accounts of revivals in the churches. All good men must rejoice when God manifests His presence in the conversion of sinners and in the building up of the saints; and how gratifying it must be to an editor to have such reports to publish. So he that scattereth and he that findeth rejoice together. It often makes me homesick to read of these good times in dear Nova Scotia. I would like to pray with you as well as for you, and yet I do not forget the honor conferred upon me to be an ambassador of God to these Burmans.

There has been considerable uneasiness for a year past on account of armed bands of robbers. They would enter an out-of-the-way village and take possession, everything was at their command while they chose to remain, and woe to the village that dared to report their visit. By a system of intimidation, secured by a few brutal murders, no one dared to inform on them, and the police were everywhere thrown off the scent. British perseverance, however, has at length driven them out, and now we are subject only to thefts, housebreaking, and cattle lifting. A few days ago one of the native clerks, who handles a good deal of government cash, had his house visited during his absence from home. The natives got into the house about midnight, bound the women, and threatened them with instant death. Of course, in their terror, they not only told where the money and jewels were, but agreed to show them, and one being unbound for the purpose, lighted a lamp, unlocked the boxes, and handed whatever valuables they contained. The gentlemen then insisted on being lighted down stairs and out of the house. We have not yet been visited by the gentry, but would be if they supposed it worth the risk.

This has been a very hot season and the rains are late, only a shower about the tenth and bright sunshine ever since. For more than a month I have not tried jungle travel. Having lost nearly four years from my work in order to recuperate, I do not want to break down now from any reckless exposure. The prospects are encouraging, the truth is well received for the most part, and converts are made continually. The chief cause of our weakness here is the indifference of Christians. Few except the preachers feel called upon to labor for souls. Men who are evidently true believers in Christ are satisfied to live for themselves, scarcely opening their mouth to their neighbors. I am certain that the truth preached is not so convincing as the truth lived, acted out in our daily contact with men, and I would like to suggest to those who are grieved over the dearth of young men entering the ministry, that the great want of our denomination is in men who, not as ministers but as laymen, find joy in laboring for souls. Unconverted men are too apt to regard as cant a word of exhortation from a minister, when they would receive it with profit from a judicious layman. I well remember such a word to myself from that noble saint, Sidney Shaw. In the simplicity and fervor of love, with tears in his eyes, he spoke to me of my soul, and although I answered him lightly I never forgot. A careful attendance on all the means of grace, although very important, is not the limit of the obligations or the privilege of the saint.

June 18th.

I had to attend to something else and left the foregoing unfinished, but will send it now as I have not time to rewrite. We are well and busy. My wife has a class of Bible women, and I a class of preachers. Five of these men have been employed as preachers, and five of them are new men. Two or three of them will evidently join themselves to the ministry of the word, and the others are sufficiently anxious to know the truth to give their time for the sake of studying the Bible. Such men will be a power in the church, and will preach more or less every week.

We now have six schools in our district, scholars averaging 30 in each, where the gospel is taught daily, and a Sunday School every Sunday morning. I hear good reports from several other stations, and you will be glad to hear that this is a year of grace for Burmah as well as for Nova Scotia.

We have just received a man who has been examining the gospel for years. My wife called him as a personal teacher about eight years ago, and he has been ever since feeling his way along. He was once a Pongyee, and is learned and influential. It is a hard blow to Buddhism to have him profess faith in Christ.

Sincerely your brother,
Wm. GEORGE.

Missionary Correspondence.

In the absence of anything later from our missionaries we give the remainder of Mrs. Churchill's letter dated April 20th from the C. M. Link:

On Friday we went over to visit the Yellamas. At the first house there are only three of a family—an old man, a widow; his daughter, who lost her husband a few months ago; and her daughter, also a widow since her childhood. That afternoon another old lady and her daughter, and two children were there, besides two others, which made us a congregation of nine, who sat and listened attentively, except the children; and even they were very much pleased with my pictures; one showing the Prodigal Son while engaged in feeding the swine; and the other, his father embracing him on his return home.

The old lady was very ill a month ago, so ill that I did not think she could recover. For more than a week she could not speak and could scarcely hear anything, but always greeted me with a smile when I went to see her. She was the one who first opened the door to the Yellamas to me, and I have always felt that she must be saved. She confessed before them all, seemingly sincerely, that she believes in Jesus and that He is the only Saviour. He only knows how deeply her heart is affected by the truth. One of the women belonged to the second house we visited and went home before us, and we were followed by the other stranger. I had been called to this house when one of daughters was very ill, some two years ago, and they never forgot my services. This day I had a warm welcome and many enquiries after my little boy, and why I had not visited them for such a long time. Here too, was a woman waiting for the purifying waters the Brahmin could manufacture, and they seemed quite surprised when Siamma told them that no such purification was ever required by her. They said, "God had commanded it." To this we took exception, and showed them why the Brahmins taught it, as well as a great many other observances at which they must be present, and receive their pay. Here ten women listened to us attentively, and three of them followed us to the next house, where they again listened well to the lesson for the day, and, answering the questions correctly, helped us to teach their sisters who had not heard before. At each of the houses we offered prayer, both to show these women how to pray to the true God, and to ask His blessing on our work. At each house we were invited to come again soon, and I came home feeling that the Lord had surely been with us. We had only been at three houses, but all the women from six houses and a few others had been present, and heard of the way of life that afternoon.

Just as I got home, two Yellama men came to see me. One said he had a sick son at home, his only child, and wanted me to go to see him. The other said, "You cured my son two years ago and I have brought this man to you that you may go and cure his son." I tried to make them see that it was only God, the true God, who could cure diseases, and that without His blessing on my work I could do nothing; promised to go next day and see his boy, and dismissed them, for another little boy was then waiting for me.

Saturday we went out again, calling at another house on our way. Here had lived and died the husband of the widow we visited the previous day. (She has now gone home to her father's house.) I had known the man well, as he often came to our house for flowers, etc., and brought me limes which could seldom be bought in bazaar. In talking about him I asked, "Where did he die, in this room?" pointing to one near us. "O no," they said; "he died out there, pointing to a shed, I suppose used for their cattle—a number of posts set into the ground and roofed with grass or leaves; no protection around the sides. How many days did he lie there before he died?" "Three. When they thought he would die they had him carried out there." For he must not die in the house lest the house should be unlucky afterwards, and all kinds of misfortunes should come to them.

While I was there, there was considerable talk about a piece of cloth, and I asked what it meant. They informed me that this cloth, or *quaka*, had been purchased without asking the Brahmins whether it was a good day or not, and afterwards it proved to have been a bad day. So the cloth was laid aside, and must not be put in with their other cloths till a good day came, on which they might tear off the end and put it away ready for wearing. The woman who bought it had no one to send it with to the Brahmin, to see if this was a good day or not, so had sent it over to these her relatives, for some of them to go and enquire for her. We tried to convince them that all days were alike good, but failed. Then I said I could tell her whether this is a good day or not, as well as the Brahmin. She stood irresolute, and her daughter said, "Go along and ask the Brahmin," and by way of apology to us, "All of our people do this way and we must too." We pointed out to them how that for this service, as well as the innumerable other things in which they were consulted, the Brahmin must receive pay, and for this the custom was instituted, as we came out of the yard we met the woman returning. "Well, is this a good day?" we asked. She replied by rolling up her eyes, shaking her head, and spreading out and twisting her hands in the peculiar manner which always means *No* among these people.

Arrived at the house where the sick child was, we found the father holding him. I asked for the mother, "O, she is in there," he said. "Sick?" I asked. "Yes, a little." Some other person whispered what I already knew, but had forgotten for the moment. "The wife must not be seen in the presence of her husband, or the husband must not see her in the presence of others."

We intended to talk to the women of this house too; but after praying with the father and his child, and administering the remedies we had brought, the black clouds rolling up in the north and west, the muttering thunder, and almost constant flashing of lightning, warned us to return home without delay. This we did, and it was no vain warning, for we were no sooner housed than the storm was upon us in all its fury. First, clouds of dust, preventing us from seeing across our compound, and reminding us of a blustering snow storm at home; then the rain, thunder and lightning, with the wind blowing a gale all the time; lasting till some time after night-fall.

During the dust storm, in looking toward the east, we saw the glare from a burning village, which we at first thought was our own town burning. It must have been a hard time for the poor unfortunates to become homeless and homeless.

ZEEGONG, BURMAH.—On March 24 we began a very successful three-days' meeting at Zeegong. More than one hundred were present on Sunday, all from our own district. Brother Stevens from Prome came, and helped us greatly. We began these yearly meetings some seven years ago, but they were not kept up during our absence in America. In all probability this will be formed into an association: the ground covered by the Pegu association is so extensive that very few besides the preachers can attend. Since last writing one has been baptized and three restored.—REV. WILLIAM GEORGE, April 6, 1883.

CHINA, A New Experience.—Among the number baptized were four old men, heads of families, to whom late in life the gospel had come with its glorious message. Hard-featured, rough specimens of humanity were they apparently; but they showed in their examination good evidence of having gladly accepted the offer of salvation. They had never before seen the houses of foreigners, and in visiting us, asked to be permitted to look around. They were greatly delighted when Dr. Ashmore played a little for them on the organ. Their expressions of wonder and admiration were very funny: the pictures, the furniture, and the little foreign ornaments, they regarded with a sort of awe. One old man got down on the matting, and rubbed his finger over the hearth-rug. Another exclaimed under his breath, "God must have been here." Dear old men, what a revelation heaven will be to them!—MISS S. A. NORWOOD, Swatow, April 9, 1883.

ABORIGINES IN INDIA.—There is a large population of aborigines, a people who are outside caste, who do not belong to any of the old established religions, who are not under the influence of bigoted and hereditary superstition; and these aborigines offer a clear field upon which the missionaries may operate. And although they are humble people, no doubt, still they are brave, resolute, faithful, and true living people; and if they are attached—as they rapidly will be—to Christianity, they will form a nucleus around which British power and influence may gather.—SIR RICHARD TEMPLE.

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1883.

THIRD QUARTER.

Lesson VIII.—AUGUST 19, 1883.

ISRAEL FORSAKING GOD.

Judges ii. 6-16.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vs. 14-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers."—Judges ii. 12.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

M. The Lesson and Context, Judges ii. 11-23.

T. Israel's Negligence, Judges ii. 1-5.

W. Israel's Apostasy, Judges iii. 1-11.

T. Judgments and Mercies, Ps. lxxviii. 54-72.

F. Warning to the Impenitent, Acts xiii. 38-52.

S. Warning to Christians, 1 John ii. 15-29.

A New Heart, Heb., ch. viii.

ISRAEL FAITHLESS TO JEHOVAH.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. A Wicked Generation, Vs. 6-10. II. Idolatry, Vs. 11-13. III. Judgment and Mercy, Vs. 14-16.

QUESTIONS.—What does the Book of Judges record?

Vs. 6-10.—What was the character of the new generation? What was the trouble? What does this fact prove? What was the general character of the Jewish nation?

Vs. 11-13.—Into what did Israel fall? How did it come about? ch. iii. 5-7. How did Jehovah regard their conduct? How does he regard idolatry now? Can there be idolatry without worshiping images?

Vs. 14-16.—How was Israel punished? What predictions and warnings were fulfilled? What did God from time to time raise up? For what purpose? Give the earlier examples of judgment and mercy found in ch. iii. When delivered, was the reformation of Israel permanent? ch. ii. 17-19. What did this show as to their character? What list of the Judges, ending with Samuel, at last became of Israel? What lesson for sinners who hear the gospel?

Scripture Searchings.—Make out a Why was Israel at last rejected and scattered over the earth?

The beginning of this chapter records the visit of an angel of the Lord to Israel with a sharp rebuke, because they had not entirely driven out the Canaanites from the land, but had suffered portions of the different heathen nations to remain. He tells them that these shall be "as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be as snares to you." Our Lesson relates the swift moral declension of Israel through the idolatries of these nations. But, first, the author gives a retrospect of the happier condition of Israel during the life of Joshua and of the elders who had surrounded him.

NOTES.—Vs. 6.—This verse, with the three succeeding verses, is a repetition, in nearly the same words, of Josh. xxiv. 28-31. When Joshua had let the people go. From the great gathering at Shechem, spoken of in the last Lesson. Every man went to his inheritance, with a purpose strong within him to possess the land by driving out the heathen. But, encountering greater difficulties than they had reckoned upon, (for illustration see i. 19), the Israelites compromised the matter by permitting the nations to stay, and making them tributaries. See the record of this fact in i. 19-36. Yet, according to iii. 1, this was of the Lord, who intended "to prove (or test) Israel by them."

Vs. 7.—The profound impression made upon Israel by their godly and courageous leader, is seen from the statement that the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua. The company of leading men or princes, who had been associated with him, were permeated with his spirit, and had seen all the great works of the Lord, such as the miraculous crossing of the Jordan, and the fall of Jericho. So long as this band of faithful and pious men lived, their influence kept the Israelites from apostasy. But when they died, there was a rapid deterioration.

Vs. 8. See Lesson VII.

Vs. 9.—They buried him in the border (within the limits) of his inheritance. This was Timnath-heres (portion of the sun). "The Jews see in this name a reference to the act of making the sun stand still, which is to them the greatest exploit of Joshua's life, as they state that the figure of the sun was carved upon the sepulchre."—McClintock and Strong. The name of this city in Josh. xix. 50, where we have the record of its grant to Joshua, and in Josh. xxiv. 30, is Timnath-erah. The *erah* with its letters transposed is equivalent to *heres*, and is supposed to be meant for the same. This spot was given to Joshua at his

own request, after the partition of the country was completed. The exact locality is not identified.

Vs. 10.—There arose another generation. As the new king of Egypt forgot Joseph (Ex. i. 8), so the new generation of Israel forgot the Lord. They were strangers to the solemnizing experience of their fathers, and too readily yielded to the corrupting influences of the idolatry that surrounded them. We have repeated illustrations, notably in this instance, and in the cases of Jacob at Shechem (Gen. xxxiv.), and Lot at Sodom, of how difficult it is for even godly parents to bring up their children in the fear of God, when they voluntarily expose them to wicked surroundings.

Vs. 11.—The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. The first utterance of this sad and familiar refrain. Seven times do we meet it in Judges, as descriptive of the seven apostasies of Israel, which brought upon them seven servitudes. *Baalim*. The plural form of *Baal*, and, according to Keil, a general term used to denote all false deities. "Baal was the chief male deity of the Canaanites, and was worshiped by the different nations with peculiar modifications, and therefore designated by various distinctive epithets." Such as *Baal-berith*; i. e., Covenant Baal; *Baalzebub*, Baal (lord) of the fly, and protector from it; *Baal-peor*, Baal presiding over the licentious rites of worship. There are similar modifications of the Mariolatry of Roman Catholic countries, but with the one and same object of idolatrous worship.

Vs. 12, 13.—Forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt. Their folly and ingratitude could not be more strongly expressed. The God who delivered them by a series of astounding miracles from the degrading slavery of Egypt when they were broken and helpless, and had shown himself powerful and gracious, was cast off for the impotent and false deities of the people that were round about them, whom these gods could not protect. Bowed themselves. Publicly worshiped. See graphic picture of their sin in Ps. cvi. 34-39. *Ashtoreth*. Also in the plural, the singular form being *Ashtoreth*. The female deity corresponding to Baal. Her worship was wide-spread, and the rites connected with it those of the most revolting licentiousness. The effort to mingle such worship with the worship of Jehovah, was, in the highest degree, insulting to God.

Vs. 14, 15.—Hence the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel. "Our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. xii. 29). The intensity of his nature is seen in his indignation against sin as well as in his love of holiness. He delivered them into the hands of spoilers, etc., as he had declared he would if they forsook him (Josh. xxiv. 20). God is as true to his threatenings as to his promises of grace. He withdrew his aid from them, by which they had heretofore conquered, and used the wicked nations as scourges for them. They were defeated in battle, and given over to the plunderings of their enemies. Nor did the Lord merely refrain from helping them; for his hand (power) was against them for evil. All their undertakings at home and abroad were out of joint. Everywhere they were baffled and overcome. Greatly distressed. As any people would be that were given over to the horrors and cruelties inflicted upon a conquered nation in ancient times.

Vs. 16.—Nevertheless. God is a God of grace as well as of justice. He made provision for their deliverance upon repentance. The Lord raised up. By prompting men at critical times of Israel's oppression to undertake their deliverance, and giving them courage and power for the work. Judges. A unique order, not like the ordinary judges of the theocracy (Ex. xviii. 21-26), but called for a specific purpose according to Israel's needs, and endowed with extraordinary powers. There were four different judges, including Deborah, during the period of this Book. They began their authority with an act of national deliverance, and generally combined military leadership with civil rule. The office was not hereditary; but each one was specially called of God for the service.

SUGGESTED LESSONS.

This Lesson forcibly illustrates the danger of ungodly associations. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." The Israelites were ashamed of being singular, and therefore joined in the popular idol-worship around them. Notice their progressive steps in sin. First they forgot, then they forsook the Lord, and then boldly served Baal.

Baal worship is as popular to-day as then. The world, self, unholy pleasure, mammon, have their millions of votaries. Let the Christian beware lest he be drawn away from his Lord.

God does not share in any sickly sentimentalism about sin. He hates and punishes it.

The golden thread of grace is seen in the texture of judgment. God makes provision for the deliverance of his people, even while he smites.

Help for Parents, or for the Teacher of the Primary Class.

We have three Lessons in the Book of Judges. This one gives a general view of the people of Israel during the period between the conquest of Palestine and the establishing of the monarchy under Saul. There were good times and evil times. Obedience and disobedience. Prosperity and adversity. The first chapter relates their partial work of driving out the Canaanites. The idolatry and evil practices of the Canaanites were cruel and revolting in the extreme. God sent his people into that land to purify it, and fit it to be the home of a people to whom his oracles were committed, and from whom should come the Saviour of men. The Canaanites were like a cancer in the human body; nothing less than the severest measures will do for such a disease, and nothing short of destruction, full and complete, would meet their case. It was just and right that they should be removed from the land, and the people of Israel were merely the agents of God in effecting his purpose.

The "Judges" of Israel were the Rulers raised up at special times. When Israel was in distress, and bowed down in repentance, they were often lifted up and brought near to God by the leadership of the Judges.

For perhaps fifty years, Israel was faithful, through the period when Joshua ruled them, and during the period of the elders who lived after the death of Joshua. Then they forgot God. We forgot God! Yet how much greater, in every way, our privileges and helps to remembrance. In forgetting, they easily drifted away from God, and so, though perhaps they did not at first mean to do so, they forsook God. Perhaps they did not like to be different from their neighbors. They wanted to be well thought of by the Canaanites. So they went one step lower, and followed Baal. Sin is sure to be linked with suffering.

Becoming the servant of sin we live in it day by day until sin has entire dominion over us. Except we turn to God again, we are lost forever.

—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

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