

MISSION FIELD.

The Power of the Bible in India.

An extract from an address by Rev. Henry Haigh, of India, delivered at the annual meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society, in London, 1886.

Some years ago a man came into my study in India, bringing a letter of introduction from a brother missionary 200 miles away. He was a thin, gaunt-looking man, one who evidently had in him a large capacity for mysticism and devotion. Two years before he had begun to read a Bible in Sanskrit at the place where my brother missionary lived. He was a great Sanskrit scholar, and the teaching which he had, very soon began to find a new explanation and a strange fulfilment in the Book which was now placed in his hands. He became an enthusiastic student, and, after he had studied for about six months, he proposed, on his own account, to become an expounder of the Bible. He did not profess to be a Christian, and he had no desire to be baptized.

He took the Bible about with him wherever he went, and read it to the people. For a long time he did work of this kind. He would start out without giving him any warning, and stay away for two or three months, and then suddenly return. He said:—

"I have been all through the south of India on this journey, and I have stopped at about a dozen different places. I did this in one place. As soon as I got there I asked for the chief pundit of the place, and was introduced to him. I asked him if he had any people to call together that I might talk, and he called them together—sixty of them; and when they came, I sat down, and I opened the Bible, and I began to chant from the Bible as we chant from our own Vedas. And the chief pundit and the bystanders listened. I chanted from the Psalms, and they said: 'What Veda is that? It is beautiful. We have never heard that Veda before. Where did you get it?' I went on, and then, after I chanted some of the Psalms, I began to chant some of the stories of the life of Christ, and they listened to me and wondered, and at last they said, 'We must have that Veda,' and I have brought home sixty rupees from the people of that place in order that we may send them at once sixty Sanskrit Bibles."

But he did more than that. There was in Mysore a Guru who was perhaps the most powerful ecclesiastical potentate in the whole of India. This man went to him—he had nothing on but just one cloth throne around him—and when he came up to the place where this Guru lived, he asked to be introduced to him. "Why do you want to see his holiness?" "I want to speak to him. I am a Sanskrit scholar, and I hear that his holiness is the greatest Sanskrit scholar living, and I should like to converse with him and sit at his feet." He prostrated himself, and talked in Sanskrit with the Guru for a while. At last he said: "Your holiness, I have a book, a Veda. I do not know whether you have seen it, but, if you will permit me, I will chant a portion from it," and his holiness granted permission, and so he began to chant a portion of the Sermon on the Mount, and the Guru listened to it as one would listen to new and ravishing music, and when he had done he said: "Can you get me a copy of this Veda? I should like to have it, and to turn to it again and again," and the man said, "I will get you one if you will," and then he said, "I left him, and I have come back to get a special copy for the Guru."

Two or three days afterward there came a letter from the Guru to the man himself, and he brought the letter with him and showed it to him, and the letter said:—

"I have been thinking about that chant of yours which said, 'Ye must be born again,' and I should like to know exactly what the Christian people mean by that, and how they would have people born again. Will you speak to some Christian Guru and get the information I want?"

And so they sat down together, and spent the better part of one day in inditing a long and respectful, but plain and evangelical letter to the highest priest of the Hindus.

Just before I left India, a native teacher brought a man to me, who told me this story, that some three years before a copy of the Gospel had come into his hands. He began to read it, and he found in this Gospel the portrayal of such a Guru as he had never heard of before. His Gurus never came to him without trying to take the money out of his hands. He said:—

"Sir, I read and read, until I felt that this was the Guru that I needed, and so I took the idol which I and my wife had been worshipping for a long time, I put it out of the house, and then I set up a shelf on the wall, and I have put that Book there, and I burn incense before that Book, and prostrate myself before it, and in that way try to worship the Guru of whom that Book tells me."

There was another man living away across country, who had never seen a missionary; he had never seen a native teacher; but

he had read the Bible; he had read it carefully and repeatedly and he had adopted the Guru whom it portrayed. What was the consequence? That man, having seen how good the Guru was, had said to himself: "I must obey this Guru; what are his commands?" and, turning to the Gospel once more, he found the command that he must be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. What was he to do? He had never seen a Christian church; he had never seen the ordinance of baptism administered; but he had a way of obeying the command, and so, day by day, he went down to the tank, and, looking up toward heaven, he said, "I baptise myself in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," and at each name he plunged into the water and came out again. And who should say that that man was not baptized from heaven? More than that he saw a command that he was to remember Christ's death till He came, that he was to eat and drink; and so, although he had never been in a church, day by day he took a handful of rice, and, putting it in his mouth, said, "This I do in remembrance of Christ;" and drinking a little water, he said, "I drink this because Christ died for me;" and that man, though no priest had ever put his hands on his head, and no minister of any church had ever given the sacrament to him, that man had received the supper of the Lord.

OUR YOUNG PEOPLE.

This department is conducted by a member of the General Assembly's Committee on Young People's Societies. Correspondence is invited from all Young People's Societies, and Presbyterian and Synodical Committees. Address: "Our Young People," PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW, Drawer 2464, Toronto, Ont.

Suggested Subjects of Prayer

FOR THE WORLD'S CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR PRAYER CHAIN FOR 1897.

January.—For the Conversion of the World.

Pray that the beginning of the new year may witness the beginning of a universal revival of religion. Pray for a great manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit throughout the world, and that the unsaved everywhere may be turned to Christ.

February.—For Armenia.

Pray that Armenia may be spared further persecution, and that a way to prosperity may be opened to the thousands left destitute by the Turk.

March.—For Our Churches.

Pray that churches may be filled with the evangelizing spirit of Christ; that the members may dwell together in Christian unity and service; that they may loyally uphold the pastors' hands; and that the great mission of the church in winning men and training them into Christlikeness may be fulfilled.

April.—For Unsaved Friends and Relatives.

Pray that the members of our own families may be won for Christ, and that Christians may be faithful in witnessing to them for the Master. Pray for the unsaved friends and relatives of others.

May.—For the Cause of Temperance.

Pray that the drink traffic everywhere may be destroyed, and that all Christians may labor together for this end.

June.—For Universe' Peace.

Pray that war everywhere may give way to arbitration, and that Christian nations may become examples of fellowship and mutual toleration.

TO CHRISTIAN ENDEAVORERS.

Christian Endeavorers! Hand locked in hand,
One is your mission by sea and by land!
Wide as the world is the Gospel ye bear,
Rich in redeeming love, free as the air!

Christian Endeavorers! True to your creed,
Strengthen your brethren, and bid them God-speed!
Wide keep the banner of freedom unfurled,
This be your motto—For Christ and the world!

Christian Endeavorers! Do not delay!
Work as your Master did, "whilst it is day!"
Nor till to-morrow leave what should be done,
Ere in the western sky sinks the red sun.

Christian Endeavorers! Fervent in zeal,
Ring out the message with charion peal!
Yours 'tis no longer your colors to hide,
Speak for the Master, be true to your Guide!

Christian Endeavorers! Look not behind!
Strength for the present day's work shall ye find
Dwell not on failures, but resolute be
Still to press onward, unfettered and free.

Christian Endeavorers! Look to the goal,
Seek ye no resting-place here for your soul
Christ as your Captain, His word as your sword,
Forward! and fearing not, praise ye the Lord