

## COLD WATERS TO THE THIRSTY SOUL.

By THE REV. DUNCAN MACGREGOR, M.A., St. Peter's, Dundee.

“As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.”—PROVERBS XXV. 25.

Water is the most grateful drink when there is real thirst. It is at once the most refreshing and the most safe. When the traveller in the desert comes to his encampment at noon, with a burning sun overhead and the sand as hot as lava beneath his feet, nothing will satisfy him but a spring of water.

Water is a wonderful creation. The world needs much of it, and there is a plentiful supply. The store is kept in a vast reservoir—the ocean. While laid up there it is preserved in salt. But as portions are drawn off for use, the salt is left behind. It is caught up into the clouds by evaporation, carried by winds across the world, and dropped in rain upon the thirsty earth. An abundant supply is distributed to all God's creatures.

We have much experience in our day of receiving news from a far country. There never was so much running to and fro as now. The social depression among large classes at home—the discovery of gold fields on the other side of the globe—the facilities for travelling which have annihilated space and narrowed the land and seas—have given such an impulse to emigration, that almost every family in the land is bound by tender ties to the antipodes. You know how refreshing it is to hear good news from a far country. A wayward son has sailed and left his mother disconsolate. She thought he was to be the stay of her declining years, and to lay her head in the grave. Years pass. At last a letter comes full of penitence and love; distance and hardships have softened him. He recalls the solemnity of a father's advice and the tenderness of a mother's prayers. He has found

Christ. And he has begun a career of successful industry. He is doing well. Ah!—the news is like cold water to his mother's soul, and, as she presses the letter to her lips she says, “This my son was dead, and is alive again: he was lost, and is found.”

Again: Look at the joy with which we read of the triumphs of the gospel in heathen lands. After long years of waiting the news comes that successful war is waged against the pagan gods and all their abominations, that the standard of the cross is raised in the heart of India and China, that the heathen are casting their idols to the moles and to the bats. Hinduism is tottering to its foundations. China has opened her gates to the gospel. The tidings from Madagascar have filled Christendom with joy and wonder. But lately we heard of the conversion of the king of Basutos in South Africa—of a New Zealand chief devoutly studying the New Testament—of thirteen young converts at Burnshill in Kaffraria sitting down at the Lord's table—of the hearts of missionaries in Australia being gladdened by hearing the sound of praise and prayer from the huts of the Aborigines—of a fresh harvest of souls gathered in Raratonga—of the Fijians stretching out their hands to God. What precious first-fruits of that harvest when Christ “shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth; the kings of Tarshish and the isles shall bring him presents, the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts?” These good news from far countries have been as cold waters to many thirsty souls.

We proceed to the main point.