

## OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

### COMMUNION WITH CHRIST.

BY REV JAMES A. R. DICKSON, B.D.

The great difference between an instructed and an uninstructed Christian is clearly seen in the conception of communion with Christ that is entertained. The uninstructed Christian is content with the mere name and empty title of "Christian," and desires no more, seeks no more, is abundantly satisfied with only that, and plumes himself not unfrequently upon that as a high and glorious thing, which no doubt it is, but unless it is far more than the bare name and title, it is very deceptive to poor empty souls. The mere title cannot save the soul, cannot change the heart, cannot renew the life, cannot nourish the immortal spirit. To be called a Christian, is not necessarily to be a Christian. Many, alas! are called Christians who are not Christians, and that simply because they are as yet untouched by the Spirit of God. And "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." It is a tremendous delusion to rest in the name of the Christian without the nature of the Christian. It is sure ruin, everlasting ruin. To the man who is content with the title, without the reality, all that may be said about communion with Christ will be distasteful, perhaps very distasteful, and may even be regarded, and denounced too, as fanatical. And no one can be surprised at this. The short-sighted care not to have another announce that he deserves a glorious headland afar off. That is too tantalizing. But a man may be a true Christian and have little more than the name. He may have life and not exercise it, he may have the Spirit of God and refuse to listen to it or obey it. He may give a momentary assent to the glory of divine things, and then go on as if he had no relation whatever to them. His worldly affairs, pursuits, business crowd into mind and heart, so that they monopolize the thoughts, the feelings, the affections, the energies of life. The things seen overmaster and hide out of sight the things unseen; the Present pushes into the sunless background the Future. And meanwhile the heart is not satisfied, it is hungry, it is heavy, it is darkened and chilled, and it cries out for bread, and rest, and light, but the roar of the turmoil of the work-a-day world stifles it. And let the man who so acts get what he may be unhappy, ill at ease, there is something lacking. What is it? It is Christ, and a living fellowship with Him. That the instructed Christian understands, and he deals honestly and fairly by his soul. He provides for it by meditation on the Word which leads up to communion with Jesus, the incarnate Word. In the days of our Lord's flesh communion face to face with him was possible, and was enjoyed. John, in his 1st Epistle, 1:1-3, says: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life: (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." To-day our communion with Him must be through the Word, by the Spirit. Hence the high place we must give the Word, and the constant use we must make of it. It testifies of Christ; unveils Him to the gaze of our souls; enables us to hear Him speak; causes us to receive the flood-tide of His affection; transmits to us His disposition and His will; binds us with bonds of love about His heart. How sweet are the strains that sweep out of Christian hearts in communion with the Lord. They are like the spicy breezes of Italy and Ceylon, laden with delicious aroma. Miss Frances R. Havergal writes: "I have taken Him at His word in everything, and He has taken me at my word in everything. Oh, I can say now that Jesus is to me a living bright reality, and that he really and truly is

More dear, more intimately nigh,  
Than e'en the sweetest earthly tie.

No friendship could be what I find Him to be. I have more now than a few months ago, even though I was so happy then; for the joy of giving myself, and my will, and my all to Him, seems as if it were succeeded, and even superseded, by the deeper joy of a conscious

certainly that He has taken all that He led me to give, and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him"; so having entrusted my very trust to Him, I look forward ever so happily to the future as 'one vista of brightness and blessedness'; only I do so want everybody to 'taste and see.' Miss Adelaide L. Newton writes. "To get deeper into any of God's thoughts is so sublimating. You cannot think what longings I have had for a sight of Jesus lately, faith does not in the least satisfy me. I know, indeed, there is a heaven of communion to be enjoyed even on earth. How very beautifully one sees it in Cant. 1:4, 11:4 taken together. Jesus bringing his bride 'into his chambers,' and she bringing Him into hers, both unlocking, as it were, the innermost recesses of the inner man, to admit each other into the closest intimacy which language can convey an idea of—Jesus entering into the soul, and the soul entering into Jesus! But if we can taste such exquisite sweetness of delight when we get into His chambers now by faith, what will it be to be with him bodily and forever!" Writing to a friend, Miss Newton says: "May I send you the words I have chosen for myself, as expressing my earnest longing for nearer communion with Jesus during the new year. 'Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth. That is drawing near to us, is it not? and in such a way as to make us feel His love, and know that He is manifesting Himself unto us as He doth not unto the world.' And to another she writes. "Oh! that the victory which Jesus hath wrought over death may banish every painful thought, and enable you, in holy fellowship of mind with Him, to make the present a time of triumphant joy to you!" Think of the life underlying these expressions! It has depth and fulness, and a broad Christian consciousness. It is worthy the name of life. The Rev. Andrew Bonar wrote of the Rev. Wm. Hewitson, of Durierton, Scotland. "He was the likeliest to Robert McCheyne of any I knew. One thing especially often struck me—he seemed to have no intervals in his communion with God—no gaps. I used to feel when with him that it was being with one who was a vine watered every moment." This is Mr. Bonar's testimony. Now what is Mr. Hewitson's own experience? It is uttered in one comprehensive statement: "I am better acquainted with Jesus than with any friend I have on earth." All his life bears out the truth of this statement. Writing to a friend in Edinburgh, before he left for Trinidad, he says: "No awakened soul should stop short of a realization and experimental enjoyment of union with the Lord. No converted soul should rest satisfied till it think every thought and speak every word in communion with Jesus. This would seem to a carnal professor, or to a child of God who is still to a great extent carnal, a standard far too high; but to have a lower standard is to be ignorant of our standing in Christ—of what we have in Him, of the closeness of our union with him, and of the character we should maintain to be in keeping with our profession of faith in His name." These words cannot be too well pondered. What is our Lord to us if we do not know Him, if He is not personal to us, if He is not conversable, if He is not within call, if He is not our life, our sustainer, our shield, our guide, our all, and in all? What is Christ to us if we have no communion with Him? We live only by the faith of the Son of God. Without Him we can do nothing. He is essential to our life. And it is by communion with Him that our spiritual life is fed and nourished. Our Christian vitality and reality depends wholly on this communion. And our Christian service and suffering is valuable or valueless as this is present or absent from it. One day the Queen of Holland drove up to the door of Cæsar Malan, in Geneva, in an unusually imposing cortege. After the visit was over, his son asked him if he had been careful in addressing her to observe the prescribed forms. "Oh, my dear boy!" he replied, "I know nothing about that; all I know is that I addressed her as a minister of God. I had no time for any but eternal things. We spoke of the salvation of the soul, of that vast eternity to which we are hastening." Only communion with Jesus gives us an overshadowing sense of the preciousness of the soul and the nearness of eternity. This is Robert M. McCheyne's advice. "A word spoken by you when your conscience is clear, and your heart full of God's Spirit, is worth ten thousand words spoken in unbelief and sin." That is, in other words, your ministry will be mightiest when you exercise it

in communion with the Lord. How needful it is that both ministers and Sunday School teachers and parents should remember this. Work done out of fellowship with Christ will be dry and barren. It will not touch other hearts. It will lack tenderness, and unction and sympathy. It will be like a sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. It will ring on the ear, but it will not captivate the heart. It lacks the divine energy that communion invests the Word with. Moses coming down from the mount with shining face, and full mind, and sensitive heart to God's claims and man's need, to God's righteousness and man's ruin, is the enduring representation of the transforming effects of communion.

This communion enables the Christian to suffer to the glory of God as well as to serve. Miss Havergal says. "One evening (after a relapse into sickness) I longed so much to be able to pray, but found I was too weak for the least effort of thought, and I only looked up and said, 'Lord Jesus, I am so tired!' And then He brought to my mind 'rest in the Lord,' with its lovely marginal reading, 'be silent to the Lord,' and so I just was silent to Him, and He seemed to overflow me with perfect peace, in the sense of His own perfect love." Is not that beautiful? All so full of simplicity and childlikeness! It is perfectly winsome. This is Lady Powerscourt's testimony in her precious "Letters". "Oh! it is a precious thing in this tempestuous world to wrap ourselves up in a sense of His unchangeable love, His inexhaustible grace; to be able to meet every event with 'I know and believe the love He has to me.'" Miss Newton, writing to a friend, says. "I grieve for your uncomfortableness, but I am sure it is a proof of love, and that is a furnace that will do you no harm. Some time ago I remember thinking that God was teaching me to justify Him in all His trying dealings, but really of late this feeling has been changed for one of real thankfulness each and every sorrow He sends me. It is the family rod." Ail is acceptable to the Christian who walks in communion with the Lord. Everything flows from love, and he sees it as love; and love sanctifies all, sweetens all, glorifies all.

### OUR CENTRAL INDIA MISSION.

BY REV. JOSEPH BUILDER, M.A., MHOW.

As the missionary cause in India, where the deities, supposed to be hovering about, are as numerous as the palm trees that grace the land, is of great interest to the Presbyterians of Canada, any information regarding the position of their work in this part will doubtless be welcome.

Strange things have been happening recently in Holkar's State. They are not connected with mission work but are of great interest to the person who would understand the condition of things here and form a correct judgment in regard to the question, now before the Government of India, of the position of Christian missionaries in a Native State. Holkar's son, the heir apparent, who is popularly known as the Bâd Sâhib, has until very lately exercised considerable authority in his father's dominions. He does not seem, however, to have imbibed the lessons of Modern History, but one would think he had carefully studied the character and acts of the Roman Emperor Nero. Only one half need be true, that he is charged with, to make him a monster of cruelty. It is undisputed that he had a messenger of the Bombay Bank arrested and punished for simply laughing in the street when he was passing by. It is true also that he had a man tied to a pillar while his back was being burnt with a blistering drug, and then flogged on the blistered spot, for alleging that he had not in his possession any property belonging to one of his own servants whom he had put in prison. Other rumours are afloat, such as flogging a man, smearing him with honey, then tying him to a tree and leaving him to be stung to death by wasps, burning a whole village down because the noise of the grinding of corn disturbed him, and inflicting tortures on women too revolting to be mentioned. Nor are all the charges laid against the wayward son. The Holkar himself is also accused of acts of tyranny. Numerous complaints are being sent to Government regarding the confiscation of property, etc. One is of a particularly scandalous nature, in which a man was suddenly ruined on the basis of some claim going back forty-five years. A number of respectable native merchants were also imprisoned without trial because they displeased His Highness by