

Messenger and Visitor

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Mafeking Relieved.

News of the relief of Mafeking was received in London Friday evening and was quickly transmitted to all parts of the globe, calling forth demonstrations of great joy in hundreds of cities and towns of the Empire. The despatch came from Pretoria, through the Associated Press, and simply contained the information that, after the Boer laagers and forts around Mafeking had been severely bombarded, the siege was abandoned, a British force from the South taking possession of the place. The date on which the relief force entered Mafeking was not given nor any other particulars. The London War Office had no confirmation of the news from official sources, but this was to be expected, as the intelligence would doubtless reach Pretoria at least a day or two earlier than it could reach Lord Roberts at Kroonstad. As the news had been impatiently expected for many days it was generally received as trustworthy, and the great metropolis abandoned itself to expressions of joy, which, if possible, exceeded the demonstrations on the occasion of the relief of Ladysmith. The joy of London has been shared by all parts of the empire. The siege of Mafeking will take place among the great military events of history, and the name of Baden-Powell will take high rank among the military heroes of Great Britain. For qualities of leadership—the high courage and calm confidence which inspires courage and confidence in others, indomitable hopefulness and cheer, masterly resourcefulness and strategy and the grim determination never to submit or yield while resistance is possible—these are the qualities that have enabled the defender of Mafeking to bring the beleaguered town with its little garrison through a siege of seven months, though constantly beset by a powerful force of the enemy, armed with heavy artillery and in possession of all the resources of modern warfare. A London despatch of Saturday morning says: "London's millions spent half the night in the streets. Sober, plegmatic London is beside itself with emotion. Gusts of patriotism have set the town quivering twice or thrice before during the war, but nothing has equalled tonight's hundred square miles of almost furious demonstration. It was a curious thing for the onlookers to see solemn, gray-haired men toss their opera hats into the air and join in the hurricane of cheers when a wreath-crowned banner, with the portrait of Colonel Baden-Powell on it, was borne along Picadilly. Smart women in broughams waved Union Jacks out of the windows. Conventional family parties stopped at street corners to take part in singing 'God Save the Queen' and 'Soldiers of the Queen.' Everywhere were good-feeling and an astounding roar of human voices."

London's joy has been shared by every loyal portion of the Empire. The people of Canada fully participate in the general gratulation. They have watched with intense interest and profound admiration during the progress of the siege the heroic defence of the indomitable commander supported by the men whom he had disciplined and inspired with his own cheerful and unconquerable courage, and they had hoped, even when there seemed little ground to hope, that the defenders of Mafeking might be enabled to endure until help should come.

Doubtless Colonel Baden-Powell will be rewarded with the honors with which Britain is accustomed to acknowledge the deeds of her heroic sons, but the place which he has won in the hearts of his countrymen will be more to him, we may believe, than any factitious distinctions. The value of the defence of Mafeking is not to be measured simply by its importance in a military sense. It has upheld the prestige and the best traditions of British arms, it has shown that England has not yet ceased to produce men of military genius and the highest qualities of leadership. It will shine for all the empire as an example of heroism and an inspiration to lofty service, which Britons will not easily permit to be forgotten.

As we go to press some news from official sources is at hand respecting the relief of Mafeking. The relief expedition was organized by General Hunter and led by Col. Mahon. It left Kim-

berly May 4th, marching at the speed of about 30 miles a day. On the 13th Col. Mahon had a hard fight with a Boer force which had followed and endeavored to head him off. The British had 5 killed and 24 wounded, and the Boers lost more heavily. From the official despatches it appears that the relief was effected either Thursday or Friday. Col. Baden-Powell won a crowning triumph by repulsing a determined assault of the Boers on the 13th and capturing Commandant Eloff, a son-in-law of President Kruger, and 107 others including 9 officers and a number of French and Germans.

Parables of the Kingdom.

Each of the three parables which are comprised in our Bible lesson for the week, illustrates in broad outline a particular phase of truth relating to the kingdom of heaven among men.

In the parable of The Wheat and the Tares, our Lord recognizes without any doubt or question the existence of evil in the world. Its origin he leaves in mystery, only intimating that it is the work of an enemy. It is hard to see how anyone can harmonize the teaching of this parable with the theory that sin is only a negative thing, and that evil is but good in the making. A man with malice in his heart sowing evil seed, the growing and ripening tares, the children of the evil one,—all these seem distinctly positive in character. The tare or darnel is not a stalk of wheat in the making. Both in the story and in the interpretation, the two are radically different both in nature, in fruit, and in the end which awaits them.

It is God's purpose that good and evil—the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the evil one—shall for this age or dispensation remain in the world side by side. There are reasons for this which it is no part of the purpose of the parable to declare. Men have foolishly sometimes endeavored to improve upon God's plan in this matter. They have sought sometimes, on the one hand, to separate the Christian community entirely from the life of the world, seeking in the seclusion of monastic life, security from the annoyances and dangers which come from contact with evil men. This is like pulling up the wheat to transplant it into some place where no evil seeds have been sown. The attempt has not been a success. The transplanted stalks have had for the most part but a stunted growth, and it has been discerned also, that no walls of convent or monastery could be built so high that the enemy which sows evil seed could not scale them. Then also, in strange disregard of the teaching of Jesus, men acting in his name have sought by the cruel hand of persecution to extirpate evil from the world, and thereby have proved their inability to distinguish between wheat and tares, persecuting often to the death in the name of God the truest and the noblest of his saints.

One other thing especially this parable makes plain. The evil in the world which so perplexes Christian faith is not forever. The world is Christ's wheat field, and the time is coming when it shall be cleansed from all that defiles. An enemy has intruded, and the results of his malicious work are seen on every hand. But this is still God's world and Christ has redeemed it from the thraldom of Satan. The purpose of God cannot be thwarted by the malice of an enemy. The cleansing of the world involves separation of the evil from the good. Again and again this prophecy of separation is heard in the parables of Jesus, and, from the solemn and repeated emphasis with which he dwelt upon it, must we not conclude that it is of tremendous importance? There must be separation of tares from wheat, of chaff from grain, of the worthless fish from the good, of the goats from the sheep; everything that offends and all that work iniquity are to be gathered out of the heavenly kingdom, that in it the righteous may shine forth as the sun.

In the parable of The Mustard Seed, another phase of the truth concerning the kingdom is set before us. Here it is its growth from very small beginnings to great results. The little seed that a man takes and plants in his garden seems a very insignificant thing, but what wonderful potentialities are wrapt up in it! From apparent death it bursts into life, overcomes gravitation, lifts itself upward, sends its roots downward, nourishes its life upon the soil and the sunshine, transmuting mineral substances into its own organic structure and by them nourishing its own life. How wonderful this development

is, even though the miracle is being constantly repeated before our eyes! So with the seed of the Kingdom sown in the world,—it seemed insignificant enough men thought as they saw it planted. The noble and the learned and the mighty for the most part would have nothing to do with it. A religion which centred in the cross—the symbol of shame and degradation—and was preached by Galilean fishermen,—what could the world want of that? But the world did want it, and does and will continue to want it with an ever increasing consciousness of the fact that it is the Heaven-sent answer to the heart that cries out for God. The greatest and the best of men have bowed adoringly before "the sweet wonders of that cross."—For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

In the parable of The Leaven, our Lord teaches the multiplying and permeating power of Christianity. The leaven hid in the dough gradually permeates and changes the character of the whole lump. So Christianity in the heart of human society, though apparently so insignificant in comparison with the great mass, is not lost in it or destroyed, but gradually permeates the world and changes it to its own character. To change the figure, the light that came into the world through Jesus Christ is not overcome by the darkness, but shines more and more unto the perfect day. This is the natural interpretation of the parable, and it is nothing against this interpretation that leaven is generally used in the Scriptures as symbolical of evil. The Son of Man is Lord of all symbols. The serpent is usually significant of evil, but Jesus used the uplifted serpent as illustrative of the uplifted Saviour. A bad sense attaches to the word "thief," but our Lord spoke of the coming of the Son of Man as the coming of a thief in the night. It is not the quality of leaven, as good or evil, upon which the force of the parable depends, but upon its fermenting, permeating, and transforming character. Ever since Pentecost, Christianity has manifested itself more or less powerfully as such a fermenting, permeating, and transforming power. The hope of the world is in this truth. God's salvation reaches men through men. It is through the touch of regenerate life upon the unregenerate that the world is being brought to Christ. It is not by speaking to men directly out of heaven, but by speaking to them through human hearts filled with his love that God saves the world. How important that every individual life, every home, every church, should be in the largest possible degree a centre of this divine transforming influence!

Editorial Notes

—The Church of the Pilgrims, Brooklyn, N. Y., has called as the successor to Dr. Storrs, Rev. H. P. Dewey, D. D., who has been for twelve years pastor of the South (Congregational) church of Concord, N. H.

—It is related that a missionary once asked his people to sing the hymn "Go, labor on," in a translation which he had made for them, and that he was afterwards horrified to find that his version had signified to them "Go grumble on." It is suggested that there are congregations in which the missionary's version would be a very appropriate one.

—A few days ago in Toronto, a boy thirteen years of age shot his father dead with a pistol, because the father opposed the boy's plans for spending the summer. The coroner's jury accepted the statement of the boy that he did not intend to kill his father, but only to frighten him into letting him have his way, and accordingly, the boy stands charged with manslaughter instead of murder. The jury also intimated their belief that the boy had been prompted to the commission of his terrible deed by the reading of pernicious literature. This is an incident which carries its lesson on its face.

—The sixth annual report of the Seamen's Mission Society of St. John, gives an encouraging account of the work accomplished in connection with that excellent institution. The mission is well worthy of the sympathy and support of the Christian people of the city. Many are showing their good will toward it by contributions of money and in other practical ways. Larger contributions from the public would enable the mission to do a still greater work. The very generous contribution of \$500 has been received during the year from Miss E. I. Kinnear, which has enabled the society to close its books without a deficit on the year's operations. But as so large donations are not likely to be received every year, it is very desirable that the number of contributors shall be increased.

—Rev. J. H. Saunders, of Ohio, Yarmouth, writes: "Our dear brother, the Rev. G. C. Crabbe,

died at his home on Saturday. A note which weeks ago was sent to our Messenger. Our brother Master here and kept on permitted. go down at night we show Lord calls his grief on their lieve, the church service. The received. To creest symp

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