

FAN—The grain in the East was threshed by driving oxen attached to a rough-bottomed, wooden sled over it as it was spread out on the threshing-floor. This left a mass of broken straw mingled with grain and chaff. The fan was a large wooden fork, with a handle six feet long and four or five wooden prongs fastened to a cross bar with strips of fresh hide which tightened as they

dried. By this implement the mass was flung into the air, when the evening breeze rose, and the wind blew the chaff ten or fifteen feet away, the straw was carried half that distance and heavy grain fell at the winnower's feet. The chaff was usually burned, the straw kept for fodder, and the grain stored in jars or granaries to be used as required.

APPLICATION

By Rev. P. M. MacDonald, M.A., Toronto

Preaching in the wilderness, v. 1. Old people will tell of the days when, in the place of Canada's smiling farms and thriving towns and great cities, there was a vast wilderness of unbroken forest. Heroes, in very truth, were the men, who leveled the thick woods with their ringing axes, to make way for the prayers and prosperity we now enjoy. Real heroines, too, were the women who bore their full share of the toil and hardship of those pioneer days. Well has it been for our land, that along with the early settlers came the ministers of the gospel to plant the truths of religion. Whatever of the fear of God and the love of righteousness there is amongst us, we owe, in no small measure to the labors and the lives of these "wilderness" preachers. Our homes and our churches, our missions at home and abroad are largely the result of their zeal and devotion. They did much to make Canada Christian, and we shall show ourselves worthy of them, by striving to make it increasingly Christian.

Repent ye, v. 2. An old proverb says, "Repentance is that which a fool does at the end, and a wise man at the beginning.

A minister entered a room where a young man lay dying. When the sufferer had been directed to Jesus as the only refuge and tenderly urged to give his heart to God, he was asked, "Have you any message for your young companions?" "Yes", said the young man in a way never to be forgotten, "tell them to repent and give their hearts to their Saviour. Tell them to seek God's mercy now, for a death bed is a poor place to prepare for eternity." He that repents

each day for each day's sin will have only one day's sins to repent of the day he dies.

Prepare ye the way of the Lord, v. 3. This is not to do God's work. His work is only His. But there is a work for us to do which

is indispensable. Mahomet "Tie thy Camel" heard one of his followers say, at the end of a long day's march, "I will loose my camel and commit it to God." The man was tired, or lazy, and he was willing to seem trustful of God's care of his camel. Mahomet heard the remark and said, "Friend, tie thy camel, and then commit it to God." It is ours to prepare for God's gracious action. We have to repent, to abandon sin, before God comes on the way of mercy to grant us forgiveness.

Confessing their sins, v. 6. Spurgeon says that from the words "I have sinned" we may preach a timely sermon to ourselves; and we can make it thoroughly convincing, if we recall how the text was used by Pharaoh, Balaam, Saul, Achan, Job, Judas and the Prodigal Son. General confession of sin is not enough, we must single out the special sins of transgression and omission and acknowledge our guilt of these. We should confess until we have brokenness of heart for them." This may seem a heavy undertaking, but when we reflect that sins unconfessed mean sins unforgiven, we may be helped. It is only when we keep silent about our sins that they are dangerous, as when one sore sick with a dangerous disease refuses to tell the physician his case.

The wrath to come, v. 7. Robert Moffat, missionary to Africa, was preaching on the resurrection to some natives. Among them was a chief notorious for his murders. "What",