

state was a fundamental tenet of the churches that held the field, eagerly adhered to because upon the state the church relied for much of her power and influence. The baptism of unconscious infants was everywhere practiced, and was followed by the attendant evil of unregeneracy and worldliness among the membership of the churches. Nothing did the church regard with greater suspicion and hostility than the spirit of the new evangelism introduced by those who laid the foundation of Baptist church history in these provinces.

It seemed almost a hopelessly small beginning when the plouers of our denomination began to lift up their voices against the ungodliness of the world, and the unscriptural practices of the church. Without the facilities of travel such as we possess to-day, without the inspiration of numbers, in many cases without the prestige of learning, and always without the co-operation of the recognized people of God, it might be foreseen that the struggle must be severe if they would triumph over the obstacles that lay before them. That the struggle was severe we know. That glorious triumph was achieved we also know.

As we contrast present conditions with conditions existing at the opening of the nineteenth century the contrast is such as to fill us with unbounded optimism with reference to the future. Marvellous indeed has been the progress of the last three quarters of a century. When Horton Academy was founded in 1828 there were less than three thousand five hundred Baptists in the Maritime Provinces.*

*Dr. E. M. Saunders as my authority.

To-day our membership is reckoned at more than fifty-one thousand.

While the small beginning of our denominational schools has grown into an educational plant second to none of the same dimensions, the influence of which has been felt and recognized far beyond the limits of our own country. We may lament the lack of spiritual life and power in our churches, and not without cause. Yet we cannot fail to be impressed by the growth which under the providence of God, has attended the unfolding of our denominational life.

In the light of the history that has made us what we are we can more easily understand the force of the parable which likens the Kingdom of God in its beginning to a grain of mustard seed which a man took and cast into his field.

3. The force and beauty of the parable might also find abundant illustration in the history of every Christian life.

Here, if faith, hope and love have done their perfect work, the working of the principle that regulates the growth of the Kingdom of God is most clearly seen. The seed from which the life of the soul springs is exceedingly small. If we examine the records of Christian biography we find that in every case conversion can be traced to a very small beginning. Ordinarily God converts the soul through the preaching of the gospel. But it is not usually by the reasoned out systems of theology that the soul is turned to God. It may be by one sentence in a sermon, and that perhaps one to which the preacher attached but little importance, that conviction is carried to the heart.

From this small beginning the largest life is evolved. From the tiny germ the mightiest system of truth is built up. The mustard seed develops into the tree which affords shelter and refreshment to the weary and needy of earth.

From all of this I wish to point two practical lessons of encouragement for all here present.

(1) And first to those who are in the Kingdom and of the Kingdom the simile of the parable says, "despise not the day of small things, nor estimate the importance of Christian enterprise by external appearances."

The things which are very small, and seemingly very weak are capable of becoming infinitely great when they have in them the germ of spiritual life. We all need this reminder to save us from discouragement; for who has not felt its cold, blighting, paralyzing influence! It is easy to become enthusiastic in the cause of God when it has all the visible elements of power supporting it, but not nearly so easy when these are lacking. When numbers are few, and visible results meagre, it is well to remember that this is an inevitable stage in the process of development toward greater things.

God writes his history on a large scale. Each page of the great volume which records his dealings with men must be read in the light of what has already been written, and so far as we are gifted with the prophetic spirit, in the light of what is yet to be recorded. The page which we are now writing may be, in many respects, uninspiring reading if we isolate it from all that has gone before.

Indulge the spirit of optimism as we will, we cannot escape the conviction that we have fallen upon a time which must be characterized as unspiritual if not materialistic. If Christianity possesses elements of power to-day that did not belong to her in former ages, she has, I fear, lost in certain other respects. We have learned how to make crutches for the halt; we have learned how to write apologies for Christianity.

But are we losing the power to say to the sinner, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk?" Amid the multitudinous cares of this busy and exacting age, are we no longer capable of experiencing those consuming convictions which are the mainspring of every great and worthy deed? Do lost souls sit complacently under the sound of the gospel as it is proclaimed to-day, and yet fail to realize their need of a Saviour? It is said that these are pre-eminently characteristics of the present age. Doubtless we have all noticed present day tendencies in the spiritual world which seem to be the heralds of weakness and decay. Let us beware however against drawing an unwarrantable inference. It is not the gospel of the grace of God that is losing its power over men.

If there is any power being lost it is by those who proclaim that gospel which is equally to-day as in Paul's

day, the power of God and the wisdom of God. Forgetting this good men are heard enquiring, "Is the gospel losing its power over the people?"

Is Christianity dying? That foolish question has many times been asked, generally by those who are anxious to attend the obsequies. It seemed not only dying but utterly dead when its founder lay in the grave.

But somehow it possessed a vitality which those who opposed it failed to discover. They are long since dead, but Christianity still lives, lives because he lives. Surely there is no longer room for doubt that universal conquest is the gospel's only goal.

Fail not to exert the full measure of thy influence for the extension of that kingdom which is yet to come in all the fulness of its extent and power. That influence may seem small in any given case. But it is well to remember that all hearty service is abundantly blessed by him in whose sight the small things are great, who will not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax "till he send forth judgment unto victory."

(2). But I speak to some who have never yet seen this kingdom of God of which Jesus speaks, who have not yet complied with the requirement upon which entrance to its sacred enclosure is conditioned.

The simile of the parable is not without its lesson of encouragement for you. It speaks of expansion, of growth. It suggests the entrance of many who are yet without. And you, sinner, may be included among that number. The tree here spoken of is in a new sense the tree of life, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations. Concerning it there is no prohibition save this one, "Thou shalt not live outside the shadow of its spreading branches." Free as the pure air of heaven that sustains life in vegetable and man is the boundless grace of God. Oh, weary dying soul, bathe thy parched lips in this perennial stream. Drink and live, and living glorify the one who is your Master, even Christ.

Why do the Heathen Rage?

(Conclusion).

TO THE FELLOW-WORKERS AT HOME:

Dear Brothers and Sisters:—It was Sunday morning. We fully expected that the telegram which Luxminarayana sent the previous night regarding his baptism would bring a number of his people to Bimil that day. And we were not disappointed. Sooner than we expected, as early as 6.30 a. m., it was announced that two of his relatives were on the Mission Compound, in earnest conversation with their converted brother. What threats, pleas, or promises they made, I cannot tell. But in half an hour's time Luxminarayana came to me asking leave to return home with his uncle and brother. That this was the most unwise step he could take under the circumstances I am not more fully persuaded now, than I was then. We tried to show him the folly of his proposal. We told him of some cases similar to his own in connection with the history of our mission; and of the sad results that had followed such action as he now proposed. On one occasion, a Brahmin was baptized. His people raged and mocked and wept and threatened. But he remained firm. Did they then give up hope of reclaiming him, and agree to let him live a Christian? Decidedly not. They would rather see him a life-long imbecile, or even a corpse, than a Christian. And so they formed a diabolical plot to poison him whom they called friend and kinsman. Assuming a gracious attitude, and making as little of what he had done as possible they repeatedly invited him to their home, assuring him that he would receive only kindness at their hands. He finally yielded to their entreaties thinking that no serious harm could result thereby. But their kindness cost him his reason for the time being, his happiness and usefulness afterward and possibly his soul's salvation. The first food he ate there contained the deadly drug. He immediately became unconscious and though he afterwards recovered, he was left a mental wreck of what he had been and without will-power or moral courage to do his known and acknowledged duty before God and man.

We reminded our brother that unless he was prepared to deny his Saviour and declare that he had been deceived, and submit to the trying ordeal of being taken back into caste thus renouncing, *in toto* what he had said and done, he might expect all this, and even more if he put himself into the hands of his relatives as he seemed disposed to do.

He listened most earnestly and respectfully and thanked us heartily for all the advice we had given him. But he had a better opinion of his people than we had. Were they not educated and enlightened?

Would they be so narrow minded so unreasonable so cruel? Had they not always treated him with the greatest kindness and would they now persecute him for being obedient to the dictates of his own conscience? Thus he reasoned and accordingly, against our wishes and our warnings, decided to return to his home. We reluctantly consented on the condition that he remain to the morning service to receive the right hand of fellowship.

It was not until after this decision was reached that I met his elder brother and uncle, the former a college graduate, at present studying for the bar. I never shall forget his countenance. It spoke whole volumes. More forcibly than words could utter, it told us that he was ashamed and shocked and injured, to a degree that tongue could not tell. Had he said in plainest English or Telugu, we hate you and despise your teaching; and if we had it in our power, we would wipe you out of existence together with your Christianity and its Christ, all this and more, would not have expressed as much as did the unspoken language of his look. True the man made a most heroic effort to be respectful and succeeded admirably. But the inward wrath and contempt, and pent-up rage and revenge, could not be concealed. He was decidedly unwilling for his deluded brother to remain a minute longer under the influence of those who had poisoned his mind and morals; and who had brought such shame upon them. We on the other hand

were as determined that he should not leave the Compound till after the morning service. By the help of the Lord, we prevailed, and a little later were worshipping together in the Mission House.

The subject that morning was Christ's Temptation chosen in view of the special need of our new brother. He seemed to grasp the teaching, and to feel the force of applications made. The right hand of fellowship was given and we sat together at the Lord's table to recall our Saviour's suffering, humiliation, and death for us; and that other great and comforting, soul-inspiring and courage-giving event, which our Lord Himself definitely promised should take place, namely: His second coming in power and great glory.

It was well that we took the precaution to have the service in the Mission House that morning, for long before it was finished we heard the sound of a storm brewing outside. Already a little cloud or two had burst, and things looked unusually threatening. But none of these things seemed to disturb our brother Luxminarayana. He was as composed as possible. Very leisurely he conversed with one and another of the Christians, all of whom were eager to speak some sympathizing word, and finally bade us farewell, to join those who were so impatiently and angrily waiting outside.

As I stood on the Compound wall looking upon that excited crowd, witnessing the hate and scorn of friends and relatives, that was being hurled at us by word and look and gesture, I found myself in serious inquiry as to what evil thing we had done. For a moment it seemed that we must be guilty of some heinous crime. Had we brought upon their community some devastating pestilence; or purposely shed innocent blood of some one loved by them; or had we entered the homes of those present and stolen silver and gold; had we done any one, or all, of these things, we might reasonably expect such a display of anger and resentment. Had that young man's action been such as to condemn him to the gallows we would not be surprised at such excitement and such sorrow. See that dear old-grandmother! Hear her wail! Look at her beating her breast and pulling her hair! Luxminarayana makes his way through the crowd, puts his hand in her's and says: "Why are you crying this way? Wipe away your tears and look at me. I am not dead." Her look and gesture which immediately followed unlike the brother's, before mentioned, are photographed upon my mind so that I could not forget them, if I would. Her's however, was not a look of anger or revenge. It expressed a tenderness and a grief that made one heartily sorry for her. It seemed to say "How could you be thus cruel to those who love you so dearly? Don't you know that this has caused me more sorrow than your death itself would have done? A sword driven to my heart, would not hurt more than this. And then with true parental love she caressingly drew him to her side. I verily believe that some young man might live a most immoral life, commit atrocious crime, die a wretched death, and go to an eternal hell, without causing his people as much anxiety and sorrow as he did by being baptized into the name of God's Holy Son, his avowed Lord and Saviour.

It is true that a man may believe most anything and be most anything, and at the same time remain a good (?) Hindu, so long as he does not break caste. He may be a Buddhist, Theosophist, or an infidel; he may be a liar, rogue, and an adulterer, a standing disgrace to human society, and notwithstanding all this command the respect of the Hindu public and be regarded as a gentleman. But he may not be a Christian, because he thereby necessarily parts company with those customs and ceremonies the observance of which makes him a Hindu, and diametrically opposes the fundamental principles of Christian teaching. Should anyone, perchance, dare to assert his independence and break away from the caste slavery of his fathers he is at once regarded as an object of pity and contempt, or a fit case for the lunatic asylum. And should all efforts of his people to induce him to abandon his (to them) mad and silly course, prove fruitless, he is ostracised from society and regarded as an outcast not worthy of respect, even though he have the purest mind and holiest character of all India's sons; and even though all his life previous to the time of his Christian profession, he were a Brahmin, feared, revered, and worshipped as a God.

Half an hour after the crowd had dispersed we were gathered in prayer on behalf of our brother Luxminarayana, who was doubtless at that very time being put to the severest test. Just how much he was tried and tortured, how courageously he fought, and how sadly he fell, we can only judge.

Two days later Veeracharyulu received a letter from him from which the following is a quotation: "I am sorry to say that for certain reasons which unhappily did not occur to me before, my faith in Christianity is not strong enough to constitute me a Christian. I wish therefore to inform you of the fact; and to request you, the missionaries, and the other Christians, to excuse the trouble given, and to kindly except my best thanks for the inconvenience you underwent on my behalf." Did this letter cause us heartache? Yes. Did we think we had been deceived and duped? No; the devil suggested it but we did not believe him. Did we think that the young man really felt that he had made a mistake and that this letter was a true and voluntary expression of his heart's conviction? Emphatically no. We had good reason to believe that he had been forced to write the letter. Do we think that he will ever come back to us, sorry and ashamed for this denial of his Saviour? Why should we not think so? Is brother Luxminarayana made of any poorer material than was brother Peter? Peter's denial certainly seems as inexcusable. Is the Lord any less loving, faithful or powerful, than he was in Peter's day? Satan has desired Luxminarayana as he did Peter. And he seems to have realized his desire to some considerable extent. But we believe that Christ has prayed for him. We are praying for him. And now in closing I want to ask you all to join us in persevering prayer to God that this dear brother may be brought to tears, as was Peter, and be graciously raised from the pit into which he has fallen, a wiser, purer man, and a useful Christian.

Thus far all efforts to communicate with him have been carefully guarded against by his relatives who keep him in virtual imprisonment. Our only way of access to him, at present, is via the throne.

Yours in Him,
Bimilpatam, July 9th, 1901. R. R. GULLMON.