

Pastor and People.

Written for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN
"WORTH RAISING."

"It was not worth raising,"—so the Captain said:
My question was about an old mast-head,
That, stripped and bare, 'neath shadow of the
hill,
Rose up above the waters lone and still.

An ancient beacon pole it seemed to be,
Now needless, left to mercy of the sea.
But, no; it told of shipwreck years ago—
A gallant bark lay mouldering there below.

This was at Holy Isle, by Arran's shore;
I heard the Captain's words, and asked no more
For thought on fleetest wing fled far away
To other isle where other vessel lay.

The isle was Malta, where a hidden rock
The Sultan's pride brought down with sudden
shock;
Where watch and ward for Britain she had kept
The lordly iron-clad now death-like slept.

It was worth raising; and nor toil nor cost,
Lest floating fortress finally be lost,
Was grudged by nation, touched in tender part,
Yet prompt of hand as stout of hope and heart.

Nor, freely spent, was labor spent in vain:
A few months pass, and lo! upon the main,
Upheaved, made new, no sign of mishap sore,
The Sultan moves majestic as before.

"Worth raising"—truth of cheer for men who
weep

O'er human wrecks, engulfed in lower deep
Of sin's dark waters; hearts that simply say
Than goodly vessel "how much better" they!

Made in God's image, faintly yet we trace,
What in the basest, sin can ne'er efface,
The primal glory features, God's great plan
More glorious still restores in every man

Of fallen race, though farthest fallen he,
In Christ a new creation he may be;
Christ-like we may behold him even here,
With perfect likeness "when He shall appear."

"Worth raising" yes, by more than vision
bright

Of what may be; He gives another light
For and with whom we toil the lost to save,
That never daunted be, but ever brave—

Gethsemane and Calvary alone
The worth of every soul makes fully known;
Heaven's estimate be always mine! My love,
My sacrifice be like to that above!

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MISSION WORK IN AFRICA.—I.

BY J. J. R.

In turning over some volumes of Exeter Hall Lectures I came across one entitled, "Modern Geographical Researches in Africa." The lecturer prefaced his remarks by saying: "Comparatively little attention has been bestowed upon Africa at any time and not much has been written respecting it during late years." This sentence was uttered forty years ago. What a change has been wrought during these forty years! To-day the attention of the whole civilized world is directed towards Africa, and much has been written respecting it. The flag of every European nation now floats over some portion of its soil, and no change can be made, or new territory appropriated, without much discussion and rivalry. Railroads and telegraph lines are being constructed, and steam-boats ply on all the larger rivers and lakes; rivers and lakes which were scarcely known to any forty years ago.

A question rises before us, as we read of these things in the news of the day. It is this, European governments show such eagerness to acquire possessions on this continent; financiers are ready to risk millions of dollars in opening up its mines, and building railroads and telegraph lines; scientists travel over it for the sake of gaining new information in the different branches of scientific knowledge; traders go to all parts for barter and gain; the soldiers of our Queen as well as of other countries face the hardships of forced marches into its interior to do battle for their country. Are we the followers of the Lord Jesus, just as eager, just as courageous in advancing with the banner of the cross, carrying, to the benighted people who inhabit that land, the glad message of the gospel? We are glad to say encouraging answers can be given to this question; though there are no doubt many of the professed followers of Christ,

who are not yet fully awakened to the importance of this work, yet the missionary spirit is spreading, and much earnestness and zeal are being manifested. The last account I have met with, in regard to the work in Africa, as a whole, states, that "already 40 missionary societies, 700 foreign missionaries and 7,000 native preachers are laboring for the evangelization of Africa, and about 1,000,000 of her children are under the influence of the gospel." The population of Africa is estimated at 200,000,000; Stanley places it at 250,000,000.

This population is small, compared with Asia, or indeed with any of the other continents, in proportion to their area. Reasons for this are no doubt found in the cruel customs which have prevailed there for centuries, and the constant petty warfare waged between different tribes. The custom of burying the living with the dead, as many as 500 or 1,000 at one time, the practise of infanticide, and the punishing of every crime great or small by death, the system of trial by ordeal in which poison was used causing the death of hundreds of innocent persons. Add to these the slave trade which has during this last century greatly thinned the population. But there are still many millions, the majority of whom, are given over to superstition, without any of the refining influences of civilization, without a knowledge of God or any true conception of the great destiny of man; and we are told that among them are to be found men of fine physique, possessing noble traits of character, quick to learn and eager to be taught.

Where missionaries are laboring among them, we are told many stories of their fidelity to the missionaries, of their aptitude to understand and then impart to others knowledge received, of their bravery under persecution. Thrilling stories of danger and daring; sad, sad stories of cruel suffering, mutilation and death borne bravely, rather than deny Jesus, in whom they have learned to trust. "The hope for Africa lies with the missionary."

Commerce has its place, scientific explorations have their place, great undertakings such as railroads and telegraph lines have their place, and are a necessary part of the work to be done; but none of these things, without the gospel, can purify or elevate the character of these heathen tribes in Africa. Commerce, without the restraining and refining influences of Christianity, is apt to beget an avaricious spirit (a special danger in Africa where avarice is already a ruling passion), and is not conducive to the growth of a high moral tone, or the cultivation of man's finest nature. But when commerce is tempered by the gospel rules of love and right dealing between man and man, it becomes a power, in fact is essential to the permanent upbuilding of any people. Livingstone has said: "No permanent elevation of a people can be effected without commerce." One of his aims ever was to open up easier means of traffic with interior Africa. We find that wherever commerce leads the way, the missionary soon follows, and similarly wherever the missionary gains an entrance, commerce is encouraged, and these two ever go hand in hand, and if carried on in right lines mutually aid each other. Sorry we are to think that, even in trading with the natives of Africa, men are oftentimes so eager for gain that they forget, or refuse to order their business according to the principle laid down in the golden rule.

Some would say that much of the money spent in opening up and evangelizing Africa is money thrown away, or money that might be better spent. I am not able to pronounce on that further than to say the future alone can show the folly or wisdom of such investments.

To me it seems as if the time for opening up Africa had come, and no human hand can stay the march of progress. Livingstone spent his life for Africa, and listen to what he says. "The indirect benefits, which to a casual observer lie beneath the surface and are unappreciable, in reference to the

probably wide diffusion of Christianity at some future time, are worth all the money and labor expended on them." Livingstone had great hopes for Africa he expresses them in these words, "When He who is higher than the highest accomplishes His purposes, Africa will be a wonderful country, and again, something like it was of old when Zerah and Tirhaka flourished and were great." Even at the present, looking at it from a commercial standpoint, we can see it is not all loss. Reports from South Africa, from the Congo and Nyassaland tell us that in many parts trade is steadily increasing. And Stanley and others have showed us that there is wealth in its mines, its forests and its fertile plains not yet explored. What is to be in the future we can not see. One thing we do know is that the call to the followers of Christ is to "Go forward" now, as the way opens up, telling to every tribe and nation the glad news of a Saviour, the only Saviour who can cleanse us from our sins, purify our hearts or satisfy the longings of the soul.

(To be continued.)

ABRAHAM THE FRIEND OF GOD.

It is God's way to impute to us what He does for us; and to reward us for what we let Him do in us. God works in us both to will and to do; but, at the same time, He holds that we work out our own salvation. And so it was in the beginning of His ways with Abraham. God chose Abraham, and called him, and blessed him. But at the same time, God always has made much of the fact that Abraham had the mind and the heart to do what he did both for God and for all the families of the earth. And that immense venture of faith and of love on the part of Abraham, to call it a venture, was so original, so unheard of, and so full of all the great qualities of a godly heart and a heavenly life, that Abraham has ever since been called, not only the father of the faithful, but also the foremost and topmost friend of God. You understand, then, and will take home the lesson. Abraham had the heart to choose, and to prefer, and to venture for God, and for the will and the call of God, before everything else in this world. Abraham immediately, unquestioningly, cheerfully, joyfully arose and went out to do and to be all that God had asked him to do and had promised him to be. Till, as Butler has it, God justified Abraham's taste, and supported his cause, and acknowledged and claimed him as His friend; him, and his seed after him.

Abraham withheld not Isaac from his Friend on one of the mountains of Moriah; and in the same country, two thousand years after, God was not to be outdone by Abraham in the seat of His friendship to Abraham and to his seed forever. But the bare mention of that brings God, and His friendship to us and our friendship to Him, two thousand miles nearer us and a thousand miles more possible to us than Abraham's too splendid faith and too wonderful love. With all that has been said I have difficulty in believing what has been said. No, not exactly in believing it, but in what we call realising it. For all that we have read and heard in Abraham's history,—that any mortal man should be able to befriend Almighty God, still remains a very startling thing to say about God. But not about Jesus Christ. I could have befriended Him myself. And I think, nay, I feel sure, I would have done it too. Multitudes of men and women who were as weak and as evil and as unbelieving as we are, will be brought forward at the last day to receive the thanks of the Father because they befriended His friendless Son. The women of Galilee who ministered to Him of their substance will be brought forward; Martha will be brought forward, and the woman at the well; the owner of the ass's colt, and the householder to whom belonged the upper room; Simon the Cyrenian also, who helped Him to carry His cross, the soldier also who gave Him some of his vinegar to drink; and Joseph of Arimathea, and

Nicodemus, and the women with their spices, and the angel who rolled away the stone. O!—you start up and exclaim: O! if my lot had only been cast in Galilee, or in Samaria, or in Judea, or in Jerusalem! O! you cry, how you envy the men and the women to whom the Father will say, Inasmuch as ye did it to Him ye did it to Me! But, as you still cry that, John xv. and 13 comes up into my mind. You will remember it when I repeat it: "Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." And again: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." And, again, in the same kind: "Henceforth I call you not servants, but I have called you friends." And then, to His Father, this: "Neither pray I for these alone, but them also which shall believe in Me through their word." Well, then, we do not need, we have no temptation now, to challenge the wisdom and the love that cast our lot two thousand years after Christ; as the same wisdom and love cast Abraham's lot two thousand years before Christ. Abraham believed the word of the Lord in his day; and if we believe in our day through the word of the disciples, then are we Abraham's seed and need envy neither our father or any of our brethren. Abraham laid down his life and the life of Isaac at the call of God. And Jesus Christ, Son of God, and son of Abraham, laid down His life at the same call. But our call, our first call, is not yet to lay down our life, but to take Him as our friend who has laid down His life for ours. Now, what do you all say to that? Are you his friends on that footing? A friend gives full scope to his friend's love and goodness. Have you given Jesus Christ full scope for His life and death for you? Has this man laid down His life for you? He has, if you have ever asked Him to do it. He has, if you have ever come up to His cross and said over Him, He gave Himself here for me. He has, if you have ever said, I lay my sin and death on Jesus Christ. Did it ever come to this terrible pass with you, your life or His? And how did that terrible pass end? When was it? Where was it? How long ago was it? When did it take place last? Has it taken place to-day? Is it every day taking place? Then you need envy neither Abraham nor any other man. Your day is the best of days for you. And you will be brought forward among the very first and the very best as a sinner who has adorned the doctrines of the death of Christ, and of the heart of God to sinners, as scarce any other sinner has done from Abraham's day to the day of judgment. Does that amazing Man still stand offering me His death for me, and His living and everlasting friendship to boot? Then, this moment; then, in this house, and on the spot, I am His friend, and He is my friend.—Rev. Alexander Whyte, D.D., in *British Weekly*.

Noah Brooks relates in the *Century* the following incident of Abraham Lincoln: "On the 9th the First corps, commanded by General Reynolds, was reviewed by the president on a beautiful plain at the north of Potomac creek, about eight miles from Hooker's headquarters. We rode thither in an ambulance over a rough corduroy road; and, as we passed over some of the more difficult portions of the jolting way, the ambulance-driver, who sat well in front, occasionally let fly a volley of suppressed oaths at his wild team of six mules. Finally Mr. Lincoln, leaning forward, touched the man on the shoulder, and said: 'Excuse me, my friend, are you an Episcopalian?' The man, greatly startled, looked around and replied: 'No, Mr. President; I am a Methodist.' 'Well,' said Lincoln, 'I thought you must be an Episcopalian, because you swear just like Governor Seward, who is a churchwarden.' The driver swore no more."

Philadelphia Presbyterian: Devout souls in all the ages since Pentecost have discerned the presence of the Spirit in the churches which have kept the Faith, and rejoiced in it as a personal testimony for their own hearts. But if there are signs that the old truth is getting a new hold upon the hearts of the people, and securing a fresher and more vivid presentation in the preaching of the day, then we may be sure that the "revival" which many anticipate, with much longing and many prayers to God, is at hand.