

Missionary World.

REPORT OF REV. NORMAN H. RUSSELL FOR 1894.

Through the kindness of Rev. Dr. MacTavish, Central Presbyterian Church, of this city, we have been enabled to give the following interesting letter from India to our readers.—[Ed.]

The year of 1894 is drawing to a close and I am reminded that before the New Year is many weeks old the good people of Central will be looking for the annual report from their missionary in India.

I would that we could meet face to face and that with my lips I could speak to you. It would not be so much to tell you what we have done, as what remains to be done. I would like to tell you of the grand opportunities that lie before the Church in Central India, of the great multitudes who know not God, of many fields white even now to harvest but without laborers, to garner in the sheaves. In the past year's experience nothing impresses me so strongly, no, not even the baptisms, as the great crowds we have been permitted to preach to, crowds that did not seem to grow tired even after one and two hours preaching, but were ready for more. I cannot say that these people are crying out for the gospel but there are hundreds, thousands ready to listen and to learn. I look back on the past year with no feelings of elation. I am thankful to Him for what He has permitted us to do, but I am sad over the little that has been done, sad over many mistakes, and neglected opportunities.

Our schools have grown steadily, not so much in numbers as in ability and discipline. Our large school entered its fine new building at the beginning of this month and already a change for the better is to be noted in its discipline. The teaching staff has been increased and improved though I am sorry to say we still have to depend on non-Christians for some of our staff. None of our teachers, however, are out of sympathy with us, all professing more or less faith in Christ. The head master is an earnest man, lately elected an elder of the congregation and his influence for good is to be felt throughout not only the school but also the congregation and even the whole city. I can give no statistics of baptisms in the school, for the boys are under age and not able to receive baptism, but we have been cheered by many signs of interest. One boy, a Brahmin, earnestly desired baptism and showed many signs of being awakened. Nearly all of the boys come voluntarily to Sunday school on Sabbath morning. All are carefully instructed in the Bible and many have a very thorough knowledge especially of the gospels. The branch schools are entirely in the hands of Christians, and are well attended both Sunday and week days.

Our Sunday school work has kept full pace with our supply of teachers. Several of our Christians, not in the employ of the mission, voluntarily carry on Sunday school work. We have 8 schools, 20 teachers and about 550 scholars who are taught in 4 different languages—Hindi, Urdu, Marathi and English. I have a teachers' Bible class on Saturday morning. Our schools have been better organized this year. The large school is under the superintendency of Mr. Drew, with Mr. Auketell, the head master, for assistant.

Our congregation has had a year of blessing. Outwardly it has grown in numbers, there being now 53 on the roll. The organization of the congregation, the formation of a session and deacon's court, have given a great impetus to the life of the church. Services are all well attended, prayer-meeting as well as Sunday services. In all this work my brother and I work hand in hand with the session, the elders sharing the burden of the care of the people. We have had several additions on profession of faith to the roll of communicants, one being a young convert from Roman Catholicism. We have also had a number

of baptisms from non-Christians, of whom I will speak later. The congregation has met socially on several occasions, especially when we have been visited by our brethren from the out stations.

The work in the out station has gone on steadily. The villages about Manpur and Barwai have all been carefully taught the way, and among them not a few have shown much interest. The Christians in both places however, have been persecuted, and this has deterred some from coming forward. In spite of opposition, however, two more heads of families have been baptised in Barwai, and lately one of these had the pleasure of bringing his wife forward for baptism. They have all been of the same class, and now their influence is spreading for one of their people, away on the other side of Mhow, has come forward for baptism.

Among the other baptisms, none was more interesting than that of a Brahmin and his wife and child. He had to leave his home and people to come to us, but he worked as a coolie while he studied the Word. I have since employed him as a driver of my bullock cart in the District, one of the humblest of occupations. Meanwhile he learns the Word in my daily class, and, on the several occasions he has said a few words to the crowds, I have seen that he has a grasp of the truth. A Ghoud and a shepherd were two others of those who have joined us; the former we baptised in Manpur. There are several enquirers asking baptism.

Evangelistic work—that is to say, the preaching of the Word in the bazaars, mohallas and villages—has gone on steadily. In the evenings we use the magic lantern a great deal and many a congregation is gathered by means of its attractive pictures. January and part of February we spent in the District, and I was able to visit a large part of the great unoccupied field west of Mhow. We preached in many large towns and villages, spending a considerable time in Mhow. The latter place, a city of about 25,000, is a most needy field for mission, arly labor, and the friendliness of the Maharaja seems to make the present a very seasonable time for beginning work there. Wherever we went, both above and below the Ghats, we found a ready hearing. In a place called Maheshwar we found several professing a desire to become Christians but the distance and smallness of our forces has forbidden our following up the work. I have also spent the month of December in the district. Our work has been specially marked by a providential opening among the Bheels or Hill tribes of whom many live in the Mhow district. They usually flee at the sight of Europeans, but we were introduced by one of their own people and were able to visit 9 or 10 villages, spending several days among them and doing grand work. We have also visited several large towns to the north-west of Mhow, in one of which especially we were made very welcome. We hope to spend the coming two months in the district.

Besides the monthly Bible class for workers, we were able to hold a Bible school in Rutlam for a month for the catechists of all the stations. The classes proved very helpful, and were very welcome to the men. I am glad to say that the Mhow men stood well to the front in the examinations, none coming below 50 per cent. in any examination. Some of the new converts we have had in Mhow for a while studying the Word. I also hold a daily class when in the district which all the Christians with us attend. We hope to be able to continue the Bible school next year for at least three or four months. I can see a steady increase in our Christians both in their knowledge of the Word, and in their spiritual life. And they display a deeper interest in one another and in the heathen round about.

But I must close. Let it be, however, with the earnest prayer that these words may find their way to some hearts who shall be stirred up to do something more to help increase the missionary force in Central India. "The harvest truly is plenteous but the laborers are few."

NORMAN H. RUSSELL.

PULPIT, PRESS AND PLATFORM.

Bible Reader: We never need anybody to comfort us concerning our own failings; we can do that ourselves.

Ram's Horn: By observing how he treats the poor, is probably the way angels find out what a rich man thinks of Christ.

Phillips Brooks: Life is too short to nurse one's misery. Hurry across the lowlands, that you may spend more time on the mountain tops.

Zion's Herald: It is easy to drift with the multitude. It is quieting to dwell among shadows. It costs effort to think, to act upon principle, and to diffuse light and knowledge.

United Presbyterian: There are opportunities that come but once, but our greatest sins are not the neglect of these. Opportunities that come every day, and still are neglected, will stand against us like a cloud of witnesses for our condemnation.

Cumberland Presbyterian: To weep and have your tears wiped away is more blessed than never to have known tears. There may be some shallow happiness in hearts that never felt sorrow, but blessedness comes to those only who mourn and are comforted.

Christian Observer: The right of a church session to invite any preachers to minister temporarily in its pulpit, is, of necessity, a limited one. The whole structure of our Book of Church order is permeated with the thought that the session may invite only those men—ministers or licentiates—whose "aptness to teach" has been commended by the church courts.

North-Western Christian Advocate: Fire will consume a church. A wounded saint will bleed to death, and diphtheria will slay the child of an apostle, unless water, bandages and medication are utilized in the respective emergencies. These agencies are as providential as the prayer that should reinforce them respectively. The seriously sick man who resorts to prayer to the exclusion of medicine is an astonishment to us, as is he who accepts medicine and rejects God. The divine gift of quinine or its substitute for malaria is as providential as he who invites to prayer in the moment when it is time to pray.

Ram's Horn: Let us not conclude that God has made an assignment because things are not going to suit us. What if the times are hard, and nothing seems to be going right, the Eyes that never sleep are still running to and fro for us. What if bad men do get into office, and ruin seems to be king in politics; trust God to manage things in a way that angels will applaud. "Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. The Lord shall laugh at him: for He seeth that his day is coming."

Dr. Herrick Johnson: The best example of self-denying liberality in the Bible is recorded of woman. The best example of loving service in the Bible is recorded of woman. The best example of conquering prayer in the Bible is recorded of woman. The gift was a widow's mite; the service was the anointing of Jesus with a box of ointment; the prayer was a mother's prayer for a daughter possessed with a devil. Jesus never let fall such words of royal commendation as concerning these three women. Of the poor widow he said, "She hath cast in more than they all." Of Mary he said, "She hath done what she could." And to the Canaanitish mother he said: "O woman, great is thy faith! Be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

Teacher and Scholar.

Feb. 24. } CHRIST AND THE MAN BORN BLIND { John ix.
18, 5. } I. II.

CATECHISM.—Q. 10.

GOLDEN TEXT.—John ix. 5.

Daily Readings.—M. Christ and the Man Born Blind—John ix. 1-11. Tu. Questions by Pharisees—John ix. 13-32. W. Cast Out—John ix. 24-34. T. Spiritual Light—John ix. 35-41. F. Bartimæus—Mark x. 46-52. S. Light in the Heart—II. Cor. iv. 1-6. Su. Light of the Word—John i. 1-3. Other cures of Blindness—Matthew viii. 22-26, xx. 29-34; Mark x. 46-52; Luke xviii. 35-43.

Time.—October 29th, at the feast of Dedication.

Place.—In Jerusalem.

Introduction.—Chronologically, this lesson comes between lessons iii. and iv. Jesus went from Capernaum to Jerusalem to the feast of tabernacles; while there He taught in the temple, and many of the people believed on Him. The Pharisees failed in an attempt to arrest Him, the officers sent to do it returning, saying, "Never man spake like this man." The daily readings contain the story of the whole transaction, and is found in John only.

I. A Great Calamity—Blind From Birth. V. 1.—Blindness is very common in the East. Restoring the sight is one of the great blessings imparted by medical missionaries. This man's was a very bad case. He had been born blind; he had never seen the face of father or mother, sister or brother; never seen green fields and the beauty of flowers, or the blue sky or sun, moon and stars. None of the provisions and means of help for the blind, now so common, were known then. As his parents were poor there was nothing for him but to beg—v. 8. This is a picture of man's state spiritually; born blind to the evil and pollution of sin, insensible to its guilt, blind to the beauty of holiness, the excellence of the Lord Jesus Christ as a Saviour from sin.

II. False Ideas Corrected. V. 2-5.—It was a common opinion and popular doctrine that every misfortune and calamity, such as this, was a mark of God's displeasure, and a punishment for some special sin; in this case of the man himself before his birth, or of his parents. Compare Job iv. 7-9; Luke xiii. 1-4; Acts xxviii. 3-6. The disciples believed in the popular doctrine and asked—v. 2—"Master, who did sin," etc. It is true that men suffer because of sin; it is also true that children suffer on account of the sins of their parents. But Jesus, in His answer, corrects the common notion: "Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents"; not, of course, that either of them was sinless, but that this blindness was not on account of the special sin of any of them. The purpose of it, Christ says, was "that the works of God might be manifest in Him." This, it will at last be seen, results from all sin, the glorious work of God in human redemption is seen in it. In this case it was seen in the power and goodness of Jesus in healing him first, then, after, in his believing in Jesus as the son of God. Compare the case of Job, the resurrection of Lazarus. When God does not heal, His work is manifested in supporting His children under trials, changing them into blessings, and in calling out toward the afflicted sympathy, kindness and help. V. 4, 5—Here, as elsewhere, the outward blessing is used to represent the spiritual benefits which are the chief results of our Lord's work. "I must work . . . day . . . night," etc., referring probably here to His approaching death in a few months. But, generally, God gives to every man in this world his work, and this life is the only time in which he can do this work, "the night cometh," etc. Jesus is the light of the world; He dispels the darkness of the soul as he did that of this man's eyes.

III. The Blind Man Healed. V. 6, 7.—There was no virtue in the clay, the spittle or the anointing, but our Lord sometimes used outward means in working a miracle, when He saw fit, with a view, we may suppose, of helping the weak faith of the sufferer. The man at once went his way, washed and came seeing. We have here another instance of prompt and implicit obedience and how such faith is rewarded. Siloam means "sent," and suggests to John a reference to Christ as the "sent" of God to give light to eyes spiritually blind. Picture the man as he went, blind, groping his way, and as he came back seeing, filled with wonder and delight. So, also, of one restored to spiritual sight.

IV. The Wondering Neighbors. V. 8-11.—"Is not this he that sat and begged?" Some, this is he; others, he is like him; himself, I am he. "How were thine eyes opened?" etc. How natural is the whole scene! How lively and graphic is the story! He ascribes his cure entirely to Jesus. So, also, to Him alone is due, as sent by His Father, by His gracious power, exercised through the Holy Spirit, all the praise, honor and glory of our receiving spiritual sight although born blind.

Lessons.—1. Man's state by nature, spiritually, is a very sad and helpless one—blind.

2. God the Father has provided in His Son, and by the work of the Holy Spirit, sight for the spiritually blind. To get sight we require to use the means and have faith in them. Jesus Christ takes away sin, darkness and sorrow, and gives light, peace and joy.

3. Those who receive spiritual eye sight should be ready to testify to the power and goodness of Jesus.

4. Having received sight we should do life's work with all diligence after Christ's example.