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Strict Baptist Mission.

1862.

President:
MR. S. MILNER.

Treasurer:
MR. H. COOPER.

Secretary:
MR. G. PEARSON.

Committee:

MR. ALAND
„ COLLIER
„ COOK
„ FIELD
„ GAZE
„ GOLDING
„ JAMES, T.
„ JAMES, J.
„ LE RICHE
„ LONG
„ NICHOLSON
MR. MATTHEWS
„ REYNOLDS
„ RUSSELL
„ SQUIRRELL
„ TOWNSEND
„ TURNER
„ TALLACK
„ TOPHAM
„ WAGON
„ WAKELIN

THE ANNUAL MEETING

Held at Keppel-street Chapel, June 24, 1862.

Moved by MR. W. NORTON, of Sutton; seconded by MR. PELLS, of Soho Chapel, Oxford-street, and carried unanimously:

"That the Report now read, be adopted, printed, and circulated under the direction of the Committee, and that the persons above mentioned be the Committee and Officers for the year ensuing."

Moved by MR. J. S. ANDERSON, of Bethesda Chapel, St. Luke's; seconded by MR. A. P. FÖRSTER, of Denmark, and carried unanimously:

"That having heard the statement given of the origin and operations of this Society, and the principle upon which it is based, this Meeting earnestly trusts that its efforts to convey the gospel to the heathen will receive the manifest blessing of God; that the Missionary employed will be divinely guided and sustained in his important work; and that this missionary effort will receive increasing sympathy and support."

REPORT.

THE Committee of the STRICT BAPTIST MISSION have much pleasure in meeting their friends and subscribers on this, their first annual gathering since the commencement of their present Missionary undertaking. They feel that they have abundant cause for thankfulness to God, who has so far guided and succeeded their efforts, as to afford good ground to hope that this small and unpretending Mission will take root, and receive from time to time proofs of the Divine favour and approbation.

The mind of the religious public has been so long accustomed to associate missionary work solely with the large missionary societies at present existing, that a separate effort on a small scale by any of the churches themselves, apart from those societies, appears to most, a doubtful and hazardous proceeding, destined speedily to end in failure and disappointment.

We have not been insensible to the difficulties attending both the commencement and the prosecution of our present effort, yet feeling strongly convinced of its scriptural basis, and aided by many indications of providence working with us in it, we have gone forward, and have hitherto seen no reason to doubt that it has the sanction of Him whom we call Master and Lord, and whose blessing alone gives success to any effort to spread his gospel in the earth.

In this, our first Report, we feel it incumbent on us to place on record a few of the facts which have led to the present undertaking, and the steps taken in connection therewith, that thus bearing witness to the way in which the good hand of God has been with us, others may be encouraged to go and do likewise.

It was in June, 1860, that the church in this place resolved, for what appeared to them grave and sufficient reasons, to discontinue their connection as an Auxiliary to the Baptist Foreign Missionary Society. This resolution, which was arrived at after much deliberation, was not in any manner the result of apathy towards the cause of Missions, which we now, as ever, regard as the cause of Christ, and which it is incumbent on all his people to support. With these feelings, a Committee was formed to seek out a suitable sphere of labour in which to commence anew the work of spreading the gospel among the heathen. After enquiry in various directions, it was at first thought that the work might be resumed in the island of Ceylon, where the efforts of our Sabbath-school had previously been directed in the support of a school there; but the disappointment of our expectations in this quarter, combined with a remarkable opening of providence in another place, constrained us thankfully to recognize the hand of God as working for us in a manner of which we had no previous expectation. An esteemed friend, having made enquiries on our behalf, of Mr. Henry P. Cassidy, Strict Baptist Missionary, at Poona, near Bombay, received in reply, a letter, in which the following passage occurs, to which we direct special attention, as the explanation and origin of our present movement. Mr. Cassidy says, (Feb. 23, 1861), "If, as I do believe, from the time your letter reached me, there was a special providence directing you to write to me respecting a field of labour, the following communication written only two days ago, without any knowledge of your letter to me, will supply you with exactly the opportunity you desire, of supporting your own missionary among the heathen, and one too, who can send you regularly his own reports of labour. The writer was a preacher in the Free Church of Scotland's Mission here, but was dismissed on account of his baptism." Then follows the letter referred to, which was from Mr. H. Fenwick, in which the writer desires to become a member of Mr. Cassidy's church, and to devote himself to missionary work among the Baptists.

Under these interesting circumstances, your Committee felt not only satisfied but grateful, that the hand of Providence was manifestly in the event, and after further correspondence and negotiation, they engaged Mr. Fenwick as their accredited Missionary in India, at a salary, at first, of £84 per annum; his labours to be conducted under the superintendence of Mr. Cassidy. Instructions were drawn up for his guidance, and in the month of November last, Mr. Fenwick commenced his labours at Tulleygaum, a populous village between Bombay and Poonah, in Southern India.

Such is a brief outline of the main facts of our present missionary undertaking. Many details have necessarily been omitted, but sufficient has been said to show that Providence has evidently wrought with us and for us. While we were casting our eyes around, uncertain where to look either for a missionary or a field of labour, an individual far away in southern India was preparing for us; and the *time*, the *man*, and the *place*, all coincided to lead to the result that has been arrived at. We cannot refrain, on the present occasion, from calling on our friends to join with us in rendering thanks to him who is "wonderful in counsel and excellent in working."

It may be interesting to our friends to know that Mr. Fenwick is the son of an Anglo-Indian Officer, formerly in the employ of the Rajah of Dahr, and that he has lived all his life in that part of India, where he now labours, and is, therefore, well acquainted with the language and customs of the people. He is also conversant with the Hindoo writings, which gives him a great advantage when reasoning with the natives on their idolatrous ideas and practices. His wife is a native woman, and like-minded with himself in the gospel, taking every opportunity to speak to the native women on the things of God.

From the time that he commenced his labours, he has sent Reports every month of his missionary work, with its encouragements and his discouragements. This he will continue to do. These reports contain details of each day's work, the passage of the word of God

spoken from, the numbers that attended, and their behaviour, the interruptions received, or the interest manifested; which we should be glad to lay before our friends in full, did time permit. Suffice it to say that, Mr. Fenwick has a large field before him, and that he is very diligent in cultivating it. Day after day he is engaged in preaching, in familiarly conversing, or in *arguing* with the natives, as circumstances appear to require. And as those among whom he chiefly labours are engaged all day in manual or field labour, he is generally occupied in the evening, and sometimes till late at night, in breaking the bread of life among them. One extract will serve as well as many, to give our friends a specimen of his general course of procedure on such occasions. Writing on Nov. 26, he says,—"At one P. M. I preached among the *Mangs*, who heard the word of God with much joy. First I pointed out to them how they had been deceived by the Brahmins, then I showed the folly and sinfulness of their worship of idols, and the wrath of God revealed against all sinners; and lastly, pointed out God's way of salvation through the incarnation and death of Jesus Christ. They said, 'We hope God will, through you, open our eyes, and then we will follow the true God.' In the evening some came to my tent to hear the word of God again." Throughout Mr. Fenwick's reports, the same order of preaching occurs,—he first unfolds the danger, the disease, and the misery of sin, and then the fulness and suitability of the remedy, which God has in his sovereign mercy provided; taking advantage of surrounding circumstances and occurrences that take place from time to time, to illustrate and enforce the truths he brings before the people. Preaching, as he does, every day in the week, on the same topics, we have been surprised at the variety of treatment and illustration which he introduces, as well as at the perseverance he manifests in his field of labour. He has commenced both a day and Sunday-school for the young in his district.

Mr. Fenwick principally labours among the *Mangs* and *Mahars*, low, and hitherto degraded castes in that

part of India, but to whom Christianity, and the English rule open a prospect of emancipation from the bondage under which they have for centuries been placed. The *Mahars* are virtually outcasts, having to live outside the villages and towns, where they have small portions of land allotted to them; in return for which, they are required to act as messengers for the conveyance of letters and parcels from village to village, while such is the degraded light in which they are viewed, that these are *thrown* to them from a distance. At night-fall, some of their number are allowed to enter the towns, where broken victuals are left for them; in return for which, they are required to clear away all dead animals and refuse from the place. Such are the people to whom Mr. Fenwick chiefly ministers the gospel. They manifest great interest in his preaching; come to his lodgings of their own accord, as they say, to get more light; and very frequently in the reports, the expression "MUCH JOY" is used to describe the manner in which Mr. Fenwick's labours among them are received. On Jan. 17, he says, "Preached from eight to twelve, P. M. among the Mangs. These people have left off the worship of all their Hindoo gods, and now professedly pray to God through Jesus Christ. Two of them stayed behind with me till two in the morning, and said among other things, 'Sir, how shall we try to leave the sins we love best. Please to show us the way, for since we heard you our hearts are getting light, and we desire to lay hold of Jesus and be saved.'" April 3, 1862, Mr. Fenwick writes, "Preached at Dhauma, about three miles from Tulleygaum, and met with very good opportunities for so doing; preached in three different places, the number of people that heard the word was upwards of sixty. All castes of people came to hear, and heard with much willingness and quietness. Some people prepared breakfast for me. The time I spent in preaching to them was three hours. The people desired me to visit them often." April 14, "Went to the tent of a native prince, brother to the Rajah of Indore, who has come down from Indore. Had a good opportunity of speaking to him and his courtiers of the plan of

salvation by God through Jesus Christ, showed the evils of idolatry and the judgment of God on sinners. Thanks be to God for the boldness I had at the time, and for the wisdom given me to confound the opponents. Preached also at two different places in the town, and at each place met a good number of people. They were very quiet, and some said, 'How blessed it would be if all were to follow what you say.' Feel quite exhausted through the heat of the day, which is getting worse daily." April 30, "There are two enquirers, one a Mahommedan, the other a Mang. The Mahommedan can read the Bible in the Marathi language; he studies it daily with me. The Mang comes every night to learn to read the Bible in his vernacular language. He is anxious to read the word of God for himself. He has made good progress, and I have hopes that he will be able to read within a month."

It will thus be seen that, at least, a spirit of growing enquiry is manifested; and though, as the history of missions in India clearly shows, renouncing idols is a very different thing from embracing the gospel in a spiritual manner, yet it is encouraging to see the loosening of the ties that have so long bound these idolators to their idols, and the turning of their earnest attention to the light of the knowledge of God in the gospel. Some of these enquirers have requested baptism at Mr. Fenwick's hands, but it is felt that great caution is needed in acceding to this request, on account of the impressible nature of the people, and the great temptations to which they are subjected. The time of the so-called sacred festivals, of which there are many throughout the year, is especially the time to try the real character of enquirers. At these festivals, at which revelry and licentiousness are consecrated as religious service, it will easily be understood that the depraved passions of a people long given to idolatry are strongly excited, and that they exercise a powerful attraction over them." Some of the Mangs who have been regular attendants on Mr. Fenwick have yielded to its influence, others have stood firm, and openly declare their conviction of the sin and guilt of such practices, and their fixed resolve to renounce them altogether. May these con-

victions prove the beginning of a deeper work in their hearts; and as of old, God visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name, so may he now visit this outcast people, and through the instrumentality of his servant gather out from them those who shall form the nucleus of a church of Christ, which shall be as a light set up in a dark place—an ensign planted on a hill—to which others may be drawn as to a centre where the Lord "commands the blessing, even life for evermore."

In undertaking the entire support of Mr. Fenwick, your Committee felt that it would be needful to obtain the assistance of other churches in carrying out that object, which they doubted not would be willingly given. The church at Tunbridge Wells was the first to remit a sum of money to the Mission, amounting to £5 13s. 4d., and this was followed by friends connected with the church under the pastoral care of our venerable brother Murrell, who sent donations amounting to £11 13s. 6d. The Sunday-school at Soho Chapel has also agreed to contribute £10 annually; and we have recently received an intimation that the Sunday-school at Salem Chapel is prepared to follow their example. Mr. Bloomfield and two of the Deacons having become annual subscribers. Under these circumstances it was felt by your Committee that it was right and expedient that the local name of the Society should be changed to one more general in its application. Accordingly, instead of being called the "*Keppel-street Strict Baptist Missionary Society*," it is now called the "*Strict Baptist Mission*," which is the name by which it will in future be designated. We think it due to our young friends connected with the Keppel-street Sunday-school to acknowledge on the present occasion the zeal and perseverance with which *they* have aided this Mission. Some years ago, when supporting a school in Ceylon, a system of collecting cards and boxes was introduced, which has continued to the present time, and has gone on every year increasing in amount, until this year the sum of £27 has been contributed and collected for our Mission, thus showing what a well-devised system, carried

out with regularity and zeal, will accomplish. Before leaving this part of our subject, it is *just* that we should refer to the fact that of the sum of £84 agreed to be given annually to Mr. Fenwick, the church at Poona, under Mr. Cassidy's pastoral care, has kindly offered to contribute £1 per month or £12 per annum. While gratefully recognizing the kindness which dictated this offer, your Committee are desirious not to tax it longer than the first year of Mr. Fenwick's missionary labours, hoping by that time to be able not only to take the whole amount upon themselves, but also if possible to *increase* it, feeling that their Missionary's support and comfort should be an object of their constant care. The life of a missionary in the East, owing to the depressing influence to which it is subject, is so different to that of a minister in England with all his friends around him, that he should be made to feel that he is constantly sustained by the sympathies and prayers of his supporters in England; and that he is viewed not merely as their stipendiary servant, but as a brother beloved for his work's sake. In this light we desire to view Mr. Fenwick and his labours, and as such, to commend him on the present occasion to the support and prayers of all our friends, hoping that those who have not yet become annual subscribers will be induced to come forward this evening to do so. At the same time we wish to remind our friends that Mr. Fenwick's reports are open to their perusal whenever desired by them.

In conclusion, your Committee desire to call the attention of their friends to the principle upon which this mission is based, which is that of *church action*, in distinction from mere *society action*, as the scriptural foundation of all missionary efforts. Believing that, to the churches of Christ *as such*, is the great commission of our Lord given, to send the gospel abroad among the heathen, and that this work cannot be properly delegated to any society, formed external to the churches, to carry out in their place or on their behalf,—we have endeavoured to act on this principle in this our present effort; and we take this opportunity to commend it to

the notice and examination of other churches as well as those who have already acted upon it. As of old, Paul and Barnabas were deputed by the church at Antioch, to go forth on their missionary journeys, and returned to that church to give an account of what God had done by them,—so now it becomes Strict Baptist churches, commencing anew, to send out faithful men to act as their missionaries to the heathen, and *themselves* to maintain constant and fraternal intercourse with them, respecting all that pertains to their work and its results. And though there may be nothing of the *show* in the religious world, which the present large Missionary Societies make in their annual gatherings in Exeter Hall or elsewhere; yet we trust that such simple efforts, conducted with a single eye to the will and glory of Christ, will not fail to meet his approbation and blessing.

Finally, believing that the work of conversion not only belongs wholly to God, but that it is *his* work in a far higher sense than that in which we believe the common operations of providence to be his work,—we would press upon ourselves and our friends the absolute necessity of cultivating a prayerful, humble, and dependent spirit, in carrying on this missionary effort, so that if success be granted, we may be rather humbled than lifted up, and if success be withheld for a time, we may humbly work on, and wait till the blessing come, that God in all things may have all the glory.

"God be merciful to us, and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us; that his way may be known upon earth, his saving health among all nations." "And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands, establish thou it."

TREASURER'S REPORT.

Receipts.	£	s.	d.
Subscriptions and Donations, Keppel-street Chapel	31	18	9
Keppel-street Juvenile Missionary Society	27	13	1¼
Contributions by friends at St. Neot's, Hunts	11	14	6
Ditto, Tunbridge Wells	6	8	4
Collections after Sermons	27	0	0
	104	14	8¼

Expenditure.	£	s.	d.
Paid to Mr. Fenwick, the Missionary (3 quarters)	54	0	0
Printing	3	0	0
Cards and Boxes	1	5	6
Expenses attending Annual Sermons	2	5	0
Balance in hand	44	4	2¼
	104	14	8¼

Audited and found correct,

J. Collier,
W. Russell, } *Auditors.*

LIST OF ANNUAL SUBSCRIBERS.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Miss Ashlin	3	3	0	Mr. Ames	0	10	
Mr. Milner	1	1	0	Mr. Oliver	0	10	
Mrs. Palliser	1	1	0	Mr. Russell	0	10	
Mr. Trimming	1	1	0	Mr. Caleb Smith	0	10	
Miss Haines	1	1	0	Mr. Norton	0	10	
Mr. Barmoor	1	1	0	Mr. Long	0	8	
Mr. Cope	1	1	0	Miss Kelsey	0	5	0
Mr. Cooper	1	0	0	Miss Wells	0	5	0
Mr. Pearson	1	0	0	Mr. J. James	0	5	0
Mr. Turner	1	0	0	Mr. J. Bloomfield	0	5	0
Mr. Smith, of Watford	1	0	0	Mr. J. H. Cooper	0	5	0
Mr. Gaze	0	10	6	Mrs. Peniston	0	2	6
Mr. Collier	0	10	6	Mr. Golding	0	2	6
Mr. Scott	0	10	6	Mrs. Sedgwick	0	2	6

Subscriptions and Donations of any amount will be thankfully received by the Secretary, Mr. G. Pearson, 17, Albert-street, Camden-town, London, N. W.; or at Soho Chapel, Oxford-street, by Mr. Reynolds, 57, New Compton-street, Soho, W. C.; at Salem Chapel, Meard's-court, Soho, by Mr. Scott, 1, Old Bond-street, W.; at St. Neot's, Hunts, by Mr. J. Topham; and at Tunbridge Wells, by Mr. Wagon.