Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology



https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb

PayPal https://paypal.me/robbradshaw

A table of contents for the *Strict Baptist Mission Annual Reports* can be found here:

https://missiology.org.uk/journal_strict-baptist-mission-annual-reports.php

Strict Baptist Mission.

REPORT,

1863.

STRICT BAPTIST MISSION.

President:
MR. S. MILNER.

Treasurer:
MR. H. COOPER.

Secretary:
MR. G. PEARSON.

Committee:

Keppel-street.—THE DEACONS, MESSRS. ALAND, FIELD, GAZE, GOLDING, T. JAMES, J. JAMES, RUSSELL, SQUIRRELL, TALLACK, TOWNSEND, WAKELIN, AND COLLIER, *(Subscription Secretary)*.

Soho Chapel Auxiliary.—MESSRS. PELLS, REYNOLDS, MATTHEWS, AND SMITH.

Salem Chapel Auxiliary.—MESSRS. BLOOMFIELD, SCOTT, CURZONS, BEARN, AND HONEYCOTT.

Foot's Cray.—MR. MAY.

St. Neot's.—MR. TOPHAM.

Tunbridge Wells.—MR. WAGON.

REPORT, 1863.

In presenting a second Annual Report of the proceedings and progress of the Strict Baptist Mission, your Committee have much pleasure in stating that they have hitherto met with nothing to cause them to question the wisdom or propriety of the undertaking upon which they have entered. On the contrary, they have with thankfulness to acknowledge that God has manifestly guided their way, and removed difficulties from their path, and that they have continued to receive the sympathy and support of friends in various churches who have become acquainted with their efforts, and the object they have in view.

For the sake of any who may not be acquainted with this movement, it may be well to state that it arose between two and three years ago, from a desire on the part of the church meeting at Keppel-street Chapel, to open up a direct communication with some heathen land, independently of any existing Missionary Society, and to place there a faithful Missionary labourer, from whom they might receive frequent and regular reports of his work among the heathen, at the same time undertaking his entire support. This desire for separate action arose from no preference for isolation, but simply from a growing persuasion that the Baptist Foreign Missionary Society, to the support of which that church had long contributed, did not now represent either the principles or the practice of Strict Baptists, and that its influence had been virtually used in antagonism to them. At the same time, your Committee was impressed with the conviction that large Missionary

Societies, besides being, like other large Societies, liable to internal abuses, were not the kind of instrumentality that Scripture points out for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom in the earth. The New Testament teaches that the true Missionary Societies are the churches themselves, and your Committee believe that for one or more churches to join in choosing, sending out, and supporting a Missionary, is the most simple, scriptural, and efficient plan that can be adopted. Their object is, therefore, not to build up a large Society, even if it were in their power to do so; but, by example, to stimulate other Strict Baptist churches to make similar efforts, in the form of church-action, to send the gospel to the heathen; feeling assured that to the churches themselves, and not to any society external to the churches, was the great commission given—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

Not, however, to dwell on general topics, we will proceed to lay before our friends a brief account of Missionary work in India during the past year. In our last Report it was stated that a Mr. Fenwick, formerly connected with the Free Church of Scotland Mission, but who had become a Baptist, was engaged as our Missionary at *Tulleygaum*, a populous village between Bombay and Poona. He continued his labours till July last, when circumstances arose which induced him to resign his post, and he has, we believe, returned to his former sphere of labour. We deeply regret that a change of this kind should have taken place so quickly after the establishment of this Mission, yet on the whole, we cannot but regard Mr. Fenwick's resignation as likely to prove advantageous, rather than injurious, to its welfare and progress. Our kind and judicious friend, Mr. Cassidy, of Poona, unwilling that the sphere of Mr. Fenwick's labours should be abandoned, at once sought out for us another Missionary to carry on his work on the same spot. In this he succeeded, and we trust it was the "good hand of God upon him," that led him to select GYANOBA POWAR, a promising native Hindoo,

whom he had baptized some time previously, and who had been employed for some time as colporteur and preacher by the Bible Society in that district. Accounts of his Christian character, his assiduity and his perseverance, were sent to us, and we felt that we could not hesitate to engage his services, at least for a probationary period with a view to a permanent arrangement. He entered on his labours at the beginning of September last, and his first Report appeared to us to promise well for his future efficiency in his work. He appears to be a simple-hearted, single-minded labourer, and sincerely concerned for the moral and spiritual welfare of his native brethren and sisters around him. Being himself rescued from the dark and degrading system of idolatry which prevails around him, as a brand snatched from the burning, he can the more readily enter into the condition of his fellow-countrymen ; and meeting them on their own ground, he, like the apostle Paul, reasons with them out of the Scriptures on the things relating to Jesus Christ and their need of him. A few extracts from his journal will show more readily than any description, his method of carrying on his missionary work.

It must be evident to all that a missionary's address to the heathen, must be in many respects different to a ministerial discourse in a Christian country. In the former case the very historical truth of Christianity is disputed; in the latter, it is taken for granted; in the former case, the preacher has a settled, orderly congregation of regular attendants; in the latter he has an *un*settled, and, too often, a *dis*orderly company, who frequently interrupt him with derision and disputes, so that he reckons it a great point gained when they present the appearance of attentive listeners. From Gyanoba's journals we learn some of the special difficulties with which he has to contend. One of these arises from the fact of the natives regarding *sin* in an entirely false and superficial manner, viewing the breaking of their *caste*, and a failure to attend to the ceremonies prescribed by their priests and sacred books, as the

worst sins they can commit. Their inability to conceive of the idea of an *invisible* God, the Maker of all things, as distinct from their various idols, is another difficulty to be contended with. So inveterate are their propensities to idolatry, that some of them call the British Government a god, being a manifest *power* among them. They frequently ask Gyanoba to let them "see" his God. On one such occasion Gyanoba replied, "Show me first your *soul*, and then I will show you God; or, show me even a bodily *pain*, and I will show you God," which at once silenced the objector. When pressed with argument, they are willing to admit Christ as a religious teacher, side by side with Tookaran, Duyanoba, and others, whom they regard as infallible teachers, and whose deeds are chronicled in their *Shastras*. In like manner they compare the miracles of Christ with their idol-wonders; and because those of Christ were not so monstrous and absurd, they express their preference for the latter. Frequently they will interpose speculative questions to Gyanoba's statements—for the Hindoo mind is very speculative—such as "Why did God permit sin?"—"Why does God punish sin, if he is the cause of all things?" &c., showing a readiness to entertain any question rather than face the great fact of their own sinful and guilty condition.

Some of the natives having confused ideas of the wonderful character of the Christian Scriptures, regard the Bible as a *charm*, entertaining a superstitious feeling respecting it, not unlike that formerly felt by the ignorant in our own rural districts. On March 27th, two women came to Gyanoba, and begged to see his Scriptures, of which they spoke in high terms. Upon further enquiry, this promising application, turned out to have arisen from one of the women having had something stolen from her, and wishing to know who took it. Five rupees (equal to 10s.) were offered to Gyanoba if he would tell them who was the thief, and it was with the utmost difficulty that they could be persuaded that Gyanoba's Bible did not contain the required information. Yet in the midst of

so many instances of ignorance and superstition, it is refreshing sometimes to meet with remarks such as these, which fell from the lips of some of his hearers. "What connection is there between the death of Jesus Christ, and the life of sinners?" "Man's mind is full of sinful desires; how can he believe in Jesus Christ?" "What you say is true, but then we must give up our caste, and be despised by our people." From these remarks, it will be seen that some, at least, are brought to thoughtfulness on the subject of religion,—thoughtfulness which we would fain hope will, in some cases, through the enlightening grace of the Holy Spirit, lead on to a saving knowledge of Christ and his salvation.

Our missionary is intimately acquainted with the contents of the Hindoo sacred books,—the "Shastras," "Vedas," and "Poorans," and with their entire system of idolatry. By these means he is able to expose the degraded characters and base actions attributed to their deities, and the absurd and pernicious ideas of God which they entertain. His ability also to meet their captious objections is not inconsiderable. As, for instance, when one remarked to him, "Why should we worship him who is invisible?" his reply was, "The Queen of England reigns over us, but if any of you were to say, She does not appear to us, I have never seen her, and therefore I shall not obey any of her laws, you would all say he was senseless." On another occasion, in reply to the remark that the "Shastras" say that man's soul is a portion of God, Gyanoba said, "It cannot be so; God has no parts nor portions. The watchmaker by his skill makes the wheels turn the hands, but does not introduce a part of his soul into it. Though God is in every place, man's soul is distinct." To this reply, the significant remark was made, "What can we say to you? your way is the true one; after some time we shall be like you." The question of caste is constantly arising, and the natives can neither understand nor believe that God has made of one blood all nations. Gyanoba meets their craving for high caste by telling them that "There is only one high caste, and

that Jesus Christ is at its head; that he who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners" was "of the highest caste," and that "all who believe in him are made of high caste too."

From these brief extracts our friends will gain some idea of the mode and character of our brother's missionary labours. He invariably gives us details of all the more remarkable conversations he holds with the natives, and of his movements day by day. As a specimen of his general mode of addressing his hearers, we give the following:—

[Translated.]

Oct. 8, 1862.—Preached to the Mahars. After preaching, one said, "How came sin into the world? What have you to say about it?" *Gyanoba.*—"I have this to say about it: God at first created all the world upright and without stain. He created angels in heaven for his own service. One of these became sinful through pride, and those who leagued with him became sinful too: so the Supreme expelled them from heaven, the place of happiness; and they obtained a place in hell, the place of punishment. God created Adam and Eve, whom the chief of the devils visited and told them that what God had told them was not right, and that he had thereby concealed real joy from them. He advised them to despise what God had said, and to do what God had forbidden, and they would then become like God. Adam and Eve obeyed him and disbelieved God, so they and their posterity too became sinful. Of this the Bible gives full information. I will now tell you in a few words how sin is put away. When Satan had caused our first parents to fall, God cursed him in his serpent form, and said, 'I will put enmity," &c. This is the first prophecy God gave about man's salvation, and it teaches us that some one was to be born of the woman who would work out man's salvation, and overcome Satan who had tempted Adam and Eve and caused them to fall. This Saviour was born more than 1800 years ago, and lived on earth about thirty-three years, and preached to the people, showing his power by working miracles. Many who saw him believed it was he who was to come. He took the sins of men on his own head, and endured God's curse for them. Heavy as it was, he bore it and loosed men from the punishment of sin. 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son,' &c. The name of that Saviour is Jesus Christ. O think highly of him and forsake the ways of sin."

Short summaries of the main facts of Christianity, like the foregoing, are rendered necessary by the fact that many, if not most of those who assemble to hear the Missionary from time to time, have never heard them before, and accordingly they have to be frequently repeated, as the ground-work to his subsequent teaching.

The following is a conversation which took place with a Mussulman, April 16, "Read an account of the Saviour's incarnation," a Mussulman said; "Jesus was a great prophet, and excepting our excellent and glorious Mahomed, there has not been a greater prophet than Jesus." Gyanoba.—"What did Mahomed do for mankind? Jesus gave his life to save sinners and there is none greater than he." Mussulman.—"Jesus said he was the Son of God." Gyanoba.—"What he said was true, and it is so recorded in the gospels." Mussulman.—"The gospels are not genuine. The stories are given there to deceive his disciples." Gyanoba.—"If it be not genuine (as you say) then show me the genuine gospel? in what language is it written?" Mussulman.—"How do I know?" Gyanoba.—"Do you know what is written of Jesus in the Koran?" Musselman.—"I have not read the Koran, but I believe what our Moolvies say." Gyanoba.—"I am astonished. You have not seen a gospel, nor the Arabic Koran, nor a book written by Christ's disciples, and how can you accuse his disciples and say that the coming, and doings, and sayings of Christ are vain." Mussulman.—"Neither I nor the Moolvies can say so, but the day is far spent and I have no time to answer you, and I know you will not listen to me."

He attended on the 5th and 6th of March the great Holee Festival, which lasts five days, and which is marked by scenes of wild riot and abomination. Young and old, even among the more respectable part of the community, throw off all restraint; and, in the words of Gyanoba, "Horrible things are done during these five days." Amid such scenes Gyanoba could gain but little hearing, but some *even there* were brought to confess with shame the wickedness of their doings. A few days after, (March 11,) he visited Dehoo, a place of pilgrimage to the shrine and image of Tookaran, where a large concourse of people was gathered for several days together. Here he preached, conversed, and argued till the 17th, when he tells us he lost his voice through incessant preaching; respecting which Mr. Cassidy remarks: "I can testify to this, and am sorry no other Christian teacher was at Dehoo to help Gyanoba." Our friends will thus see that we have a diligent and laborious missionary, and one whose labours we hope and believe God will own and bless in his own time.

With regard to positive results, we are not able to refer our friends to any instances of conversion to God that have come to our knowledge, though it would be too much to affirm that out of the numbers that have listened to his voice, *none* have had the seeds of eternal

life implanted in their souls. There is a very natural desire to hear of saving results from missionary labour, and this desire has, in India, led many of the missionaries to stimulate the profession of Christianity without sufficient care to ascertain its reality. The prospect of temporal advantage, if held out to the natives, will, in many instances, at once lead to a professed attachment to the Gospel and to those who preach it; and thus the means are afforded of sending a fallacious report to England which the facts of experience will not warrant. It would not be difficult to raise a church of converts at Tulleygaum, provided sufficient inducements were held out to them to profess Christianity; but *such* a church we feel persuaded our friends do not wish to see. Of this we had a striking instance in our last Report, when on April 13, hearing Gyanoba preach, a man who appeared struck with what he heard, said, "If I should be persuaded of the truth of all these things, who will provide for me? If you will give me twenty-five rupees a month, I will turn without delay." Another said, "If I enter your faith, how much will the Padoee give me?" Accordingly they wonder at Gyanoba's constant refusal to take presents from them, and it is the testimony of Mr. Cassidy, who has had long acquaintance with this part of India, that no greater source of trouble and difficulty to him and other missionaries exists than the constant craving on the part of the natives for GAIN, in some form or other. To many, if not most of them, the words of Scripture are exactly applicable,—"Men of corrupt minds, destitute of the truth, *supposing that gain is godliness.*" Still we know that with God all things are possible; and many genuine instances have occurred, where Hindoos have given up all for Christ's sake, and have gone forth to follow him, with no prospect but that of poverty, persecution, and reproach.

Whatever may be said of individual conversions, Christianity, *as a religious system*, is evidently making rapid way in India. Of this the natives seem to be well aware, and such remarks as—"Our gods are down

now,"—"You were once with us, and have now gone over unto this religion, so will everyone at last; *be it so!*" are not unfrequently addressed to Gyanoba by them. We may also add on this point, that in a recent number of a native non-Christian journal, "The Indu-Prahash," the editor remarks:—"The missionary movement is making steady head against rapidly retreating obstacles." And such is the general impression of the more educated among the natives of India.

We have for some time had a great wish to provide a school for the young at Tulleygaum, and also to provide some sort of building in which our Missionary might preach, and which would form a sort of centre for his labours. We considered that these two objects might be combined in one, by the erection of a building which should serve both for a school and preaching room. This matter has formed the subject of much deliberation to your Committee, as well as of consultation with their friend and adviser, Mr. Cassidy, of Poona, who expresses himself to have great confidence in the propriety and prospective usefulness of such a step. "There is," he says, "a Government school at Tulleygaum, but for the lowest classes it is virtually closed," to which we may add that in the Government schools of India the use of the Bible is prohibited, for fear of offending the prejudices of the natives; the consequence of which is, that they learn to despise their former system of idolatry, without at the same time learning to love and value Christianity; and it is even declared by competent authority, that the youth of India taught in the Government schools is to a great growing up in Deism. To this objection, the schools established by the Missionaries are not open, and we are hoping to see a school opened at Tulleygaum, where the children of the poorer classes may not only learn to read and write, but be trained up to respect and value the Scriptures, with the ultimate hope that the seed sown may, in some instances, bear fruit to life eternal. The Committee, therefore, at their last meeting, passed resolutions to purchase an eligible piece of

ground in the centre of the village of Tulleygaum, and to erect thereupon an inexpensive building for the purposes just named. The total cost, both of the land and building will not, we are informed, exceed £100—a sum so moderate, that we feel we can with the greater confidence ask our friends to assist us in raising this sum. Some who read this Report may have heard of our object for the first time; it is our hope that God may put it into their hearts to come forward to help liberally in what we may, without presumption, call a *good* cause,—for it is the cause of Christ himself, and concerns the spread of his kingdom in the earth. And to all our friends we would reiterate the Divine assurance, "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."

To all who have helped us through the year we tender our hearty thanks. Our young friends have worked with energy and perseverance; the Juvenile Auxiliaries at Keppel-street, Soho, Salem, and Foot's Cray, in Kent, having raised during the year the sum of £60 18s. 0¾d. We hope for a continuance of the same noble efforts in future years. Friends at St. Neot's and at Tunbridge Wells, have also kindly assisted us again this year; and we trust that Strict Baptist churches generally will, in time, be formed into little clusters, each supporting a Missionary of the Cross in some heathen land.

With this hope, we commend this infant mission to the sympathy, the support, and the prayers of our friends. Let us be "steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we *know* that our labour is not in vain in the Lord."

BALANCE SHEET

Of the Income and Expenditure of the Strict Baptist Mission, from June 24, 1862, to June 24, 1863.

RECEIVED.	£	s.	d.
Balance in hand as per last Audit	43	14	2½
Collected at the last Annual Meeting ...	1	18	8
Profit of Tea	0	14	7½
Subscriptions and Donations (Keppel-st.)	13	2	0
Keppel-street Juvenile Auxiliary	30	18	0¾
Soho ditto.....	10	0	0
Salem ditto	10	0	0
Foot's Cray ditto	10	0	0
Contributions by Friends at St. Neot's	9	3	3
Ditto at Tunbridge Wells	7	17	7
Collections after Sermons at Keppel-st.	11	6	7
	148	14	11¾

PAID.	£	s.	d.
Sent to Mr. Fenwick the Missionary (3 months) per Mr. Cassidy.....	18	0	0
Ditto to Gyanoba Powar (9 months Salary	36	0	0
Printing, Postage, &c.	3	15	6
Sent to India as a first instalment towards the erection of a School and Preaching Room	12	0	0
Balance in hand*	78	19	5¾
(This balance is required in advance for liabilities incurred.)			
	148	14	11¾

We have examined the above accounts, and find them correct.

JOHN JAMES,
ROBERT CURZONS,
J. A. MATTHEWS,
} *Auditors.*

June 18, 1863.

ANNUAL MEETING.

Held at Soho Chapel, Oxford-street, Wednesday evening, June 24, 1863.

MR. JOHN PELLS, in the Chair.

Moved by MR. S. MILNER, seconded by MR. G. WYARD, and carried unanimously :

"That this Report be adopted, printed, and circulated, and that the following persons (names on the wrapper) be the Committee and Officers for the year ensuing."

Moved, seconded, and carried unanimously :

"That the warmest thanks of this meeting be given to Mr. H. P. Cassidy, of Poonah, for his kind sympathy, and judicious aid in forwarding in India the objects of this Society.

The meeting was also addressed by MR. J. WOODARD, of Ilford, on The example of the Apostles considered as Missionaries of the gospel ; and by MR. W. HAWKINS, of Trinity Chapel, Southwark, on the Missionary promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world."

LIST OF ANNUAL SUBSCRIBERS.

	£	s.	d.
Miss Ashlin	3	3	0
Miss Haines	1	1	0
Mrs. Palliser	1	1	0
Mr. Milner	1	1	0
Mr. Cooper	1	1	0
Mr. Trimming	1	1	0
Mr. Pearson	1	1	0
Mr. Barmoor	1	1	0
Mr. Reynolds	1	1	0
Mr. Cope	1	1	0
Mr. Squirrell	1	0	0
Mr. Turner	1	0	0
Mr. Denham	1	0	0
Mr. Bloomfield	0	10	6
Mr. Scott	0	10	6
Mr. Ames	0	10	6
Mr. Collier	0	10	6
Mr. Gaze	0	10	6
Mr. Norton	0	10	0
Mr. Clover	0	10	0
Mr. Oliver	0	10	0
Mr. Russell	0	10	0
Mr. Long	0	8	0
Miss Kelsey	0	5	0
Mr. Wells	0	5	0
Mr. J. James	0	5	0
Mr. J. H. Cooper	0	5	0
Mr. Parker	0	5	0
Mr. Harman	0	5	0
Mrs. Penistan	0	2	6
Mr. Golding	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. Neots, Hunts, by Mr. J. Topham; and at Tunbridge Wells, by Mr. Wagon.