

OLIVE TREES

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8.

QUESTIONS OF THE HOUR.

THE DIVINE METHOD OF MISSIONS.*

(Is. 42: 1-4.)

Rev. J. B. Gilmore, York, N. Y.

It is a beautiful and instructive fact that this rich promise of the gospel to the Gentiles is found in the Old Testament, seven hundred years and more before the coming of Christ in human form. It is well fitted to correct the mistaken conception according to which we are often prone to think that God in the Old Testament was different from God in the New—less loving, less desirous of saving the great heathen world. God is love. And, since He is eternal and unchangeable, He has ever been love. This is the truth which appears in the latest and fullest offers of salvation made by Christ's apostles and by Christ Himself. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Although the love of God was not manifested so fully in the Old Testament as in the New, it was manifested just as really.

*Spoken Sabbath evening, April 30th, before the Missionary Association of the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

God's purpose to give the gospel freely to all was fully revealed only when in the fullness of time He sent forth His Son; yet this had been His one increasing purpose through the ages. God's method, too, for making known His saving truth throughout the world was stated from time to time with greater or less fullness. It was stated, among other passages, in the one before us, as this is interpreted by the Evangelist Matthew in the 12th chapter of his gospel, 17th and 21st verses inclusive.

While thus the truth here taught concerning the divine purpose and plan to save the world is couched in the language of prophecy, and therefore is not so simple and direct as the presentation of the same truth in the New Testament, particularly, of course, in the great commission, yet, as we have intimated, it has this advantage of opening up to us a wider vision of missions, where we see the subject as it existed from the beginning in the great plan of God, and as it shone from the beginning in the whole Word of God—prophecy now fulfilled in gospel, Old Testament in New.

This subject, then, it is to which we invite attention:

The Divine Method of Missions.

I. *The Field.*

This includes all nationalities. The term "Gentiles" is very comprehensive. With the Jew it included all nations of the world except one. That was his own. But with God, in His plan of

MONOGRAPHS.

MISSIONARIES OF THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH TO THE LOWER PROVINCES OF CANADA.

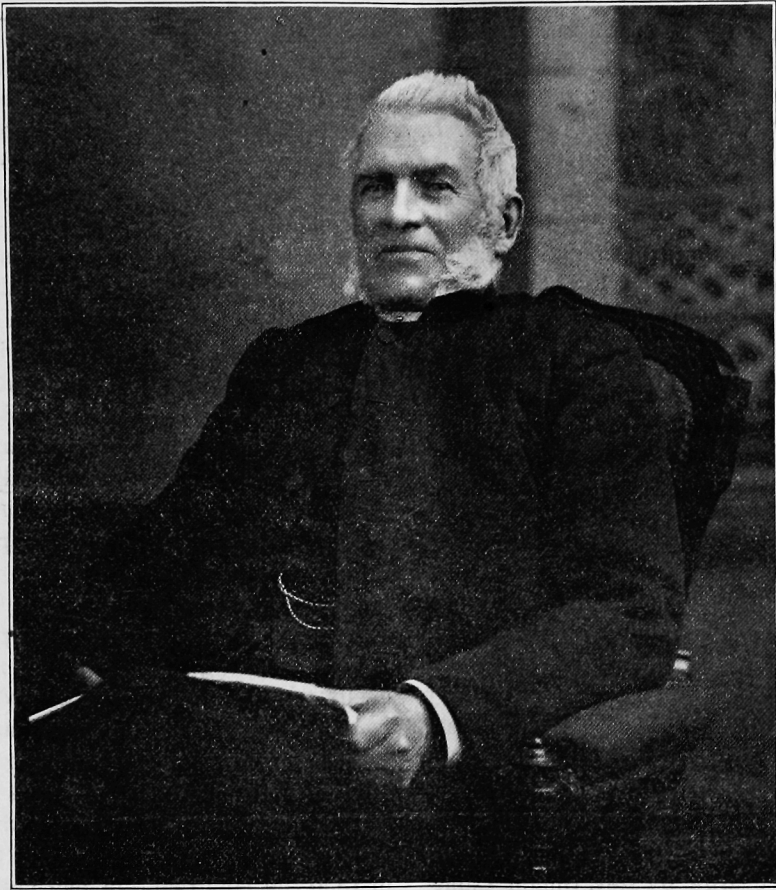
ALEXANDER McLEOD STAVELY.

After his settlement at Grand Prè, Nova Scotia, in 1833 (see *OLIVE TREES* for March, p. 82), Mr. Sommerville was left without any permanent assistance for many years. His letters at that time to the Board of Directors in Ireland urged the importance of sending out more laborers, if the results of his ministry and that of Mr. Clarke were not to be lost. In their report to the Synod of 1836 the Directors say: "Believing this to be a most important field of missionary effort and regarding the present as a suitable time for attempting the wide dissemination of gospel truth in a country which seems destined, at no distant day, to become a great and independent empire, we would gladly afford to the missionaries, already on the field, such help as might enable them more effectually to prosecute the mission. Most deeply do we sympathize with them in their privations, sufferings and trials, and, above all, in the disheartening prospect of receiving no additional help from us in carrying forward the mission. . . We indulge the hope that the importance of the mission to the British Colonies will yet be duly appreciated and means placed at the disposal of our successors in office for prosecuting it on a scale adapted in some measure to the necessities of the people and the duty of the Covenanted Church, as displaying a high standard for the Redeemer's cause." Repeated applications made by a society of Covenanters in St. John, N. B., for the regular administration of ordinances, coupled with favorable reports as to their piety and steadfastness, so impressed the Board that

the Convener was instructed to prepare and address to the licentiates of the Church a Circular recommending the claims of that Society and holding out special inducements to any one who would accept their call. But there was no response till 1841, when a young man of fine appearance, full of life and energy, recently from college, an acceptable preacher, with the prospect of a desirable pastorate in his native country, volunteered to cross the Atlantic and serve, as God would enable him, the spiritually destitute in what was then regarded as a very distant field of labor.

This young man was Alexander McLeod Stavely, son of William John Stavely, D.D., the distinguished pastor of Dercock and Ballymoney Congregation, in the North of Ireland, and grandson of the even more famous William Stavely, whose name carries us back to stirring times in the history of Ireland. Alexander was born in Corkey, County Antrim, June 19, 1816, and under the prayerful training of a godly father and mother, whose memory he still reveres, grew up in the fear of the Lord. At an early age he was sent to the Academy in Belfast when under the presidency of Dr. R. J. Bryce, so justly celebrated as a linguist and classical teacher. Afterwards he attended for two years the Royal Academical Institution in that city, a seat of learning where many who subsequently became eminent in various professions received their collegiate education. While a student in the University of Edinboro, Scotland, for three sessions he enjoyed the instructions of such professors as John Watson, late editor of *Blackwood's Magazine*, Dr. Walsh in *Ecclesiastical History*, and the renowned Thomas Chalmers in *Evangelical and Pastoral Theology*. In the *Moral Philosophy Class*, conducted by

the professor familiarly known as "Christopher North," he carried off the first prize. Having completed his literary course in on the instruction of the greatly beloved, because eminently pious, Dr. Andrew Symington. Licensed to preach the gos-



I am yours most truly
 Chas. Wilson Stanley.

1835, he attended for the usual three terms the Divinity Hall at Paisley, where he had the rare privilege of meeting and waiting pel by the Northern Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland, March 16, 1839, he had been engaged

in preaching to different congregations in the Province of Ulster for about two years, when he offered himself as missionary to the Lower Provinces of Canada.

This offer, made in the spirit of true consecration, was gladly accepted, and on Wednesday, the 12th of May, 1841, Mr. Stavely was set apart to the office of the holy ministry and the pastoral charge of the Mission Station at St. John, N. B. The solemn and impressive services were held in the Meeting House at Killraughts in the presence of a large and deeply interested audience. A sermon was preached by Rev. James Dick from Rev. 1: 16, "And he had in his right hand seven stars." Jesus Christ was spoken of as invested with mediatorial authority, always present with His Church, and the spring of all blessings. Ministers, he said, are represented under the figure of stars to show that the light they have comes from Christ and is given that they may be lights and guides to others. Their position in the right hand of the Redeemer indicates that they are His property and His gifts to the Church, under His guidance and protection at every step in their ministry. A very touching letter was read from the Society in St. John, inviting Mr. Stavely to be their pastor and telling him of their prospects, and then the father of the candidate led in the ordination prayer. After an appropriate charge by Rev. Simon Cameron and a brief discourse by Rev. Thomas Houston on the nature, obligations and encouragements of the missionary enterprise, the exercises were brought to a close. It may be mentioned as a curious fact that the certificate of his ordination, an extract from the Minutes by the late Dr. Thomas Houston, Clerk of Presbytery, is still in the possession of Mr. Stavely, treasured as one of the few documents that escaped the flames when his house was destroyed in the great fire of 1877.

On the 25th of June this devoted missionary sailed from Greenock by the merchant ship "Eagle," bearing with him the love of many friends and followed by earnest prayers for himself and the little band that had placed themselves under his leadership. On the 3d of August he safely reached St. John, where he received a cordial welcome and entered at once upon his work. His presence was an inspiration to the people. Although the house of worship was situated in the Lower Cove, a remote part of the city, the attendance was very encouraging. Rev. Robert Wilson, from the Established Church of Scotland, was the only Presbyterian minister in St. John at that time, and many Presbyterians from the North of Ireland, attracted by the young preacher's fresh presentation of the truth, worshiped there at least part of each Sabbath and contributed liberally for the support of ordinances. Soon after Mr. Stavely's arrival the Lord's Supper was administered, Mr. Sommerville, of Nova Scotia, assisting in the services. Eighteen were added to the membership of the Church, making forty-one or forty-two communicants. Thus was the work fairly inaugurated, and through the agency of Sabbath schools, social meetings during the week and monthly gatherings of teachers for conference and prayer, it was carried on with many tokens of Divine favor, till in 1850 the congregation had erected and removed to a commodious building in a more central locality. At present there is only the fragment of an organization in the city, but during a busy pastorate of thirty-eight years hundreds were received into the fellowship of the church, though some of them remained only a short time and then carried certificates to congregations in the United States. The value of the work is not to be estimated by the few that remain, but by the multitudes that were helped on the way and the impulse that

was given to the cause of truth and righteousness in New Brunswick.

Through the courtesy of Mr. J. Ewing, of St. John, a manuscript history of the Presbyterian churches of that city, written from memory by Elder Robert Ewing a short time before his death, is in my possession. It supplies a few facts.

The Society that called Mr. Stavely had been organized by Rev. Mr. Clarke in 1828 and was composed of Covenanter families, strongly attached to the principles of the Second Reformation, who previous to that time worshiped with the Established Church, but were not communicants. Among them were "a few able laymen, capable of conducting religious meetings at all times, weekday and Sabbath," and consequently during the thirteen years that the little church was without a pastor it "enjoyed a large measure of spiritual life and energy, and all felt the blessing and good will of Him who dwelt in the bush."

Speaking of the congregation in 1879, Mr. Ewing says: "The church has been singularly blessed in that there has been nothing like public scandal charged upon any member, either male or female, during the long period of thirty-eight years. It has never been afflicted with much dissension or discord, and an open rupture has never taken place." Attention, however, is called, in connection with this statement, to an event well worthy of a place in history, which occurred in 1840-41, a few months before the arrival of the pastor and while not yet under the government of a Session: "There was only one family in the church engaged in the sale of spirituous liquors. Although they were spoken to by the elders and other members respecting the immorality of the traffic, they persisted in it. Their plea was that in the other Presbyterian churches the members were allowed to sell liquors, and why should not they? The contention continued for some

time. At length the more zealous members were determined to carry their point, if possible. A strong, outspoken document was drawn up, in which was contained a resolution that no one, man or woman, master or servant, should be recognized as a member of the church who followed the practice of selling intoxicating liquors to be used as a common beverage. A meeting of the whole church was held for the purpose of formally deciding the question. After having been fully discussed and put to the vote, the measure was carried by a large majority. The parties engaged in the traffic departed in great displeasure, declaring that they would leave and have no more to do with such a people. They repented, however, came back and continued, as before, worthy members of the church. . . . So the Reformed Presbyterian has the honor of being the first Presbyterian church" in St. John "to cast out and still to keep out all tavern keepers to this day."

The year after Mr. Stavely's settlement, the Irish members of St. Andrew's Church, having, for reasons that need not be mentioned here, become dissatisfied, withdrew from its fellowship, "went in a body to the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Lower Cove and in a single day filled the little house to overflowing. Their children attended the Sabbath school, and on the whole they appeared well satisfied and many might have remained, but for one circumstance. In a short time one after another would inquire: 'When would it be convenient to christen the little one?' When informed that the usage of the Covenanter Church was to baptize the children of members only and that in the face of the congregation, they soon left," and identified themselves with a new organization in the vicinity.

The ministry of Mr. Stavely was not limited to St. John. He traveled into

other and distant parts of the Province, enduring the hardships peculiar to pioneer service, to preach the Word and encourage the scattered friends of a Covenanted Testimony. At Queensville, N. B., a society was organized and a comfortable place of worship erected during his early ministry. He also crossed the border and organized a society at Littleton, Me., where a few devoted Christians from Donegal, Ireland, had formed a settlement. Some of the United States ministers have in late years visited the locality, and have borne testimony to the worth of the people. Their church edifice is the first and only Presbyterian place of worship erected in the State of Maine.

During his residence in the commercial metropolis of New Brunswick no minister stood higher in the esteem of the community than Mr. Stavely, nor exerted a stronger influence on behalf of social and civic morality. A man of genial and loving disposition, brimful of humor, and withal loyal to his convictions, even those who were not ready to endorse his views nor accept his positions on many questions, admired his character and cherished his friendship. The Hon. Dr. Elder, of the St. John *Telegraph*, gave voice to public sentiment when he thus referred editorially to his resignation and approaching return to Ireland in 1879: "During his long pastorate he was held in the highest esteem not only by the people of his own charge, but, we might say, by those of all denominations. The fact speaks volumes for the high ministerial character maintained by him, more especially when it is considered that he adhered faithfully to the doctrinal system and ecclesiastical usages of a religious denomination which is more inclined to adhere to the 'old paths,' as Mr. Stavely would say, than to countenance new departures in modes of thought or worship. Mr. Stavely is one of the oldest

members of the New Brunswick Auxiliary Bible Society, and has frequently taken the platform at its annual gatherings, delivering eloquent speeches on such occasions. Though an ardent champion of David's Psalms and their exclusive use in worship, he has often enlivened his speeches, and at times even his sermons, with quotations from our religious poets, with whose works he has an extensive acquaintance. . . Mr. Stavely has ever taken a warm interest in the Evangelical Alliance, in Missions, in charitable and philanthropic efforts. . . We are safe in saying that few persons have left our city and Province for many years whose name will call forth more kindly mention and frequent recollection than that of Rev. Mr. Stavely."

And what a noble testimony is borne by Elder Robert Ewing, who was closely associated with him during a long pastorate: "It is well known, amid all the bickerings amongst the ministers of the city, he, as a man and a minister, has never in a single instance done anything at variance with the ministerial character. As a preacher, he is sound in the great cardinal doctrines of the gospel of Christ, and, as a man, he is beloved by all parties."

Soon after his resignation, June 16, 1879, Mr. Stavely returned to Ireland, where he has been since engaged in preaching and pastoral work. In the spring of 1899, after having been actively employed in preaching the gospel for sixty-one years, the Presbytery, at his request, dissolved the pastoral relations that had existed between him and the congregation of Ballyclare and Larne for over fourteen years. This resignation was marked by a demonstration of good will on behalf of his people and the whole community that has already been recorded in OLIVE TREES (see April number, p. 113). Only a short time previously he had received a beautifully worded and engrossed address from the congregation in St. John,

with letters from two old friends, assuring him that the people there were of one spirit and one mind in expressions of esteem and continued affection. What clearer proof is needed of a strong hold on the hearts of the little flock he had shepherded so long and faithfully?

The disastrous fire of June 20, 1877, which swept away in one night about two-thirds of the city, including their fine church edifice and the home of the pastor, was a severe blow to the congregation. But though minished and brought low, they rallied and erected a new brick building, which, before the pastor left, was dedicated to the service of God.

Mr. Stavely is still hale and hearty and interested in every good work at the advanced age of fourscore and three. Mrs. Stavely, formerly Miss Margaret Cameron, the bride of April 21, 1852, is the loyal companion of his old age, and their home has to-day, as in the days of long ago, a welcome for every one who fears the Lord.

LIFE OF HASSAN SULEIMAN MAH- LOOF.

Hassan is better known by the name Daoud, which he took at his baptism.

Thinking a sketch of Daoud's life, the trials and persecutions which he endured even from childhood would be interesting as well as profitable, and the means of drawing the attention of the Church to the poor, ignorant and downtrodden race from which he came, I lay before the Church this history of "Our Soldier Daoud," gathered mostly from the notes of the Rev. Samuel Lyde, missionary letters and a "personal reminiscence" prepared for me at my request.

But that my readers may understand more perfectly the circumstances connected with the birth and life of my subject, I will open this paper with a brief description of the Nusairiyeh sect to which he belonged.

The Nusairiyeh is a semi-heathen sect living originally in what is known as the Nusairiyeh Mountains. These mountains begin opposite Tartoos, and extend north, ending in Mt. Cassius on the sea and inland at Antioch. The north end of the range is partly occupied by the Turcoman and Armenian sects.

We find the Nusairiyeh, also, on the plains of the Orontes at Suadia, and in the city of Antioch; and, passing over to Asia Minor, we find them in large numbers in the cities of Tarsus and Adana and in the villages of the surrounding country. There are, also, a few villages on the southeast slope of Mt. Hermon, near the headwaters of the River Jordan. They number in all about 200,000 souls. They take their name from Nusair, their founder.

The following description of their origin and religion is taken from their secret books, many of which have been seen, and translated. From these books we learn that they claim to have existed ages before this world was created, as stars or spirits of light, and that because of their sins, of pride and rebellion, God banished them from their place in the starry heavens, and created this world for them to dwell in, and covered them with a covering of flesh; also, that their god promised to appear among them in a covering like unto their own, and all who would recognize and obey him, and know his "Name" and his "Door," would be restored to their spiritual and happy estate, but that all the others would be compelled to do their probation over again, either in human form or in the form of some of the lower animals. In order to torment and try them, he also created from their sins of pride and rebellion an adversary and demons, and from the sins of the demons he created woman. We also learn that their god has, according to his promise, appeared, since the creation of this world, in seven different ages, and