

# THE CHRISTIAN SUN.

IN ESSENTIALS, UNITY;

IN NON-ESSENTIALS, LIBERTY;

IN ALL THINGS, CHARITY.

Volume XXXI.

SUFFOLK, VA., FRIDAY NOVEMBER 29, 1878.

Number 47.

Original.

## INTRODUCTORY SERMON.

DELIVERED AT THE OPENING OF THE FIFTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL SESSION OF THE EASTERN VIRGINIA CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE.

BY REV. J. T. KITCHEN.

TEXT:—Where hast thou gleaned to-day?—Ruth 2: 9.

The weakest and most humble servant of Jesus is expected to do something for his Master. He may not be able to do much, but God knows the number of talents he has given him to improve, and has commanded him to use them. There is work to be done everywhere, and it therefore naturally becomes the duty of every one to do what his hands find to do. To accomplish anything in the material world around us, we must exercise thought and energy. Without these we cannot expect to succeed. Hence we notice the agriculturist busily employed in cultivating his farm, using all the improved implements within his reach, so as to facilitate his work, and make it more effective. Then we see him bringing together the products of his farm, where he stores them away for his own use, or prepares them for market. The botanist goes over field and woods collecting together different plants; then he classifies them, and gives to each class its appropriate name. What a beautiful and variegated pile of leaves and flowers he has before him! It took time, it took thought, it took work, for this study of nature. But the grand idea of learning more about God, and of opening the way for others to learn, richly paid for all the time and means given to the undertaking. The mineralogist digs from the rich mines many useful and valuable metals. These are utilized for man's good. The work may be hard, the progress slow, but it will eventually give the diligent hand the result of its labor. Much earth may have to be rolled away, many rocks may have to be split, before the precious ore is reached, yet the thought of finding the things which God has placed here for man's good, say nothing of the temporal advantage, compensates for all. And the astronomer standing on this planet, looking out into the unbounded space beholds much to admire and love. He brings to his aid the searching eye of the telescope, and by this means is enabled to glean a more extended knowledge of the Author's unlimited work. Thus we notice that many learned men have been industriously engaged in exploring, and gleaning from the fertile field of science which lay so invitingly before them. Nor is their work yet completed, for the deeper they descend and the higher they ascend, there is much to engage their admiring attention.

My brethren of the Eastern Virginia Christian Conference, we are gleaners in the beautiful gospel field. We are laborers together with God. Let me ask then with the appropriate words of the text, Where hast thou gleaned to-day?

I feel that here are many who have obeyed the command, "go work to-day in my vineyard," and that they are waiting with reports from different parts of the field of Christian labor to give an answer to this question. Soon we expect to hear where you have gleaned and what you have gleaned for the Master. To feel, however, that another year is past, and that we have one less in which to work, should not so much awaken sad emotions as active ones. The thought often presents itself to my mind that when our work is done, if we have any regret at all, it will be that we did so little in gleaning sheaves from the field of Christian labor when there was ample opportunity given us to do more.

We well remember the Bible says, the night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Our probationary state, our working time may very truly be called night, for we have to labor through many dark and gloomy hours. But this night, this working time is far spent. The time given us to glean will soon end. The day is at hand—it will soon, yes, very soon, dawn upon us. The faint, gray streaks of day can almost be seen, when we hope to exult in these words of Dr. Young: "Then farewell night of darkness now no more, joy breaks, shines, triumphs, 'tis eternal day." I allude to the day when we shall be required to give an account of our work

when we shall be judged according to the work we have done. Shall our work meet the approval of the Master or not? Oh, that every one of us could say, and feel honest and earnest about it when we say it, "I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day—the night cometh when no man can work."

It is my purpose in this annual address to see first where we have gleaned, and in the second place to inquire what we have gleaned.

We very naturally suppose that something has been gleaned from the General Convention of the Christian Church, and that the plans there originated will be brought down to the annual Conferences for consideration. This, then, was an important part of the field to glean from, because the work done there affects materially that which is to follow.

The Sunday School Convention was another important place to glean. Some who are here had the privilege of attending, and those who did not, to some extent shared in its benefits.

Next in order, we may mention the District Meetings which have been held to aid in more effectively accomplishing the work of the church.

The Missionary Society organized in nearly every church, is another essential part of the field in which to labor. There has long been much precious grain scattered over this portion of the field, which ought to have been gathered up, and placed where it was so much needed.

Pastoral visiting gave another opportunity for doing good service. Going in and out among the flocks, noticing their condition, was quite essential. Talking with and praying for the sick was another privilege the pastor had of doing much good.

The pulpit was another place to work. A blessed opportunity was given the preacher to do good to all who waited upon his ministry. Paul in writing to Timothy says, Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. The Christian teacher should not only study the Bible, but he should study human nature very closely also, so as to understand as far as possible the people to whom he preaches. Many a wrong impression has been made, simply because preacher and people did not thoroughly understand each other.

He should certainly study the spiritual needs of those to whom he ministers God's word as far as he is able. He should enter into the treasury of the Lord with the key of faith, and bring therefrom rich blessings of salvation for hungering, thirsting souls. There are two books to which he can have daily access. One is the book of Revelation, the other is the book of Nature. Science and the Bible studied together are most powerful instruments for the man of God to use. The book of Nature is beautifully illustrated with living pictures, and the thoughtful preacher who loves to behold nature may draw largely from the volume which is always open to his admiring gaze. What a great variety of objects he has to glean illustrations from! The woods with their pleasing aspect present trees of every variety and size. There are the leaves from the tender buds of Spring unfolding themselves into a thousand forms, moved by every passing wind, until they are changed into those rich, golden-tinted colors to beautify and adorn the departing year. Then there is the landscape invitingly spread out, reaching out to the valleys and mountains which are scattered here and there, in which and over which hundreds of objects call out the inquiring attention. Springs, rivers, lakes, oceans, all are useful objects to draw illustrations from. And he who studies the poetry of such scenes can more forcibly impress the teachings of God's word. The clouds too, that float through the air are well worth our study. The poet Cowper brings out this idea with striking imagery when he says,

"God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform: He plants his footsteps in the sea, And rides upon the storm."

The Bible student with the book of nature still open looks out upon the broad expanse of the heavens, and there gathers knowledge which can be used to good advantage in illustrating the Bible. David felt this when he sang: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge." Thus we have had a good opportunity to search the Scriptures that we might bring from their profound depths

"things new and old." The question now naturally arises, Have we been diligently engaged in gleaning from this part of the field of Christian thought and work?

The members of the church have had many privileges afforded them for gleaning instruction from the pulpit. They have, in some cases at least, had the benefit of receiving well balanced thought. But how they have appreciated the instruction, and how much progress they have made in their spiritual life, we cannot say—God only knows. I fear that on the part of many, there has not been a disposition to make the best of surrounding circumstances, but a willingness rather to find fault and condemn.

Perhaps the preacher sometimes did not do to suit them; and it may be they were right hard to please anyway.

The church to a very considerable extent, has the power, if it will, to build up its pastor, by speaking kindly of him and to him. It can hold him up or let him fall. Hold up his good qualities and then help him, for his own good, and for the good of the cause of Christ, to correct his faults. If he has a fault, and many have, tell him of it and not them. And it seems to me if the church is what it ought to be, it will seek to do this way, instead of always looking eagerly for something to happen, so as to make a great ado about it, and then have it to say, Our preacher don't suit us, we must call another. A church that is constantly desiring a new pastor is not a very desirable church for a pastor to seek, because it might want to change him after the first year, if not sooner than that time. I do not wish to be understood as being opposed to a change when necessary, but simply call attention to the fact that some people are carried away, so to speak, with something new—a new, fresh man. They let go one friend to catch another, and thus they go on and on through their whole life. Then there are some that have not got the moral courage to stand firm by a friend when others oppose him. This is the most shameful of all. I don't like to see people too friendly to-day and then so distant to-morrow. It is a bad sign.

My brethren of the laity, your brethren in the ministry need your help, your sympathy, your co-operation; without which they can never be very successful. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." Learn each other's dispositions as well as you can, and then you will be prepared to judge more correctly, and to give honor when it is due. If such a course was pursued, preacher and people would do a much greater and nobler work for God.

We have let little, trifling things prevent us from sowing the gospel seed, and from gleaning the precious harvest of souls into God's spiritual kingdom on earth. In some instances we have yielded to opposition and discouragement, at the same time failing to take that Scripture for our comfort, which says, "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Bearing the precious seed of the gospel is a delightful work. And though he who engages in this work is often cast down, and is made to grieve in his very soul, on account of many varied, opposing influences, yet it is the most glorious work that claims the attention of men. At times everything may seem to be against him. The wind of prejudice may blow the seed upon the hard ground of opposition, but if they are sown with an honest hand, in due time the ground will be made soft, the seed spring up, and produce fruit to the glory of God.

Having noticed some of the places where we have gleaned, let us now see what we have gleaned. As gleaners in the gospel field, we must show what we have gathered together for the Lord. May we not commence with the belief that every earnest gleaner has done something worthy to be noticed?

"A kind word spoken thy portion may be, yet that rightly considered is a good thing done." There is a volume of meaning in a word, a tone, a look, and a gesture. And almost every one has it in his power to wield a healthy or an unhealthy influence. Surely nothing can be more comforting than to know that we have made ourselves happy while making others happy. From the lowest rank up to the highest of human beings, all like to have due respect and attention paid them. It is not only right that they should demand this, but it

is highly important for them to have it.

See that man of note passing along, who gives all necessary attention to his inferior brother; he loses none of his honored and manly bearing by adapting himself to the surroundings of him who is not so well situated in life, but on the other hand he raises himself in the estimation of the individual. To raise the fallen, to comfort the feeble minded, to support the weak, to encourage the desponding, to help one another on the journey of life, should demand the prayerful attention of every reasoning mind. "To do good, and to communicate, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost.

To have friends among the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned, the old and the young, is a great privilege for any one to enjoy. But if we expect to have friends, we must show ourselves friendly. We must speak kindly of and to each other if we expect to have lasting friendship. We need to entertain kinder feelings to wards each other. We need more words of encouragement and more acts of kindness. We need to honor each other more, and to appreciate one another's work more. And until we learn to do this, we will not be doing our duty to each other as laborers together in the vineyard of the Lord. My brethren, there is an untold power in kind words, and I feel that all of us like to have them. Seeing then that we like to receive them, let us be willing to give them.

When Boaz saw Ruth in his field, he enquired who she was, and after learning the facts connected with her case, he showed her many favors, and spoke kindly to her. How pleasant it must have been to this woman, working for her support among strangers, to receive kind attention at the hands of Boaz and his servants. Kindness and politeness will not fail to reward those who are exercised thereby.

Now let me ask how many enemies have we restored to our friendship? There is scarcely an individual who tries to do good but that will have enemies. Even the Saviour himself had them. Paul had them, and other Bible men were also surrounded with them. But, admitting this to be true, still it is unpleasant to know we have enemies, because there are enough things to impede our progress, and to mar our happiness without them. Have we, my brethren, tried to live so as to heal the wounds and bruises of discord by pouring the oil of peace upon them? If we have done this, it may be said of us, they have not gleaned in vain.

How much means have we accumulated to place into the treasury of the Lord? Have we been as anxious about advancing the work of the Lord in our midst as we have been in gratifying our own temporal desires? The rich temporal blessings of God have been abundantly bestowed upon many, for which they ought to be profoundly thankful. And we sincerely hope that those very persons will give a good portion of it back again, that God's name may be honored and glorified among men.

We suppose that the Christian laborer has gleaned among the poor, the neglected, the fallen, and the outcast of society. Sorry am I to say it, but it is the truth, that we as servants of God have shamefully neglected this important Christian duty in our past experience. Christ went about doing good. To whom? To the poor, maimed, halt, and blind. His mercy reaches the wretched outcast, and stoops to the lowest degraded soul. Peter says in the Acts of the Apostles, "I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

To glean among the educated, to work among the affluent, to associate with the refined, is doubtless a valuable privilege to enjoy, but it is equally important to work among the subordinate in society. Your presence in the humble tenements of the neglected might dispel much gloom that surrounds them. Your conversation might shed light into some soul which had long been in darkness. From this time let us do more good in this important part of our work.

Coming along down through days, weeks and months of the Conference year just ended, I see those here assembled who are ready to say, we have gleaned close by the reapers, and have gathered precious immortal souls for the Master. The central idea of all our work is to save sinners, and the work of missions, education and publications is the means being used to open the way by which they can come to Jesus.

Oh, that the Saviour of men would hasten the time when these means shall more fully accomplish his blessed work in the earth!

The promises to all engaged in the mission of saving souls are most encouraging. One of them is this, "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever." My brother, my sister, my friend, "Where hast thou gleaned to-day?" Around what sick bed have we gently spoken these lines of the Apostle, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?" Beside what lonely, discouraged traveller have we uttered the words, "Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the world?" Into what troubled soul have we whispered, "Let not your heart be troubled!" To what timid, fearful follower of Jesus have we said, "Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid?" To what stranger have we spoken the words, "There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother?" What dying pilgrim have we consoled by using the precious words, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me?"

Weary gleaner, toil on a little longer, until life's work is done; then you shall come home, bringing your sheaves with you, to rest in the "sweet by and by."

## MINUTES OF THE FIFTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL SESSION OF THE NORTH CAROLINA AND VIRGINIA CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE.

DAMASCUS, ORANGE CO., N. C., Friday, November 15, 1878.

The North Carolina and Virginia Christian Conference met in its fifty-eighth annual session at this place to-day.

Conference was called to order at 11 o'clock A. M., by Rev. W. S. Long, President of the last session. Religious exercises were conducted by Rev. A. G. Anderson.

The following Elders answered to their names:

A. G. Anderson, J. W. Wellons, W. S. Long, W. G. Clements, J. W. Hatch, R. G. Tinnin, M. L. Hurley, J. W. Holt, J. W. Pinnix, D. F. Jones, S. Apple, Peter T. Klapp, C. A. Boon, W. W. Staley. Licentiate.—A. F. Iseley.

The list of churches was called, and found to be represented by lay delegates as follows: O'Kelly's Chapel—J. F. O'Kelly. New Elam—Sion Mitchell, Puffin Holt. Hines' Chapel—Samuel Apple. Mt. Bethel—W. C. Pruitt, Thos. R. Strader. Liberty Hill—L. G. Ayscue. Pleasant Hill (Chat.)—S. Edwards, W. G. Murchison. Pleasant Grove (Va.)—John H. Chappell. Concord—G. W. Pinnix. Christian Chapel—M. S. Stevens, N. G. Woodell. Shallow Well—W. A. J. Thomas, Isaac Hunt. Shallow Ford—Peter Michael. Mt. Pisgah—J. C. Fire-sheets. Pleasant Union—No delegate. Moore Union—S. M. Burns. New Providence—Jos. A. Long, Joseph McCadams, Dr. B. A. Sellers. Cat-tawba Springs—J. A. Sorrell. Mt. Auburn—No delegate. Union (Va.)—E. A. Tuck, P. W. S. Tuck, W. H. Buntin. Antioch—Lawrence Dowdy. Hanks' Chapel—Thomas J. Griffin, W. S. Petty. Pleasant Hill (J'n)—J. W. Dixon. Morrisville—Charles Pennington, J. H. Moring. Oak Level—James Pearce, Wm. T. Young. Hayes' Chapel—J. T. Ball. W. P. Collins. Mt. Zion—No delegate. Damascus—Manly Stroud, M. J. W. McCandley. Lebanon—No delegate. Apple's Chapel—S. C. W. Apple. Good Hope—J. F. Davis. Pope's Chapel—No delegate. Bethlehem—P. J. Kernode. Salem Chapel—H. Marshall, R. J. Massey. Martha's Chapel—J. J. Jenkins, S. A. Morgan. Union (N. C.)—G. R. Maynard. Wake Chapel—D. B. Jones, G. B. Adams. Bethel—No delegate. Reece's Chapel—No delegate. Pleasant Grove (N. C.)—No delegate. Liberty School House—No delegate. Zion—G. W. Ellington, W. H. Wickler. Mt. Hermon—Festus Stevens, Z. R. Kelley.

Conference then proceeded to elect a President for the present session. The vote resulted in the election of Rev. J. W. Wellons.

On motion, Bro. Peter J. Kernode was elected Assistant Secretary. A letter from a new church called Mt. Hermon, situated in Wake county, N. C., petitioning for admission into the body, was read by the Secretary, and on motion, the petition was granted and the delegates were introduced to the Conference and enrolled as members.

It was moved and seconded that the church letters be handled in. Carried.

On motion, Conference decided to meet each day at 9 o'clock A. M., spend 20 minutes in prayer-meeting, adjourn at 12 M., for preaching; meet at 2 o'clock P. M., and adjourn at will.

Rev. A. Apple, appointed at last session to preach the Annual Sermon, being absent on account of sickness, no sermon was preached.

On motion, the Rules of Order were suspended until 1 o'clock P. M.

On motion, Rev. W. S. Long and the delegates from Damascus were appointed a committee on Religious Exercises.

A letter from Rev. B. Craven, Secretary of the North Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, declaring Rev. W. H. Moore, Rev. T. J. Gattis, and Hon. W. F. Stroud, fraternal messengers to this body, was read by the Secretary, and on motion 1½ o'clock Monday was set apart for their formal reception.

Several delegates arrived and were enrolled as members of Conference. On motion, the recommendation requiring the Standing Committees to report at stated times as adopted at last session, was adopted by this session of Conference.

Conference adjourned.

## AFTERNOON SESSION.

Conference was called to order by the President.

Several delegates came forward and were enrolled as members of Conference.

The Committee on Sabbath Schools submitted their report, which was discussed by Rev. Bros. D. F. Jones, A. F. Iseley, A. G. Anderson and others, after which it was amended and referred back to the committee.

On motion, the church letters were taken up and read.

On motion, Conference adjourned. Religious exercises by Rev. W. G. Clements.

## SECOND DAY.

Saturday, Nov. 16th, 1878.

Conference convened, the President in the chair.

Religious services by the President.

The proceedings of yesterday were read and approved.

The Committee on Religious Exercises reported Rev. S. Apple to preach to-day at 12 o'clock M.

On motion, Conference proceeded to elect a minister to deliver the Annual Sermon before the next session of this body. Rev. J. W. Holt was elected, and Rev. M. L. Hurley was chosen alternate.

Rev. W. S. Long then introduced Rev. Dr. Thomas Holmes, of the Michigan State Christian Conference, to the President of Conference, and the President introduced him to the body. Dr. Holmes made some very feeling remarks in Christian greeting, in reference to the relations existing between the Northern Christians and the Christians South. He expressed sentiments soliciting more intimate relations of fraternal intercourse. The President responded in some words of welcome and fraternal feeling.

On motion, Rev. Bros. J. T. Whitley and E. W. Beale, and Bro. D. B. Dunbar, fraternal messengers from the Eastern Virginia Conference, were invited to seats in Conference as deliberative members. These brethren responded in some appropriate remarks upon taking their seats.

The Committee on Religious Literature submitted their report.

On motion, the report was made the special order for 2 o'clock P. M.

On motion, Conference proceeded to select a place for holding its next annual session. Christian Chapel, Chatham county, N. C., was selected. A motion to change the time of the annual sessions was indefinitely postponed.

On motion, Conference proceeded to elect fraternal messengers to sister Conferences, as follows: To the Virginia Valley Conference: Revs. J. W. Wellons, J. W. Pinnix, and W. S. Long.

To the Deep River Conference: Revs. W. W. Staley, W. G. Clements, W. S. Long, J. W. Hatch and J. W. Wellons.

To the Eastern Virginia Conference: Revs. J. W. Pinnix, J. W. Holt, P. T. Klapp, D. A. Long, J. W. Wellons and Bro. J. T. Ball.

To the Georgia and Alabama Conference: Rev. J. W. Wellons.

Rev. W. S. Long offered the following resolution which was unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That any member of this Conference who may, in the

providence of God, be present at the session of any Christian Conference in the Northern States, be hereby authorized to bear to our Northern brethren our Christian greetings.

On motion, Rev. W. T. Walker, fraternal messenger from the Virginia Valley Conference, was invited to a seat in the body.

Conference adjourned for dinner. During the intermission a sermon was preached by Rev. S. Apple from Matt. 19: 27.

## AFTERNOON SESSION.

The report on Religious Literature was taken up and discussed by Bro. J. T. Ball, Revs. Thomas Holmes, D. D., and J. T. Whitley, after which the report was adopted as follows:

## REPORT.

The Committee on Religious Literature beg leave to submit their report:

We feel satisfied that without the aid of the Press we cannot succeed in carrying forward the various enterprises of our Conference. Without an exponent of our principles, and a medium of communication we cannot hope to see our entire strength utilized, or our cause prosper. We can neither keep our own people alive, nor reach the minds of strangers, in reference to the great work we are endeavoring to accomplish.

We have no paper published in the interest of our cause within the bounds of this Conference, but the CHRISTIAN SUN, published at Suffolk, Va., very well meets our wants for the present, and we recommend it as worthy of a hearty support from the members of this Conference. Soon after last Conference we appointed a local agent in each church to act in behalf of the SUN, but a number of those appointed did but little or nothing for the paper.

Respectfully submitted, J. W. HOLT, M. L. HURLEY, J. W. HATCH, Committee.

The Committee on Religious Exercises reported the following appointments for preaching: Sunday morning at 11 o'clock in the house, Rev. Thos. Holmes, D. D.; at the stand at same hour Rev. W. T. Walker; 2 o'clock P. M., in the house Rev. J. T. Whitley; at the stand at the same hour Rev. E. W. Beale. Conference adjourned. Religious exercises by Rev. A. F. Iseley.

## THIRD DAY.

Monday, Nov. 18th, 1878.

Conference convened, the President in the chair. Religious services by the President.

The proceedings of Saturday were read and approved.

On motion, Hon. Jno. M. Moring was invited to a seat in Conference as a deliberative member.

The Committee on Home Missions submitted their report which was discussed by Hon. J. M. Moring, Revs. J. W. Wellons, J. T. Whitley and P. T. Klapp.

The time for the special order having arrived, the report was made a special order for 2 o'clock P. M.

Rev. W. H. Moore and Hon. W. F. Stroud, fraternal messengers from the North Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, were then introduced to the President and the Conference. These brethren made some appropriate remarks of fraternal greeting in accepting their seats among us.

A letter from Rev. T. J. Gattis, an absent member of the same delegation, was also read by the Secretary. Bro. Gattis expressed feelings of regret at not being able to attend in person.

The President responded in some words of welcome and fraternal love. Rev. W. S. Long offered the following, which was unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That in order to convey to that body proper expressions of our Christian love, we will appoint two of our number as fraternal messengers to the North Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

Rev. W. S. Long and Hon. J. M. Moring were appointed. Rev. Peter T. Klapp was appointed alternate.

Conference adjourned.

## AFTERNOON SESSION.

Conference convened, the President in the chair.

The report of the Committee on Home Missions was taken up and discussed by Revs. A. G. Anderson, W. G. Clements and W. S. Long, after which the report was referred back to the Committee, with instruction to recommend some plan for future operations.

Rev. D. F. Jones moved that the recommendation of the General Convention in reference to districting the churches of the several Conferences be adopted by this Conference.

[Continued on second page.]