

REPORT OF A SPEECH,
DELIVERED BY
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THE
INDIAN CHIEF,
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STOCKTON:
JOHN BEACH, HIGH-STREET.
MDCCCXXXI.

SPEECH, &c.

My Christian Brothers and Sisters, I feel glad in my heart this day to meet with you, and to speak unto you on this occasion. And I take the liberty to say, that in my country, when we are assembled in council in the woods on important occasions, it is the custom to shake hands all round, as a sign of union and love; but as there are so many,—such a great multitude, assembled here this day, as there are so many I cannot go round and shake hands with you all, and so I shall take the liberty to shake hands with the head Chief of our council instead, and in doing this, I shake hands with you all in my heart.*

*The Speaker then turned to the Chairman, (R. Middleton, Esqr., of Cheltenham,) and in a most impressive manner, shook him cordially by the hand.

My Christian Brothers and Sisters, I am called upon to move a resolution, and as I am not accustomed to this way of proceeding, I will read it unto you, and then give you some account of us poor Indians in Upper Canada.

“That this Meeting remembering that whatever good is done upon the earth, it is the Lord that doeth it, engage to be earnest in prayer to Almighty God for a more abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Missionaries themselves, and the People amongst whom they labour.”

I feel glad of the presence of you all, and to read these good words unto you, and to believe in my heart, that you wish to send the Missionary to the poor Indian. Nothing comforts my heart so much, as to see White Friends assembled for the purpose of sending the gospel all over the world. Those nations that are now dark and perishing, will hear the sound of the Saviour, they will know God, and they will feel religion, and they will be prepared to leave this world, and to go up where the Great Spirit lives. I will tell you of the situation of my countrymen in the woods of Upper Canada. I

will give you a short account of my countrymen before the Gospel came to them, and this is still the state of many of my countrymen.

The Indian is poor, and in a wretched and miserable state; he is destitute of many blessed privileges, he knows not God, and has not the comforts of this life. We poor Indians acknowledge that the Great Spirit made all things, the sky, and the world; but how to worship him we knew not. We had not the Bible, and the Missionary to point us the good way that leads to heaven. And while we were thus ignorant of the nature and character of the Great Spirit, we worshipped other gods that were no gods at all. We worshipped the Sun, and the Moon, and the Stars; and we worshipped the god of the deer, and the god of the waters, and the god of the thunder, and we neglected to pray to God, the Great Spirit. We thought there were many gods; gods of the elements, and of many things; and we thought they had charge of the deer, and of the water, and of the fish; and we prayed

to them, and made sacrifices to them. And when we wanted deer, we prayed to the god of the deer, and we made sacrifice by burning meat into the fire, on account of wanting a good hunting or a good fishing; and when we wanted fish or a good voyage, we prayed to the god of the waters; and when it thundered, and we were afraid the thunder would hurt us, we burned tobacco to the god of the thunder. And we were in a dark and miserable state, and we were perishing and dying off, age after age.

My Christian friends, we had no right idea of a future state; we knew the Indian had a soul, but we never dreamt of heaven, nor of the lake of fire. We thought there was a place some way to the West, where the sun goes down, and the souls go to it when they leave the body in this world. The old Indians said there was plenty of game, and deer, and fish; and the souls of Indians hunted and fished, and they had fine feasting, and all things pleasant to comfort their hearts. Some said that between this world and

the world of souls, there was a great river, which the souls had to cross; and that the river was deep, and very swift, and there was only one place to go across, and that was a pole very round and smooth. And the Indian that had good faith, and had been hospitable,—had made good feasts, and had hunted well, and had been a good warrior, and had fed the hungry, and had never told lies, he would go over quite easy; but the lazy Indian, and the lying Indian, and the stealing Indian, and the murdering Indian, he would fall off, and he would be swept away down the river into the great ocean. We did not know better, we were blind and ignorant of the Gospel.

We had a foolish idea of thunder in the woods; the Indians consider thunder to be a god; my countrymen think it to be a great animal,—a great eagle, and that it has great power, and that it lives in the clouds, and that it has enmity against the great serpents, and shoots them with arrows, and the lightnings are

its arrows. The old Indians tell that once an Indian saw the thunder-eagle and the great serpent. The Indians at the River Credit were anxious to know about the thunder, and came and asked the Missionary, and he told them it was caused by heat collected in the clouds, and that it went off and made a noise and a light, the same as powder,—but they could hardly see into this. The old Indians related that an Indian was a great while ago, away on Lake Huron; and he ascended a high hill, and its top was amongst the clouds. And when the Indian got to the top, he saw the place where the thunders lived, the thunders' nest, and there were little ones, young thunders, trying their skills upon the young cedars which grew upon the side of the high hill; and they shot the bark off them, and they were shooting at the young serpents.

They are in great darkness, destitute of knowledge; not only ignorant of our way of worship, but their temporal state is poor. I came to this country, and its islands are full of

houses, and churches, and fields ; and the people hear the ministers declare the word of the Great Spirit : but it is not so in my country.—We have no fine houses, but only bark, smoky wigwams : we have no fields to grow corn and potatoes, but we have to depend on what we get by hunting in the woods, or the fish we catch in the rivers. And as we have no fields, we are sometimes very hungry when we can get no game, and our children cry after us, and we have nothing to give them to eat. We have no church in the woods, no chapels, no ministers to declare unto us words of peace ; we are destitute of good and happy religion. You are exalted to heaven above in privileges, but we are destitute of all these things ;—I mean spiritual things. I am now speaking of my heathen brethren.

This was the exact state of my countrymen and brethren, before the Great Spirit sent them religion ; but we are now good and happy, it has done our hearts good ; before this we did not pray, but we were great drunkards ;—the fire-

waters had got among us, the whiskey had destroyed the children of our tribe.—It had destroyed us, and wasted us away like snow melts in the warm sun. Once we were numerous on the shores, and in the woods, and by the lakes; and we are now only a handful,—and we weep over the graves and bones of our fathers.—When I think of this, and look on their graves, and think that they died without the name of Christ, my heart feels to mourn, and I am humbled in the dust; for they are gone to an unknown world, and I know not whither they are gone.

My Christian friends we were in this state, ignorant of God, ignorant of religion, and we were but a remnant. Eight years ago, we were sitting in darkness in our wigwams; we were blind, we did not feel to love God in our hearts. Then the Missionaries looked on us, and had pity on us, and the Great Spirit spoke to them to come to us, and to preach the Gospel unto us. In obedience to the Great Spirit, they came among poor Indians;—they came across the

great waters, and they landed among us, and proclaimed the glad tidings of the Gospel. They came with love in their hearts,—with the Holy Spirit in their souls,—and they took us by the hand and called us Brothers and Sisters. They told us of the Lamb of God, they taught us to call upon him, and to forsake our crooked path. We did so;—and our heart was soon affected with the great word, and we believed in the name of the Great Spirit. He hears the cry of the poor Indian, as well as of the white people, and condescends to take away our sins.—We felt sorry in our hearts, we fell on our knees and said, “O Great and Good Spirit! have mercy upon me, a poor Indian; I trust in thy name, O take away my sins!” And the Great Spirit understood our prayers, and we found the Saviour precious to our hearts.

This was eight years ago, and now there are twelve hundred converted, and every day they are rejoicing in the love of God; the wigwam is filled with the song of praise through the woods,

and the converted Indian can be seen and heard praising the Great Spirit. And thus one part of prophecy is fulfilled, which says, "The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." As soon as we found the Great Spirit to be good unto us,—that he was no respecter of persons,—when our souls were converted, that moment we felt it in our hearts to be farmers, and to have schools, and schoolmasters, and to build chapels, and we sent out a cry to come over to us,—to great England to help us and take us by the hand. When religion comes, every thing else comes. When Jesus gets into the woods, he brings all good things with him. Missionaries go in the name of Jesus Christ and preach like the Apostles, and then our hearts are softened by the words of the good Saviour, and we wish to be farmers, and to be civilized, and so on.

It is hard work to make Indians into farmers.—The good Governor, the letter of whom

has been read to you this day, sent an Indian agent to the Sachem Indians, who spoke unto them, and told them that if they would settle, he would give them oxen, and horses, and sheep, and ploughs, and they should have a school, and a schoolmaster; and the council of the Indians heard the words of the agent. If any one can do any thing with the Indians, it is the Governor, for they call him their Father, and the King of England their Great Father; and the Indians met, and heard the words of the agent. And he informed them, and said what the Governor had told him. And one Chief said, "We have listened to the words of our Father, but we cannot do as you wish. We thank our Father the Governor, but we remember that the Great Spirit placed us in this way, and he did not give us houses, nor the book, nor Missionaries,—the black coats; this is not our way:—our way is to live in wigwams, to have deer out of the woods, and to live by hunting and fishing. We prefer remaining as we are, for we do not want houses, and schools, and ministers." You see

what hard work it is to change Indians, when you begin at the wrong end. Missionaries, you see, are useful all over the world, for no sooner are men Christians, than they wish to be civilized and to live in houses.

I am now happy to say that we have established among the Chippeways, sixteen schools with four hundred children, and they are learning the English language, and the Indian boys and girls read and understand. And in the schools, especially the sabbath schools, they sit down, and read the words of our Saviour Jesus Christ. And tears of joy run down the tawny face of the fathers, when the boys and girls, like little Missionaries to their fathers and mothers, explain the words of our Saviour Jesus Christ. A great deal has been done within eight years past, and it is a wonder and surprise to the settlers who saw what was their state before, and what it is now. While many look on this astonishing work, they mourn, and are converted themselves.

Shall I tell you how the Great Spirit made us conquer the fire-waters, that is, the whiskey? He helped us to overcome the great enemy and destroyer, that had killed more than guns, and swords, and cannons. The Great Spirit helps us, or we could not do it. I will tell you one anecdote of this. One tribe of Indians that were Pagans, had a Missionary that was sent to them, and he went and preached, and they prayed to the Great Spirit, and they would drink no more. And there was a trader, a bad white man, that went among them for furs and skins, and he gave them fire-waters for the furs; and when the trader saw that they would have no more fire-waters he got angry, and cursed and swore, and said "It is all nonsense; my people"—for he called them his people because he traded with them, and thought he could do what he liked with them by selling fire-waters to them,—“my people will drink as fast as ever when the Missionary goes away,—when he has his back turned, when he has to leave them.” The Missionary left, and as soon as the trader knew it, he got a

cag of whiskey, and put it by an Indian path; that the good Indians might shortly find it. And he put it on the brow of a little hill, and then he hid himself a little ways off; he concealed himself in the bush, to see the Indians drink and get drunk, and then he would have a great story against them. By and by four praying Indians came, who were no doubt praying in their hearts, and they walked one following after another, because the path in the woods is not wide like your fine roads, but only lets one walk at a time; and the first Indian came close up, and stopped, and spoke, and said, "O Brothers! the Devil is here," and he went on; and the second caught the scent, and said, "O yes! of a truth, for me smell him;" and the third takes his foot and shakes the cag, and the whiskey rattled, and he says, "O yes! for me hear him too;" and the fourth takes and kicks the cag, and tumbled it down the hill; so they conquered and overcame the devil in this way, and they went on their way rejoicing. Then the poor man, the trader in the bush, when he thought they had gone out of sight,

came out, and he put the cask on his shoulder, and went off vexed and ashamed, like a dog with his tail hanging down under his legs. So you see the Great Spirit helps us against the fire-waters.

I will tell you another anecdote, and then I will say no more. A Chief from Lake Huron, came to the River Credit to see how we lived; and he attended our meetings, and listened to us, and after a few days he stood up in our assembly, and said, "Brothers and Sisters, I am very glad that I have come to see you in this place, and have heard your words. The Great Spirit loves you, and I see he has done you good,—he has planted a tree among you,—a great, good tree, the tops reach unto the great Spirit, and its roots are deep, and its branches reach a long way, so that men can take hold of them. You have found the good tree, and you are climbing up it. I am yet blind,—I have not yet found it; my heart is very poor, I am in darkness, feeling and groping for the great tree; but I hope that by and by, I

shall come up to it, and climb up it too : and all I have to beg of you is, that you will look down upon me, and call after me by my name,—and reach out your hand to help me, that I fall not ; —that I may get up where the Great Spirit lives.” And the aged Chief found the good tree. It was Jesus he meant by the tree. He is, I trust he is, yet climbing ; all men may climb up for it grows wide ; its branches reach to the ends of the world, so shat all may go up the good tree.

O ! my White Christian friends, no doubt you pity us poor Indians ; I have told you how poor we are, if you pity us send us the Gospel ; we cry, and our words are come to you, O ! send Missionaries all over the world. When you have so much means,—so many good Missionaries, ready to go and preach,—and when you have so much money in your hands,—why should not they go ? Now begin to pray for poor Indians, and untie your purse-strings, and roll out your sovereigns, and your guineas, and shillings, that we poor Indians may get religion, and be happy.

I shake hands with you all in my heart.
This is all I have to say.

FINIS.