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FOR THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN.
"WHAT TIME I AM AFRAID, I WILL TRUST IN THEE."—Psalm lvi: 3.

JANET MAY.
Security and peace came with the morn:
A quietude sleeps in the morning noon:
Not on a handful of storm-cloud
In all the blue is born.—
Yet I know not what ill
Lurks in the shadow of the world,
Or broods above the eastern sea,
Of great hushed waves, foam peared.—
But "what time I am afraid,"
Then, "I will trust in Thee!"
I know no enemy within my bound:
No serpent's trail my garden blooms among.
Many to love me, I—loving back—have found.
Still I know not how near the lion stalks:
What vampire broods its deadly wings—
"Destruction wasteth" and the "pestilence walks"
So near my dearest earthly things—
Yet, what'er the future holds for me,
"What time I am afraid,"
I'll trust in Thee!"

FOR THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN.
REMINISCENCES OF PRESBYTERIAN MINISTERS.

BY AN OCTOGENARIAN.

No. 8.

DR. SPRAGUE.

"Tis my wish in the present number to remember William B. Sprague, one of my fellow students at the Seminary. He joined us in 1816. He was social in his temperament. He called at my room to ask for my autograph. It was given. "Are you going," I said, "to waste your time in collecting autographs, like Dr. H. of Liverpool? How many do you expect to obtain?" "About twenty or twenty-five thousand," he replied. He secured a large number both at home and when abroad; but mine has certainly fallen into the rear of such a Paper Army.

His call was returned, when he remarked, "It is my wish to become well acquainted with you." "Why so?" "Because I taught some time in the Lewis family, near Alexandria. Attended the church of Dr. Muir, and your father used to help the Doctor at his sacraments." "Yes," I replied, "he used to go in a packet called the Two Brothers, but it was lost in a storm, and then the 'Horse Boat' was started." "And how did you like the family in which you were domesticated?" "Prodigiously," he rejoined, "to talk like Dominic Sampson." At that time he was playful and good humored. Somewhat inclined to mimicry; but this quality was no doubt subsequently discarded. We took to each other in that very interview. "Here is a letter," he continued, "just received from Mrs. Lewis, which reflects great credit on her pen." He read to its conclusion.—

"That," I remarked, "is a superb piece of composition. She quotes from Shakespeare." This may be allowable in a private letter; but we fear about 1877 that some of our preachers may thrust him forth in the pulpit. If so they would not find me a second time among their hearers. In performing the solemn offices of our vocation, 'tis very bad taste to quote a man who spent his life in promoting the gaiety of Covent Garden and Drury Lane. Dr. Johnson says that he roused the laughter of nations.

My perplexity here is great. Shall we relate the following incident, or hide it in the cave of Macpelah, or bury it in the tomb of all the Caplets. No; it shall be stated to the honor of an ever present Providence.—Leaving the Seminary before him, he wrote, "The anxious res domi have overwhelmed the student. A few pieces of coin would help me through my course. But they can't be pulled off the trees." My answer: "Silver and gold have I not, but Jehovah jireh." I went to Robert Munroe, an elder of the Georgetown church; enjoined confidence. "There are fifty dollars," he remarked, "in the coffers of our session. He can get them if he please." I met Dr. Muir on a visit to Georgetown. "There are fifty dollars unappropriated in the treasury of the Alexandria session." So we sent him the hundred. He has mentioned this circumstance because it was not my generosity. Had it been it would never have been told. Had he given away in his distress and turned to other pursuits, what a valuable minister should we have lost.

Dr. Sprague settled for a few years in West Springfield, Massachusetts. Muskets and carbines are made at its armory. But he always wore the olive leaf in his hat.—When our Cause was lost, he wrote to my daughter, "You have a letter from General Lee. I want the autograph of the Modern Marlborough." It was sent. He never joined in the atrocious charges against the Southern Church. What; do you cherish malice against the Northern Church? Not a particle; but we hug our self-respect.—From Springfield my friend looked out to preach ordination, installation and dedication sermons, but was called to a pastorate in the Second Church of Albany, into the details of which we cannot enter.

He was a diligent collector of facts, an untiring correspondent, and an observer in foreign travel. He held converse with Wilberforce, called on Hannah More at Barley Wood, saw Mrs. Grant, of Laggan, and talked with the celebrities of Edinburgh, the Scottish Athens. He was anxious to collect the various writings of Robert Hall. He succeeded. An American edition was the result.

Dr. Sprague was a voluminous author.—Not so copious as Baxter. In early life he had embraced the Unitarian heresy. He so defines it in a letter to the writer of this notice. His views might have been changed under the tuition of Dr. Dwight, who was President of Yale. Yale, the founder of that college, was neither a Socinian, Arian or High Arian. Nor yet were its Professors and Presidents. Dr. Sprague's aims in all

his publications were practical. His style perhaps is not sufficiently graphic for our times. He keeps too uniformly on a level, from the want of a vivid imagination; but the great mass of readers prefer that style of literary execution. In this way his usefulness may have been increased.

The reputation of Dr. Sprague will eventually rest on his great work called the "Annals of the American Pulpit," to which were devoted twenty years of his industrious life. His plan was too comprehensive for the labors of a solitary man, whilst discharging the duties of a Bishop over a large congregation. His tools may have impaired his fine constitution. It might have been better if Wesleyan ministers had been eulogized by brethren of their own creed. And so of Immersionists, Congregationalists, and Episcopalianists. But his charity was very extensive. He loved all who called themselves Christians. When engaged on his work we wrote him as follows: "Gibbon, in sight of the Leman Lake, and the home of Beza, completed his History of the Roman Empire.—His researches and talents were lent to the cause of Infidelity. By the light of a full moon, which shone on vineyards and waves, mountains and hills, castles and cottages, he laid aside his pen and felt nothing but a vacuum in his interior nature. May your days be prolonged till yours be finished on the banks of the Hudson. It will redound to the honor of our common Christianity.—Its heralds will pass in a panoramic view before the Church of the living God; and your breast will burn in gratitude to the Giver of all ministerial gifts. May you long abide in the home which your people have provided for you, and may its fires disperse warmth over all its room, until you be summoned to meet the soldiers of the cross, to the remembrance of whom your pen has been so true."

Dr. Sprague died at Flushing, situated at Long Island Bay, to which the elite of New York are accustomed to resort in summer.—He died surrounded by the lights of heaven, glimmering among the shadows of octogenarianism.

FOR THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN.

WAS SOLOMON SAVED?

Some months ago the writer listened to a discourse based on the dying charge delivered by David to his son Solomon. The theme was one admirably chosen as the foundation of an appeal to the young, (of whom there was a large number present), to make the service of God the chief end of life. But to the disappointment of at least one of the hearers, the text and the religious history of Solomon were used merely to point the moral of a warning to those called "scientists" of the day; men who deify mere knowledge, and ignore the Bible and the religion embodied in it. To reach this theme (one not inappropriate surely), the preacher gave an exposition of the passage in Kings, in which God appeared in vision to the young king, and gave him leave to choose what boon he might ask at the hand of God; and the king chose "wisdom." In commenting on this choice, if the writer did not misunderstand the preacher, the sentiment was expressed that the choice of wisdom was not a wise choice. And the painful impression was produced by the whole discourse, that we have no satisfactory evidence that Solomon recovered from his "dark and winding ways," and was finally saved. This is the view, it is admitted, expressed by a celebrated Arminian commentator, who while he expressed grave doubt as to the salvation of Solomon, at the same time has charity enough to express the hope that Absalom, while hanging by his treacherous hair to the limbs of the tree, breathed a prayer in the ear of God that was heard and accepted, ere the dart of fierce Joab sent him to his long account.—But these peculiar views were connected with a theological system with which the preacher above alluded to has no sympathy. Still, unquestionably, the more than grave doubt expressed as to the eternal destiny of Israel's wise king, and one of God's inspired servants, is to say the least, not in accordance with the common belief of the church to which the preacher who delivered the discourse belongs.

God did indeed use Solomon as a beacon light to warn others of the evil consequences of departing even for a time, from the "precepts and ordinances and commandments," given to Israel, and recorded especially in the books of Moses. He had forewarned the Israelites as to the danger of copying the example of the godless nations of Canaan. He knew the proclivity of his people to run after idols, and hence he enjoined on his ancient people to utterly exterminate the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites and the other nations that dwelt in Canaan. He wished every incitement to idolatry removed, so that his people might be free from temptation. The case of Solomon was a fulfillment of the predictions uttered by Moses, as to the sad delinquency of God's people after the death of Moses and Joshua, and Samuel and David. The fearful example of the wisest of men, in yielding to the seductions of wealth and women, is a solemn warning to those that "think they stand," to "take heed lest they fall." It is an admirable theme on which to rest the force of an appeal to God's people, to beware lest "being led away by the word of the wicked they fall from their own steadfastness." But the question recurs again, was the choice of Solomon in choosing "wisdom," so far from unwise, as that it can be legitimately used as even a good motto text, in inveighing against those who make a god of knowledge or science, and render to those the devotion due alone to the Great Jehovah.

And first the choice of wisdom was approved by God. Had it been merely the wisdom of this world to the exclusion of the fear of God, which is "the beginning of wisdom," we would not find the choice of the youthful king of Israel commended. The circumstances of Solomon were very peculiar. He was very young to assume the reins of government over such a great nation as had been consolidated under David. Factions were to be quelled, discordant elements united, disappointed aspirants to the throne had to be restrained, conspiracies repressed, and some of his father's enemies punished, to whom David, in lenity, had given a respite while he lived. Well did Solomon need wisdom in the restricted sense even of worldly discretion. But his choice seems to have included more than a mere discernment of what was fittest to be done in a given case. It surely included this, but it comprehended more.—A careful inspection of the circumstances under which the choice was made, and the language of the choice itself shows that the request did not comprehend merely earthly wisdom. The choice was for wisdom to do what was right, and not simply what was wise. The account in Scripture is, that God appeared in a dream at night, while Solomon was in Gibeon, and God said, "Ask what I shall give thee." And Solomon said, "Thou hast showed unto thy servant David, my father, great mercy according as he walked in truth and uprightness of heart before Thee; and Thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that Thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne as it is this day: And now Oh Lord God, Thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father; and I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which Thou has chosen, a great people that cannot be numbered or counted for multitude. Give therefore Thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad, for who is able to judge this Thy so great people. And the speech pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing."

The request of Solomon evinces humility, self-distrust, and a genuine recognition of the source of all help—the grace of God. These are elements of true piety, and the very fact that God so heartily approved of it, and goes on to grant much for which Solomon did not ask, makes it at least very probable, if not morally certain, that far more than the knowledge which scientists deify, was included in his prayer. It does seem to be just such a prayer, and just such an exalting of divine over human things as Christ enjoined when he said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all things shall be added unto you." He sought to govern the people in the fear of God and in righteousness, and because he sought not riches and honor, God gave him the promise of all these.

But secondly, there is evidence of Solomon's being a true child of God, in the fact that he is a chosen, an honored instrument in the hand of God in the revelation of His will to man. God did not choose to employ men who were not consecrated in heart to Him, as a medium through which to convey to us the revelation recorded in the Bible. The case of Balaam is exceptional and peculiar. God took Balaam's words out of his mouth, and used him as an instrument to pronounce a blessing on Israel, instead of the curse Balak desired to have launched on the head of his chosen people. The same may be said of the prophecy of the High Priest in relation to the death of Christ. In virtue of his priestly character, as the spirit of prophecy was not wholly withdrawn from the Jews, and was found in connection with the High Priest, the prediction was uttered by a bad man, but only in virtue of his official character. The exceptions but confirm the general rule. But in the case of Solomon, we have a large portion of the inspired volume written by him. First, we have the book of Proverbs, not merely embodying worldly maxims, but as rich in sound instruction and practical piety as any portion of the Word of God. Then we have the book of Ecclesiastes, and finally the Song of Solomon a poetical effusion of high merit in which the mutual and reciprocal love of Christ to his Church, and the Church as the bride or spouse of Christ to him, are celebrated. As Dr. Christlieb says, "Although under special circumstances God may allow some sordid person like Balaam to be the medium of revelation, the rule nevertheless holds good, that God adopts as his instruments those who, through their moral and religious character, were peculiarly capable of appreciating divine things, such as Abraham, Moses, David, the prophets, and above all Christ." Not merely as prophets, did holy men speak as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, but also as channels through which other than prophetic truth was conveyed to man.

Solomon wandered far from God, yielded to the seductive influence of the heathenish and idolatrous woman he married, and yet from the record of the book of Ecclesiastes we have every evidence to believe that he bore of grace was in his heart. It was long borne down and choked by riches and worldly honors, by flattery and voluptuous living, but yet we have as the conclusion of all his strivings and dangerous experiments to find out wisdom, this devout and pious utterance embodying his experience.—"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter—Fear God and keep his commandments:—For this is the whole duty of man; For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Surely was he chastened for all his waywardness, and yet this whole book of Ecclesiastes is a record of religious experience, an autobiography, in which he sets down

all his thoughts and records the utter vanity of any and every thing, as a source of true peace and happiness which falls short of the fear of God, which is "the beginning, middle and end of wisdom." D. B. E.

FOR THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN.

THE UNEMPLOYED MINISTRY.

The writer remembers many appeals to the churches, fervently delivered by apostolic men in behalf of an increase of the number of ministers of the Gospel. They left upon his mind an indelible impression, and the solemn words of the Divine Master—"The harvest truly is plenteous but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into his harvest"—still ring in his ears with a deep spiritual power. But he has lived to see a condition of things hard to reconcile with these appeals, and a large number of those, whom the Church has encouraged to come out from the world and devote their lives to the service of Christ, are, at this moment, out of all regular connection with that service, and driven, by an inexorable necessity, to earn their bread in various secular callings.

The mournful fact to which attention is now invited, implies several things by no means creditable to the Christianity of our times. Either these supernumeraries are unfit for this sacred calling, and the Church has committed a great error in investing them with the ministerial character, or the Church has shamefully allowed them, for want of support, to waste their energies in other pursuits. It is doubtless true that some of our unemployed ministers have proved inefficient, and unadapted to the spiritual duties of their vocation. But, making every allowance for such failures, it is hard to believe that any considerable proportion of Presbyterian ministers have proved utterly unworthy of a share in the holy work to which they were consecrated. The number is too great to warrant such a conclusion. We are compelled to adopt the other alternative, to a large extent, and arrive at a conclusion, equally mortifying, that the neglect or indifference of our churches is the main cause of this great want of ministerial labor.

When we speak of the churches, we do not refer exclusively to the lay members. The fault lies somewhere among the people and their spiritual guides—not only with the congregations, but in our Presbyteries and Synods. Something is due, beyond a doubt, to the caprice of our churches in the selection of their pastors. The demand is becoming almost universal, for a new man fresh from the Seminary, and many of our best laborers are starved out, to make way for young men, who are thought capable of doing a maximum of work for the smallest compensation. But another cause appears to us equally operative in preventing our unemployed brethren from securing fields of labor. I refer to the difficulty experienced in discovering the mutual adaptation, requisite to a successful settlement. Minister and churches must know one another, in order to make or receive a call. Our system is practically defective in this point. We need an organization for the purpose of bringing the pastors into correspondence. As far as we have observed, such correspondence is generally left to accident—or rather to the suggestions of interest, or friendship, in behalf of the candidate. Influential friends are the real agents in most cases, since churches cannot generally know many available ministers, unless their names are presented by some individual recommendation. It is obvious that, in such a state of things, many a modest, unobtrusive, humble servant of Jesus Christ, may spend his life in obscurity and want, simply because the churches know nothing about him.

It need not be said that churches episcopally organized, have an advantage over us in this matter of locating ministers. The difficulty is not inherent in our system. It is simply a consequence of neglect. We have not realized, as we should, the importance of furnishing a channel of correspondence between ministers and churches; and the evil has now grown to such enormous proportions, especially in the Northern Presbyterian Church, as to demand immediate attention and remedy.

A committee of Presbytery could discharge this function as well as a diocesan bishop.—It is not appointment that is needed, but mutual acquaintance between ministers and churches. Every Presbytery in our bounds should exercise episcopal supervision to this extent, that its ministers may not be secularized, and its churches be preserved from dying out. Many of them are dying from this very cause, and we often wonder at the apparent indifference of the Presbyteries. This is one of the worst features of independency, and one against which our Form of Government can and should provide. The evil to which we refer is rapidly advancing, and tending more and more, every year, to impair the efficiency of our Church. It cannot cure itself. Water will seek its level, but it must have a channel. It is moreover a physical agent, and may sometimes force its way through obstacles. Modest worth, on the contrary, needs fostering and encouragement, and refuses to force its way into notice, either in Church or State. * * *

GOVERNMENT is a very evil thing in a family: it brings disquiet and uneasiness into it; he that is greedy of gain troubles his own house; and what is worse, it brings the curse of God upon it, and upon all the affairs of it.

TRUE religion is the best support of civil government; it requires submission for the Lord's sake, and for conscience' sake.

FOR THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN.

TRUE GREATNESS.

Most people have false notions as to what greatness is. They associate it with glare and glitter, with popular recognition and popular appearance. The general who has led the armies of his country to magnificent victories, the statesman of broad, philosophic views and far-seeing sagacity, the scientist who has discovered and revealed the secrets of nature, the divine who has published a standard work on theology, the preacher who pleads for Christ with the eloquence of Apollon and the success of Paul,—these are the men who are generally pronounced great. It is not considered that greatness may dwell in cottages as well as in palaces, and be found with the widow who rears her ragged children for Christ, no less than with the man whose fame has been given to the world in deeds of glory. And hence it is, that some are truly great who do not know that they are great, and are deterred from seeking greatness because they believe it unattainable.

But true greatness is not dependent on the adventitious circumstances of one's life. It may, indeed, be connected, as it often is, with an exquisitely constructed intellect, an exalted field of action, and deeds that strike and dazzle, and immortalize; but these are not by any means essential to it. It belongs essentially to character, and consists in the careful and successful training and development of our spiritual nature, with all its multifarious activities. It is not the mere evocation of a Bacon whom Pope pronounces

"The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind," or of a Warren Hastings, whose administration in India may have been brilliant, but was far from being pure; but that substantial work, both of heart and life, which meets with God's approval, and will live when the memory of all things earthly has died away. In a word, it is holiness of character and holiness of effort. Show me a full rounded Christian, ripening in all his graces, and doing his life-work with a heavenly mind and a contented spirit, in the sphere which God has assigned him, and I will point the world to a truly great man, whether he be a Havelock or a Jackson, or only a shepherd feeding his flock upon Salisbury plains.

And in this view of the subject, there is room for the exercise of a truly sanctified ambition on the part of every Christian. We need not to seek glory on broad and blazing fields of action,—we may find it in the narrow limits of self-conquest and progressive assimilation to Christ. We may not climb to high positions either in the Church or the State—God may not have bestowed upon us the gifts and graces which would fit us to occupy the most commanding and responsible places—but we may aspire to greatness of soul, greatness of character, greatness of effort even, when measured not by a fictitious, but a true standard. We may learn by the grace of God to master the evil and cultivate the good, to extirpate the harsh and bitter, and put on the gentle and kind, to round off the angles, and give symmetry to the figure, to lay aside the earthly, and be clothed with the heavenly; and though our actions may fill but a nook in the world's great busy arena,

"We may make our lives sublime." In our families and before our neighbors, by our words and by our deeds, we may achieve a greatness which may be unheralded, indeed, by human praise, but shall live when monumental brass and marble are no more. M.

Will the Pillars Stand?

Some years ago, according to a story often told, an insane man, in one of our New England towns once rose from his seat in the midst of a large assembly, and seizing with a great deal of energy one of the pillars that sustained the gallery of the church, declared aloud that he was going to pull it down. Had another "Samson Agonistes" suddenly appeared, and declared himself just ready to bow between the pillars of another of Dagon's temples, there could hardly have been a greater consternation. If the people had but stopped to consider, their good sense, as well as their confidence in the architect of the edifice, would have assured them of the man's utter impotence to execute his threat. But amid the outcries, and faintings, and general confusion, they yielded to the most foolish fears. Nor did they recover their self-possession, and quietly resume their seats, until another man, significantly pointing to the large and strong pillar which had been threatened, calmly said, "Let him try—let him try."

This proposition restored order and confidence at once; the house did not fall, and the services went on. And so, "to compare great things with small," when men insanely threaten to pull down the pillars that the skill of the Divine Architect has reared and holds up, we are too easily moved with alarm, and too slow to consider the strength of the structure. When God pleases, he can indeed make "the pillars of heaven to tremble, and to be astonished at His reproof." But so long as it is a feeble mortal who undertakes to shake them, our confidence in the Omnipotent Ruler would do well quietly to "let him try." This seems to be the very object of that assurance of God to the trembling inhabitants of the earth in a time of great fear:—"The earth, and all the inhabitants thereof, are dissolved," that is, melted with fear, trembling with dark forebodings; but "I bear up the pillars of it."

THEY who are not saints on earth, will never be saints in heaven.

SIN AND THE SAVIOUR.

It was a significant remark made by Tholuck, the beloved Professor who has just died at Halle, and made at a time which gave it increased significance, that in reviewing the manifold blessings which God had bestowed upon him during a long life, the one thing for which he had most to thank Him was the "conviction of sin." The acknowledgement had unusual emphasis given it by the fact that it was made in the hearing of a great multitude of his students, and of the learned men of Germany, gathered together on the fiftieth anniversary of his career as Professor in the University of Halle. In the presence of that vast assembly he was not ashamed to confess that the personal consciousness of sin, as sin is seen in the illumination thrown upon it by the Holy Ghost, was the chiefest of the blessings which had been vouchsafed to him in the mercy of his Heavenly Father.

Of course, this conviction of sin, for which this devout man was so grateful, was valuable to him, chiefly because of what followed as the fruit of this conviction. It is a sad thing, not a good thing, to be a convicted sinner, if one remains such. It is, then, only the prelude to the despair of Judas, and works only unto death. But sin must be understood before Christ is understood. Its pressure must be felt before we will look for help to the great bearer of our burdens. The consciousness of sin is the awakening of the man to the knowledge of himself, and such an awakening must sooner or later come, and we will never heed the call to a new and nobler life. It does not seem to be a blessing; it comes with keen stings and sharp goadings, and sometimes with terrors which overwhelm us; but these are the accompaniments of a great crisis in life, through which we must pass to enter into life eternal, and the pains and terrors are "blessings" when they make us know that the crisis is upon us, and the day of destiny dawning. When we find our way into the light of God's countenance we will bless Him for the storm and tempest which drove us there.

So we understand the words of Tholuck. And we are justified in this by other words of the same speech, a speech which seems to have been largely an unveiling of his inner life—his Christian experience. "I have but one passion," said he; "it is *He, only He*." He spoke of Christ, and he was acknowledging Him, in an unusually fervent manner, to be the great Saviour of his soul. "Only Christ" became the key-note of his life; the love of Christ the master-passion of his heart. To him, after that crisis in his soul, to live was Christ.

The two confessions of this remarkable speech ought not to be read apart. There is a tie which connects them together, and thus taken together they explain each other. The good man saw that the conviction of sin was a blessing, because that had brought him to the Saviour of sinners. What seemed to be death was the beginning of life. And as his sin grew darker and more burdensome, Christ, the great deliverer, grew more needful and more precious. His love glowed into a flame, as he felt the power of the blood which cleanseth from all sin touching the heart and conscience which sin had stained.

We are disposed to emphasize the words of Tholuck more fully because they seem to us to be most reasonable. It does not belong to our times to make such confessions. Especially does the sense of sin, the pungent and oftentimes intolerable conviction of sin, seem lost in our day in a vague and general sense of need, of a lack of something in us which Christ, in some vague and general way, supplies. We sing in our "gospel songs," of our need of wants of the soul, of vacancies in the heart which the Saviour is to fill. But we find it hard to put in our songs that we are "dead," that we are "lost," that we are "corrupt." We like not the thought of guilt, damning guilt, of a curse which is upon us, and a wrath under which we lie, and so failing to comprehend our sin, we fail to comprehend the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, and fail so far to surrender our hearts to the sweet and moving love of Christ. We do not put down as among our chief blessings "convictions of sin." When we do we will come into a more grateful acknowledgment of the mercy of God in saving us, and of the fullness of grace that there is in Christ Jesus. Presbyterian.

ABRAHAM.

It seems to me that we have presented to us in Genesis (the very first book of the Bible) one of the most profitable characters for us to study that the Old Scriptures contain—Abraham. And there was one peculiarity about him which distinguished him. That was his faith. It won for him the name of "faithful Abraham;" and he was also called the "father of the faithful." And it is further stated of him in the New Testament that his "faith" was accounted unto him for righteousness.

It becomes a matter of great interest to us to know what there was peculiar about Abraham's faith, that it won for him so great distinction in the eyes of God; for surely such a faith as this our souls would long to have. If we ponder carefully the sacred narrative we find out what it was. Abraham's faith was a simple, childlike trust in God.—And, my friends, if we would have our faith accounted unto us for righteousness, it must be like Abraham's faith—a simple, childlike trust in God.

It has been beautifully said: "The Shepherd does not ask of thee Faith in thy faith, but only faith in Him; And this He meant in saying 'Come to me!' In light or darkness seek to do His will; And leave the work of faith to Jesus still."

PROFICIENCY in religion is a good sign of sincerity in it.

CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

From Dr. Field's "Pictures of India," in the New York Evangelist.

What I have seen in Calcutta and elsewhere satisfies me that in all wise plans for the regeneration of India, Christian missions must have a necessary part. One cannot remember but with a feeling of shame, how slow was England to receive missionaries into her Indian Empire. The first attempt of the English Church to send missionaries to India, was met with an outcry of disapprobation. Sydney Smith opened the Government would send the missionaries home. When Carey first landed on these shores, he could not stay in British territory, but had to take refuge at Serampore, a Danish settlement a few miles from Calcutta, where he wrought a work which makes that place of pilgrimage to every Christian traveller in India. We spent a day there, going over the field of his labor. He is dead, but his work survives. There he opened schools and founded a college, the first of its kind in India, and which led the way for the establishment of the magnificent system of National Education, which is now the glory of India. Carey was in his day what Dr. Duff was a generation later, a vigorous advocate of educating the lethargic and torpid mind of India. This is but one of many benefits for which this country is to thank missionaries. And if ever India is to be so renewed as to enter into the family of civilized and Christian nations, it will be largely by their labors. One thing is certain, that mere education will not convert the Hindus. The experiment has been tried and failed. Some other and more powerful means must be taken to quicken the conscience of a nation deadened by ages of false religion—a religion utterly fatal to spiritual life. That such a change may come speedily, is devoutly to be wished. No intelligent traveller can visit India, and spend here two months without feeling the deepest interest in the country and its people. Our interest grew with every week of our stay, and was strongest as we were about to leave.

The last night that we were in Calcutta, it was my privilege to address the students at one of the Scotch colleges. The hall was crowded, and I have seldom, if ever, spoken to a finer body of young men. These young Bengalees had many of them heads of an almost classical beauty; and with their grace of person heightened by their flowing white robes, they presented a beautiful array of young scholars, such as might delight the eyes of any instructor who should have to teach them "Divine philosophy." My heart "went out" to them very warmly, and as that was my last impression of India, I left it with a very different feeling from that with which I entered it—with a degree of respect for its people, and of interest in them, which I humbly conceive is the very first condition of doing them any good.

Children's Service in Free St. Guthberts.

During the Council in Edinburgh, an interesting service was held in Free St. Guthbert's Church (Rev. Sir H. Wellwood Moncreiff's). It was especially arranged for children, and was conducted by Rev. Dr. James Eells, San Francisco, whose Sunday Schools have been managed with great success.—There was a large attendance of children, and the young folks behaved with great propriety. Dr. Eells, who spoke to the children from the rostrum, interested them from the beginning to the close of his address, and showed how thoroughly he has qualified himself for such meetings. He told them how the Sabbath School children in San Francisco get on, and he illustrated his story by appropriate anecdotes. In connection with his church at San Francisco is a Sabbath School, attended by 500 persons, some young and some old, and the school-room is made as attractive as possible, being the finest part of the church. The school, he mentioned, is held in the morning before the church service, which enables the children to accompany their parents and guardians to their places of worship at the ordinary time. In the afternoon a number of the scholars are entrusted with the work of teaching Chinamen, who being first taught the rudiments are gradually instructed in divine truth, being told about the Saviour, and trained in Bible knowledge. These Chinamen, after receiving elementary training from their youthful teachers, are advanced to higher classes, conducted by gentlemen with very considerable success. Fourteen Chinamen, he added, had become members of his church, and were preparing to be missionaries, with the view of teaching their brethren. The reverend gentleman then offered several excellent advices to his young friends, telling them that in order to do good they must first resolve to be good. They all, moreover, had power to serve the Lord; if they could do nothing else they could pray; and that was a great deal. What they were as boys and girls they would be as men and women, and it was in this respect that the Scotch people had been especially wise in striving to give their children a good education both in the Sunday and day schools.

AT THE PRESBYTERIAN COUNCIL the Rev. Dr. Hoedemaker, of Amsterdam, said the National Reformed Church of Holland had just recovered from the long sickness of Rationalism. They had had infidelity in the Church and among the people, which had rested upon them as an incubus. But now they could look back upon what it had been, and could fortify their brethren in other lands and say: "Don't be too much afraid of it. God will make it into a blessing, after all." Forty years ago there were very few who preached the living Christ in his Church.—When their secession friends left them, forty years ago, taking with them whatever there was of life left in the Church, they had only had 400 ministers preaching the gospel.—They had taken prominent positions in all the great cities, and crowds flocked to hear them just in proportion as they preached the living Christ. As for the influence of Rationalism upon the clergy, they had great reason to bless it. There was a disposition to settle down quietly, and be content with whatever had been dug out of the mines of Holy Writ; but Rationalism had stirred them up, and pushed them forward, and made it necessary to study. And the results of this study had been that they obtained new views of the glory of God and saw always more in the Revelation. Every interrogation point Rationalism made had been changed by God into an exclamation point. As to the effect of Rationalism upon their theology, it had taught them the organic nature of the Bible, of revelation, and of truth.