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Centennial of Coila Church

Great Religious Festival at Cambridge, N. Y.

PEOPLE began to gather early at the United Presbyterian Church, in the village of Coila, in the town of Cambridge, N. Y., on September 18, to celebrate the centennial anniversary

of the settlement of its third pastor, the Rev. Alexander Bullions, D.D., and the semi-centennial anniversary of the settlement of its fourth pastor, the Rev. Henry Gordon, D.D. On the preceding Sabbath, an historical sermon had been preached by the pastor, the Rev. John C. Scott, Ph.D., to a large congregation, among whom were many former members of the old Associate Presbyterian Congregation and numerous present members, ministers and invited guests.

Editor of The New York Observer.

My Dear Sir: The Rev. Irenæus Prime, a former Editor of The New York Observer, was a son of Dr. Prime who preached in Cambridge, N. Y., when Dr. Bullions preached in Coila. They were very closely associated in friendship and



REV. ALEXANDER BULLIONS, D.D., 1807-1857.



REV. HENRY GORDON, D.D., 1857-1897.

of the settlement of its third pastor, the Rev. Alexander Bullions, D.D., and the semi-centennial anniversary of the settlement of its fourth pastor, the Rev. Henry Gordon, D.D. On the preceding Sabbath, an historical sermon had been preached by the pastor, the Rev. John C. Scott, Ph.D., to a large congregation, among whom were many former members of the old Associate Presbyterian Congregation and numerous present members, ministers and invited guests.

Wednesday was a fine autumn day. There was a slight chill in the air, and here and there the flame-colored branch of a maple tree gave token of the blaze of glory that would soon spread over field and forest. Coila and its church stand in the town of Cambridge, Washington County, New York, occupying a portion of a wide and fertile plain, ten or twelve miles across, circled with hills, watered by winding and gentle streams, and now, as in the boyhood of Irenæus Prime, peopled by a set of independent farmers, who are well-to-do for

this world, and the most of them have been wise enough to make provision for the world to come. By ten o'clock the lawns around the brick and stone church, built in 1833, were covered with a busy throng of men and women setting tables for the noonday meal, for it was to be an all-day service; the sheds in the rear of the church were full of carriages and wagons; and the church was rapidly filling up with an eager and interested congregation.

The following note, from a direct descendant of Dr. Bullions,

work, and I wish to send an invitation to some member of Dr. Prime's family to the "Coila Centennial."

Very truly yours,

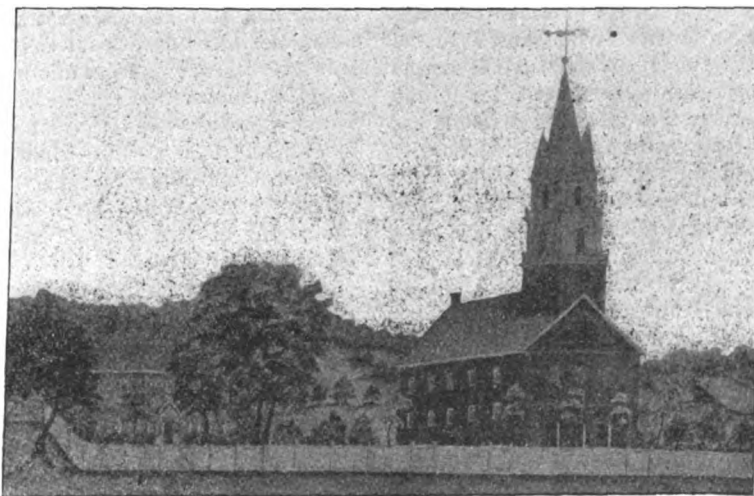
ISABELLA BULLIONS McCLELLAN.

As the Rev. Wendell Prime, D.D., the son of "Irenæus," is living an invalid life in Switzerland, he could not fill the place

which would naturally belong to him, and so "Augustus," his brother-in-law, went to the spot which is full of reminiscences of the friendship which existed for many years between Dr. Bullions and his family, and the family and descendants of the Rev. Dr. Nathaniel Scudder Prime.

The interior of the church was richly decorated with flowers and the large panel behind the pulpit burdened with green vines. Within the panel is the inscription, "Thy way, Oh God, is in the Sanctuary. Praise ye the Lord." The ancient lofty mahogany pulpit has given place to a low reading desk,

which brings the preacher nearer to the people. Upon the platform in front, were the early communion service of a pewter platter, a flagon and two pewter goblets, the second service made of silver, and a new one of individual cups, a present from a daughter of Dr. Gordon, were also on exhibition. Here were also the metal tokens which gave admission to the communion and the baptismal bowl from which Dr. Bullions had baptized more than 950 children and adults in the fifty years of his ministry, the records from 1790 and the old roll

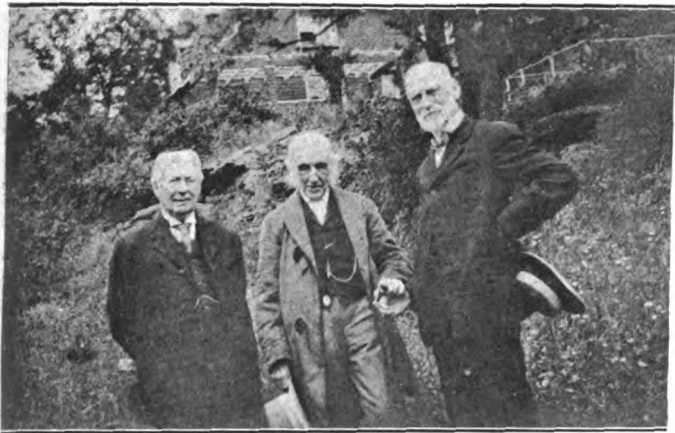


THE ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BUILT IN 1833, AND ITS MANSE.

FISHERS OF MEN.

By Theodore L. Cuyler, D.D.

JESUS CHRIST commissions His servants to be "fishers of men." A good motto for ministers and Christian people everywhere, anxious for largest results, lies in Christ's command to Peter on the shore of Galilee: "Launch out into the deep!" Peter's reply to his Master was that they had been toiling all night and had caught no fish; "nevertheless, Lord," he says, "at Thy word I will let down the net." He was despondent, but not despairing. The command of his Lord is enough to rally his faith. To the eye of faith many things are clear that to the eye of sense are exceedingly dark. Faith



PRESBYTERIANS BOTH BLUE AND TRUE.

Dr. E. G. Thurber, Dr. T. L. Cuyler, and Dr. J. H. Edwards.

sets the bow of Peter's little smack toward the deep water; the fish are there, and not in the shoal water near the shore. So out into the deep they pull; down goes the net, and lo! such a great multitude of fishes are enclosed that two boats are required to bring the abundant haul safely to land.

Here is a lesson for pastors, Sunday-school teachers, parents and all who long for the salvation of souls. Perhaps last year was not a year of success. Failure in any good undertaking is a calamity; it often breaks the back of a weak Christian's courage. Failure ought to provoke a true Christian to fresh ardor and new attempts to retrieve the losses of the past. Failure has a reason for it, and it ought to stir every honest heart to the solemn inquiry: Whose fault was it? God does not break his promises. His injunction is: Be not weary in your good work, for in due season ye shall reap, if ye faint not.

The first duty of faith is to make a new venture. Christ's command is to "launch out," and make the effort. I would not make too much of a word which originally had only a local and temporary intention; but that word "deep" has a great spiritual significance. There must be a deep down faith in our hearts, and a deep insatiable desire for the salvation of the souls with whom we labor. God grants to a fervent desire what He denies to a faint and feeble desire. "I will not let Thee go unless Thou bless me"; that is the temper of a Christian who is in dead earnest for a revival in his church, or for the conversion of the friend he or she is laboring with. Shallow interest, shallow feeling, shallow praying, catch no fish for the Master.

The minister who longs to convert souls must lay hold of the deep truths of God and strive to penetrate the depths of the hearts before him. Down in the bottom of the unconverted heart is the lurking depravity, the besetting sin, or the unbelief that keeps the sinner from Christ; and the truth must go deep to reach the roots. It must uproot the sin to make conversion thorough. My brother, you will need strong doctrine to do this. Phillips Brooks well said that "no exhortation to a good life that does not put behind it some truth as deep as eternity can seize and hold the conscience." Preach all the doctrine your Bible gives you, and in love to the sinner's soul.

Fishing for souls is a personal work. It is not confined to the pulpit; every man or woman who possesses faith and ardent love of Jesus should engage in it. It is not a "professional" business, restricted to a few, and to be done in a set fashion. Nor is it to be accomplished only by a whole church employing a huge net to bring in a multitude of converts at a single draught. Sometimes a powerful and general

revival does this. But conversions follow individual effort with individual hearts. A pastor often accomplishes as much by an hour of close friendly conversation as by an hour of public preaching. The Sunday-school teacher can reach his or her scholars most effectually by a private visit, and a faithful talk with each member of the class. Personal work does the business; each fisher must drop his own hook, baited with love. No one is scolded to Christ; yet an unconverted person will bear a tremendously searching talk if it is conducted in a frank, tender spirit, and unmistakably prompted by affection. The real aim must be persuasion; that is, to persuade the sinner to let go his sin and to lay hold of Jesus. He is wise that winneth souls.

Brooklyn, New York.

GO TO!

By the Rev. C. A. S. Dwight.

THE Bible has its expletives—such as Alas! Aha! Ah! Go to!—which serve to give zest to its speech and point to its precepts. The interjectional term "Go to"—a sort of demand for attention—occurs five times in the Old Testament and twice in the New Testament. It is very nearly equivalent to our expression "Come now!" James uses it in sarcastic reproach of the worldlings of his day who tried to count God out of human life. "Go to, now, ye who say—" It is this saying things without proof that gets people into trouble. A great many things in this gullible world are said with a solemn air which are yet untrue. It is well therefore to bear in mind the shrewd observation that it is "better not to know so many things than to know so many things that are not so." It is easy to say anything, and to gain a following if one only speaks in a loud enough tone, and with a determined air, but the hard thing is to prove the point and sustain one's position against all critics and adversaries.

There are many would-be teachers of their fellow-men who need to be rebuked by this challenge of James. Go to, now, ye that say: "There is no God!" How do you know that? Have you been through all the universe to see? Have you with theodolite, compass and chain of speculation triangulated every area of infinite space? Have you by personal observation proved the existence of a theistic vacuum in every corner of the universe? If not, how do you know that a God may not be anywhere and everywhere? O glib, gullible atheists! Your accent of unbelief is only a plagiarism from a past impiety. 'Tis only the distant echo of the man who in David's time said, "There is no God!"—and that man was declared to be a "fool."

Go to, now, ye that say: "We do not know that there is a God!" That sounds indeed a little more promising—it seems to concede something. There is hope of a man who says that he does not know, for he at least may be taught knowledge. But agnosticism by itself, and so long as it does not get past itself, is weakness. Its religious hope, being so vague, so indefinite, so ineffectual, really amounts to nothing. The agnostic needs to be converted as much as any other man. Paul did that sort of work in Athens—converting agnostics. "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship him declare I unto you," said he to the Areopagites. There is always need of writing in on the altar of the agnostic god the name of the true and only Jehovah.

Go to, now, ye that say: "The Bible is a discredited book!" Again we say, How do you know that? Did you learn it from the friends or the foes of the Bible? Is such "discrediting" of the Bible a result of humble, prayerful study of the old Book on one's knees, when God is asked to bless the use of syntax, lexicon or commentary, or is it the effect of heady, unspiritual, mere theoretic study? Be sure of this, nobody ever understands the Bible unless he gets into it, and it into him. Let us value these flippant, unintelligent flings at Scripture at their true worth. Ever since there was any Bible there have been rationalists who have set out to explain away its spiritual message, and to disparage the wonderful Book. But the old Book abides—the critical hammers are broken, the anvil has survived the shocks.

Go to, now, ye that say: "Life is not worth living." Probably it is not, as you who say that are living it. For life is chaotic, unorganized, inexplicable, disconcerting except in so far as God is found in it and Christ is served by it. Existence is dark unless a Father's love shines through the gloom. The