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Prayer.

For the American Presbyterian.

GOD'S COMMAND.

By J. O. BLYTHE.

Go forth, my servant, and proclaim
Salvation in your Saviour's name;
Where'er sin hath rolled its tide,
Salvation preach, and wide
Salvation! from that righteous law,
Which holds a guilty world in awe,
A guilty world in wrath o'erwhelm,
And to eternal death condemn.

Salvation! from the guilt of sin,
And sin's corruptive work within,
The heart of man, so full of guile,
His thoughts, and lips, and acts are vile.

Salvation! from the dreadful doom,
That dreads the wretched soul by gloom,
Who wraps in shrouding shades of death,
He pants away his dying breath.

Salvation! in my blessed God,
To whom for refuge all may run,
And, safely there, for ever hide,
Their weary souls in His dear side.

Salvation! which, in His alone,
Lifts from the footstool to the Throne,
All men the gospel who receive,
Repent, return, confess, believe.

Go! preach salvation; haste, this day!
Salvation! O, salvation cry!
No rest by day, nor rest by night,
Till all the world is filled with light.

Correspondence.

LETTER FROM MRS. BENTON, OF SYRIA.

TO THE LADIES OF THE WESTERN CHURCH.

DEAR SISTERS:—If my poor communications can serve to increase your interest in our work, and make you feel more acquainted with our missionaries, and feel that it is your work we are doing, or rather, the Lord's work we are helping us to do, I shall feel a thousand fold repaid for all I can say or write.

Would that you could visit us in our mountain home! Just fancy yourselves on board a noble steamer in the harbor of Beirut, and you have before you one of the finest views in the world. The city is beautifully situated on the Cape, stretching far back among the thousands of orchards of mulberry, olive, and fig trees; and beyond this bright scene, in the background, tower the high peaks of Lebanon. It is winter, and all the upper hills are covered with snow, and as you gaze upon these gigantic masses, all sparkling in the bright oriental sun, you will fancy this old Lebanon's coronation day.

Leave the crowded steamer, pass the city gates, mount a snow-footed Arab steed, and soon you'll cross the sandy plain, and begin to ascend, by a crooked, zigzag path, the mountain-side. Handfuls of villages are scattered all over the varying scene, and many of the peaks are cultivated quite to the top, by being terraced up; that is, the ground is made into stairs; each stair forms a narrow field, with a thick stone wall in each side, and each rising higher and higher, till the mountain-peak is converted into a vast green stair-case, most beautiful to the eye, and showing the industry and patience of these hardy sons of the mountain.

Some are covered with fields of grain, others with mulberry, olive, fig, apricot, walnut, and almond trees. And more than all, the delicious grape is cultivated in almost endless variety and perfection. Other peaks are covered with bare, craggy rocks, not a tree or a shrub, except a little, straggling thorn-bush, which tempts none to climb except the hungry goats and their faithful shepherd. Now you descend a deep gorge, and ford a mountain torrent, babbling its noisy way over the rocks. Now you walk carefully and with a swimming brain the edge of a fearful precipice, where a single mis-step of your horse would plunge you into the awful abyss, far below. After four or five hours of climbing, your Arab guide points to a large village on the top of a high peak, and shouts, "Bhandun!" You think you are almost there, but those mountains deceive the weary traveler! You have got to descend a deep ravine, and toll up a steep mountain. Hold fast to the mane of your faithful beast, and let him pick his own way among the rocks, and he will bring you safely up. And then the fine view of the blue Mediterranean Sea, spread out in vast expanse at your feet; the highest mountains towering high above, with their tops covered with the everlasting snow; the cool, invigorating breezes, and our most hearty welcome, I am sure will repay all our toil. All the simple villagers will salute you as you pass along, and any one will gladly conduct you to the missionary's house. It is an humble abode, rudely built of stone, laid up in massive thickness, without mortar, and roughly finished and plastered with mud on the inside, with a few small windows. As I said before, 'tis winter now, and the cold wind whistles through the cracks, scattering the snow over the floor, causing us to shiver, and to draw closer to our nice little Yankee stove, and to put an additional stick of wood into the fire. Our furniture is simple yet comfortable, and we would not exchange our mountain home for the finest palace in your beautiful city, because we love these poor people, and long to bring them to the Saviour. There is hope in laboring for these people; there is many a jewel bright under these rough exteriors. These people, though dark-skinned, degraded, and sunk in superstition, have some good traits. There is very little of the spirit of drink. I have never seen a drunkard in the streets in this country. A small quantity of *arak* is made from distilling raisins here every year, but little is drunk, though they are most inveterate smokers. The mountain people are very industrious and saving, and when not oppressed by their superiors are quite happy and comfortable. Such are the people of Bhandun. There are very few suffering poor here.

Now since, in imagination, we have conducted you to our distant home, we will invite you to call on some of the people, and see them in their houses, and as it is the day of my usual weekly prayer-meeting with the women, will you come with me? We hold it every afternoon at the house of dear sister in the other part of the village. On arriving at her house, we find a bright fire burning in the little round fireplace in the room. There is no chimney, the smoke

all stays in the room, or goes out at the open door or the cracks about the window. Sheepskins, with the wool-side up, are spread on the floor around the fire, and a little piece of carpet and a cushion for the expected guest. A few mats, jugs and pottery, plates and kettles, make up the household furniture. No table, chair, or bedstead,—thick quilts, spread on the floor, is the bed of the East. In Moosa is a poor widow, but she is rich in faith. Though it is very hard for her to get her scanty clothing from year to year, she always brings her little bag of raiment to put in the treasury of the Lord. Here we shall meet from fifteen to twenty females, arrayed in their simple cotton garments, and their black veils of their own work. We will sit all around the smoky fire. One of the native sisters will open the meeting with prayer. Then I will read and explain to them a chapter in the "Holy Book," they asking familiar questions, and all freely speaking of their feelings and hopes; after about an hour, we close with prayer. These dear seasons are very profitable to all who attend, and the more encouraging as there is more of a spiritual movement here than anywhere else in Syria among the women. Our Bible-class on the Sabbath is still increasing in numbers and interest, so that in all, I have over forty females in these little meetings.

Dear sisters in Philadelphia, do pray for me and pray for these, your poor Lebanon sisters. To-day several of the women were in tears at our meeting, and a solemn feeling seemed to pervade their whole hearts. Were you to call with us on every family in Bhandun, all would give us a most hearty welcome, spread for us a clean rug or a nice sheep-skin beside the fire, and bring us a plate of fine raisins of their own making, and some of the richer ones would offer us a little cup of black coffee, and a pipe, if we would smoke. We would visit the schools and find the children all seated on the ground, or each sitting on his own sheep-skin, with their eyes so bright, and their faces as intelligent as need be. And if you could only understand this great mystery of Babel, the Arabic language, you would be delighted to hear their lessons. You would find the people coming to our house from all directions, and from great distances, for medicines for the maladies of their bodies, and spirits giving us almost constant opportunity to speak to them of Christ, the only Physician for the soul.

Be assured of my warmest love, and most hearty service in this good work.
Your affectionate sister,
LOANEA G. BENTON.
Bhandun, Mt. Lebanon, Feb. 20, 1860.

A PLEA FOR CHURCH EXTENSION.

Messrs. Editors:—In the last number of the American Presbyterian, church extension is made to depend for its success on active unity. Overstatement by our church courts is feared. But great interests, nevertheless, are at stake. Misunderstandings exist, and no small amount of irritation, that should, if possible, be removed.

Read a pamphlet of October last, by Rev. Z. A. Murray, Agent of the A. H. M. Society, for W. N. York. Also an article of November last, in the New Englander, by Rev. Dr. Dutton, of New Haven. Mr. Murray says in his pamphlet, that separation from the Congregationalists in the work of Home Missions, "is to be deprecated as a deadly pestilence. Not one in ten of the members of the co-operating denominations desires it;" that of contributions to the A. H. M. Society, for the past year, there was expended upon missionaries of our own denomination, some \$25,000 more than we desired; that the church extension movement is fraught with "division," and consequently with ruin to our prosperous church. Mr. Dutton charges us with betraying, in this connection, the principle of "co-operative Christianity," and with unfairness in withholding our funds from the common treasury. The action of large ecclesiastical bodies in New England, is also adduced in denunciation of this course as intolerable. How can we so great a breach be repaired? How can the irritation thence derived, be allayed, so as best to subserve the cause of Home Missions, to which we are mutually pledged? Is it quite certain, after all, that separation from the A. H. M. Society, would not be for the interests of all concerned?

With all deference to the Committee of Conference, appointed by the last General Assembly, who are yet to report, and although I infer a disunion of partnership with the A. H. M. Society; reasons exist why, in our judgment, we should associate independently as a denomination, in the work of Home Missions.

I. Dissolving partnership, then, with the A. H. M. Society, is no novelty. What does the history of that society disclose on this subject? When organized in 1826, it embodied, aside from its present constituency, the Dutch Reformed, Associate, Scotch and Old School Presbyterians. The Dutch Reformed, in process of time, seceded. So also did the Old School Presbyterians. They chose to act independently in the cause of Home Missions, and have been wonderfully prospered by the adoption of this course. Their own statistics are proof positive of it. Nor by the confusion of Mr. Murray himself, was the A. H. M. Society materially affected by these changes. It went on from strength to strength—its missionaries for the last year numbering one thousand and fifty-four. Instead, therefore, of deprecating our separation from that society as a deadly pestilence, we marvel that it should have subsisted on the co-operative principle so long, and accomplished such an important work for God in its day and generation.

2. By acting independently as a denomination on behalf of Home Missions, we, of course, escape the charge of sectarian bias in the misapplication of funds. Of all the difficulties which hinder the progress of the church in our age, strife about money matters, is, in our way of thinking, the most ungodly, and the most at war with the true spirit of God and of missions. Presbyterians are jealous of Congregationalists, and Congregationalists are jealous of Presbyterians in reference to this subject. Call to mind, indeed, the first cause of contention in the primitive church, and how very humiliating: "When the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration." The charge of neglect, made by the Grecians, may have been ill-founded; or the Hebrews, rather

than the Grecians, having sold their estates in order to amass the common fund, obtained a preference in the dispensation of it. This, however, is not material. We are reminded by it that when a charity becomes vast and complicated in its dispensation, misunderstandings will arise. And as in this case, so in ours, this must be met by the institution of new safeguards in the way of direct accountability. They chose seven men from among themselves to manage that trust. And if we would shun like difficulties in the collection and disbursement of funds, we should drop exchanging alliances with all other denominations, and endeavor, by God's help, to prosecute the work of Home Missions on our own responsibility, as those who have a charge to keep.

3. By acting independently in the cause of Home Missions, we shall also, it is believed, best secure the collection of funds.

Upon this subject, our views differ too widely from those expressed by Mr. Murray. He regards separation from the A. H. M. Society, as not only fraught with division to our branch of the church of Christ, but with starvation to the missionaries themselves. "Not one in ten of the co-operating denominations desires it." But is he quite sure of this? How, then, comes our General Assembly to have acted with so much unanimity in opposition to his views? We know the affection which exists for the A. H. M. Society. Nor shall it be found fault with, temperately exercised. But by some it is lauded as an organism in the cause of domestic missions, of far greater moment than the church of God's own planting. I know not the experience of Mr. Murray in W. N. York. I can testify for myself, however, that as the pastor of some responsible village charges in that State, for many years, I always found a strong minority opposed to sending money out of the denomination, to be spent in Home Missions. They felt that if the church owed to herself any duty, it was to look after that interest. They regarded it not only as a duty, but as a business. Men of business, who looked for direct accountability in the disbursement of funds, sympathized with this respect. And the effect of it was to sadly restrain our collections. I have reason to know that the difficulty hereby complained of, was also widely spread. Not a few churches in our denomination have joined the Old School body, rather than submit to the degradation of practically ignoring their own organism, in the furtherance of the cause of God and of missions. And the whole history of domestic missions, in our country, is a force, if it does not show that the way to raise the greatest amount of funds in this enterprise, is to act denominationally. Even the immediate effect of the church extension movement, as instituted by the General Assembly of 1855, has been to increase, rather than diminish, the amount of funds raised for such an object in our churches.

4. By acting independently in the cause of Home Missions, we retain the confidence, and an exchange of kind offices with our Congregational brethren. "And is not this devoutly to be wished?" And is not this devoutly to be wished? No small proportion of our denomination at the North is of New England origin. Not a few of our church members were born and nurtured in the bosom of the Congregational churches, meeting confidence. They sympathize with us fully in our views of missions, revivals, and necessary reforms. And why sacrifice an immense moral power, by waging a partisan warfare with them? Why do it, especially at the West, where every form of popular infidelity is rife, and all our strength is needed to resist the common enemy? The strife springing up between us in the last few years, and even upon missionary ground, is a scandal to Christianity, a grief to the godly, and a fertile source of dissensions and bickerings, that ought to be healed. And a sure remedy for this evil, and the restoration of confidence among brethren, so extensively forfeited, is independent denominational agencies in the work of home evangelization.

5. And except we act independently in the work of Home Missions, how can we, as a denomination, fulfill our mission?

We boast of the wisdom of our church polity, and of its representative character and aims. We conceive of it as well fitted to draw out the talents and resources of the church, in the furtherance of any noble and Christian-like enterprise. And God has set us an open field in the cause of Home Missions, to our own work in his vineyard. Why not, then, use our own ecclesiastical organism for this purpose? That Congregational Churches should find the need of affiliation in a society outside of themselves, even in "civil corporation," for the accomplishment of such an end, is not surprising. But for what purpose do our sessions and presbyteries exist, if not to engage in this work? How can a church, which does not tax its own energies in the support of the gospel, expect to prosper? Her very life and success has always been identified with the spirits of missions. He that wavereth in this field, shall be watered himself. And that labor in this field should ever have been accounted by Presbyterians as "exceptional," rather than normal obligation devolved upon them, is matter of profound humiliation and grief. "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon!" What mission have we to accomplish at "such a time as this," may for what reasons we exist independently as a Christian denomination, if not by our own agency to gather a lost world home to God?

Let me shrink back from having cried up, in connection with this cause, "co-operative Christianity." We did not endorse it. But whether it were right or wrong, is immaterial. What is sound policy at one period, may not be so at another. The great Dr. Owen was charged by one of his cotemporaries with contradicting an opinion he had expressed fourteen years before. His reply was, "The man who finds no occasion to change his opinions once in fourteen years, shall not have me for a rival." He expected to live and learn. And when Dr. Riddle, Barnes and others are called rightly to account for like inconsistency in reference to the work of Home Missions, it admits of satisfactory defence! May God enable our brethren of the next General Assembly, (like the men of Issachar that "had understanding of the times, and knew what Israel ought to do," to go forward "in faith, nothing wavering."

Reading, Wis., April, 1860.

INDELS, says a modern philosopher, are like counterfeit money. We can't hinder their circulation, but we can't compel us to take them.

For the American Presbyterian.

BEHAVIOUR IN CHURCH.

Messrs. Editors:—Your paper of last week, you had an article upon "Behaviour in Church," from the "Christian Instructor." I have wondered why *Pastors* do not become instructors on this all important matter. It is possible, they do not see the faults of manner appared in their congregations? Kind words, from beloved pastors, will go further to correct the evils which the *Instructor* depicts, than columns of written matter. In early life, I was one of a congregation, thus appealed to, and the impression left upon my mind and heart, has never been effaced. The pastor spoke particularly of the want of solemnity apparent among his people while receiving the benediction. I never afterwards received it, as the glad signal of dismissal from tiresome services, but I learned to look forward to it as the part of the service, which would best understand and unite in, and I have since then thought my first and last prayer, were when I bowed to receive the benediction. Do not the churches need sermons upon the bearing of Christianity upon the members of God's people, while in His house? Our secular papers complain of thoughtless young men and women, who disturb the lovers of music, by whispering, at operas and concerts. It is not only the young and giddy but God's professed friends, who need to be reminded, that the house of God is no place for conversation. Remember, dear Christian reader, "The Lord is in His holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before Him." Enter His house, with a quiet, reverent manner. Do not take your seat and gaze about the house; do not try to see or hear anything, who may come, and if you recognize a friend, do not whisper to your neighbor, that so and so is sitting in the third pew to the right; do not turn your head when you hear the sexton's croaking shoes approach. It is to be regretted that he does so hurriedly hurrying past the house, when he leads persons into the house of God. "Let all things be done decently and in order." Let this be preached to the people. Let the pastor, and the sexton, let it be preached to the pastors, and there will be more reverent manners to be found in the house of God. "Congregations will assemble noiselessly, sextons will tread lightly, and pastors will refrain from studying their notes to join in the songs of praise."

THE SABBATH THE WORKING MAN'S CHAIR.

BY CHARLES PHILIP, AN ILLINOIS FARMER.

The working man may be sometimes tempted to repine against the arrangements of Providence, but when he walks to the sanctuary to hear the ambassador of God proclaim the tidings of a common salvation, he feels that the Sabbath and its ordinances are not prevent any bit of the work of God, and that he does not come to rest, but to a new day of duty.

On the other hand, the Sabbath is a great defence against the tyranny of the wealthy, in the competition between money and labor. The Sabbath is the great charter which secures the worker his independence of the working man; and it is so, only because it is a Divine institution. It would cease to be of any value to him, were it superseded by a mere conventional day of amusement.

Working men, the Sabbath is the gift of God to man. It is *his* day, and he has a right to it. He is to be free from all other duties, and he is to be free from all other cares, and he is to be free from all other anxieties, and he is to be free from all other sorrows, and he is to be free from all other troubles, and he is to be free from all other pains, and he is to be free from all other afflictions, and he is to be free from all other calamities, and he is to be free from all other miseries, and he is to be free from all other evils, and he is to be free from all other horrors, and he is to be free from all other plagues, and he is to be free from all other judgments, and he is to be free from all other punishments, and he is to be free from all other torments, and he is to be free from all other agonies, and he is to be free from all other deaths, and he is to be free from all other sufferings, and he is to be free from all other pains, and he is to be free from all other afflictions, and he is to be free from all other calamities, and he is to be free from all other 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