

The American Presbyterian.

John A. Weir

1 Jun 70

New Series, Vol. VI, No. 44.

Genesee Evangelist, No. 1224

Strictly in Advance \$2.50, Otherwise \$3.
Postage 20cts, to be paid where delivered.

PHILADELPHIA, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1869.

Home & Foreign Miss. \$200.
Address:—1334 Chestnut Street.

THE ENGRAFTED WORD.

This language implies that the word is alive. Only the most flourishing and thrifty cuttings are used as grafts. If they are dead, they cannot be grafted even upon a living stock. The word which is to be grafted upon the regenerated nature, is no dead abstraction. It is no mere book like other books. It is not even the product of a supernatural effort, which inspired its authors and then left them and their work forever. The virtue of its inspiration cleaves to it still; not to its mere letters, or its series of propositions, but to its matter as apprehended by the living spirit of man. To that, it is quick and powerful, a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. It communicates, like the living graft to the stock, its own life to the mind. It changes and ennobles human nature, and makes it bear the fruits of righteousness instead of the Dead Sea fruits of sin.

But the stock must be alive, no less than the graft. The nature dead in trespasses and sins cannot receive with meekness the engrafted word. Life—spiritual life—in the stock, alone can respond to life in the graft. The spiritual life of the regenerate man must flow through the channels, must penetrate the manifold avenues, must blend with the life, of the word. It must appropriate the life of Scripture, and carry its own daily life and growth onward through the rules the examples and the spirit of Holy Writ.

There are times when every earnest student or devout reader of Scripture, so to speak, lives into the Scripture, far more than others. His peculiar experience gives certain Scripture peculiar pertinence and power to his soul. It is full of meaning. It seems as if written on purpose for him. His whole being finds room in its expressions. With what eagerness does the mind, long burdened with a sense of sin, grasp at length some one of the texts carrying the Gospel offer of forgiveness to the penitent! How do the familiar words now flame out with strange power and beauty, and what a flash of overwhelming light and joy do they send to every darkened corner of his soul! Perhaps no part of Scripture is grafted on more lives of God's people than the Psalms. "A religious man," says Mr. Barnes, in his Introduction "is rarely, if ever, placed in circumstances, where he will not find something in the Psalms appropriate to his circumstances." Luther had the 17th verse of the 118th Psalm—"I shall not die but live and declare the works of the Lord" written on his study wall, and he wrote: "This is my psalm, which I love. Though I love all the Psalms and the Scriptures, yet have I had such experience of this psalm, that it must remain and be called my psalm; for it has been very precious to me, has delivered me out of many troubles, and without it neither Emperor, kings, the wise and prudent, nor saints could have helped me."

Each great age of the church seizes some portion of God's word, and projects into it, its life, finds new applications of its meaning, and new depths of its truth. When the whole heart of humanity throbs with new necessities, it finds treasures in the Scriptures just suited to its wants, though it has scarcely had a conception of their existence before. Want, anguish and yearning of soul give the interpreter's insight. Thus it was at the Reformation. Men, disenchanted of the gorgeous illusion of a great ecclesiastical fellowship, which could relieve them of all personal responsibility for their sins, turned in a mighty anguish of spirit, and clung to those portions of the divine oracles which spoke of the true sin-offering, and of personal justification through a divine Mediator; and the writings of Paul became the breath of life to their self-condemned souls. They appropriated them, lived in them, found them all aglow with divine fullness and splendor of meaning, such as they had never suspected in them before.

To-day the Church seems to be living more in the Gospels. These it especially is searching with marvellous industry. The peculiar results of the studies of the Reformers are reckoned among the Church's attainments—finished for the present, at least. And now the demands of philosophy and the pressure of unbelief are compelling us to form to ourselves, out of the materials of the Gospels, a more complete image than ever before, of the divine-human person of the living Christ. And we are sure that new and wonderful light is breaking forth from this portion of the divine word. Let us not then be satisfied with, or live wholly in, the results of past ages of Scriptural inquiry. In the language of another, "Let us labor, that through prayer and through study, through earnest knocking, through holy living, that inexhaustible inexhaustible Word may render up unto us our truth—the truth by which we must live, the truth, whatsoever that be, which more than any other, will

enable us most effectually to do that work which our God would have done by us in this the day of our toil."

THE RE-UNION AND FOREIGN MISSIONS.

The New Presbyterian Church in the United States must be a missionary church. Upon the vast and now wide open field of heathenism, she must aim by God's help to do a great work. Carrying a perishing world upon her heart, and conscious of large resources, she must be dissatisfied with any small measure of service and success in its behalf. In this consecrated hour of re-union, especially, will she behold in a new light, all her past labors, and will feel unwonted yearnings and heart-throbs for a measure of success in the future far exceeding any attained in the past. And if any one of the channels of work for the Master which she is now expected to adopt,—that of foreign missions for example,—has proved comparatively unsuccessful in the past, what wonder that some voices are heard, asking her to pause, and for her own and for the dying world's sake, to ponder seriously the expediency of persisting in the old course under the new circumstances? What wonder, if that large part of the Presbyterian Church which has for over half a century co-operated with the American Board, should express some reluctance to part with an organization which shows results in one year, about equal numerically to the net results of the thirty-five years of the organization with which they are now asked to co-operate? Re-union means progress, if it is anything but an empty name. If that is its meaning to the members of the late Old School Church, why should they be startled by a kindly meant proposal to bring their slowly-working missions into connection with one of the greatest, most alive and most prosperous of the missionary Boards of Christendom? Would not such a movement better harmonize with the progressive spirit and the grand Christian aspirations of Re-union, than its opposite? And which one of the Concurrent Declarations is violated, in letter or spirit, by a proposal which, if accepted, would unite Old and New School in one Board, just as completely as the alternate course would do? The Sixth Article of the Concurrent Declarations says:—"There should be one set of Committees or Boards for Home and Foreign Missions," etc. We desire but one. The change we suggest would leave but one. Let the whole united Church adopt the American Board as its organ. Then let there "be but one set of Committees or Boards." On the other hand, if the Presbyterian Board becomes the recognized organ of the united Church, we shall say with equal emphasis: Let there be one set of Committees or Boards. Let there be no flirtation after marriage; no scattering of interest and energy in diverse directions. Do we want any more of that, after what we have experienced in the New School Church? With whichever Board it is, let the alliance be open, square and hearty. Up to a certain point, we may not only cherish but express our preferences and strive to communicate them to others. After that we know our duty, and God helping, we expect to do it. We think there has been undue haste and a defective sense of the right of free discussion, in the cry of disloyalty which has been raised in some quarters at our former suggestions on this subject.

But has the American Board so much the advantage of the Presbyterian Board as an evangelizing agent? Upon this point, we have been answered by "a member of the Presbyterian Board," in *The Presbyterian* of this city and in *The Presbyterian Banner* of Pittsburgh. The material parts of his defence, are such as: The greater age of the American Board and its missions. It had the start by twenty-two years of the Presbyterian organization. Certainly, this must be taken into the account. Let us then go back to an earlier date in the history of these organizations. Take the American Board at the age of twenty-one or twenty-two years, before the great movement in the Sandwich Islands. At that time (1833) according to Mr. Newcomb (*Cyclopedia of Missions*, pages 110 and 112) it had received \$1,307,050, and counted 1940 communicants in its churches. The Presbyterian Board in 1854, twenty years after the establishment of its first mission, had received \$1,490,795, and had 512 church members on its rolls. And it is to be remarked that if the Presbyterian Board is twenty-two years younger, it has had the great advantage of the experience and the missionary literature created by its predecessors, who had to spend years in tentative efforts and in breaking down prejudices, which have never needed to be quite so thoroughly done again.

Another point in the defence, is the comparison drawn between contiguous mission fields occupied by the two Boards. Here let the writer speak for himself:

"The American Board commenced its Western African Mission in 1834; the Presbyterian Board its Corisco Mission in 1850. These are contiguous to each other. In 1861, when the Memorial Volume of the A. B. C. F. M. was published, the membership of the Presbyterian Mission was four times that of the former, and it had then an actual membership just one-half greater than the Gaboon Mission had received from the beginning. Nay, in three years, in a single church at Benita, there were more members in its communion than were received in the Gaboon Mission for twenty six years. Which mission, then, has received the Pentecostal recognition?"

After the use of this word "Pentecostal," perhaps the reader will be surprised to learn that the total membership in the Corisco Mission last year (according to Schem) was 88 at two of the stations, and four have been added at the other. West Africa is the most unproductive and most costly in men, if not money, of all missionary fields. The American Board has been gradually withdrawing from it. Our brethren of the other board deserve the highest credit for their heroic persistence in that field; but it still waits for Pentecostal recognition. That seems rather to have been given to the English societies laboring in that quarter. Next, the writer compares the nearly contiguous missions of the two Boards in India, where the progress is represented to be nearly the same in both. The Presbyterian Missions began in 1834, number 449 communicants; the Maharratta Mission of the American Board, begun in 1813, has 610. Had the Madura Mission of the American Board been selected for comparison, it would have appeared that though founded the same year with the Presbyterian Mission, it reckoned 1250 communicants last year. The Aroet Mission in India, founded in 1854, and since handed over to the Reformed Dutch Brethren, a year ago reported 439 members.

The writer then turns to China, another of the proverbially hard fields. There he finds the American ahead of the Presbyterian Board, in Canton, by twelve years; while the communicants favor the younger mission nearly five-fold; being as 579 to 119. Here too, it should not be overlooked that the Board has surrendered its most flourishing mission in China—Amoy—to the Reformed Dutch. Founded later than either of the above named (in 1844) it reported last year 701 members, exceeding the total of both the preceding.

Mention is also made of the Presbyterian Mission in Brazil, which according to the writer, was begun in 1859, according to Newcomb, (*Cycl. p. 643*) in 1853. The writer in *The Presbyterian* says the membership of its four churches is 216. The membership of the Presbytery of Brazil in the O. S. minutes is given at 83. If, however, the writer is correct, and we deduct 216 from 1836, the total membership of the churches of the Presbyterian Board, we have left 1620, (instead of 1750 as we stated it,) belonging to its churches on heathen ground. We think it proper to make this deduction, since the churches contributing to the American Board generally use the A. and F. Christian Union as their channel of operations among Roman Catholic countries.

Perhaps we did wrong to confine our view to these two Boards exclusively. But if we extend the comparison to other societies we shall not find the Presbyterian Board put in any better light.

Take the American Baptist Missionary Union. Thirty-nine years after its organization it had received, according to Newcomb, an aggregate of \$1,663,793, and had 10,261 communicants on heathen ground. The American Baptist Free Mission (anti-slavery) was 25 years old in 1868, when, according to Schem, they reported 5862 members in the Bassein (Africa) Mission alone. The missions of the M. E. Church, begun in 1820, thirty-four years afterwards, had 2637 members on heathen ground. The American Missionary Association, (Anti-Slavery) formed in 1846, counted in seven years 1160 members on the foreign field. The two missions of the Ref. (Dutch) Church which may be said to be fairly in operation, Aroet, India, and Amoy, China, were last year, respectively 24 and 12 years old, and they numbered 1140 communicants.

It seems to us a conclusion impossible to be avoided that, judged by numerical results, the Presbyterian Board of Missions must be reckoned among the least successful of all the attempts of the American Churches to evangelize the world. Those who have stood by it for thirty-six years, and have continued to pour out their wealth, in no stinted measure, during all those years, in its support, have shown rare degrees of faith and patience, which it is far from us to disparage. But should they be greatly surprised or hurt if those who have been associated with one of the most prosperous and greatly blessed of all mission enterprises, pause when they are asked to leave it, perhaps to cripple it,—and to adopt in its stead, an agency whose history has been so differ-

ent? Would not pure zeal for the Master naturally suggest the invitation we have given to the supporters of the Presbyterian Board, to turn the whole wealth and energy of the Presbyterian Church into a channel where a large portion of it has been so successfully employed; to strengthen instead of weakening one of the most signally favored of missionary enterprises, and to give the heathen world an illustration of Christian unity, as impressive to their minds as the Reunion will be upon the entire home field? To us it seemed that a duty would be unperformed, if this suggestion were not made. We have made it. If it fails, we are content.

AN ORGANIZATION PERFECTED.

The recent installation of a pastor over the O. S. Church in Newburyport, Mass., proves still more curious in its details, than the curt reports which first reached us had led us to suppose. When this congregation came under Presbyterian control, it reserved certain rights, one of which was the privilege of asking the neighboring churches and pastors of the Congregationalist body to unite with it in the installation and dismissal of its pastors, and other business of importance. This right has long remained in abeyance, but was revived on the present occasion, and the neighboring Congregationalist Churches were invited to be present by their pastors and lay delegates, on the day and hour fixed by Presbytery for the installation. But what was the Presbytery to do with these Congregationalist delegates? One stickler for Presbyterian order tried to cut the knot, by moving that they be invited to sit as corresponding members of Presbytery. But the elder who represented the Newburyport church entered his earnest protest against this step, as a violation of the reserved rights of the Church. This led to a long discussion, and was finally voted down by the Presbytery itself, the Congregationalists looking on, probably to their edification, certainly to their amusement. When finally it was decided that these pastors and lay delegates were not to be put on a footing, in which they would have a voice; but no vote, the question recurred—on what footing were they to be placed? A motion now came from the other side that the Presbytery adjourn, and a new body be constituted of all the pastors, elders and lay delegates present, and that the Moderator and clerk of the Presbytery be the officers of the new body. This was agreed to, and this Presbygational body proceeded to do the work for which they had assembled. The examination of the pastor elect was but a short one, for dinner was waiting, and the other exercises were postponed till evening.

We may surely congratulate our O. S. brethren on their growth in catholicity and breadth of view, when we see a Presbytery thus stepping down from the lofty platform of *jure divino* exclusivism, to welcome their brethren of the Puritan faith and order. We trust that there will be no disposition to repudiate or censure this Presbytery of Boston for their magnanimous act. Even Drs. Backus and Smith, we hope, will relax the severity of their frown, and join with the majority of the Presbytery of Baltimore in disapproving of the hard words they have hurled at unordained elders, and Presbygational churches. We rejoice in every indication of cordial good feeling between those that hold to the Genevan faith and order, and those that unite the Genevan faith and the Puritan order.

THE VOTE ASCERTAINED.

The newspaper organs of the Old School branch have received such intelligence from the Presbyteries that, last week, they were able to announce the fact that two thirds of the one hundred and forty-three Presbyteries of their Church had given an affirmative answer to the Assembly's Overture on Reunion. As our own Presbyteries are without exception voting upon the same side; as Dr. Hatfield early in October had received more than fifty responses from the New School Presbyteries, all in the affirmative, and as all our papers have been adding every week to the number, we may regard it as certain that the required seventy-six of the one hundred and thirteen New School Presbyteries have given, or will give, the affirmative answer to the Overture; and that the greatest ecclesiastical movement in the American Church, and the greatest voluntary Reunion movement since the divisions of the Reformation has been finally decided upon.

Although the fact has been for months confidently anticipated, we cannot announce it as thus ascertained, without a feeling of awe. It is, indeed, true that the division of thirty-two years ago is to be blotted out; that a signal example is to be given to the world of the living power of Christian charity; that the reproach of division,

which has so long rested on Christendom, and especially upon Presbyterianism, is to be materially lessened, and that the multiplication of the agencies of evil in the world is to be met by the consolidation of two of the larger and more influential bodies, who, for many years, have worked apart and in jealousy of each other.

We stand in awe at the new and serious responsibilities it brings upon us all. We, who have been seriously estranged, are now, indeed, to dwell within one Church home. The old tabernacles are both to come down, and a new one, common to both, is to be occupied. Charity, confidence, forbearance, love,—pure, hearty, fervent, must take the place of coldness and mistrust. Clannishness must be put aside. Like kindred drops we must flow together. And this we must do in such a manly, generous way, as not to sacrifice, or to expect from others the sacrifice, of differences, but as comprehending them in one elastic, yet truly sound, organization. Without perfect homogeneity, we must find a genuine peace. It is easy to sing in unison, but our work is the nobler one of harmonizing different tones in one glorious psalm of praise and service.

In this solemn hour, to which generations will look back as to one of the landmarks of the Church's progress and history, what better can we, the actors do, than confess our faults to God and to one another, and ask forgiveness of both? What better than earnestly to pray that the whole work may be manifestly the Lord's, and that man's wisdom and activity may be but the outgoings of the mind of the Spirit, in every coming step of the movement? What better than to reconsecrate oneself to the simple service of the Master in redeeming a lost world, so that the coming together of these two Churches with one accord may be with the manifest and unwonted outpouring of the Spirit upon all the members? Their separation has not been without great advantages; what may we not look for from their Reunion? If our fall into division has been "the riches of the world," how much more our fullness. If our casting away one another has prompted to more numerous and wider measures for evangelizing men, shall not our reconciliation be as "life from the dead"??

A REMARKABLE ANSWER TO PRAYER.

Last July, on the Sabbath of our Communion, there was sent in an earnest request that the united prayers of our people should go up to God in behalf of a son. He had suffered two hemorrhages of the lungs and it was feared that he could not live. We were asked to pray that God would spare him, and that this child of early baptism and consecration might be brought to Christ. On that day and on the Wednesday evening following, he was especially remembered at the throne of Grace. From that Sabbath he began to gain strength, and to-day he is in as good health apparently as ever before. But what is better than all, he feels that during the past few weeks he has become a Christian.

This young man is a civil engineer, and has just received a very flattering appointment from the English Government. England has pledged herself to build 14,000 miles of Railroad in India and to defray a portion of the expense. The authorities there desired to have some American Engineer to show them our modes of Railroad construction, and this young man is the one chosen for the purpose. Before this will greet the eyes of the public, he will have sailed, intending to be absent three years. It was his earnest desire before leaving home to confess Christ before men. As our regular Communion would not come till January, we held an extra service last Sabbath morning, when he was received into the membership of the Walnut street Presbyterian church. It was a solemn and interesting occasion. A whole family were there to commune with him for the first time. He is the last of eight living children to enter the church, and thus they sat an unbroken family in Christ, around the table of our Lord.

How an incident like this ought to stimulate our faith! What an encouragement for united prayer.

S. W. D.

—It is a fair illustration of the inconclusiveness of some of the arguments used in propping theories of the immense antiquity of man, that the picture in the very frontispiece of Sir Charles Lyell's book on the subject, designed to give an idea of the lake dwellings of Switzerland, is founded upon a sketch of an existing village in New Guinea. Mr. Wallace, in his "Malay Archipelago," page 500, says he spent some time in the very village which was the original of Lyell's drawing. We need not go into antiquity, or even into history, to find lake-dwelling communities.