

# CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN.

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FOR THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN.

## THE DEAD.

[The following lines were suggested by a passage in the writings of the Abbe de Lamennais.]

The countless thousands who have passed  
Along the shores of earth while fast  
They flitted down Time's river,  
Whose voices sounded on the shore  
A few brief moments, then no more  
Were heard on earth forever—  
My spirit cries,  
What is their present state, where their abode?  
And God replies,  
"Blessed the dead who slumber in the Lord."

While swift they passed, before their sight  
A thousand phantoms false but bright  
This false, vain world paraded;  
But as they gazed with eager eye  
Time's rapid current swept them by—  
The earthly vision faded.  
My spirit cries,  
What is their present state, where their abode?  
And God replies,  
"Blessed the dead who slumber in the Lord."

Bright beaming o'er the swelling tide,  
Their hearts were e'er their course to guide,  
The Cross of Christ was lifted;  
But some finished its heavenly light,  
And swift into death's gloomy night  
Their ship-wrecked souls were drifted.  
My spirit cries,  
What is their present state, where their abode?  
And God replies,  
"Blessed the dead who slumber in the Lord."

Some voyagers, with careless air,  
Viewed smilingly earth's pagans' fair,  
Not noticing or heeding  
The distant ocean's sullen roar,  
'Till suddenly they found the shore  
Fast from their gaze receding.  
My spirit cries,  
What is their present state, where their abode?  
And God replies,  
"Blessed the dead who slumber in the Lord."

The old, the young, the grave, the gay,  
Are daily, hourly borne away;  
And hoping, loving, fearing,  
Laughing or weeping, they go by,  
As ships before the tempest fly,  
Forever disappearing.  
My spirit cries,  
What is their present state, where their abode?  
And God replies,  
"Blessed the dead who slumber in the Lord."

Some too, whose life-boat side by side  
With ours were launched upon the tide  
Of Time's impetuous river,  
While yet the morning sun shone fair  
And flowers perfumed the dewy air,  
Have vanished, and forever.  
My spirit cries,  
What is their present state, where their abode?  
And God replies,  
"Blessed the dead who slumber in the Lord."

And we ourselves are hastening on  
To that far off, mysterious bourne,  
From which no soul returning  
Has e'er the faintest tidings brought—  
From whose shut tomb no sound is caught  
Of shouting or of mourning.  
My spirit cries,  
What is their present state, where their abode?  
And God replies,  
"Blessed the dead who slumber in the Lord."

REV. JOHN H. RICE, D. D.

The following letter from Dr. Rice was found among the papers of the Rev. James M. Brown, D. D. It was written to a minister in the Presbytery of Lexington, of which a copy in the handwriting of Mrs. Rice was sent to Mr. Brown, then living near Martinsburg, Berkeley county, and seems to have been done for the purpose of counteracting certain misrepresentations. To this Dr. Rice adds a postscript. This letter, we believe, has never been published, and will be read with deep interest.—PRES.

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,  
APRIL 26, 1830.

Rev. and Dear Brother:  
"I received your letter by Friday's mail, and fully appreciate your kindness in writing it. In my answer I will just state frankly, and as fully as a single sheet will admit, my views in regard to the Seminary."

It is true that I have devoted myself to it, heart and soul; but if I know myself, I am identified with it, only as it is connected with the prosperity of the Presbyterian church in the South and the prevalence of pure religion. As for political feelings and prejudices, I utterly disclaim them. I have long been convinced, and have acted on the conviction that ministers of the gospel had better let politics alone. In this I am conscientious. I believe that I have never voted but three times in my life; and then because I thought that John Randolph was persecuted. My votes for him, however, offended some of the members of my church, and made the gospel as preached by me less acceptable to them. And on discovering this, I resolved that it would be better for me to wave my right as a citizen, than ignore the interests of religion; and now for twenty years I have adhered to this resolution. I do not intend ever to vote for or against the new Constitution. So much for that.

But as to the Seminary, it has been my through conviction that the Presbyterian church could never do its part in evangelizing the Southern country without a Seminary. Indeed I apprehended that without one the church would go down, South of the Potomac and East of the Ohio. It certainly has not increased in all this region in its due proportion. I feared it would go down.

But whether in this I was right or wrong, all agreed that if the thing were possible, it would be exceedingly well to build up a Seminary for the Southern churches. But many doubted whether it could be done. I was convinced that it could, and strongly expressed my conviction. I did not at all wish to undertake the work. I had rather this day set out, if it were possible, to return to my beloved people in Richmond, and be confided and loved as their pastor, than to do any

thing else in this world. But I was called and urged by the majority of Hanover Presbytery to engage in the work. Situated as I was, I could not hold back. Here has been the way in which I proceeded:

1. This important, but doubtful enterprise can be accomplished in only one way—that is by uniting the interests of the Southern churches in erecting and sustaining it. Had not the enterprise been delayed too long, South Carolina and Georgia might easily have been brought into the plan; they, however, have committed themselves to the public and must go on. But I have it from the best authority that they are sorry for it. Well! as the case was, I took a map and carefully examined the whole country—this I had often done before, but I did it again; and I saw that the present location was about half way between Pennsylvania and South Carolina, and about half way between the Atlantic and the Western States; in a point about as central as any that could be fixed on; and in the midst of a respectable Presbyterian population, to which we might look for considerable aid in all little emergencies. This was my great reason for wishing the Seminary located permanently in this vicinity. That I had any selfish reason or local prejudices, I utterly deny.

2. As soon as successful efforts had been made, sufficient to prove that a Seminary could be built up, I proposed to Hanover Presbytery to offer it to the Virginia and North Carolina Synods. The history and result of that enterprise is well known.

3. My ultimate plan was to propose to take in Maryland, South Carolina and Georgia, with the expectation that half the Directors would belong to Virginia and Maryland, and half to the States South of us. Maryland agreed to the measure—our Southern brethren reluctantly refused.

4. In this state of things, I knew nothing so good as the plan proposed, and little did I think that any one would ever imagine that we were giving up old friends for new ones. How could I think so? On the plan first adopted by the Synod of Virginia, our friends in the Valley never expected to have more than half the number of Virginia Directors located among themselves. Hanover Presbytery and Winchester below the Ridge would always have the other half. Then the Valley brethren, instead of having one fourth of the power in their hands, will now have one-third, because they will have nine Directors of their own appointment always in the Board, and the Seminary will be precisely as much as theirs—as though they were located in the bounds of their Synod. How an addition of power is to operate as an alienation of old friends, I am at a loss to perceive.

5. But West Virginia Presbytery was not annexed to the Synod of Virginia for two reasons. 1. Because it was believed that the leading brethren in the Valley did not wish for it. 2. Because it was apprehended that the Synod would almost never travel over to the East side of the Ridge, and after awhile this would generate complaints, and strengthen old local feelings. I believe Dr. Speece thought so. Brother McFarland indeed expected that the measures of last Synod would create offence in the Valley; but, although he is often very clear, I could not see the force of his reasons on that occasion.

As for my own part, I did believe, as I now believe, that the whole plan was friendly and kind in its design, and will be so in its effects, should it be carried into execution. It takes a great sum of money to endow and sustain a Theological Seminary. If we have not one here, in its foundations as broad, and in its whole structure and apparatus as imposing as that at Princeton or Andover, all the leading youth of the South will go North for education, and many of the best of them will never return. Well, the plan now complained of gives the Valley nine Directors instead of six, and brings in the District of Columbia and Baltimore, the third city in the United States, into connection with the Seminary; that is, it gives to the Valley very efficient aid in raising money and increases the strength of their vote in proportion. Is this unfriendly?

But I am so desirous that the Presbyterian church should co-operate in the South, that I will do anything to unite all parts of it. Will it do to make the Seminary, by Act of the General Assembly, neutral ground—so that it shall not be in the possession of any Presbytery, and when we have three professors, one belong to each of the three Synods? Or will it do to let West Hanover be annexed to the Synod of Virginia instead of the Synod of the Chesapeake?

If the Valley brethren will nominate Dr. Speece, Mr. Ruffner or any other man in whom they confide as third Professor, I have no doubt every man in West Hanover will vote for him. If he should be elected, I will board him if he has no family; and if he has, I will surrender my house to him, and live in a log cottage. In a word I hereby pledge myself to do anything that will unite the Presbyterians to sustain their own Seminary, and build up their own church. And if putting another person in my place will have that effect, I will give in my resignation to the Board at its next meeting, and retire from the Institution. I repeat it, I will do anything—I pledge myself to this promise."

P. S. Mrs. Rice has hastily copied a letter for another brother, and intends to send it to you. What your views are on this subject, I do not know. All that I aim at is to unite the Presbyterian church from Maryland as far South as we can reach. Let us go on and prosper, and South Carolina will doubtless come in after awhile. But let us all go together. I repeat that I am willing to do anything which will effect this great object; but if we now divide our resources, when there is

such a general and violent assault on us through the whole country, we shall all sink, or be "blown sky high."

I have no desire to continue here, except with the strong, decided wish on the part of my brethren that I should do so. If any other man will take my place, and do my work better, and more to the satisfaction of the ministers than I do it, I am ready to give them place—or if all will unite and sustain the Seminary, I am willing to hold on. With much fraternal affection,  
I am truly yours,  
J. H. RICE.

FOR THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN.

## IS IT TRUE?

There is an assertion made in God's word, upon which some look with suspicion, while others openly mock at it. Now and then we see a child of godly parents going utterly astray. And I have heard a remark, in substance to this effect:—"The more pious the parent, the worse the child." Yet the assertion of God's word above referred to is, "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it." This declaration, some have learned to hold very lightly, and think that it is contradicted by facts. Let us see where the trouble is. But just here, I wish most emphatically to say that God has spoken truth in this very matter, as in all others.

Now it may be all beyond denial that godly parents do often seem to have the worst children. Let it be granted. What then? Has any proof been found that those parents did rightly obey God in training their children? It is too often assumed that because the parent is godly, therefore the child has been properly attended to. Again and again it is said:—"That boy had as good a father as ever lived. But see how terribly he has turned out." So is the evidence summed up against God's word. Now may it not be possible that the parent erred in his duty? The question may be answered by noting the meaning of this expression "Train up a child in the way he should go." Whose way? What way? Not exactly that way sometimes chosen by the parents, even though they be most godly; nor perhaps always that way in which they make the child go. Go, not the way which the child too often goes. The writer in Proverbs is speaking of the doings and ways of "the Lord." It is "His way" then in which the child should be trained, and not some other. And what is His way? I suppose that almost any Sabbath School scholar can tell us that "Effectual calling" is? And just so far as it is possible to human power the parent's duty is to work up to that answer in the case of his child—especially the "enlightening and persuading." God does not try to drive us to Himself as we try to drive our children. I say drive, for it is nothing else. We cannot force human nature to love religion; and children are human nature. The process often adopted for making them good, pious people fails in results, and the fault is neither in the declaration of God's word nor in the child. Of course there is only one other lodgment for it, namely, in the parent.

The illustrations are so many, that they cannot here be set forth. But let us take just one or two. A godly parent most earnestly longs that his God shall be the God of his children. He strives to "train" them in the way they should go. How? Take as a sample, some Sabbath afternoon. (I will not select a "week day," for too many parents give no religious thought to their children during the week, and my illustration might be out of place.) The Sabbath afternoon then. The parent having returned from church and eaten his unusually hearty dinner, calls up the children to train them. A few verses are tolled through in a not very interesting manner. For surely, the truth needs nothing to make it attractive. Then the Bible is laid aside. Now comes the Catechism. The number of questions is set for the lesson. The little ones are put to the task of learning them, while the parent reads the last paper, or takes a comfortable nap. In due time the test is applied. One after another goes through with the recitation, and we go to the child that "misses his lesson."

Down comes the angry rod; or the sharp rebuke cuts to his little heart. And this is just the training, and about all of the religious training that some children get at home. And by such, neither they nor any will learn to look with kindly eye upon religion. It is no marvel that they often learn to hate it. God never told any one to "train up a child" in this way.

Another parent is at less trouble. He simply puts the religious reading into the child's hands, gives him a seat, and sets him to work "under authority." That is "Sunday employment." Of course the little eyes will get sleepy; the little body will grow weary; the little heart will become nauseated with such religion as this. Human nature is weak at best, even in innocent childhood. Still another lays stern commands and harshly threaten the rod against all that savors of week-day plays and employments, yet substitutes nothing for these. And what shall the little ones do? What can they do? Like some of whom the Bible tells us, they learn to say of God's day—"What a weariness it is!" I say God does not so tire and worry us in bringing us to the saving knowledge of Himself. It is not His way. Long-suffering; patient mercy; grace; oft-rejected, oft-returned pleadings; teachings incessant; persuasions—ah, who shall number His ways, all full of goodness and piety for our infirmities. And then when we do come to Him, it is because He has by His Spirit so gently "persuaded and enabled us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely

offered in the Gospel." He makes us fall in love with Christ and with His religion.—This is God's way. Now let parents train their children in God's way, and when they are old, they will not depart from it. They need "enlightening." And some of this we can give them. They need "persuading." And this we can give them. They need "enabling." And here we can help them. For it is no small "enabling," when a parent so lives before his child as to make his religion attractive instead of hard and hateful.

Now in conclusion, we lose fearfully by not beginning the training soon enough. A parent waits until the child is ten, or fifteen years of age, and then takes the first steps in this work, only to find that "the world, the flesh and the devil," are all ahead of him. "Now," is the time, even though the "Now" mean in the moment of the child's birth. Claim its first breath of life for Christ, and labor to make your child good; nor once think the work done, until you can stand before the Master saying, "Here Lord are we and the children thou hast given us." Let the tiny child's finger learn how to point to where God is, ere the little tongue can utter a word about Him. Then let your life win the child's life. None can do with your child what you can. "Father and mother are the greatest and best people in the world" with them, and can lead them as they will. It is no marvel if the child goes astray, when the worldly ways are more fascinating, more loving, more kind, more important, than God's way. If we take so much pains, work so hard to train our children for the life that now is, how much greater is the life to come, and how much greater our pains to train them for it! It will be worth all the trouble taken, if at last we and our little ones may rejoice together before the face of God. SEWALL.

FOR THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN.

## A FRAGMENT.

[A venerable Elder who has long stood as a faithful servant in the church of God amid some of its most momentous conflicts, but who is now bending under the infirmities of about ninety years, sends the following "fragment." May his last years be constantly cheered by the comforting presence of a covenant God, who has said, "Even to your old age I am He."—CHS. PRES.]

It was midnight; the clock on the mantle ticked the passing moments; all else was still, silent almost as the grave. The aged one turned in his bed and awoke; the clock true to its time, struck 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. "Yes, yes; another day is gone; a new gift, another day has commenced. Ten days in another year has already passed, and I still live," said the old man to himself. "And here and now, O my Father, with none but Thee to witness my silent contemplations in this silent, solemn hour, aid me with Thy Spirit that I may wisely commune with mine own heart."

The old man was troubled in spirit, for his days were far spent, and this was a time when strong men and true must do or die; wars and bloodshed among nations, hatred and wrongs among brethren, and Christians nursing strife. The soothing of—"Thy will be done," was heartfelt, refreshing "like rain upon the mown grass;" and as he mused within himself, he remembered some of the promises of God, and some of the threatenings of God were not hid from him: "His seed also will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven. If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah." Psalm 80.

Precious words to the Saints of God! He will never leave, never forsake his people; but that their transgressions are to be visited with the rod and their iniquities with stripes, is just as certain as that the word of God is true, and that his throne is firm. People of the living God! The light of the world, the salt of the earth, what if the salt lose its saltiness? What if your light be quenched? Are there not such those who call down the chastisements of God upon themselves, and upon a sinning world? His judgments must be administered as certainly as that we sin. There is no punishment for the righteous but upon earth. Our punishment, is it not here, and the time now? We read the threatenings, and should look for their fulfillment. It is declared that the wicked "shall be utterly destroyed;" "that they shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." They eat, they drink, they are merry, and tomorrow they die. O what a doom, and what a prospect is their eternity! But they "who know their Master's will and do it not," have they also not cause to tremble?

The clock ticked on the moments, the musings were solemn, until the heavens were in unrest. Bright flashed the lightning across my window, the earth shook, the house trembled, and the reboundings of the hollow thunder was as some mighty ball, jolting from hill top to hill top, until in the mellow distance it seemed as if the breathings of the Almighty alone could be thus exemplified.

Verily there is a God who can reward and punish us. Is it true that the peace of the world, and the prosperity of Zion depends upon God, upon the faithfulness of his people? Such is indeed the strong, abiding be-

lief of a stranger in a strange land, who has been visited with the rod and with stripes for his shortcomings, for his loitering on the way to his Father's house. "Save Lord or we perish," as doth the SLOTHFUL.

FOR THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN.

## OVERTURE FROM THE PRESBYTERY OF AUGUSTA, GA., TO THE G. ASSEMBLY.

At the meeting of Augusta Presbytery, at Eatonton, Ga., April 13th, the following paper was adopted:

The Augusta Presbytery respectfully presents to the General Assembly the following Overture, with the reasons annexed, viz: That the Act of the General Assembly of 1837, by which it is made imperative on Presbyteries to examine ministers from other Presbyteries of our Church, who make application to them for membership; and all other legislation of the same purport, be rescinded.

The reasons that move the Presbytery thus to overture the General Assembly, are these:

1st. They believe this rule to be unconstitutional.

The Constitution of our Church, in chap. 16, sec. 3, treating of the translation of a minister from the pastoral charge of one church to that of another in a different Presbytery, requires that "the Presbytery to which the congregation (calling the minister) belongs, having received an authenticated copy of his release, under the hand of the clerk of that Presbytery (from which he comes), shall proceed to install him as soon as convenient."

The implication of this article, as it appears to the Presbytery, is that all our ministers, however separated into Presbyteries, are members of one and the same body, on an equal footing; and that all that is requisite for a minister to obtain membership in any Presbytery into the bounds of which he is called, is to present his testimonials from the Presbytery from which he is dismissed. No reference is made to an examination, or to anything but testimonials as the basis of a minister's reception; but it is imperatively required that on his testimonials, the Presbytery shall receive him.

It may be supposed, however, that the injunction of 1837, has acquired the force of a Constitutional rule, by the fact that the Presbyteries have universally acquiesced in it; that, thus the provision of the Constitution, chap. 12, sec. 6, has been complied with. The memorialists of your venerable body think not. The rule has never been submitted by the Assembly to the Presbyteries; it has been authoritatively imposed upon them. In fact, the Assembly of 1849, on a petition being presented to them that they submit the matter to the Presbyteries, expressly declined to do so, claiming authority to impose the rule, under their right to enjoin on Presbyteries the observance of any duty;—thus assuming the matter of this rule to be a duty; and at the same time ignoring the article in chap. 16.

Your memorialists readily yield that the Assembly have the right to enjoin the observance of duty in accordance with the Constitution; and likewise to interpret the Constitution in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution; but they may not, as in this case, alter or subvert the Constitution. For if the Assembly have the right authoritatively and absolutely to require an examination as an additional test of membership, they have equal authority to prescribe any test that fancy may suggest. It will be admitted by all, that they have authority neither to add to the Constitution, nor to subtract from it, "one jot, or one tittle." If they may add or subtract little, they may add or subtract much, or wholly subvert it.

That the simple acquiescence in, or submission of the Presbyteries to this rule does not give it the force of Constitutional law, is further manifest from this, that the Constitution requires for the establishment of a Constitutional rule, that the assent of the Presbyteries be sent up in writing. This provision was designed to meet just such a case as this,—to secure, that mere usage, however wide-spread, or however induced, should not have effect in altering the Constitution.

Still, it may be said that all communities, whether civil, social, or ecclesiastical have their right inherent in them, to judge the qualifications of their members; that this is essential to their very existence; that it is therefore the Presbyteries have the right, above the Constitution, to examine candidates for admission, at pleasure. This principle is correct; but it is not applicable to Presbyteries. A Presbytery is not an independent body; it is only a portion of a larger body set off for convenience. The Church by its rule of universal application must determine the character of its members, whether private or official; and members after they are admitted by this rule, may justly claim to be recognized fully by any portion of the Church, where Providence calls them.—Hence, in 1821, the General Assembly in response to an overture from the Baltimore Presbytery, that "After the 12th article of the 10th chap. of Form of Government, the following be added,—XIII. Every Presbytery shall judge of the qualifications of its own members,"—adopted the following:

"Resolved, that it is inexpedient to grant the request contained in this overture, or to make any alteration at present in the Book of Discipline." Thus clearly expressing their judgment, that such a regulation would be an alteration of the Constitution.

A congregational association has a perfect right to judge applicants for membership coming from another association or conference. Nay, every congregational church,

on calling a minister, may require him to be examined in their presence before he be installed as pastor; for every association, conference, consociation, and every individual church amongst them is an independent body. It is not so in the Presbyterian Church;—and this is one of the characteristics that distinguish us from them.

2nd. If there were no significance whatever in this enactment of the General Assembly, your memorialists feel that, as we have said, if the Assembly may act in one case, they may in another. But this injunction is not without significance. It subverts the fundamental principle that the Church is one family or body; that the Presbyteries are but portions of the whole, set off for convenience. The rule not only does this great principle, and places the Presbyteries in the same relation to each other as that in which congregational associations stand; but, in effect, it avers also that the ministers of any one Presbytery should stand in doubt of all ministers in the Church, but themselves. It, by authority, enjoins upon the different parts of the Church not to have confidence in each other. It requires each Presbytery to question the piety, the orthodoxy, the adherence to the Presbyterian order, of every minister in the Church except those only who constitute their own immediate body. They are required to say to every applicant, no matter who he is, or whence he comes, "We cannot receive you till we have examined you, and satisfied ourselves in regard to you."

Is not this, in fact, the destruction of the unity of the Church; nay, its complete disintegration? It is true, we still meet with our brethren of other Presbyteries in Synods, and in the General Assembly, on fraternal terms; treating them as equals, and claiming to be treated by them as equals;—yet when they propose to come into closer connection with us, by uniting with us in the same Presbytery, we make it appear that we really lack confidence in them, and must needs put them through an examination before we can receive them. This certainly is anomalous, to say the least of it. But a still greater anomaly is this;—we refuse to receive without examination, as co-laborers with ourselves in Presbytery, the very men whom we recognize as rulers in the Church, and as ruling over us by their acts in the Synods, and in the General Assembly.

If by this procedure ministers are not made to feel, that they really are not of one family, though formally united in one general body, then there is unnecessary connexion between cause and effect. So far as this is felt—and it is keenly felt by the sensitive,—it must erode the bonds of affection by which members of the same family should be bound together. Where there is lack of confidence—and the rule, as we see, by authority enjoins it upon ministers to be suspicious of each other—there cannot be true fraternal love.

The rule then teaches that the Presbyterian Church is not a compact, homogeneous body, but a very loose confederation, a mere conglomeration of possibly discordant materials. The true principle is this—to exercise great caution in introducing ministers into the Church, whether by ordination or from foreign bodies; but when once introduced, they are to be regarded as members not only of that particular Presbytery into which they are introduced, but of all or any Presbytery into which they may be called in an orderly manner. If they prove to be unworthy, there is a constitutional process for deposing them.

Your Memorialists hope that your venerable Body will take this matter anew into consideration. The original design of the rule which we desire to have rescinded, was to meet the anomalous condition of things that grew up under the Plan of Union of 1801. The evils arising out of that Plan, culminated in 1835-37, and threatened the utter subversion of the Church. Unconstitutional Presbyteries composed in large part of Congregational elements, were very numerous; and although they, in great measure, had been separated from us by the *Excoinciding Act*, still, their fruits, heterodox ministers, abundant, and purer Presbyteries could not guard against the entrance of such amongst them, but by an act of this kind.

The injunction, though unconstitutional, served that purpose; and though felt by some to be unconstitutional it was adopted because perhaps there was no other way of meeting the abounding evil. But the occasion for such an extreme measure has long since passed away. The Presbyterian Church in the United States is now eminently orthodox, evangelical, homogeneous. There is no occasion that we any more stand in doubt of each other. We should embrace as brethren; stand shoulder to shoulder as brethren, and with one heart in full fraternal confidence strive together in the ministry, for the advancement of our Church, for the advancement of the cause of the Redeemer.

All which is respectfully submitted.  
Attest: JOSEPH R. WILSON, Moderator,  
E. M. GREEN, Permanent Clerk.  
A true extract from the Minutes,  
FERDINAND JACOBS, Stated Clerk.

GAINING KNOWLEDGE.—Learning will accumulate wonderfully if you add a little every day. Do not wait for a long period of leisure. Pick up the book and gain one new idea, if no more. Save that one, and add another as soon as you can. Says an old Scotch adage: "Many a little makes a mickle."

TRUST.—"This little fellow," said Martin Luther of a bird going to roost, "has chosen his shelter, and is quietly rocking himself to sleep without care for to-morrow's lodging; calmly holding by his little twig, and leaving God alone to think of him."

Half Hours with My Hymn Book.

BY ALEXANDER H. SANDS.

Henry Kirke Whitte's Star of Bethlehem.  
Genius of the highest order might content itself with leaving on record a single verse of undying song. One such verse has imbedded itself in a nation's heart, and inspired and prompted the purest and loftiest patriotic endeavor. It may even fulfil a yet higher task. When the poet utters in well nigh inspired language the emotions of the Christian; when his verse lifts the mind up to the contemplation of the excellency of the Deity and opens to our view, in rapt surprise, the glories of the Jehovah, then does he fulfill his noblest office.

The "Star of Bethlehem" is almost such a poem. Its theme is of far higher significance than the glory of one's native country or the attractions of a terrestrial home; and the skill with which the poet has touched his lyre has evoked a strain to which angelic hosts might delight to listen. In how many human hearts have these simple lines awakened the holy devotion of former years, and in how many more have they evoked the first glow of fervent emotion.

There is a noble simplicity in the poem, yet the thought it stirs is allied to the grand and magnificent. Its opening lines introduce us to a splendid panorama of the loveliest objects in nature—chief among these is one which arrests the poet's gaze and fixes his devotion.

When marshall'd on the nightly plain,  
The glittering host bested the sky,  
One star alone of the train  
Can fix the sinner's wandering eye.  
The next verse discloses to view this splendid host as a company of chorusing-singers pouring forth their strains of praise.

Hark! hark! to God the chorus breaks,  
From every host, from every gem,  
But one alone the saviour speaks—  
It is the Star of Bethlehem.

There is here the mingling of history and metaphor. Doubtless the poet had in memory the account given by the evangelists of the strange star which conducted the Magi from their home in the east to the feet of the youthful Jesus in Bethlehem; but the personal application which follows evinces something more than a reference to the scriptural narrative. The interest in the one star which fixes his gaze is created in great part, if not altogether, by the peril of the life-mariner. He is seeking an object certain and constant—a guide to his way through the wide and tumultuous, and trackless ocean. He lifts up his eyes to the heavens, and is arrested by the star not more surpassing the rest in its brilliant beauty than in the steadiness of its ray and its fixed locality. The next verses carry the thought further by showing the need of such a guide. There are two topics engaging the poet's attention, the tempest-tossed mariner and the star which directs his course:

Once on the raging sea I rode,  
The storm was loud, the night was dark,  
The ocean waded and rucely blow'd,  
The wind that tossed my foundering bark.  
Deep horror then my vitals froze,  
Death struck, I ceased the tide to stem,  
When suddenly a star arose,  
It was the Star of Bethlehem.

The metaphor is transparently clear.—Life is the ocean, the sinner is the mariner, the singing seas are the tempests of passion which assail him, the loud storm, the dark night, the yawning ocean, are the perils to which he has just realized his exposure; a moment more and he founders his bark, and his precious, priceless cargo, the soul, sinks to rise no more. The peril is too great to endure unappalled. There is a sudden horror, a freezing of the blood at the vitals.—Just then hope beams upon the mariner.—The darkness of the night cannot quench the ray of the radiant star. It pierces through the blackness of the storm. It sends its silvery sheen across the howling tempest and over the raging waves. It rests on the path of the despairing one. He gathers new courage, he looks up to his Comforter, and now he passes the dangerous shoals and angry breakers, and now the striding waves have lashed themselves into quiet, and now the haven is in sight, and now the port is entered and the mariner is safe. But for the light of the guiding star, he had perished in mid-ocean. But for its cheering, consoling, directing rays, he had never reached the haven of security.

It was my guide, my light, my all,  
It bade my dark forbidding cease;  
And through the storm and danger's thrall,  
It led me to the port of peace.  
Now safely moored, my perils o'er,  
I'll sing first in night's diadem,  
Forever and forever more,  
The Star—the Star of Bethlehem.

Richmond Christian Advocate.

DECISION AGAINST RAFFLING AT FAIRS.—Chief Justice Bellows, of New Hampshire, says that the means used to swindle money out of persons at church by grab bags, guess cakes, rafflings, etc., are recognized in law in that State as indictable offences, and the proper officers fail to do their duty when they suffer them to pass unnoticed.

"DON'T SHIVER for last year's snow," a saying of Archbishop Whately's, is peculiarly applicable to those who make themselves miserable over troubles that are past.

THE REFORMATION.—Thomas Carlyle says that the Reformation was a judgment-day for Europe, when all the nations were presented with an open Bible, and all the emancipation of heart and intellect which an open Bible involves.

THERE IS ONLY ONE STIMULANT that never fails and never over-intoxicates—DUTY. Duty puts a blue sky over every man—up in his heart, maybe—into which the skylark, happiness always goes singing.