

not truly say—must we not be forced to say—God is as a stranger in the earth, as a mighty man that cannot save ?

A few words bearing directly on our own little history. Four years ago, it fell upon me to urge as a duty on this Synod to negotiate union with the other Presbyterian Churches of the Dominion. At that time the obstacles in the way seemed as nothing in comparison with the obvious benefits. And with rare unanimity, the views presented were adopted. Without a dissenting voice, we pledged ourselves to enter on the task of adjusting our relations to the other Churches, which were also similarly pledged with ourselves. Why are we now as far apart as ever ? How is it that resolutions unanimously accepted by influential committees, the assent of the several Churches is partial, languid, or that in many cases they are hostile ? Did the God of peace visit us just for a moment, and then withdraw as a wayfaring man ? Has He resolved to be to us as a man astonished, as a mighty man that cannot or will not save—a stranger in the land ?

I leave these questions to be answered by every one as he listeth, and pass meanwhile to consider,

II. The view indicated in this passage of the religious life. "*O, the hope of Israel,*" cries the prophet, "the Saviour thereof in time of trouble." And again, "Yet thou, Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by Thy name." What these expressions suggest is, the *direct personal character* of the relation between God and man, insisted on by the prophet, and this element of personality, of heart to heart, from God to man, as the essence of religion, seems to me to pervade and be the life of the whole sacred volume. It is not of creation, but of a creating God, nor of the fall, but of fallen man, nor of redemption, but of Christ, nor of regeneration, but of the Holy Spirit,—not, in a word, of abstractions anywhere, but of God and man everywhere, that the Bible has to tell us. I cannot dwell on this feature,—must be content merely to indicate its existence

and paramount importance. I say paramount, because neglect of this personal element has been one leading cause, in my belief, of the deadness heretofore or now existing in the Christian Church. We hear much of Christianity,—as a creed, a philosophy, a ritual of Low Church, Broad Church, High Church, of dogma, liberalism, form, of all these much, of Christ, in comparison, nothing. Take each separately as your weapon to fight the world. Take Christianity as a creed. You are simply setting dogma against dogma. And why, asks the world, should not my *ipse dixit* be as serviceable in the business of life as thine ? Take Christianity as a philosophy. It becomes a case of reasoning against reasoning. And I know not why, in time to come, as in the past, on the basis of mere reasoning, the world should not hold its own, or even carry the day. Take Christianity as a ritual. Sooner or later, every religion, trusting for its influence to forms of worship, becomes an effete thing, the subject of ridicule and scorn. Christianity as a creed opens the door for unlimited sectarianism and selfishness. This or that doctrine becomes, for the time, a Shibboleth, and, in trying rightly to pronounce it, the very meaning of the Shibboleth itself is forgotten. Christianity as a philosophy runs headlong into scepticism, and with it into sensuality, and life's motto becomes, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Christianity as a ritual degenerates inevitably into superstition and sacerdotalism, with their sure rebound to infidelity.

Oh, that we could all attain to the Bible view, "Christianity is Christ." To learn Christ, live Christ, put on Christ, love Christ, preach Christ, depart and be with Christ,—how shall I express it ? How make it more plain that the Gospel is the life of Christ, that prophecy pointed to Christ, that every epistle has for its aim to tell of Christ ! Jesus and the Resurrection,—Christ, and Him crucified—another King, one Jesus,—the kingdom and patience of Christ,—not "justification by faith alone," but by faith in Christ ; nor adoption to obedience alone, but to be joint heirs with