

are large open buildings, containing huge images of Gaudama; some in a sitting, some in a sleeping position, surrounded by images of priests and attendants, in the act of worship, or listening to his instructions. Before the image of Gaudama, are erected small altars, on which offerings of fruit, flowers, &c. are laid. Large images of elephants, lions, angels, and demons, together with a number of indistinguishable objects, all assist in filling the picture-que scene.

"The ground on which this pagoda is situated, commands a view of the surrounding country, which presents one of the most beautiful landscapes of nature. The polished spires of the pagodas glistening among the trees at a distance, appear like the steeples of meeting-houses in our American sea-ports. The verdant appearance of the country, the hills and valleys, ponds and rivers; the banks of which are covered with cattle, and fields of rice; each in their turn, attract the eye, and cause the beholder to exclaim, 'Was this delightful country made to be the residence of idolaters? Are those glittering spires, which, in consequence of association of ideas, recall to mind so many animating sensations, but the monuments of idolaters?' O my friend! scenes like these, productive of feelings so various and opposite, do, notwithstanding, fire the soul with an unconquerable desire to make an effort to rescue this people from destruction, and lead them to the Rock that is higher than they."

Many of these pagodas or temples are exceedingly imposing in their appearance. A very exact drawing of one of them, said to have been built 600 years before Christ, Shoemadoo the great temple of Pegue, about 60 miles from Ragoon is here presented to our readers. *[The cut is here wanting.]*

This edifice, is 362 feet high; and near the top of the spire are suspended several bells, which make a continual jingling, as they are moved by the wind. There are here a number of images representing good and evil spirits. On the north side of the temple are three large bells of good workmanship, hung near the ground between pillars; near them several deer horns lie strowed on the ground, and those who come to pay their devotions first take up one of these horns and strike the bell three times. This is done to let the idol know that a worshiper has come. There are several low benches near the foot of the temple, on which the person places his offering. When this is given he does not care what becomes of it, nor does he take the trouble to drive away the crows and dogs who frequently eat it before him.—S. S. Journal.

THE PRE-EXISTENCE AND DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

Before Abraham was, I am.—John viii. 58.

The Saviour was at Jerusalem teaching the people. In the course of his remarks he announced, "If a man keep my sayings he shall never taste of death"—meaning eternal death. The Jews are indignant and demand "Art thou greater than our father Abraham which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom markest thou thyself?" In replying to these inquiries, he declines bearing witness of himself, leaving them to be convinced of his works which he had wrought. He informs them, however, that Abraham whom they were sitting up as superior to him, and in whom they so much gloried, was in his feelings very-unlike them, for he says, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad." Then said the Jews unto him, "thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" Jesus said unto them, "verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am."—Reader, take your Greek Testament, and see if these words in Italics are not correctly rendered. No man will deny that this is the most natural and obvious sense of the original. Priestly, himself, admits that "the literal meaning of our Lord's expression is, that he had lived before Abraham."—Is it not the true meaning also? I believe it is, and for the following reasons:—

1. Christ had said that Abraham rejoiced, or anxiously desired to see his day and was glad. His hearers understood him that he lived when Abraham lived, and therefore immediately object that he was not fifty years of age, whereas Abraham had been dead almost 2,000 years. It is to meet this objection the Saviour uses the remarkable words quoted above, and therefore to make them relevant, they must be understood literally, that is as implying that he had actually conversed with Abraham, and even lived before that Patriarch's day.

2. Our Lord introduces the words, with the solemn asseveration, "verily, verily," which leads us to expect an important truth, and a simple and intelligible statement of that truth. But we have neither one nor the other, if Christ does not here assert his pre-existence.

3. The Jews understood our Saviour on this occasion as orthodox Christians do. They believed him to assert not only his pre-existence, but existence from all eternity—to make himself God; and therefore they sought to stone him.

4. Christ himself has sanctioned this interpretation by not undeceiving the Jews—by his bare silence. We know with what holy indignation Paul and Barnabas refused divine honors from the idolatrous Lystrians, and how promptly the angel declined the homage of St. John, when the latter fell down to worship him. Would not the same feeling have caused Christ, if a mere man, and a man of piety, to shudder at the thought of thus holding himself forth as God; and would he not do his utmost to undeceive the Jews forthwith as well in order to relieve his own mind, as to prevent their imbibing an invincible prejudice against his person and doctrine?

5. I find Origen, in reply to the heathen philosopher Celsus, saying, "we do not pay these honors which are due to God alone, to an upstart of to-day, nor to one who has not heretofore existed, for we believe him who saith, 'Before Abraham was, I am.'" And Origen flourished in the middle of the third century, and understood Greek quite as well as most modern critics.

6. I find those who renounce the literal meaning straitened to find any other of the least plausibility. Socinus was for a long time troubled with this text before he could devise any other meaning at all for it; till at length his nephew informs us he received from heaven a solution of his difficulty. "Non sine multis precibus ipsius, Jesu nomine invocato, inpotavit ipse." The inspired version is this—"Before Abram can be ABRAHAM, I must be—the MESSIAH!"—The followers of Socinus are ashamed of this and have proposed other renderings, but they all labor under two essential defects—they are far-fetched and irrelevant.

For these reasons I believe Christ to say in this passage, that he was not only contemporaneous with Abraham, but that he lived before his day, yea, from all eternity. Mark the expression. He does not say, "Before Abraham was, I was;" but "before Abraham was I AM." By this form of expression he implied, that his priority to Abraham was not that of a creature which had a beginning, but of the Creator who is without beginning of years. Jehovah in Exodus assumes I AM as a title by which he was to be known and distinguished from the gods of the heathen, and all things which have a derived existence and exist only in time. By using the expression therefore, Christ evidently asserted his eternity and self-existence, and consequently his divinity.—Camden Observer.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN SENTINEL.

BENEFIT OF THE HOLY COMMUNION.

Mr. Editor:—

I have sometimes heard it said, that experience is a good schoolmaster. This is perhaps meant to apply more particularly to those persons whose the experience is; but certainly we may profit if we will by that of other men. I have, I trust, benefited by my own; and because what I am going to relate will apply to all who own the name of a crucified Master, I sincerely hope that my experience may be made profitable to your readers.

I am convinced that one object of our Lord in giving Sacraments to his Church was, to serve as the means of faith, as it were, stakes to the tent of our holy profession, to keep it steadfast in the soul amidst the temptations of a deceitful world. Thus we may at any time recur to our baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus, and be reminded, by a visible sign and seal, of the holy covenant into which we have been admitted with a holy Lord God. A recollection of the sign of the Cross made on our foreheads, may remind us that the eyes of men and angels are upon us, and watching our conduct as the enlisted soldiers of the Captain of our sal-