

THE
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FEARING FOR THE TRUTH

GRAVE fears are often expressed by timid souls in regard to the spread of scepticism and infidelity. Unbelief, in the various forms of Deism, Pantheism, and Positivism, it is alleged, is rapidly undermining the very foundations of the Christian Church, and "if the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?"

It is unhappily true that many of our savans have, of late years, ranged themselves on the side of unbelief, and are throwing the weight of their great influence with the educated classes into the scale of error, and even of atheism. It is also true that these men have numerous disciples who retail their sceptical utterances, and without a tithes of their ability or attainments, surpass the boldest of them in the recklessness of their assertions, as "fools rush in where angels fear to tread."

The tide is undoubtedly setting very strongly just now in that direction. But there are moral considerations which may tend to re-assure our fearful friends in regard to the ultimate issue of the conflict between truth and human opinion now going on. And first of all, we have GOD on our side, and greater is He that is with us than all that can be against us. Our reliance must be, not on truth so much as upon the God of truth, for without His aid we have no faith in the old adage about the greatness and ultimate prevalence of truth over error.

Then we have conscience on our side—God's vicegerent in the human breast. Every man who allows conscience to be heard—and there are times when it will be heard, whether men choose or refuse to listen—knows there is a God, and a law which condemns him for his sin, and a judgment seat in some form, before which he must one day stand. And hence, however many may live as infidels, very few die such.

And thirdly, apart altogether from the value we may attach to the Christian evidences, which to the sincere seeker after truth, will seldom fail to convince the doubting, there is the felt want of the human soul for something which infidelity can never supply. Unbelief is a negation, and no mere negation can ever satisfy a nature which is ever reaching out its hands after the spiritual and eternal. And therefore, as a mere negation, unbelief never has long prevailed over a people, and from the very nature of the case, never can. The soul, conscious of its relations to the unseen and the eternal, revolts at the impiety that would deprive it of its inheritance, and of its fellowship with the Father of spirits, and echoes the declaration of the Divine Word, "the fool saith in his heart, there is no God."

On these grounds, therefore, we have no fear of any general spread, or at least of any

long prevalence of infidelity. What there is of it let us contend with not so much with the weapons of philosophy, or of the Christian evidences, as by a more earnest and fearless assertion and utterance of God's Word. "Preach the Word," said Paul. Keep your doubts, if you are ever tempted to them, to yourself. You can never convert men by telling them of your doubts, even after you have conquered them. But keep before them the convictions whereunto you have attained. Emphasize with all your might the truth of the Gospel, and by God's blessing, your faith shall beget faith in those who hear you.

THE MISSION FIELD.

The contributions of the Congregational churches of America last year to their three leading missionary organizations amounted to nearly one million dollars, exclusive of the gift of one million made by Deacon Otis. Excepting the Moravians, no Church has a better record.

The Home at Constantinople, under the charge of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, is overrun with applications to such an extent that the teachers have given up one of their parlours for a dormitory. This year for the first time Turkish girls have entered the institution, a step which marks a new era in its history. Last year there were two Bulgarian girls at the Home, now there are seven. The Turks are beginning in various places in Turkey to attend Christian service.

The New York "Evangelist" thinks that in the United States there has been a diminution of interest in foreign missions of late. That is quite probable. We wish that any diminution were possible in our churches in Canada. There is no doubt that we have lost much in missionary fervour because our churches here have had nothing to do directly with work in heathen lands. The missionary fervour and zeal have not been aroused as they might and should have been. It is well enough to sneer at "telescopic philanthropy." But, after all, in Christian service we need the stimulus which we can get from the thought that we are toiling for the redemption of the world—not for this country or that, but for the world.

In reply to the charge of failure of Foreign Missions, the "St. Louis Presbyterian" gives the following striking facts: "1. During the last year the Gospel was preached in one thousand towns and cities in China where it had not been previously heard. 2. In China there are 14,000 native church members. 3. The missionaries of the American Baptist Church baptized last year 18,000 converts from heathenism. 4. In Madagascar the idols have been burned, and the London Missionary Society reports 1,000 churches and 67,726 church members. 5. The British Wesleyan Missionary Society reports 170,000 communicants. 6. Not less than 60,000 idolaters in Southern India cast away their idols and embraced Christianity in the year 1878."

Dr. Clark, the foreign secretary of the A. B. C. F. M. gives the following interesting facts concerning the work in Japan: The first evangelical sermon in the Japanese language was preached by a missionary of this Board at Kobe, seven years ago, to a native audience consisting of one person, besides the domestics in the missionary's family; and the first native pastor was ordained in January, 1877, over a church in Osaka. There are now fourteen churches connected with this Board alone, with a membership of between four and five hundred, while the entire number of evangelical churches connected with different missionary bodies is not less than fifty, and more than a hundred native preachers are proclaiming salvation by Christ to their countrymen. In view of such result, unparalleled in the history of modern missions, we might well exclaim, "What hath God wrought!"

This is well put: "If each of the two hundred and thirty thousand female members of the Congrega-

tional churches alone would sacrifice the value of one pair of kid gloves per year for this object (missionary work) they could easily send into the field a thousand teachers."—Secretary American Missionary Association. "Let me suggest that while the female portion of society sacrifice one pair of kid gloves, the male portion might be incited to sacrifice the value of one week's tobacco."—Prof. H. S. Bennett. In like manner Hon. W. E. Dodge, in an address at Syracuse, asked the women to wear the one bonnet all the year through and devote the price of the new one to the foreign mission work. And he asked, the men to do the same with their new hat. This is getting back to primitive times. "And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing-hearted, and brought bracelets, and ear-rings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold, and every man that offered, offered an offering of gold unto the Lord; and all the women that were wise-hearted did spin with their hands and brought that which they had spun."

John Dunn, whose name has come up so often in connection with the Zulu war and who has been rewarded for his services by being made a chief under the new order of things, has a bitter hatred to all missionaries and mission work. His first act as a Zulu chief has been to forbid the entrance of all Christian missionaries into his dominions. We don't wonder at this in the slightest. The great mass of the white people in these border lands of South Africa with whom, no doubt, John Dunn has spent most of his life have exactly the same feelings. It is not the first time in which, in those regions, missionaries have been ordered off, and for the same reasons. The very presence of these missionaries is a protest against the iniquitous courses which too many of the white colonists follow. It makes them uncomfortable, and they therefore prefer to have none of it. The Dutch Boers some quarter of a century ago ordered all missionaries out of the Transvaal because they protested against the enslavement of the native children. John Dunn and others are only following suit. And they are wise in their generation. Some men have always hated the light because their deeds were evil.

The anniversary of the American Missionary Association (Congregational), just held at Chicago, marks an important period in the history of that institution. A third of a century has passed since its organization. This Society has missions among the Africans, Chinese and Indians of America. Its field of operations has greatly enlarged since the emancipation of the slaves. It supports twenty collegiate and normal institutions for the education of teachers and ministers from and for the coloured people of the South. It has organized 67 Congregational churches in the South with a membership of 4,600, of whom 745 were added last year. In its 8 chartered colleges, 12 normal and 24 other schools, are 190 teachers, 7,207 scholars, 86 being students in theology. The schools are growing in favour with both races at the South. A donation of \$150,000 by Mrs. Stone will be used for the erection of buildings at Nashville, Atlanta, New Orleans and Talladega. The work among the Chinese and Indians appears to be in good condition, as is also the mission in Africa. The annual sermon was preached by Dr. Storrs of Brooklyn from the text, "This is the Lord's doing," etc. Papers were read on such significant topics as "The Providential meaning of the Negro in America;" "Protection of Law for Indians;" "The Chinese in America." Ju Gaw, a Chinaman from California, Big Elk, an Indian, and Rev. Mr. Sanders, a negro—representatives of three despised races—addressed the meeting and told what the Lord had done for them. The presence of these three men on the platform is said to have been one of the most impressive spectacles of the entire meetings. The meetings throughout were most successful. The attendance of ministers and laymen from all parts of the country was large. The announcement that in these three years of commercial depression the debt of \$93,000 has been wholly extinguished was received with great enthusiasm; and the fact that over \$37,000 had been paid on the debt, the year's expenses met, and a small surplus in hand was surely a sufficient excuse for thanksgiving.