

much assistance. Go-carts, whistles, sucking-bottles, and corals, were made for an infantile race, and if we may judge preachers by the helps prepared for them, they must, many of them, be still in long clothes and hats and hoods."

INDIAN MISSIONS.

MY DEAR MRS. HARVIE,—Only a few more days of this year, and as I wish to write to you before the close, it is time I made a beginning. I will do so first of all by wishing you a "Happy New Year." The weather is warm and cloudy, which is trying in this climate. The children have a week's holiday; they have not had any since school began last February, except perhaps a day now and again on the occasion of any of their great days. The attendance has improved the last six weeks, all those having returned who were kept at home by the performance of ceremonies which their caste people especially are expected to perform after the death of one of their number. The school hour has been changed to eleven. Since the cold weather they do not come out in the early morning when cold, though most are clad very comfortably for Hindoo girls. Sandilára and Saiva are better provided than the others. The former shewed me one day her different garments. No less than three muslin underwaists, above these a short jacket of chintz, then a garment very much like a waistcoat of plaid. She wears the skirt, like all Hindoo women and girls, very full. They like to have them six yards wide; it has been the custom for ages; they would not think of making any change. She wears the chaddar also; all the children do, with two exceptions, two cousins, who are Marathas, and came to this part some months ago from Bombay. Sandilára, niece of Saiva, has lost her mother, and lives with her grandparents. They have a salary of \$350 per month, but they live in real native style. A chair is always brought for me whenever I go, but the women and girls either sit on the floor of the verandah which surrounds the courtyard, or on a charpái (bedstead) in it. Little Saiva, so called to distinguish her from the elder Saiva, is as attractive as ever. She wears many silver anklets, and the noise of these and her merry laugh tell of her coming before she is in sight. I visit the homes of all the children in school with one exception. The family have only lately come from Cawnpore, although I got the consent of their father, their mother, it seems, is not willing. Their grandmother, it appears, has a great influence in preventing my coming. She is very unlike Sandar's grandmother, who always receives me so kindly. Her only brother lives in Agra, and as he is a Christian her family will not allow her to go to visit him. If she went they would not take her back again amongst them. She seems to have a wish to see him, as she has not seen him for years. Not long ago I went into the house while Sandar was eating her food. She ate her chapátis (thin cakes of unleavened bread), drank a mouthful or two of water, which was in a brass cup by her side, then with the remainder of the water washed the part of the floor where she had been eating. The floors are all simply mud floors, washed over frequently with a mixture of cow manure and sand as a means of cleaning them. Yesterday I was forbidden to enter a house in the city, which I had before visited a few times. The women were all friendly, but the men were opposed, and as the women wished to prevent disturbance I had to come away. One of the men asked me for my book, a Hindi New Testament, which I had in my hand, on pretence that he wished to know what book it was. I gave it to him; he walked off into the house with it, saying he would have me put in prison. This was only to frighten me. When he found he did not succeed he ordered me to go. Meantime an old woman brought me out my book. I came away after getting the Testament, feeling it useless to remain. The woman I wished especially to meet remained inside; probably they would not allow her to come out. I have not met any woman who listened to the reading of the Scriptures as attentively as she; for the present there is no hope of reaching her. Some time ago one of the men in this house told me if I brought the Bible there again he would have me put in prison. I ventured back again, only to find them more bent on putting a stop to my coming, or rather to my bringing the Bible to their homes. The work is growing on our hands; if some oppose we still find more to do than we can always overtake. Mr. and Mrs. Douglas are out in the district. The mission circle are all well. Indore, Dec. 29th, 1880. MARGARET RODGER.

DAVID'S LAST PSALM.

(2 Samuel xxiii. 1-7.)

Hear David's song—like dying swan he sings
His last—good Jesse's son, the man whom God
From low estate uplifted to high honour,
Messiah, with the oil of Jacob's God
Anoint; of Israel's psalms the singer sweet :—
By me Jehovah's Spirit spake, His word
Was on my tongue. Even Israel's God, the rock
Of Israel, thus unto me spake:

A ruler be thou over men for righteousness,
By God's fear guided in thy rule;
Then blessing comes; cheering as dawn of morn,
After black midnight; glorious as the sun
When rising in a cloudless sky, glistening
Like grass bedewed with raindrops, beauteous all,
In the clear sunlight.

Fulfilled has been His word beyond desert,
Not so with God has been my house; and yet
His covenant of ages stands with me,
In everything arranged, unfailing, sure,
That covenant of promise is my all,
My safety, my desire; although my faults
Have hindered still its growth and beauty.

The sons of Belial; in God's name I will
Root out—all of them, like briars shaken out;
No careful hand of husbandman shall touch
To gather—but with tool of iron girt,
A tool long-handled, will together heap
And toss into the flames to be consumed,
Before my judgment seat.

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SCRIPTURAL TESTS AND CHRISTIAN LIBERTY.

MR. EDITOR,—While thanking you for your courtesy to my last letter, I intended, with your kind permission, to go a little farther into the question of the right of Churches, as constituted in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to make admission to His ministry conditioned on intellectual conditions of belief in regard to what are universally admitted to be non-essentials, or to exclude, on the ground of such tests, men of God plainly called by the Lord Jesus Christ, to His ministry. No reasonable person would expect any body of believing men to sanction teaching which left out or altered anything they believed essential to the faithful preaching of the Gospel of Christ, and I should think it most desirable that each Church should thoughtfully and prayerfully agree upon what these essentials are; but will the most enthusiastic upholder of our standards assert for a moment that everything contained in them is such an essential? Such an assertion would be simply impious, for all must admit that God has abundantly blessed the preaching of men who could not endorse every doctrine of these standards. By what right then does any Church set up tests excluding such men from her ministry?

I am quite aware that Churches do assume this right, and therefrom has sprung much lamentable schism and separation, but that does not prove it, for they can have it by no other authority than that Christ has given them, and there is no ground whatever in Scripture on which they can claim it; and I am arguing, not on the ground of expediency or custom, but on the single principle of *Scriptural right*, believing that this will be found, in the end, the true expediency. When you can shew me anything in Scripture which warrants the exclusion of men from Christian Churches on account of difference of opinion in *non-essentials*, I shall at once concede the right of Churches to claim what I now believe to be an unscriptural assumption of lordship over the conscience. We have a question, arising in the early Church, of difference of opinion in regard to matters involving what seemed then most important principles—the eating of things formerly forbidden, or of meat offered to idols, and the observance of sacred days. Does St. Paul lay down an article for the Church in these matters and say, "If any man thinks differently, he can leave us?" No! But "let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?" and it seems to me as clear as daylight that Churches should "look to their marching orders," and assume no right that Christ has not given them; most of all when by such usurpation they exclude His beloved and faithful servants. But I will not dwell further on this question at present, as I wish to give an interesting extract on the subject of liberty in Protestant Churches from an article by an American Presbyterian minister, published in a recent number of the "Presbyterian Monthly," sent to me from the Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia. It sufficiently replies to the last part of your article, and shews that the Pres-

byterian Church is waking up to appreciate the evil wrought by the present system of traditional tests.

"It cannot be denied that while Protestantism started with liberty—liberty for every man not only to read the Word of God for himself, but also to form from the Word of God that theological belief which his reason, informed by the Holy Ghost, gave him—that the latter liberty was soon denied, and practically abridged the movement. Protestantism found it necessary to agree upon its confessions. From that moment, liberty of forming or asserting any convictions different from those already defined by the particular Church was sacrificed to the instinct and necessity of order. A traditional sense was attached to the passages of God's Word by the various Churches of Christendom, just as by Rome herself, and men were bound to that traditional sense under sufficiently heavy penalties. They were not cast out with curses or excommunications, but they were thoroughly cast out for all that. The Church of England, the most liberal of all the Protestant Churches, expelled the Puritans. She expelled the Non-conformists; she expelled practically the Methodists, Presbyterianism—has destroyed her fertility, that she might stand stern and austere in the dignity and immutability of her Confession, while the glowing life which would have quickened her passed out of her pale forever. The Church of Rome in occupying the ground of exclusiveness is consistent, while Protestantism is inconsistent. The Church of Rome presents a united body in favour of its dogmas. Protestantism is divided within itself. These differences give to the former infinite advantage, and are the real reason why the Reformation has suffered arrest, for no carnal weapon of Rome could ever have prospered against the spiritual weapons of the Reformers.

"What remains to be done? The Reformation is arrested; it must be completed. The standard of liberty must be carried forward to a higher vantage ground; the last intrenchment must be scaled; we have won a free Bible, a free Church government, a free civil government; we must win a free discussion of theology. But we are told the press is free; that all men may and do write as they please. It is not true; discussion is not free as long as ministers who take any side but one are liable to be proceeded against. So long as this is the case the substantial intellect of the ministry will not express itself, and the battle will be fought, as now, by outsiders, who are competent merely to disturb the repose of assured conviction, and not to restore it.

"If the really able minister of the Gospel is clearly convinced that there are some things in the established formulas which require to be changed, as no longer tenable with reason nor reconcilable with an advanced knowledge, he sees plainly what it will cost to put his convictions forth. 'If I break the ice,' he argues, 'it will be instantly said that I have broken faith and dishonoured my professional views. There will be an instant cry to have me stifled, silenced, or trampled down!' And thus the result is; that laymen are free to say what they please upon such subjects, while clergymen cannot express aught but the established opinions, nor shew variation from them in thought or word. This is the anomaly which the case presents. It is said that the ministers who are set apart to the study of this particular subject are to be the only persons who shall not be permitted to have an independent opinion of it. Uncertainty extends to all classes of society. The surface crust of argument grows thinner day by day, and there are ever and anon sharp cracks of vague misgiving. There is one class of men competent above all others to prove the sources of this unrest to the core, but they are denied full liberty to say what they think. You can speak out, but if your speech varies from the tradition of the Church, whose hired exponent you are, then you are a recreant to your trust, a breaker of your covenant. This is the peril, and it is sufficient to keep prudent men warily silent, the men most fitted, perhaps, to settle these perplexities. It is like saying that lawyers must take no part in the amendment of the statute book; the engineer must be silent on mechanism; and if an improvement is wanted in the art of medicine, physicians must have nothing to say about it.

"But such an anomaly must disappear. The whole progress of humanity is diametrically opposed to it. Already we stand in a position from which we may fairly ascertain the purpose of the Almighty. All the events of His providence are setting the seal to the