will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

It is not enough to plant a social settlement in a slum and send some of the "privileged class" to dwell there. Sin is not cured by scenery any more than small-pox. The cross of Jesus must be planted in the slum, and the radiant presence and saving power of the matchless Christ, in whose person dwells all the fulness of the Godhead, and through whom the Great Father seeks His wayward children, must come with a Gospel that imparts life and says to them who are dead in trespasses and sins: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

MISSIONARY DIFFICULTIES.

Paper read at Mission Meeting, Washington, D. C.

There are several features of Foreign Missionary work which have about equal weight with me. The one I have chosen to mention this evening is, the difficulty which the ignorant heathen mind must encounter in deciding what to do, who to believe, which (of the various forms of religion offered by the different sects) is right. When I say ignorant heathen mind, I mean ignorant on this subject. A Chinaman may or may not be educated up to the standards of his neighborhood about certain matters, and that will not affect his position as to something entirely new: except that any kind of cultivation is an improvement to a certain extent. Let us suppose a man of the interior: his life having been spent in degradation, his ideas almost limited to devising the best plan for procuring the actual necessaries of life—and there are untold numbers of just such human beings—to be suddenly aroused to the fact that his life is unsatisfactory, and to feel that there is—there must be—something better, somewhere. He is in earnest about desiring whatever it is; his sincerity as to planning for his own advantage cannot be doubted.

Of course, this idea becomes definite very gradually. He wants a change at first, because any change must be an improvement over his present state; or at least, cannot leave him any worse off. He has been brought to this state of investigation by hearing the declarations of some missionary—or some neighbor who has heard a missionary—who asserts that this existence is a very small part of eternity; and the least important part, considering the happiness or misery experienced here. Naturally he will appeal to the man who seems to know about the matter. I say seems to know, because these people cannot be certain of the statements of strange men at once. The Presbyterian missionary tells him one thing, the Romanist another. He, perhaps gets only this idea from both, that he is unhappy, and will be so as long as his present course of life continues; that he knew before; the methods of relief do not agree; the men who are making such positive assertions, and who have come so far from their homes, and taken so much trouble on account of what they believe, do not think the same way; positively disagree on vital points. What is the man to do who has no reason for taking one statement in preference to another? And whose true and only motive is enlightenment?

The visible and insincere forms of the Romanist emissaries must always be in opposition to the invisible and sincere religion of the Protestant missonaries. In a recent letter from one of our missionaries. In a recent letter from one of our mismanists were promising the natives protection of different kinds; from robbers, from extortionate tax-gathers, and others, on condition of their being enrolled as members of that body; and that people had come to him offering to join his church if he would guarantee something similar. This shows the utter ignorance of the Chinese as to the kind of relief the religion of Jesus offers. It will take time, money, work and prayers to bring these people to a correct and satisfying idea of what "a home in heaven" means. They must be instructed as to what to do to have the truth made plain to them; they must be taught what is the truth; they must be taught how to investigate.

I don't think that we, here in a Christian and educated country, can appreciate the difficulties which our missionaries have to encounter in this direction. When a man knows enough about what he wants to ask a direct question it is not hard to give him an answer that will, to a certain extent, be satisfactory, at least that will convey some information on the subject, and so help him on the way to final and complete satisfaction; but when you have to find out what he wants to know and then satisfy him, the difficulties are much increased; and divine help is needed to first state the dream, and then tell its interpretation. Such I take it is the condition of the very ignorant Chinese and heathen generally. Those who are better informed as to their own so-called religion, are not much better off, ifk any. For they must be taught to forget the old forms, to empty their minds and hearts of ridiculous idolatry, before there is room for the pure Word of God.

I cannot see anything in the near future which indicates likelihood of a decided change in the methods now being pursued by the different denominations for making converts. Unity of action is most to be desired. But we Presbyterians have our ideas and the others have theirs. We can only continue to work and wait, assured that in his own good time the Master will show the perfection of his plan.

FIFTY YEARS OF SERVICE LOST TO CHRIST.

Rev. H. Waddell Pratt.

How did it happen? By a custom prevailing in the Presbyterian Church. We mean the custom of those who are to profess their faith in Christ for the first time, or of those who are received by letters from other churches; in waiting till the communion season to publicly unite with the church.

The matter was forcibly brought to our attention somewhat more than a year ago. A young lady had accepted Christ in her heart, had given satisfactory evidence to her pastor of her faith and declared her intention of making a public profession, such as Christ commands. The pastor said: "Come at once before the Session, and on next Sunday morning you will be publicly received." She replied: "Our people have always waited till communion, and since that is three weeks off only, I shall come then." Nothing that he could say could overcome the desire to adhere to a custom which prevailed in one of the good churches in the Valley of Virginia. The following Sunday the young lady was at church, but when communion season came she was too sick to be out. The pastor had a similar experience with her the next communion, until finally five months after her decision for Christ she came when there was no communion service. But in the meantime she had lost five months of open, active service for Christ. And Christ and the church had lost five months of active service. This may be an extreme case, but we think it is reasonable to suppose that owing to this custom of waiting till the communion season to take our places openly in the ranks of Christian soldiers, at least an average of one month of service and usefulness for Christ is lost in the life of every church member.

But how were fifty years of service lost? We refer to a church of six hundred members. An average of one month of service was lost in the life of each member, and hence these six hundred months lost are fifty years in that church lost for Christ, and lost through a custom that has no authority in Scripture or in reason.

The only time to unite with the church by making a public profession of faith in Christ is the first public service after the decision for Christ is made in the heart, and it is not necessary to quote Scripture to prove this to the intelligent readers of this paper. Ordinarily therefore this public confession will not come on communion Sabbath. Moreover this uniting with the church as soon as decision is made applies to those coming by letter also. For here is a man and his family who have just come in February to the city. He wants to unite with your church. But the next communion is in April, and bound by this custom he waits till then to present his letter, and though he may attend church, yet he does not regard himself nor do people regard him as united with them in the service of Christ in that congregation, until he actually unites. Hence his active co-operation is lost.

Reason also says that the putting off till a communion season to unite with the church has a bad effect on the activities of Christians who are trying to lead souls to Christ. This remark is based on the conduct of an efficient Sabbath-school teacher, who said that at this communion season six out of her twelve scholars were going to confess Christ. What is the trouble here? The trouble is that if she had not been waiting till the communion season to lead her pupils to Christ, she could probably have accomplished what she did in January during October, November and December, and all those months of service would have been gained for Christ. Besides her own Christian activity would have been steady and constant instead of being spasmodic and under high pressure in the week preceding the communion.

Is not this custom a very dangerous one in that it teaches that there is a special season for doing what Christ commands to be done at once? And have my readers ever noticed the hurtful reaction that takes place after a large number have been publicly received on a communion Sabbath?

We hope that these few lines will so commend themselves to the reasons of our ministers that we will break up this custom entirely, as the writer has found it easy to do in his own field.

THE SONG OF THE SANCTUARY.

I have always taken great interest in music, and especially in church music, having sung, as man and boy, in choirs, over sixty years.. I am now over eighty, and dearly love as best I may, to join in the praise of God with His people. So I have often thought of the best way to induce as many of them as possible to join in the worship of praise as is their duty. There is nothing more desirable or effective in our worship at this time than good and hearty congregational singing. The nearest approach, musically, to its possible effects, is a large and well balanced orchestra. As in the orchestra the reeds and braying trumpets blend with the strings, contributing to the delightful effects, so when the great body of the people sing, the old men and women, with their trembling nasal tones (not more so than the reeds) blends with the strong, fresh voices of men, women and children, to produce a glorious diapason unequaled this side of heaven.

But how to bring this about? I answer by having "Course Choirs" when possible, and it will be possible in congregations of three hundred and upwards. What do I mean by Course Choirs? I mean to go back to the Tabernacle worship, established by Moses and 2 brought to possibly greater perfection through David and Solomon; and, afer much thought, I am convinced that every hundred members—regular attendants—with their families, ought to furnish one good choir, and that the application of this principle would not only relieve many weary, faithful workers in our choirs, but be productive of many beneficial effects in the worship of the church to-day. I will now try briefly to enumerate some of these wished-for effects or results.

It would certainly give a lively personal interest to a greater number of people in the subject, and develop many a modest flower and gem "of purest ray serene," etc. As music is so generally taught now, there are numbers of young people who should have a chance to sing and take prominent part in public worship. I am sure also that this service is now such a burden to many valuable singers that they would gladly have others to share it with them. Moreover, this system would check and allay the troubles that choirs are liable to; also if members of the choir on duty were absent their places could easily be filled. The choirs not on duty would be distributed all through the house, greatly aiding and inciting congregational singing. These are some of the advantages of course choirs, very inadequately stated. To make the services of God's house attractive is surely a matter of vast importance, and should enlist the co-operation of every earnest Christian. I sometimes think the wonderful journey through the wilderness was only possible by the stimulus and inspiration of the sweet singers of Israel.

An Old Elder.

"THE CREED OF CHRIST."

Rev. Richard Venable Lancaster.

Having read this book twice and carefully, we recommend it cheerfully to those who wish to know what Jesus of Nazareth believed about God and immortality and correlative subjects.

The author assumes "that the gospels are a true record" of the life of Christ, and undertakes, by collecting his words on these subjects, to frame his doctrines into a creed.

This is a fair application of the Baconian principle of philosophical induction to the philosophy of religion as taught by "the Christ." He gathers his facts and builds his philosophy on these facts, imparting no facts or beliefs of his own. The simple question is, what did Christ believe about these subjects which are confessedly above the reach of the human understanding? When this has been done it remains only to decide whether his authority to dictate to anxious inquirers after divine truth is ample. This is widely different from the way in which Mr. Jefferson constructed his Bible. He, too, selected "the very words of Jesus, paring off the amphibologisms into which they (the evangelists) have been led by forgetting often, or not understanding what had fallen from him, by giving their own misconceptions of his