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"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

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Poetry.

To the Students of Acadia College.

ON READING OF THE PRESENTATION OF SWORDS BY
GENERALS WILLIAMS AND INGLIS TO KING'S COLLEGE.

Brethren in Jesus—Soldiers of the Cross.

Have ye no trophies of great victories won?
No laurels in your country's service gained?
No deeds of daring which your hands have done?

Have ye no swords whose glittering blades have been
Dyed in the life-blood of your fellow-men—
In Alma Mater's keeping to be placed
And there as sacred relics to remain?—

Is Scotia proud to hail her gifted Sons
Who from Acadia's classic halls go forth?
Does she delight to honor them—and tell
To nations round their deeds of matchless worth?

No—for the master whom ye serve—has said
"My kingdom's not of this world"—and ye
Who wage His warfare—His commission bear—
Tho' armed for combat—men of peace must be—

Yet ye must wield a sword of keener edge
And purer metal than these boasted ones—
A weapon which the King of Heavens gives
Sure pledge of victory—to His chosen sons—

This matchless blade has never failed its mark
How'er unpractised be the warrior's hand—
Twas forged and tempered by Almighty skill,
Nor can a host of foes its power withstand.

Armed with this stainless weapon—sons of God
Go forth and conquer in your Master's name
And tho' your deeds of patience—faith and love
Be unapplauded by the voices of Fame;

In that blest day when Jesus shall call home
His weary soldiers from the battle field—
And to His patient followers here below
The conqueror's crown—the victor's palm shall yield;

Then shall all suffering in His cause endured,
Each victory in His strength achieved, be known—
His praises then shall dwell on every tongue
And in His triumphs ye shall find your own—

But ah! it strikes not to destroy—but save
Mercy designed it—and 'tis sheathed in love
It brings the smitten to the conqueror's feet
To raise him to a Heaven of joy above.

Stewiacke, July 1859.

J. B.

Religious.

Who should be Baptized?

BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON, MINISTER
OF NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL.

"If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest."—Acts viii. 37.

It is not my wont to preach what men call baptizing sermons. It is very rarely that I as much as mention the subject, for this simple reason—that I find that men are more easily converted to this truth by my silence than by my speaking concerning it. For strange it is to say, that a very large number of persons who have come into my church have thought out this matter purely for themselves, and could in no wise trace their alteration in sentiment to any remark of mine, but simply to the fact that their thoughts have been directed to this subject, and they have seen it plainly in Holy Scripture. Now this I decidedly prefer, because then I feel sure that their faith standeth not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. I refused, on one occasion to go to Ireland when invited by a brother, who stated as the reason why he wished me to go, that by going there I should much increase the Baptist denomination. I said, "No, I would not go across the street to make a Baptist; much less across the sea. I would endeavour, as in the sight of God, to deal with men, to bring them to Christ. I must leave them then to the Spirit of God to teach them further the things of the Spirit of God. Yet, nevertheless, I must not be silent; I dare not. If I would make full proof of my ministry, and preach the Gospel fully, I must dwell upon that very great ordinance of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he has himself put in a very important place, when he couples it with believing and salvation, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be

saved." Yet let me assure you, I introduce not this topic in a tone of controversy, for that I would abhor, but only because I feel it to be the burden of the Lord that presses upon me, and as it is a part of God's word let me preach thereon. In that excellent and estimable church, the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, it is usual before the administration of the Lord's Supper, to preach a sermon which is called "the sermon of the fencing of the table." Now I think that the fencing of the table is but one manner of stating a great duty on the part of a Christian minister. All God's doctrines, all his promises, and all his ordinances need to be fenced. In the fencing of the Lord's table the principal topic is—who are the fit subjects for the reception of the Lord's Supper? who may draw nigh to the sacred bread and wine? and who ought not to approach thereunto?

Now as the Lord's table should be fenced, so also should the pool of baptism, so should the promises of God, and so should those great and glorious doctrines which are essentials of our faith. And I believe that the only fence which is proper and Scriptural is this—"If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest." Does a man ask me, "May I believe myself to be elect?" I reply, "God certainly has an elect people; but thou hast no right to believe thyself one of them, except thou believest with all thine heart." There is a doctrine called effectual calling, but if any ask me whether he is effectually called, I reply, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou hast an interest in these doctrines." We are told also of the glorious doctrine which is the basis of our religion, the doctrine of redemption by the blood of Christ. But I see no warrant for telling any man that he is redeemed, except I can get him to give a full and satisfactory answer to this question, "Dost thou believe on the Lord Jesus with all thine heart?" It seems to me that the doctrines of the Gospel have no comfortable bearing upon any man, until he believes upon the Lord Jesus with all his heart. So also is it with all the promises. They are rich, dainty things which God has spread upon the table of his banqueting house; but no man has any right to lay hold on the great and precious promises which God has written for his people, unless he can declare that he believes with all his heart. I know there are some precious things which are addressed to the sinner, some sweet and precious invitations, and I thank God for this; but I know also that the sinner can never know the sweetness of them until he believes in Christ with all his heart. I am quite clear that he never can comply with the invitation except by believing with all his heart; that he must be a stranger to the promises and to the encouraging exhortations, until he cometh with all his heart and putteth his confidence in Jesus only. So am I well persuaded that thus it is with the ordinances of the Lord Jesus. The Lord's Supper is by no means to be approached by any man that doth not believe with all his heart. "Away, profane," should be the cry of the minister, when he breaks the sacred emblems. Believer in Christ, thou art doubly welcome. Thou hast a right to the table, if thou believest with all thine heart. Whosoever thou mayest be, if thou believest in Christ, the only barrier which we can present to thee is involved in the answer to the enquiry, "Dost thou believe?" If thou believest, there is no barrier—come, and welcome—we dare put none before the ordinance, but that which God has put there. Oh! we do solemnly assure those who come to the table of the Lord without faith that they eat and drink damnation unto themselves, not discerning the Lord's body; and we warn them that they have no right to approach the table except with a true heart, that they believe in Jesus and believe in him alone.

Equally is it so concerning baptism; whatever dispute there may be concerning it. The word of God must stand, and it is ours to preach it plainly. No person hath any right to approach the sacred ordinance of baptism except he believe with all his heart. I am astonished that any should have imagined that this rule should be relaxed in one solitary point. What has

often puzzled me is that all all Calvinists should not see that baptism must belong to the people of God and them only. Do we not teach that the doctrines are for the comfort and instruction of the believer, that the promises are for the believer, that, in fact, the whole plan of God's dispensation of grace hath respect unto the believer and the believer only?—then I cannot understand upon what ground any solitary exception should be made to a great rule, and that it should be thought that this solemn ordinance should be left open to all the world, not merely to all the intelligent world, but open so that even an unconscious infant might receive it.

Not only is that a strong argument with me, but it seemeth that the whole Gospel addresseth intelligent individuals. I cannot see anything that I could do if I were called upon to preach to an unconscious person; I know that the Gospel is a thing that deals with men's understandings, and with their hearts; but when the heart and understanding lie dormant I cannot see what I as a preacher can do, nor can I see what bearing the Gospel hath upon such a case. And I wonder then that an unconscious babe should be brought to receive an ordinance which, in my idea of it, requireth consciousness in the recipient. Again, I marvel that any one should imagine that the other ordinances should require consciousness, and that no consciousness should be required in this, and that an unconscious infant should be made the subject of it. The Church of England hath this thing extremely right. We are told in the Catechism that repentance and faith are necessary before baptism; there never was a greater truth spoken. And how it is that a consistent Churchman baptizeth an infant I know not. There is certainly a figment prevalent amongst them—the godfather and godmother, when they come to the font; they promise in the child's name that he shall believe and repent, that he shall renounce the devil and all his works—things the child could not promise, which I could not promise, which, if I did promise, I should be a liar to God and to my own soul, since it is utterly beyond my power to accomplish it, even though I should be the angel Gabriel himself. The Church saith indeed this promise of repentance is like paper in circulation, it is valid, it is not the current coin of repentance or faith, it is true, but nevertheless it is valid, the promise is sufficient,—which it seems to me to be a strange figment for any rational creature to endorse. I put the case thus: suppose there is a king who has absolute control over a vast number of his subjects, and there is a certain work to be done, suppose it is the insertion of glass into a window which has been broken—there are two workmen, the king says to them, "Mend that window;" the one says, "I won't," the other says, "I will," and hangs a cobweb over it. I do not see any very great difference between the disobedience of the two. And between the man who baptizes infants openly and boldly in defiance of God's word, and the other who baptizes with the figment of a sponsorship, I see no great distinction. It seems to me a vain attempt to get over a plain and palpable command without violating the conscience; therefore it is infinitely more full of disobedience than if that were let alone. I can understand a man who does not in his conscience see that this is an ordinance limited to the believer, but I cannot understand a man who says that repentance and faith are necessary before baptism, and then takes the unconscious infant and sprinkles the sacred drops upon his brow; that seems to me to be not only ridiculous but a heinous sin and an offence against the majesty of the Most High. I must have it, that the fencing of every ordinance of God is this, "If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest,"—nothing else. I cannot thrust my brother from the Lord's table if he believes in the Lord with all his heart. I can keep back no child from baptism if he believes in the Lord with all his heart. But though he be a greyhead, if he doth not believe, it is not my business as a minister of God to alter God's laws for him, but to say, "Stand back until thou

art obedient to thy Master's command; canst not have to do with the privileges of God's house; until thou hast believed and art thus proved to be one of his children, I cannot admit thee into the privileges and enjoyments of the two ordinances of communion with Christ in his death and in his burial."

Thus much by way of controversy. And now I come to the fencing of his ordinance, carrying out practically the doctrine of the text: "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." I proceed, therefore, briefly and affectionately, to address you, my dear friends, who are about to be baptized.

This ordinance will wake to many of us recollections of the past. It brings to my mind a river and a great assembly, and a youth walking in the midst of the flowing stream, and there giving himself up—spirit, and soul, and body—to the service of his Master. It recalls to me the hour when thus I publicly avowed my allegiance to the King of kings; and notwithstanding many sins, and infirmities, and backslidings—

"Yet have been upheld till now:
Who could hold me up but thou?"

Perhaps some here present who have thus put on the Lord Jesus may be refreshed, may be warmed, and may be stirred up by the address I shall now offer to those who are about to approach the pool.

1. "If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest." In explaining this text we will take it word by word: "If thou believest." Here you see personal faith is necessary. Have ye believed in Christ for yourselves? In vain are ye the sons of pious parents, in vain are ye the daughters of godly mothers; you must be cast down to hell unless you believe in Christ for yourselves. The faith of your parents may be the means of bringing you to Christ, but if you be not brought to him all the faith of others cannot avail. And though you should have Jesse to your father, though you should have Sarah to your mother, even then ye could not be saved except by faith in Jesus Christ. How apt are we who have the family pew in the house of God, and have from infancy been brought up to hear the word preached, to imagine that there is a kind of family holiness which may avail for us all, and to conceive that because our parents were Christians we are therefore so. There is no such thing as a Christian nation unless the individuals of that nation be Christians; nor is there any such thing as a Christian family so as to avail you at God's great day, unless you who are members of it are Christians yourselves. Men are so prone to wish to do their religion wholesale and in the mass. But, beloved, remember you will have to enter heaven one by one. "Every man must himself give an account of the deeds done in the body whether they be good or evil." No other eyes will avail you in looking at the cross except your own. No other heart's repentance can satisfy except the heart repentance of your own heart. No other eyes can weep tears of penitence for you; no other lips can breathe an acceptable prayer to heaven for yourselves except your own. You must yourselves be brought to feel your own need; you must yourselves be brought to put your own trust in Jesus, or else ye are as lost as if ye had been born in some fiottentot draal, of parents who never knew or loved the Saviour. Personal religion is an essential prerequisite to admission into the Church, and to every ordinance of the Church, and to every promise of it. I shudder when I see men who are not Christians taking the promises to themselves. I have heard a man say of a sermon, which was meant for the comfort of the believer, "Oh, how sweet it was to me!" whereas he was eating stolen sweets that did not belong to him. If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest suck the honey. If thou believest thou mayest walk to and fro in the Canaan of providence, from Dan to Beersheba, it is all thine own. From the hill-tops to the valleys' utmost depths all is thine: from the height of heaven to the very centre all is thy possession. If thou believest not, thy pedi-