

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Excellence of Evangelical Faith.

A SERMON delivered before the Eastern Nova Scotia Baptist Association, July 7, 1862, and published at their request. By the REV. J. DAVIS.

(CONCLUDED.)

We detain you no longer brethren, with matters of discussion or illustration. We turn more directly to practical objects. And will it not be good for us, in the light of the text, to question our spiritual condition, and try our own hopes?

What know we, then, of Paul's deep and downcast humility—his contrition and shame in view of Sinai, and at the foot of the cross?—God's best saints are still the lowliest before him. Are we here of one mind with them? so that, from the bottom of our hearts we can adopt Toplady's expressive lives as our own:—

"Not the labour of my hands can fulfil thy law's demands."

"Nothing in my hand I bring; Simply to thy cross I cling: Naked, come to thee for dress; Helpless, look to thee for grace; Black, I to the fountain fly; Wash me, Saviour! or I die!"

Do we, again, trust in Christ, as Paul did?—"I live," says he, "I live by the faith of the Son of God." Our God, by every method, urges us to this style of living—by faith, and faith alone.

As the ship-builder strikes the shores from beneath his vessel, that it may go forth, and rest upon the face of the deep, upheld by the weight of waters, and by that alone; so Jesus is evermore training us to abandon all other supports—yea, strikes them all from beneath us with his own hand, that we may rest simply and entirely upon the ocean of his own infinite love. Now do we consent to this? Would we fain drop out of self, self at its best estate; into Christ? Do we aim at living as the martyr Lambert died? crying, "None but Christ!—None but Christ!"

Furthermore do we enter into the experience of our apostle when he speaks of being "crucified with Christ?" Oh! if we ever reach the better world, and trace in the person of the glorified Redeemer the memorials of his bloody woes, will not heaven itself write upon our hearts such lessons in regard to the evil of sin as we never could have received elsewhere?—no! not in the flames of the bottomless pit. Do we seek to learn such lessons now? Can we abide that test, "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts?" Or, sadly conscious of our inability to do a work like this all alone, do we look up for help, until, as John Bunyan beautifully has it in his Holy War, the Blessed Spirit approaches, and "puts his hands upon our hands;" thus giving us the victory over the abominations that have been so much, and so long our "plague, and grief, and offence?"

And is the cause of Christ, once more, dear to our hearts, as it was to the heart of the apostle? Do we, in our sphere, as he did in his, consecrate ourselves to the advancement of the designs of a Saviour's love? Amid all our shortcomings, does that appeal fall warmly upon our spirits, "Freely ye have received: freely give?" And do we go about to spite the selfishness of a corrupt nature, while we seek to lay upon the altar of our Lord the offerings of our love to him as freely as he laid himself upon the altar of heaven an offering of unfathomable love for our souls?

And, just once again, do we grow up into Christ daily, even as Paul did, in our dependence upon him, and devotion to him? While he cleaves to us, and will not let us go, do we so cleave to him, and live for him; rendering life for life, and love for love—our whole life of love to him for his whole life of love to us. Does our faith thus pervade our whole being; and justify us in professing, as did our apostle, "The life which I now live in flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me?"

Alas! questions like these touch us to the quick. Surely we have been trying to make a hard bargain with our Lord. Oh yes! He is welcome to do for us all that is in his heart; but how little have we found in our hearts to do for him in return. Thus we find ourselves, last as first, sinners still; and needing salvation by grace, through faith, as much as ever. Here, therefore, again, let us make Paul our pattern. Was it not on the brink of martyrdom that he wrote as he did about being "found in Christ?" With death before him, he could not trust himself elsewhere: and it was of the Master him-

self that he was thus led to tighten his grasp ere he plunged into eternity. And oh! brethren, while we, for very shame, dare not look our Lord in the face, let us not fear to cast ourselves upon his bosom, as the returning prodigal upon the bosom of his father, and weep out there our mingled tears of penitence and faith; while he, true to the love which loves "to the end," will neither cast us out, nor shake us off, but rather wind his arms around us, with the embrace of a brother, and the might of a God, binding us to his heart, and bearing us to the skies.

We would invite your attention, in closing, to a great lesson on the worth of a true evangelical experience.

See how this lesson is here brought out. In the text Paul introduces his experience into controversy. A Judaizing party had sprung up in the New Testament church; the forerunners of those who for so long and dismal a period have cursed the world with their doctrine of sacramental efficacy. "Except," said they to the Gentile believers, "ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." In theory the apostle Peter was clearly not of this party; and yet, alas! during a visit paid by him to the church at Antioch, he had in practice walked with it. His conduct in this respect was unworthy in itself, and mischievous in its tendencies. Paul, therefore, as moved by the Holy Spirit, remonstrates with his erring brother, in regard both to his behaviour and its consequences. This he does in the text and its connection. It is in the text itself that he introduces his own experience. "Brethren," he seems to say, "the faith of Jesus Christ has done that for me which obedience to Moses could never have wrought. Wherefore, in your exclusive regard to this faith, be ye altogether such as I am. Yea, trample under foot your circumcision, and all that is involved in it. Nay, let not your baptism, nor any other outward ordinance come between you and your Lord.—But make that Lord your all, just as I do, for pardon, and purity, and life, and heaven." Thus the apostle incorporates his experience with his argument. And in this way it is that the lesson is brought out with which we are here concerned.

Mark, now, the nature and bearing of that lesson. "They that are of faith," as we read elsewhere in this same epistle, "are blessed with faithful Abraham." And how was Abraham blessed? He was saved. His faith saved him. But that was not all. He was "made a blessing." His faith made him the model and "father of all them that believe." And what, in a large sense, was that faith, but an inward, vital experience, springing out of his expectation, first of the birth of Isaac, and then of the promised seed through him? See, thus, to what a pinnacle of usefulness the patriarch was exalted by his inward experience, and by that alone; and how, during his quiet and isolated sojourn in Canaan, though, strictly speaking, he was no prophet, nor a king, nor a worker of miracles, nor an inspired writer, he was made a channel of blessing to the church of God to the end of time. Nay, heaven itself is described as a "lying in the bosom of Abraham;" as though the very world of glory were made more peculiarly happy by his presence, and the blessing pronounced upon him at first reached through eternity.

Results of the same kind we trace in connection with the experience of our apostle. Was it not this very experience which fitted him for the delicate and difficult duty which we here find him discharging towards his fellow-apostle, and his elder brother in Christ? So also of the whole of this epistle to the Galatians; in writing which, be it specially noted, Paul prepared for the use of Luther one of the main weapons with which he assaulted Rome, and inaugurated the Reformation. These results arose, not from what Paul was as a man, great as he was, nor as an apostle, nor as a writer of inspiration, but from what he was as a renewed man; and hidden in the bosom of his faith in Jesus Christ do we mark the working of that leaven with which history and his writings have so largely leavened the world. So, in the fifth century, in the evangelical experience of Augustine, we discern the source alike of his noble character, and his distinguished usefulness. And again, in the sixteenth century, the Reformation itself, as D'Aubigné beautifully suggests, lay folded in the leaves of that Bible which the monk of Erfurt discovered in his convent, and whose lessons, in the hand of the Holy Spirit, found their way to his heart. It was the evangelical experience of the Puritans, under the Tudors and Stuarts, which made them the conservators of liberty as well as of religion at home, and the founders of new and illustrious States abroad: which States, troubled now indeed, sorely and justly troubled, we must yet regard, their chastisement at length perfected, as reserved by a gracious Providence

for high and beneficent destinies. The religious revivals of the last century had their cradling in the cloisters of Oxford, and the forests of New England—in the early experiences of a Wesley, a Whitfield, and an Edwards. The era of modern missions was nursed in the bosom of a village cobbler, as he sat at his stall, spoiling his shoes, while he pored over his grammars and maps. Then there are Madagascar and Tahiti. The missionaries of the cross are driven from these islands with a high hand. And yet, in spite of this circumstance, and of Pagan persecution in the one case, and of Popish wiles in the other, their Scriptural religion has been kept alive for many a long year, and has even propagated itself by means of the simple and heartfelt piety of the poor islanders themselves. And how is our Great Head meeting the spiritual requirements of the wonderful and perilous times that are passing over us? Why just by setting the Gospel lever to work with a new activity; as in the revivals of the last decade, with their yet unexhausted force—as in the ever enlarging zeal of our manifold religious institutions—especially as in the ever multiplied circulation of the Scriptures. Thus now, as of old, "the Lord gives the word, and great is the company of those that publish it." Yea, "beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that bring good tidings;"—and see! the mountains are all alive with their multitude; "for many run to and fro, and knowledge is increased." And thus also, as of old, the faith of God's people, and their secret experiences become at once their personal treasure, and their public trust; and the living waters which well up within them not only "spring up into everlasting life" as their own portion, but run over into rills and rivers, refreshing our thirsty earth, and turning it into "the garden of the Lord."

For ours lives, brethren, what remains, in the light of this last consideration, but that, obedient to the exhortation of the Northamptonshire cobbler, when he had escaped from the last, we "expect great things from God, and attempt great things for God;" and fail not to seek their earnest in our own bosom,—experience of the faith of Jesus Christ?" For here is the salt that gives its savour to "the salt of the earth," and the light that lights up "the light of the world." Without this salt the world rots in its own corruption. Without that light it stumbles on in its own darkness. Be this then our cry,— "Lord! increase our faith. Give what thou wilt beside; but grant us this boon. Withhold, what thou wilt beside; but withhold not this blessing. God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause thy face to shine upon us; THAT thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations."

For the Christian Messenger.

The Normal School at Truro.

MR. EDITOR,—

There have been some articles in your late issues referring to the Normal School. The professed object of the Institution is so important, and the expense of maintaining it so great, that it cannot be a matter of indifference when objections are urged against the School, or when any one would seek to vindicate it against such charges.

The writers of the articles referred to are "Quis," and Mr. T. H. Rand, the former an in-cog, the latter one of Dr. Forrester's Assistants, and in this case, a champion in his behalf.

"Quis" objects that the Presbyterians are more largely benefited by the Normal School than any other denomination, and appeals to Dr. Forrester's Circular as his proof. Mr. Rand replies by inviting other sects to crowd to the Institution, and so to prevent the Presbyterians from receiving an undue share of the advantages. "Quis" refers to the fact that the Principal is a Presbyterian and that the school is located in a Presbyterian community. Mr. R. replies that the Seminary must be located some where, and that the Principal must belong to some Denomination. We may admit the truth of all these statements, but are they all fairly put? It seems to me that the objection is not that the head of the school belongs to a particular sect, or that the Institution is located in a community where peculiar religious tenets almost universally obtain, but that these two circumstances exist in connexion. The Principal of the school must belong to some religious denomination, and therefore may very properly be a Presbyterian. But it was not necessary that the Institution should be located in a Presbyterian community, for other places might have been selected in which no one sect was predominant. Especially was it not necessary that the Seminary should, at the same time, be planted in one of the most

thoroughly Presbyterian parts of the Province, and be placed under the management of one of the most prominent and influential clergymen of the Presbyterian Church. This is the true objection, I conceive; and it is a momentous one, for the tendency of the arrangement is to manifest that one can scarcely persuade himself that it was an accident. It would be as easy to believe that it was an accident that three fourths of our Representatives prove to belong to the Presbyterian body.

The statistics of attendance at the Normal School, as examined by "Quis," and counter-examined by Mr. R. are somewhat different, but that is of no great moment. "Quis" may be above the mark in this item, as he is, I believe, below it in the next, namely the annual expense. If I am rightly informed, the Institution receives from the Province \$4800 at least, a year. The items, as they have been given to me, are \$1200 salary of Principal, \$400 travelling expenses of do, \$200 to do as Secretary of Board of Agriculture, \$800 to Mathematical Teacher, \$800 to English do, \$100 to musical do, \$400 for contingencies, \$400 to Head master in Model Schools, \$300 to 2d do, \$200 to 3d do. This is a pretty respectable sum to be expended, in one Institution, sufficiently large to lead the people to expect that a considerable amount shall be received for the appropriation, and large enough, certainly to warrant them to demand that all parties shall enjoy their legitimate share of the benefit.

As regards the matter of benefit two things may be remarked. It may perhaps be questioned whether what is obtained at the Normal School is always beneficial to the pupils, and next whether communities are always benefited by the possession of Normal School Teachers.—Some would say that when so many branches are professedly taught as engage the attention of the pupils in the course of a term, nothing can be thoroughly learnt, and consequently that the teachers will not be sound and successful instructors of the young. To pursue Theoretical and Practical Mathematics, Natural, Mental and Moral Philosophy, Geography, Geology, History, English Grammar and Composition, Botany, Mineralogy and Chemistry, Animal and Vegetable Physiology and Greek, Latin, French.—One, two or three, in addition to all that properly belongs to a Normal School, is rather more than can be done effectually in 4½ months. Dr. Forrester may possess so powerful and capacious a mind, that he can see no difficulty in carrying on such a work, but more humble intellects will entertain a different opinion. We have only to look abroad over the Province, occupied as it is with Teachers holding Diplomas from the Normal School, to see what is the result of the system in question.

There are two or three particulars in Mr. R's letter that deserve a remark. It is asserted that "the staff of teachers in the Normal School is a proof of its catholicity." We are told that "two of the Teachers are Baptists, one a Methodist &c." The statement arrested my attention and led to inquiries. One of the Baptist teachers, Mr. Williams, is the resident Professor of music in the village, who is employed to give two lessons a week in the Normal School. The Methodist teacher is a young lady of the village who has the entrée of the school two hours a week to give instructions in Drawing to such as are willing to pay for them. This is, I believe, the nature of Miss Starr's connexion with the Institution. If I have been misinformed, and she is paid for her services from the Provincial funds, then there is another salary to be added to the list above given.

In the Model Schools, which are a part of the Establishment and whose teachers are appointed by Dr. Forrester, the three teachers provided for by law are all Presbyterians, and they have been, from the first almost without an exception. Mr. Webster, an Episcopalian, held one of the offices for a short time; but it was soon thought desirable to promote him to a similar post in P. E. Island, and to put a son of the true church in his place. If all this is Catholicity, it must be because the Presbyterian Church is Catholic. Mr. Rand inquires, with good reason, and I join with him in the inquiry, "Is it not surprising, under all the circumstances, that so many have presented themselves, for admission into the Institution?"

But we are told, as another proof of the Catholicity of the Normal School, that "upon Mr. Randall's leaving the Institution, the Government wished a Presbyterian minister to be appointed as his successor," and that Dr. Forrester objected. The information Mr. Rand received on this head may be reliable, but it merely shifts the charge of sectarianism from Dr. F. to the Government. One would be disposed to give our rulers credit for more shrewdness, Dr. F. at