

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.
VOL. VIII. No. 9.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 1863.

WHOLE SERIES.
VOL. XXVII. No. 9.

Poetry.

In him we live.

I know thou art not far,
My God, from me; yon star
Speaks of thy nearness, and its rays
Fall on me like thy touch; O, raise
These eyes of mine
To see thy face, even thine,
My Father and my God!

Thou speakest, and I hear!
What gracious, heavenly cheer
Is in thy gentle speech, my God!
How it lifts off the heavy load
Which bows my weary head,
And checks me in my speed,
My gracious God and Lord!

Thou knowest all I am,
My evil and my shame;
And yet thou hat'st me not?
Nor hast e'en once forgot
Thy handiwork divine,
This helpless soul of mine,
My ever-loving Lord!

Thou wilt be nearer yet,
And one day I shall get,
The fuller vision of thy face.
In all its perfect light and grace;
When I shall see thee as thou art,
And in thy kingdom bear my part,
My blessed King and God!

Religious.

"It is Christ that died."

ROMANS VIII. 34.

A SERMON BY REV. WM. HALL.

The glorious gospel of the blessed God had effected a wondrous transformation of character in him, who, under the influence of inspiration, penned these emphatic words, viz.—the apostle Paul, otherwise called Saul of Tarsus, the great apostle of the Gentiles.

As if to afford the strongest evidence of the power of divine grace on human nature, and to furnish sufficient data whereby the whole superstructure of Christianity might be established, that divine and sovereign grace seemed to select as a proof and experiment the most improbable case. Around Saul of Tarsus, there clung no sympathies in favour either of Christians or Christianity. He had heard of the one but to foam with madness, of the other but to vow its utter extirpation. A Hebrew parent, a Hebrew Rabbi and the Hebrew religion were not likely means to mould the mind of this extraordinary man and prepare him for the Apostleship of Christ. No germs of thought sown in his heart in his days of boyhood, no lesson which he could have acquired in that renowned school of heathen philosophy at Tarsus, where his earliest life had been passed, was at all likely to prepare his mind for the reception of the gospel, no dogma of Jewish Theology which he could have learnt at the feet of Gamaliel, where his mature manhood had been spent, was a likely means to mould his mind and prepare him for pursuing his subsequent career as an ambassador of the cross; unlike his coadjutors in the Apostleship, who had walked by the side of the Saviour, who had witnessed his splendid miracles, who had heard his gracious words, and been under his personal training, and from being the humble disciples of Christ became afterwards the accredited teachers of his religion. Paul, on the other hand, was like one born out of due time, and we ask, Could that be a fact or a fiction, a reality or a shadow, which effected such a change in the whole empire of the Apostle's mind? Let us call to our memories the circumstances of that conversion, the journey to Damascus, armed with the authority of the Sanhedrin to persecute the disciples of the crucified One, the light brighter than the noon-day sun which shone upon him, the voice which came upon his ears with startling emphasis, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" And no sooner was that lofty soul influenced by the expulsive power of a new affection than he girded himself with all the energies of his highly gifted mind to the work of propagating that faith which he had once endeavoured to destroy; and he who was as a root of

wormwood to the Church had now become her star of promise; he who had been a bold blasphemer, the persecutor of the church of Christ, making havoc of her children, was now become gentle as a nurse cherishing those children.—If such a change had been effected in the soul of this great man, he by the instrumentality of that gospel had accomplished changes as great if not so miraculous in the minds of others; no sooner does he receive his credentials from Heaven to preach the gospel, than he puts forth all the powers of his soul to make full proof of his ministry.

—And we may well imagine that the very circumstances of his conversion would give a coloring to all his subsequent career, so that when standing amidst scenes of classic renown, surrounded by the gorgeous emblems of pagan magnificence, he had only to refer to his own conversion to the faith of Christ, and his eye would be lighted up with fresh radiance and his lips clothed with fresh eloquence. Threading his way amidst the innumerable islands of the Grecian Archipelago he plants the standard of the cross on the shores of classic Troy, at Ephesus, at Philippi, and in all the most distinguished cities of antiquity, and such was the influence that the doctrine of Christ and him crucified exerted, that, in a few years after the death of the founder of Christianity, the banner of the cross waved in triumph from the proud palace of the Cæsars. And there was one truth which above all others he made as the prominent theme of his ministry viz.—the death of Christ. No pains, no penalties, no edicts, no perils by land or sea, no punishments which might be inflicted upon him, could deter him from the prosecution of this self-denying and lofty enterprise: I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified. God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ, by which I am crucified to the world, and the world to me. *It is Christ that died.*

In calling your attention to this subject, we will unfold the death of Christ, in five different points of view—and so from different stand points present to you the truth embraced in this subject. 1st. The death of Christ presents to us an atonement for sinners. 2nd. It presents to us the truth of all the types, the verifications of all the promises and the accomplishment of all the predictions respecting Christ as the Messiah. 3rd. It presents to us a system of morality, constraining us to a life of holiness, and from which we derive a motive power to save a lost world. 4th. It presents to us a mystery which reason cannot unravel, but the truth and importance of which, all the arguments which reason ever urged can never impair or diminish. 5th. And lastly it presents to us the triumph which is accomplished over death and the grave.

1st. The fact of Christ's death presents an atonement for his people. What shall a man give in exchange for his soul? is a question which the human family has asked itself in all ages of the world, and wherever sinning, suffering, and dying humanity can be found iniquity has fastened itself in man's moral nature. What shall I give in exchange for my soul? is the question which the Hindoo asks himself on the burning plains of India, and influenced by this inquiry, he vainly imagines that he can give his body for the sins of his soul.—He will travel for years prostrate, exposed to the rays of a burning sun, he will remain standing on some lofty pedestal or cast himself before the ponderous wheels of his idol god, Juggernaut, in order to propitiate his favor.

What shall I give in exchange for my soul? is the question which the Indian mother asks herself when reposing on the banks of the Ganges and, influenced by this earnest inquiry of her moral nature, she casts her infant babe to the crushing jaws of the monsters of the deep. Why is it that she is apparently deaf to its helpless wail of infancy? why is it that that heathen mother tears the tendrils of love from her heart? Are not the ties of maternity as strong in her nature as in yours Christian Mother, does she not feel the instincts of humanity equally with yourself? Why then does she cast from her bosom her weeping offspring? It is to give the fruit of her body. It is to satisfy the yearnings of her nature, what shall I give in exchange for my soul, and so through all the dark and

idolatrous systems of paganism and the perverted views of a formal Christianity we find the same inquiry cropping out from the surrounding darkness. The Bible and the Bible alone solves this great problem of humanity. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, he is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," the only mediator between God and Man, there is a dark and untrodden interval which separates us from God. We cannot scale those impassable barriers behind which the Deity is shrouded from the perceptions of mortals, Christ has filled up that interval, he is the days-man that can lay his hand upon us both, and with one arm on Jehovah's throne and the other extending to the lowest depths of human degradation, he lifts the sinner from his guilt and pollution forever, silences the thunders of God's broken and violated law, and causes to flash over the soul the light of that countenance which otherwise is a consuming fire. God's throne of wrath becomes a throne of grace, once it shot forth flames of devouring fire, now those flames are quenched forever in the blood of Jesus. There are many matters of speculation in connection with the doctrines of the atonement, a series of discourses would be necessary to unfold all the truth as it is in Jesus. Many have endeavored to draw aside that veil which conceals the mysteries of eternity from our view. Many have endeavored to solve what the finite man cannot comprehend and without attempting to elucidate all the theories in connection with this grand radiating center truth of salvation a short analysis of some views entertained of the atonement may be interesting as well as instructive. There are four aspects in which the death of Christ has been presented to the world. 1st. That Christ died for all men and consequently all men will be saved. This is the doctrine of Universal salvation. 2nd. That Christ died for all and that man of his own free will can embrace or reject the offers of salvation. This is the Arminian view of the atonement. 3rd. That Christ died for all men but it rests with the Holy Spirit to make particular application of the blood of Jesus. This is called general atonement and particular redemption. 4th. That Christ died for a certain number of the human race given to him by the Father in the everlasting covenant of his grace, to whom the Holy Spirit applies the benefits of his death. "His name shall be called Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins." This is called the commercial view of the atonement or particular redemption.

Without entering into any minute explanation or controversial exegesis on these points, it will suffice for me to say that I give the preference to the latter view, as the most logical and the most harmonious, and though it has its difficulties arising from the peculiar phraseology of some forms of expression in the word of God, yet on the whole I consider it the most scriptural view, I would not attempt to darken the counsel of God by vain words without knowledge and I would sum up the Theology of the Bible thus,—If we are saved it is God's mercy, if we are lost it is our own fault, *we neglect the great Salvation.*

(To be continued.)

From the London Baptist Magazine, Jan. 1863.

Augustine the Monk and the Welsh Baptists.

It is asserted by many Baptist writers that Augustine the monk, required the British Baptists to admit infants to baptism, which they had not done before, and that on their refusal he prophesied that they would fall by the swords of the pagans, or, as some say, threatened them with destruction.

IS THIS TRUE?

Fabian, the old chronicler, who lived at London in the early part of the sixteenth century, in giving an account of the interview between Augustine and the British bishops, states, that they refused to submit to his demands, that is, to place themselves and their churches under his authority as the Pope's representative. He then goes on to say that Augustine addressed them in the following words. "Sens ye wol not assent to my hests

generally, assent ye to me specially in three things. The first is, that ye keep Ester-day in due forme and tyme as it is ordayned. The second, that ye geve Christendome to children. And the thyrde is, that ye preach unto the Anglis the word of God, as aforesayd I have exhorted you." Augustine is thus represented as requiring them to "give Christendome to children," or, as would now be said, to renounce their Baptist principles.

But Fabian refers to Bede as his authority. In fact, Bede is the only authority. What, then, is Bede's statement? Here are his own words: "Ut ministerium baptizandi, quo Deo renascimur, juxta morem sanctæ Romanæ et apostolicæ ecclesiæ compleatis;" that is, "That ye complete the ministration of baptism, by which we are born again to God, according to the custom of the holy Roman and apostolic Church." Here is nothing about "giving Christendome to children. The only meaning that can be fairly given to the words is this: that they should "complete" the administration of baptism, by using the ceremonies adopted by the Roman Church. There is no mention of children. Were this narrative the only source of information, we could arrive at no conclusion on that subject.

It is not my business to vindicate or excuse Fabian. I know not how to account for his representation of the case. He has either given a grossly incorrect translation, or he has been unfairly quoted, or one of the editions of his work has been tampered with. Some learned antiquarian may perhaps throw light on the subject.

Then the inquiry takes a wider range. Were the British (or Welsh) Baptists ignorant of infant baptism? Had it never been practised among them before Augustine's coming.

Infant baptism sprang up in Africa about the middle of the third century, and was the offspring of the unscriptural and superstitious notions respecting the efficacy of the ordinance of baptism which had for some time prevailed. Error is swift-footed. Intercourse with Rome, the metropolis of the empire, being at that time frequent, the new ceremony would soon find its way to Europe, and would be gradually adopted by the churches. France received it from Italy, and from France the passage to Britain was easy, as there was constant travel between the two countries. Three British bishops, one of them probably the Bishop of Caerleon, were present at a council held at Arles, A. D. 314. British bishops were also present at the Council of Sardica, A. D. 347; and at the Council of Rimini, A. D. 359. Those bishops had opportunities of knowing the state of the churches in those quarters, both with regard to doctrine and practice. The general desire for unity would in line them to receive whatever was maintained and held by their brethren on the Continent.

That infant baptism, among other things, was imported into England in this way, is highly probable. If we may rely on the authority of the *Liber Landavensis* (a very ancient Welsh record), it was practised in Wales in fifth century, for in the "Life of St. Samson" it is said that "the name of Samson was given him by St. Illyd, who lifted him up out of the sacred font and baptized him." The same work tells us of St. Teilo, who died about A. D. 563, baptizing seven children in Carmarthenshire.

Our information on these points, it must be confessed, is very scanty and imperfect. During the wars that succeeded the arrival of the Saxons, everything Christian—churches, monasteries, records—was purposely destroyed. The barbarians spread devastation throughout the land. Gildas, the British historian, expressly attributes the defectiveness of historical knowledge respecting Britain to this circumstance.

It would be an interesting task to trace the progress of thought and discussion, and to review the methods by which the unchristian crept in and gained favour, and the biblical struggled hard for life. As it is, we must be content to pick up the fragments wherever we can find them, and piece them together as we are best able.

Baptist historians ought to be particularly careful. In these days of lynx-eyed criticism, no doubtful statements will obtain currency without being roughly challenged.