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Religious.

Thoughts on Theology.

No. XI.

THE MOSAIC DISPENSATION.

Principles, (continued.)

My Dear Sir,—

I proceed now to state the principles inculcated and held under the Mosaic dispensation.

2. Respecting human nature.

In numerous passages of the Old Testament ungodly persons are described in strong and emphatic language. They are the "wicked," with whom God was angry, and whose evil deeds were contemplated with deep sorrow. Though many of those descriptions refer to heathen persecutors, others relate to native Israelites, showing that while the nation, as such, was God's nation, and was treated as holy, that holiness consisted rather in separation from other people, and obedient observance of the Mosaic law and ritual than in actual purity. It is very needful to observe this, lest certain passages in the Old Testament should be misinterpreted. It is evident that there was great variety of individual character in Palestine, and that ungodly Jews everywhere abounded. See Psalm xii. 1-4; xiv. 1-3; xvii. 8-12; xxxvi. 1-4; lviii. 1-5; cxix. 53, 136, 158. The denunciations and threatenings which occur so frequently in the writings of the prophets affirm these statements.

The existence and universal spread of human depravity were acknowledged. It was not merely that correct opinions on this subject were entertained;—the facts of the case were confessed. The results of reflection and observation were embodied in such passages as Psalm l. 5, Isa. liii. 6, Jer. xvii. 9. The pious felt the influence of the evil, and earnestly prayed for sanctifying, delivering grace. See Psalm l. 10; cxix. passim; cxxxix. 23, 24; cxliii. 10.—Their prayers indicated a consciousness of the universal disease, and a perception of the important truth that outward privilege did not imply religious character. They anticipated the sentiment expressed by the Apostle Paul in Rom. ii. 28, 29.

The sense of di-ease and guilt was connected with melancholy conclusions. In proportion to the depth of impression respecting the evil of sin was the conviction of impossibility of deliverance. "If thou, O Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord who shall stand?" Ps. cxxx. 3.

3. Respecting the salvation.

The system of worship instituted by Moses, at God's command, was symbolical and typical. Its complicated arrangements furnished continual illustration of these two truths—the necessity of atonement for sin, and the equal necessity for personal holiness. The first was taught by the sacrifices the second by the ceremonies of purification. All Jews received these lessons, and the impression, in many cases, it may be believed, was profound and lasting; but the bulk of the nation, it is to be feared, were satisfied with the outward acts, without inquiry into the latent meaning. The lamb, the goat, or the pigeon was presented at the altar, but there was no thought of sin or reconciliation; the "ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean," were duly applied, but there was no desire to have the heart sprinkled from an evil conscience.

That the essential features of the gospel were shadowed forth, or typified by Mosaic rites, is now commonly confessed, and cannot indeed be denied by any who believe in the divine authority of the Epistle to the Hebrews. How far the types were understood by the Jews themselves, is a question of very difficult solution. Generally, it is apprehended, they were not understood at all: nor is it probable that even those who are supposed to have correct views respecting the leading truths which were thus obscurely taught, penetrated far beneath the surface. The redemption was not to be fully understood, could not be, till the Redeemer had finished his work.

The servants of God unhesitatingly declared on many occasions, their firm belief in the insufficiency of outward rites, even though divinely instituted, to atone or cleanse, and the folly and sin of attempting to substitute them for personal piety; and the same truths were announced by Jehovah himself. 1 Sam. xv. 22; Psalm l. 7-15, li. 16, 17; Isa. i. 10-17, lxvi. 1-4; Hos. vi. 6; Micah vi. 6-8.

It is further to be remembered that the law of Moses provided no atonement for sins wilfully committed against God. These were offences "from which they could not be justified," Acts xiii. 39. Involuntary transgressions of the national covenant and certain breaches of duty towards one another, were atoned for in the prescribed manner; but for sin in the strict sense of the word, as well as for offences which exposed to the penalty of death, there was no atonement.

Good men saw this. They saw that the law taught what it could not perform, and that, after the most rigid observance of all its injunctions, there was a heavy burden which it could not remove, a want of moral power which it could not supply. They longed for something better. "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." "The law made nothing perfect." "It was weak through the flesh." Heb. x. 4; vii. 19; Rom. viii. 3.

The hope was partially set before them. God's design of mercy was gradually unfolded. They served him according to the light which they had, and as fresh manifestations of his will were afforded they rejoiced with trembling. Thus they were accepted. Believing God as far as he had chosen to reveal himself, and living in accordance with that belief, their faith was "counted for righteousness."

It remains, therefore, to point out the manner and extent of the divine revelation, during the Mosaic economy, in regard to the Redeemer, and the work which he would accomplish.

Moses foretold that there would rise up a prophet "like unto himself," to whom reverent regard and entire obedience should be rendered. Duet. xviii. 18, 19. Acts iii. 22, vii. 37. The Jews understood that prediction to refer to the Messiah, and their interpretation was doubtless correct. Then comes a series of direct prophecies respecting the Messiah, and the nature, extent, and consequences of his work, commencing with David, and closing with Malachi.

The key to the prophecies of David, is found in the language of Peter, in his sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 30);—"Being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither did his flesh see corruption." This explains the peculiarity of the royal Psalmist's style. He frequently identifies himself with his future illustrious descendant, and speaks in his name. The expressions which he employs are singularly varied, indicating, on the one hand extreme degradation and suffering, and a hard struggle with enemies—and on the other spotless purity, power, victory, benign influence, righteous rule, and universal dominion. See 2 Sam. vii. 18, 19, xxii. 1-7; 1 Chron. xvii. 16-18; Psalm li. xvi. 8-10, xxii.—xl. 6-10,—xlv. 2-8,—lxxii.—xcv. c, cx.

Yours truly,

J. M. CRAMP.

Acadia College, Oct. 13, 1868.

What constitutes valid Baptism.

I think all Baptists will agree, that these three requisites are essential to the validity of baptism: first, as to the act, immersion in water; second, as to the subject, a profession of faith in Christ; third, as to the formula, the invocation of the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. In a case where any one of these three conditions was not met, we should not hesitate to regard the person as unbaptized. In any such case we should not regard ourselves as repeating

the rite, by administering it to one who had received, instead of it, a ceremony which we should regard as nugatory.

But in relation to some other points, our pastors and people do not seem to have reached a common view. Some would probably consider it indispensable, that the administrator should be a regularly ordained minister of the gospel, or at any rate one who had himself been regularly baptized; while others would regard both these conditions as belonging to the propriety and perfection of baptism, rather than to its essence. Again, some make the existence of evangelical faith in the subject, rather than the credible profession of it, the criterion of a valid baptism. Unquestionably, that which qualifies for baptism in the sight of God is the inward reality of discipleship to Christ, and not any outward profession of being a disciple. But as even the most judicious and careful churches and ministers cannot judge of this infallibly, but will sometimes be deceived, it would follow from making this the unqualified test, that no certainty could be attained in regard to the validity of baptism in any given case.

Nor is this merely a speculative or theoretical difficulty: it is eminently a practical one. For the case has often occurred, that persons whose baptism has been perfectly regular in all its outward circumstances, have come to the conclusion, after many years, it may be, that they were self-deceived at the time of their baptism, that they had no genuine evangelical faith in Christ, and that the baptism was consequently invalid. Such persons, having come to be persuaded that they now have genuine faith, are anxious to have their baptism repeated, or, as they would say, to receive true baptism in place of the spurious baptism which they received before. And many Baptist ministers feel no scruple about administering the rite to persons of this class. We have known several instances of this nature, and we have reason to believe they are not very uncommon. So the question is a very practical one, both to the persons who are dissatisfied with their baptism on this ground, and to the ministers of the gospel who are liable to be called to administer the rite to them.

For ourselves, we have a settled conviction that it ought not to be administered in such cases:—that the true criterion of the validity of the rite is not the certain existence, but the credible profession of faith in Christ; and hence we should regard it as a repetition of the rite, as anabaptism, to administer it to such persons. Indeed, they would have to be baptized on the credit of their profession, and not on the certainty of their possession, of faith, the second time as they were the first, unless God should miraculously reveal to the administrator that they were true believers. We would not be understood as intimating that no reliable judgment can be formed as to the genuineness of any candidate's faith. On the contrary, we hold most strenuously that, in general, true converts may be known to be such, that "the children of God are manifest," and that the deliberate and careful judgment of them, by their fruits, on the part of those who know by experience what it is that distinguishes the children of God from the unconverted will ordinarily be a correct judgment. But when the question is concerning the validity of baptism, and the repetition of it, there is need of some more assured test than this fallible though ordinarily safe judgment. And the test of credible profession is more ascertainable.—*Cor. N. Y. Ez.*

The Bright Side out.

Far away in the gloomy prison of Andersonville, a little drummer-boy was dying.—The matted, brown hair was pushed back from the white brow, and in his wasted, haggard features, his fond mother, if she had seen him, would scarcely have recognized the handsome, merry-hearted boy, who, a short time before, made pleasant sunshine in her widowed home.

Manly and patiently had he battled with the hardships of his prison life, never complaining and never despairing, but hunger and exposure of every kind had done their work too well, and therefore he could not escape terrible sufferings. But our kind Heavenly Father, who never leaves us here to suffer more than is for our good, sent a gentle mes-

senger, the angel of mercy, to bear his brave spirit to "his house of many mansions."

The blue eyes unclosed, the pale lips moved, and the comrade bent his head to catch his dying words.

"Put the bright side out 'o mother," he said; and one more prisoner was free.

The faithful comrade bowed his head and wept, and said, bitterly to himself, "Alas! what side in this terrible prison life is bright?"

Beyond the gloomy stookade, the drummer-boy was laid to rest, and the life of his comrade was spared to tell the sad story to the lonely mother.

Do you not think, in that hour of terrible trial, that it was a great joy to the mother to know that her son was brave, and patient, and true? and that, amid all his suffering, he remembered her, and wished to spare her all possible pain?—*Little Corporal.*

"Out of the mouth of Babes."

A certain minister, no longer among the living, after preaching the gospel as a good Baptist should do, for a number of years, became somewhat muddled in respect of doctrines and cast in his lot among the Methodists.—Ere long he lapsed still further, from Arminianism to Universalism, and for a time advocated the latter grievous heresy. While thus engaged, he was called upon to pray with two persons, the one at the point of death from blows inflicted in passion, the other the murderer, as the event proved.

When he reached home, death having in the meanwhile ensued, he related the circumstances to the family. A little daughter whom he had taken upon his knee listened very attentively to what he said, and then with child-like simplicity inquired, "Pa, where did the man go that was killed?" "To heaven, my dear," was the reply. "And where will the man go that killed him?" "To heaven," he said. "Oh," she exclaimed, "I should think the other would be afraid he would kill him again."

This remark led to serious reflections, and finally broke the spell that was upon him.—He had learned wisdom from a babe and returned to the faith from which he had departed preaching thenceforth that there is to be a day in which God will judge the world in righteousness, according to the deeds done in the body.

Letter from Paris.

BY REV. J. D. FULTON, OF BOSTON.

Paris is the modern Babylon. Herebaters of God find a home, and lovers of pleasure can revel to their hearts' content. Of Paris as a city, of her public buildings, of her squares and fountains, of her picture galleries and churches in which Christ is painted with all the glories which art can furnish and money can buy, you have heard much, and need not that I should write unto you. I come to speak of a Sabbath in Paris, for you cannot with propriety speak of the Sabbath of Paris. Early in the morning the noise of the city's din rises in a fierce tumult about you, and grates upon the ear with harsh dissonance. Go out into the squares and you see them full of soldiers on dress parade.—Look at the public works and you behold workmen busy with hammer and trowel.—Look at the streets, and loaded teams and hurrying carriages crowd them. Men have a weary look, and even the horses, with their sluggish step, seem to ask, "Why does not this city, the pride and boast of Romanism, remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy?"

Revelation tells of a time coming when the bells of the horses shall give praise to God. Yesterday they told of a place where God is hated and scorned. Opening my little Bible my eye fell on these words: They were God's message to my sad heart: "Ye have said it is vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept His ordinances and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts? And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up—yea, they that tempt God are even delivered. Then they that feared God spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared