

Sermon.

CHRIST THE POWER OF GOD.

1 CORINTHIANS I, 24.

THE SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE BAPTIST CONVENTION OF NOVA SCOTIA, NEW BRUNSWICK, AND PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND, IN GRANVILLE STREET CHURCH, ON THE 24TH OF AUGUST, 1869.

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(Published by special request.)

(Concluded.)

2. Christ is the power of God in the ministration of his Spirit.

It was expedient for Christ to go away, that the Spirit might take his place. Jesus was confined to one place at a time in his humanity. He addressed more especially the senses of his disciples, and fondly they clung to his sensible, loving presence, just as we cling to our friends and loved ones until we are forced to part from them at the river of death. When Christ ascended, he sent the Spirit of Truth from his Father to carry on the work on earth, while he interceded above on his mediatorial throne. We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous; and the Spirit—invisible omnipresent, regenerating, enlightening, convincing, converting and renewing—moving directly, immediately, and powerfully on our hearts. Thus we are represented in heaven by Christ; he is represented on earth by the Spirit, and the blessed work of reconciliation is carried on both here and above. The Spirit is spoken of under the figures of wind, fire, water—mighty agents in the natural world. On the Day of Pentecost, he came as a rushing, mighty wind, and appeared as cloven tongues of fire, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and thus, in fulfillment of the prediction of Joel, God poured out his Spirit in the last days; proved the resurrection of his Son, and inaugurated the triumphs of Christianity by the conversion of three thousand in one day. The help of humanity is in the power of the Spirit of God over the spirit of man.

3. Christ is the power of God in the Gospel.

Christ is the author of a system of doctrines and we expect to find the genius, the ability, of its author in the system he has formed. "The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." The gospel consists of two grand facts, the death of Christ for our sins, and his resurrection for our justification. The first assures us that an atonement has been made for sin; the second that it is acceptable to God, and that Christ is able to save to the uttermost. Christ dying and living, is the central truth of the gospel—the heart's blood—the life of Christianity.

The gospel is a system of power, for it exhibits law as the expression of God's holiness—law in its mastery over the soul—law as a "school-master to bring us to Christ." This law, broken by man, has been kept in all its integrity by Christ. He has magnified the law, and made it honorable. It is, in the hand of the Lord, a royal diadem and a crown of glory. Christ has suffered the extreme penalty of the law; he has borne our sins in his own body on the tree; he is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world; the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

The gospel is a system of power, for it manifests supreme, almighty love. Viewed from this standing-point, it is benevolence raised to the highest power up to God; for he so loved that he gave his Son, and Christ so loved that he came and redeemed us from the curse of the law, by being made a curse for us. Christ loved his Father, sustained and fulfilled his Law. He loved us, and gave himself for us. The waters could not quench his love, the floods could not drown it, death could not destroy it. The love of Christ constraineth us.

It is impossible to believe the gospel, and not be changed by it. True faith consists in belief of Christ's death and resurrection, and trust in his person. Such faith is exercised by the regenerated soul, it becomes a new creation in Christ Jesus, grows up into him in all things is filled from the fullness of God, and becomes a partaker of the divine nature—hating and avoiding sin, loving and practising that which is good. One man cannot change another man's will, cannot give a new will; but the living Christ, through the Spirit and the gospel, makes his people willing in the day of his power. The gospel takes possession of the grand elements of human nature—the head, the heart, the intellect, the emotions, and brings all into subjection to Christ, who crowns his people with everlasting salvation.

Christ is the power of God in his gospel, for he makes it triumph in the midst of opposition. It finds an enemy in the heart of every carnal man, and yet it not only exists, but is extending

its influence over the world,—and shall continue to do so until the kingdoms of this world, become the kingdoms of our God and his Christ. The true Christian Israel is numerically and financially weak; while the world is strong in men and means; and yet Christianity fails not, for the Spirit of the living Christ is in it. It is the sword of the Spirit of Truth; it is the sceptre of our King Immanuel, and it must prevail. Christ makes his power manifest in the weakness of his servants. Paul says, "I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence."

In the close of the gospel dispensation, Christ shall come as the power of God to judge the quick and dead. "The Father judgeth no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son, because he is the son of man." "When the son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. And the heavens departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains and the mighty men, and every bondman and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains: and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne and the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of his wrath is come, who shall be able to stand?"

We need this power, as individual Christians, as ministers of the Gospel, as churches, and as a denomination, that we may be centres of hallowed virtue for the healing of the nations; that we may be the salt of the earth, and the lights of the world, and cities set upon an hill. Without the power that streams from the living Christ, all our efforts are in vain. Unless the Spirit of Christ moves and impels us, and his love constrains us, we are powerless. We may have a form of godliness, but we know nothing of its power. Except we have power from on high—power that will strike at the root of our selfishness and prompt us to consecrate ourselves and our all to Christ's service, our educational institutions and missionary enterprises will drop and die; and now, my brethren, they are in no very flourishing condition. If the money that has been lost within the bounds of our denomination in *sinful, selfish, covetous and idolatrous efforts to pile up riches and hoard up wealth*, had been given to Acadia College and to a Christian Missions, what good might have been done, and what a revenue of joy and of the purest satisfaction would have been gained! And above all the approval of the Master, the "Well done" of the Judge. We do not want additional machinery so much as we need to work well what we have. We need the living Spirit to move the wheels of our organizations, and give them increased velocity and force. We ought to elevate Acadia College, and make it the glory of our Zion, the exponent of our denominational strength. We should make distant lands and heathen tribes, and the heathen at home, feel the pulsations of our spiritual life in our missionary zeal and effort. And for this we need power from on high, that we may furnish the men and the money for this blessed work of extending the triumphs of the cross. One of our brethren, called of God, comes forward and says, "Here am I; send me;" and now we want the means to sustain him in his consecrated toil. Oh! for an expansion of soul, an enlargement of heart, that we may "attempt great things for God, and expect great things from God."

We can have this power. The scouring of a higher degree of Christian efficiency, more Christian vitality than we possessed before, is the chief object of this Convention. If we return to our homes from this annual gathering, our spiritual pulse not fuller and stronger in its beat than when we came, our meeting has been in vain. Let us wait upon the Lord, and we shall renew our strength. Let us pray more in the name of him whom the Father hears always, whose intercession can never fail, who wields the forces of the universe, who holds the stars in his right hand, walks amid the golden candlesticks, and turns the hearts of men like the rivers of water. "Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you." Let us have more faith. Our prayer should be, "Lord, increase our faith." Jesus said to his disciples, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." Let us by faith take strong hold of the living, loving, reigning, all sufficient Christ. "All things are possible to him that believeth." Faith removes mountains of difficulty. Faith is the source of energy and success. Ministers and churches are successfully in proportion to their faith. If we have faith in the Triune God, we shall reach the source of power and be filled, not with the Spirit of fear, but of power and of love, and of a sound mind. Let us use vigorously the strength we have, and it will increase. We shall be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. We shall come spiritual Gideons, Samsons, and Davids, turning to flight the armies of the aliens, or trampling them on the field of battle. If the amount of unused faculty, capital, and energy, which we possess, were put into active operation for Christ and humanity, we would march onward through these provinces and through foreign fields, "terrible

as an army with banners," and take possession of the land in the name of Jehovah Jesus.

Trife not with this power I entreat you. Would you trife with the grand forces of nature? With the lightning, the thunder, and the power of gravitation. You have read of one who sported with the lightning, laughed at the thunder, the voice of God, and laid his hand on the ocean's mane," as if on the neck of a favorite charger, and talked of the waves bounding beneath him as a "steed that knows his rider." Poor miserable genius! his course was a short and a sad one. But we profess to be in our sane minds, to have a provident care of our safety and welfare, and would not trife with the powers of nature. Then dash not madly against Jehovah's buckler, trife not with Christ who made the lightning, the thunder, and grds you as with a garment, and holds you as in his own hand by the invisible, all-pervading power of gravitation. Trife not with him who can crown with endless blessedness, or doom to eternal destruction. Let us consecrate ourselves, our substance, our all, to Christ, acknowledge him and serve him as our Maker, Mediator and Monarch, the Blessed and Only Potentate, the Power of God.

Missionary Intelligence.

EAGER TO BE BAPTIZED.—On a recent trip I baptized three: one of them a lady 60 years old, who had walked fourteen miles that day and carried her grandson, four months old, in her arms half that distance. All this, that she might hear the gospel and be baptized!

A. GALE, Gen. Miss'y.

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn.

PAUL'S PERILS OVER AGAIN.—A U. S. Baptist Home Missionary says: "In my work in this field, which is about 40 miles square, I have been in perils among fleas, in perils among bed-bugs, in perils among mosquitoes, in perils among lice."

NOTE. Cleanliness and Christianity go together. The presence of bed-bugs and lice indicates a heathenish state of society. The gospel in the heart introduces order and beauty and taste into the home of the people.

Giving money to God is worship. Our alms, and not our prayers alone, reach God and are remembered. Acts 10: 4.

HIGHLY RHETORICAL.—A colored missionary student says: "From where the boat landed, on my God-given steeds, I bounded to my field! We suppose he means to convey the idea that he went joyfully on foot."

There is said to be a singular presentimen almost universal in India, that in thirty years the sin cleansing property of the river Gange will cease. The prevalence of such an idea will have a tendency to bring about the result predicted.

A native Caffre preacher in South Africa, Rev. Mr. Soola, has lately produced in his own tongue a translation of the Pilgrim's Progress. Portions of it are said to be reproduced with admirable excellence and power.

RELIGION OF BUDDHA.—Buddhism is the religion of about three hundred millions of people,—nearly one-third of the entire human race. In numbers of adherents, in elevation of principle, in the requisites of universality, adapting to a wide range of nationalities, no other religion but the Christian surpasses, or indeed can compare with it. In these respects, Buddhism and Christianity divide the world, both together comprising two-thirds or more of the whole human family. Buddhism is the popular religion of China; the State religion of Thibet, and of the Burman Empire; it is the religion of Japan, Siam, Annam, Assam, Nepal, Ceylon, in short, of nearly the whole of the Eastern Asia. What a vast work there is for Christianity to perform. How great the demand for consecrated diligence. But, stimulated by the gracious promises of God, we may work with assurance of success. "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thy inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."

HAWAIIAN MISSIONARIES.—Five native missionaries with their wives and children, sailed from Honolulu July 7th, for Micronesia, 3,000 miles westward. Rev. J. F. Pogue, delegate from the Hawaiian Board, also accompanied them. This is the largest party of missionaries that has ever sailed from Honolulu, and the farwell services were of great interest. The Church was crowded, and several hundred accompanied the missionaries to the wharf.

Mr. Ferguson, a Scotch missionary among the Himalaya mountains in Northern India, has had 90 converts, the fruit of five years' labor. Sometimes in the mountainous regions it is impossible for him to cross to a village on the opposite side of the valley, in which case he preaches across to the people through a speaking trumpet.

The latest story of progress in Hindostan has a certain grim picturesqueness which is almost humor. The great festival of Juggernaut was held at Serampore in July. We all know what this used to be—for is it not in all the missionary story-books and pictorial geographies? The priests upon the platform of the huge car, dancing and shouting, hundreds of worshippers pulling at the ropes, and crazy devotees flinging themselves beneath the wheels. This year the crowd attracted by the spectacle was small. The cars were dragged a short distance, by hiremen, and then left half in a muddy ditch; while the idols still in them and the flags flying. When the priests urged the people to pull, the irreverent populace cried out, "Why don't you come down and pull yourselves?" Nobody was crushed, nobody was hurt, and only three men got drunk!—N. Y. Tribune Sept. 6.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

SYSTEMATIC BENEVOLENCE, &c.

MORE EXTRACTS BY A READER.

In the financial Report of the American Baptist Missionary Union, for 1869, occur the following words:

"The New Testament reveals a plan of benevolence as clearly as it unfolds a system of doctrines. We need to get that system upon the hearts and consciences of the people."

"Systematic benevolence left a small balance in the Treasury of Rev. Dr. Baldwin's church at Troy, N. Y., at the close of the financial year. But for this arrangement the church would have been \$1,900 in debt.—*Watchman and Reflector.*

"The Christian at Work" for Sept. says:—"In one of the smallest churches, near the entrance, may be seen two boxes. Over one is painted, 'Tithes; over the other, 'Offerings.' Every member of that church is held debtor to the Lord to the amount of one-tenth of his income. This he pays regularly. If he desires to rise from the Old Testament law of tithes to the New Testament law of love, he just pays his tenth and then passing over on the other side bestows his gift. The result is, that all the expenses of the church are easily met and a handsome surplus for benevolent purposes is at the disposal of the congregation. All this in a church which, on the ordinary basis, would not probably begin to pay current expenses."

"A congregation composed so largely of the poor, that they have always been sustained by the parent church, resolved to try to do something themselves. That there might be no obstacle to even the poorest, boxes were placed near the entrance, in which deposits could be made at any time. The amount contributed by each individual was known only to God and himself. The motive urged was gratitude to God, and the method advised that laid down so plainly in Holy Writ: 'Let each one lay by in store the first day of the week as God has blessed.' He that had received nothing, it was added, was, of course, to give nothing. He that had received little was not to give a great deal, and he who received much was not to give a little. Eight years have passed since that resolution was taken. During that time no plate or subscription paper, with a single exception, has been passed. They have given 'of their poverty' on what they regard a Scripture basis; each one responsible to God alone for the use or labour of his opportunities. The result may, perhaps, best be shown in figures:

First year.....	\$ 70 00	Fifth year.....	\$1,040
Second ".....	140 00	Sixth ".....	1,400
Third ".....	490 00	Seventh ".....	2,800
Fourth ".....	700 00	Eighth ".....	3,200

The people love to give, and the Lord is most evidently bestowing His blessing, if these facts shall help others to better understand and practice the Master's Rule, our purpose will be fully attained."

"There is an increasing interest on every hand to ascertain how the present system has succeeded in churches where it has been adopted and carried out. So far as ascertained, the system has worked admirably, and given satisfaction."

"In St. James (Episcopal) church, Milwaukee, the envelope system of free offerings each Sunday has been in vogue three years past, and the testimony is that it works well. All the money that is needed is raised, without church fairs, pew renting or any such expedients."

"Some churchman has accurately computed that if the families consecrate one-tenth of their income to pious uses, the result will maintain an eleventh family, viz: the pastor's. Any church of ten families is therefore demonstrably self-supporting." W. & R.

At a recent Mass. Association "a vote was taken earnestly recommending the churches to enter upon a systematic plan to raise funds for benevolent purposes according to the plan suggested by Paul to the church at Corinth."—*Id.*

A May number of the same paper giving an account of a meeting of the Baptist Social Union in Boston, says:

"There was one little thing among the interesting exercises of the evening that struck us as particularly significant. In the letter read by Rev. Mr. Garner, of the Charles Street Church, supposed to have been written in 1669, by a Boston correspondent of the Hong Kong Mercury, it was said that whereas a century ago only one of the thirteen churches of Boston had adopted the free-pew system, there was now not one of the three hundred and seventy-five which did not adopt it. This was received with such hearty applause by all present as showed plainly enough what are the inner convictions of the laymen of Boston on the subject thus incidentally introduced. There was no mistaking the meaning of this sudden and spontaneous burst.

"Carleton" was among the speakers of the evening. In the course of his interesting address he said that the houses of worship were free all over the world, among all religions, except Christianity; and that of the three great divisions of Christendom, Roman, Greek and Protestant, the latter alone adopted the exclusive system,—a system, whose practical working in our large cities is to shut out from the house of God a large part of the common people. Hardly could a mere painfully suggestive statement be made. In our opinion the Social Union would render a most fitting and timely service to the cause of Christ, if it would institute a thorough discussion of this whole matter.

It gives us pleasure to add the following from the *Traveller*, published on the same day of the meeting of the Union; The Baptist Society in Malden, of which Rev.