

For the Christian Messenger.

THOUGHTS CONCERNING FAITH.

Faith considered as an act of the mind, is one of the simplest things in christian life. There is no at struse reasoning in the act of believing...

This we have said of faith as an act of the mind.

Faith in the higher use of the term, is the gift of God,—is evangelical, or saving, not because it is an act of the mind, but because of its object, the Lord Jesus Christ crucified.

With such faith is associated an entire consecration of body, soul, and spirit to the Lord Jesus Christ. The conquest of the soul in the exercise of such faith is triumphant, yielded to Christ "a new creature" it lays itself a sacrifice upon the altar of faith.

Before passing to notice the prayer of faith let us more particularly notice the object of the faith we have described. In doing this we shall refer to the complex character of Christ the object of faith—the God-man Mediator. That the Saviour was both God and man, though inexplicable, is, as a fact, clearly revealed, and on that fact we rely, only examining it, as to its existence.

He was also man, truly man, born of a woman, partaker of flesh and blood, subject to all the sinless infirmities thereof. He knew what temptation was, in every sense of the word.

Under this view of the prayer of faith what assurance there is in coming to God, that it will not be in vain. In the wide range of topics for the prayer of faith we take, for illustration, from that formula of prayer, taught by our Lord, the petition, "thy kingdom come:" and in offering this petition we include every thing necessary to its coming, and may therefore enlarge by particularising the multitude of means, and instrumentalities until we analyze the whole moral machinery of the coming kingdom, making each means and agent an object of special petition.

The word of God points out special subjects of prayer, and the spirit of God sometimes does the same by his direct influence on the mind. In either case prayer offered will be in harmony with the Divine will.

How full of inspiration is the thought that to such a prayer there is no limit but the will of God, the will of God is the only limit of his power. Whatsoever is asked in harmony with that will, and the prayer of faith can ask no more, is sure to be granted.

Every attribute of the Deity is coupled with the mediation of Christ, and are all combined for encouragement of the prayer of faith.

There is one feature in the prayer of faith thus presented that demands special attention. It is the unconsciousness of self in our desires or prayers. It is only as we loose ourselves in subjection to the will of God, that we can offer the prayer of faith.

FIDELITAS.

For the Christian Messenger.

ONE-SIDEDNESS.

Mr. Editor,—

On the day of Thanksgiving and Prayer we had a sermon here, in the morning, and a devotional meeting in the evening.

Dr. Cramp preached the sermon. His text was Rom. xiv. 16, "Let not then your good be evil spoken of." The preacher proposed two questions:—1. When is this evil witnessed? 2. How may it be prevented?

Under the first head it was observed that "our good is evil spoken of."—1. When an unspiritual state of mind prevails:—2. When there is one-sidedness of view:—4. When a hard, contentious spirit is indulged:—4. When sloth and inactivity appear:—5. When christian fellowship is slighted and church discipline neglected.

Speaking of one-sidedness, Dr. C. remarked on the duty of Christian ministers to "declare all the counsel of God," fully, impartially, and in due proportion. There has been in all ages, he said, a tendency to wrench a portion of the truth from the main system, and then to call a part the whole. There has also been a tendency to corrupt the truth by earthly admixtures. It was so even in apostolic days. Many of the Jewish members of the Church shrunk from the spirituality and freeness of the gospel, and would have established a partnership between Moses and Christ.

We see similar tendencies now. Some few (happily, they are but few) disavow christian obligation, and shut themselves up in selfishness, leaving the ignorant and the ungodly to perish without stretching out a hand to help them. Their theory, is, that God will work as he pleases, and neither heeds nor calls for human agency.—Others

attach the greatest importance to bodily services, and priestly intervention, and divers fashions and colours of sacerdotal dress. A third class, perhaps the most dangerous of all, consists of those who would have us believe that every thing is so fixed and arranged according to law that there can be no change, no control, no interference, and consequently no miracle.

Thus, Professor Huxley, in a recent paper "on the formation of coal," terms the Labyrinthodon "our shovel-headed predecessor, or possibly ancestor" (as though that "shovel-headed" being might have been developed, in the course of ages, into man!); and referring to the immensely long periods during which the geological formations were in process of construction, he says—"Nature is never in a hurry, and seems to have had always before her eyes the adage, 'Keep a thing, long enough, and you will find a use for it.'"—"Thrifty Nature! Surely not prodigal, but most notable of house-keepers!" Still, "Nature"; not a word about God! The theology of the Apostle Paul was different:—"Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things."

The following extract from Rev. Geo. Rawlinson's "Historical Evidences of the truth of the Scripture Records" was read:—

"It is the peculiarity of Atheism at the present day that it uses a religious nomenclature. It is no longer dry, and hard, and cold, all matter of fact and common sense, as was the case in the last century;—on the contrary, it has become warm in expression, poetic, eloquent, glowing, sensuous, imaginative;—The 'Course of Nature,' which it has set up in the place of God, is in a certain sense deified;—no language is too exalted to be applied to it, no admiration too great to be excited by it;—it is 'glorious,' and 'marvellous,' and 'superhuman,' and 'heavenly,' and 'spiritual,' and 'divine':—only it is IT, not HE; a fact, or set of facts, but not a person;—and so it can really call forth no love, no gratitude, no reverence, no personal feeling of any kind—it can claim no willing obedience—it can inspire no wholesome awe—it is a dead idol after all, and its worship is but the old nature worship—man returning in his dotage to the follies which beguiled his childhood—losing the Creator in the creature, the Workman in the work of his hands."

A passage from the Duke of Argyll's "Reign of Law" was also quoted—as follows:—

"There is at least one conclusion that is certain, namely, this—that no theory in respect to the means and method employed in the work of Creation—provided such theory takes in all the facts—can have the slightest effect in removing that work from the relation in which it stands to the attributes of will. Creation by Law—Evolution by Law—Development by Law, or, as including all these kindred ideas, the Reign of Law, is nothing but the reign of Creative Force, directed by Creative knowledge, worked under the control of Creative Power, and in fulfilment of Creative Purpose."

This reminds us of our Lord's words—"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

Beautiful, too, are Dr. Watt's lines— "Nature with open volume stands To spread her Maker's praise abroad; And every labour of his hands Shows something worthy of a God."

The preacher closed this portion of his discourse by some observations on the want of reverence which the speculations and modes of thought adverted to betray and produce. Those who indulge themselves in such a way of thinking and speaking are very apt to fall into flippancy of behaviour, and to cast off that seriousness with which God and his word ought to be treated.

Yours, &c., M.

Wolfville, Jan. 4th, 1871.

For the Christian Messenger.

AN APPEAL.

Mr. Editor,—

I have received a letter from a brother in the church at Margaree C. B. stating that the church there is grievously burdened with a debt on their place of worship, and appealing to the liberality of the churches throughout the Province in this their time of need.

He says "Some three years since when finishing our meeting-house we mortgaged it for the sum of seventy pounds. Since then the friends have worked

hard to save our place of worship from falling into other hands; but instead of our little church growing stronger it is getting weaker and weaker through various causes, the removal of many of our members from the place &c. We are not able to encourage a servant of God to come for any length of time to labor among us while thus encumbered by debt. We have been advised to write to a number of our Baptist churches to give us one Sabbath morning's collection, notice being given the Sabbath before."

Being acquainted somewhat with the circumstances of the brethren at Margaree I can recommend this object to the attention and benevolence of our brethren in the churches, and urge them to render whatever assistance is in their power to so worthy an object.

Any contributions may be sent to Deacon Lachlin McDonald, North East Margaree, C. B. or to me at Halifax, and with your permission will be duly acknowledged through the Messenger.

Yours &c., W. B. BOGGS.

We shall be glad to hear of contributions being made to the above object, also to publish the amounts on receiving the information.—Ed.

For the Christian Messenger.

THE BIBLE FOR MEXICO.

We have just received a letter from Dr. Henry Ward Poole, of the city of Mexico. The following brief extracts arrest attention:

"I give you my opinion, and that of all the Mexican friends capable of judging of your excellent translation of the New Testament, called El Nuevo Pacto.

"It is in elegant language, and in conformity with the original Greek.

"You may make use of me in distributing copies, or in any way in which I can serve the cause."

John W. Butler, of the same city, writes in equally strong language, and offers to aid in every suitable way to circulate our books.

Rev. Thomas M. Westrup, in the city of Monterey, Mexico, is equally decided in recommending our Spanish Testament, and equally ready to aid in circulating any number which we can afford to donate. He has six Baptist churches under his charge.

The pastor of four congregations in and near the city of Mexico fully accords in these views, and has freely expressed them to us in person.

We have, from time to time, as the Lord has granted us means, furnished copies of this excellent version for circulation in Spain, in Mexico, and in South America; and scarcely a week passes in which we do not donate some. More than 18,000 copies of Spanish Scriptures already have been printed from our plates, and nearly all are in circulation.

At this period of the year we wish to do more than usual. New Year's Gifts are seasonable. None can be better or more appropriate than the pure word of God. We wish to send to Mexico within thirty days, more than 2,000 copies of Spanish Scriptures. We are now giving orders, both to printers and binders, to prepare them. But we have not the means of paying for them.

There are already seventy-three congregations of Evangelical Christians in Mexico, and we wish to see the whole country evangelized. The most effectual means for this object is the pure word of God, the seed of the kingdom.

Who will send us means to furnish this New Year's Gift to the Mexicans?

THOMAS ARMITAGE, President.

WM. H. WYCKOFF,

Corresponding Secretary.

AMERICAN BIBLE UNION,

32 Great Jones Street, N. Y.

The Christian Messenger.

Halifax, N. S., January 12th, 1871.

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I have received a letter from a brother in the church at Margaree C. B. stating that the church there is grievously burdened with a debt on their place of worship, and appealing to the liberality of the churches throughout the Province in this their time of need.

He says "Some three years since when finishing our meeting-house we mortgaged it for the sum of seventy pounds. Since then the friends have worked

more free to refer to the use of the term "Baptism," here, lest it should be supposed by any of the ministers—Baptist or Pedobaptists—to whom the programme was sent, that the form of expression was intentionally substituted for "outpouring," and so employed by the Alliance. Without discussing at length the question which the use of this expression naturally raises, we feel that a few thoughts in reference to it will not be untimely.

It has been affirmed that "the way in which the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is mentioned is utterly opposed to the idea of immersion as the mode of baptism and in favor of pouring or sprinkling."

An article on this subject in a late number of the National Baptist is so much in point that we prefer it to any argument of our own:—

"When Christ's sufferings are described as a 'baptism,' it is of course the literal force of this latter word which shows us the overwhelming nature of our Saviour's sorrow. So also, when the communication of the Holy Spirit is described as a 'baptism,'—'He will baptize you in Holy Spirit and in fire,'—we understand this to set forth the abundance of the divine gifts, and would never think of taking any term in the figurative description as exactly defining the word baptism.

"Several verbs are used to describe the divine action whereby the Holy Spirit is communicated. For example; 'Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued (clothed, invested, enveloped) with power from on high.' (Luke xxiv. 49.) 'The Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.' (Acts x. 44.) 'God anointed Jesus with the Holy Ghost.' (Acts x. 38.) 'The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name.' (John xiv. 26.) 'Jesus breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.' (John xx. 22.) 'The Spirit of truth proceedeth (goes out) from the Father.' (John xv. 26.) 'On the gentiles also was poured out the gifts of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts x. 45.) 'Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.' (Acts i. 8.) 'Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.' (Acts i. 5.) Now all these words refer to the same or similar acts, but the words themselves are certainly not synonymous and interchangeable, nor could they be used in defining each other. But we could ill spare any of them, for they serve to set forth the gifts of the Holy Spirit in a multiplicity of aspects,—some expressions emphasizing the source, some the significance, some the effects of the gift,—thus impressing us with the fulness, richness, and comprehensiveness of this unspeakable spiritual blessing. At least five of these words are used in the promise and description of the Pentecostal descent of the Spirit,—endue (clothe), send, come upon, pour out, baptize. How wondrous and great the gracious benediction thus variously proclaimed; and how we shiver and narrow our conception of it, when we seek to find a literal exactness in all the terms employed by the Holy Spirit himself to describe the fulness of his own benefits.

It is evident that the term "baptism," as used in this passage of Sacred Scripture, is intended to express, not a small measure, but an overwhelming power—an immersion, in gracious influences. The fulfilment certainly warranted the largeness of the prediction. Read the sacred narrative:

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they [the apostles] were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind [just as a breath of violence borne along,—see John xx. 22, "Jesus breathed on them," &c.], and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there came in upon them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance. (Acts ii. 1-4.)

What an accumulation of terms is here, to bring out the overwhelming copiousness of the Spirit's gift and power. The house was filled, and the apostles were filled. It was a true baptism. They were completely enveloped and occupied with the divine influence,—they were richly clothed with power from on high and filled with the Holy Spirit. A person would certainly be immersed, if, standing in a room, he should allow a flood of water to flow in upon him until he was entirely overwhelmed. Such is the figure used to set forth this Pentecostal baptism of the Spirit. Thank God, the divine bestowal was not scanty nor was the effect transient. If the highest baptism, that of the Spirit,—that of which the other is only typical,—is by such an abundant immersion, shall the type itself be after a totally different mode?

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OPENING OF EPISCOPAL PULPITS.

A public meeting was held in London on the 19th ult., under the auspices of the Church Reform Union, to