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Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.
Welcome.

The mountain stream is leaping down,
The plain has changed from white to brown,
The robin's happy voice is heard,
What say stream and plain and bird?
The stream exclaims, "Joy, joy I'm free,"
The plain cries, "Sun shine warm on me,"
The robin says, "Come, let us sing,
Welcome, welcome, joyous Spring."
The sun shines through a vernal sky,
The forest lifts its head on high,
Anew my languid pulses start,
What say sun and forest, heart?
The sun says "Earth be warm and glad,"
The forest shouts, "I'll soon be clad,"
My heart responds, "Then let us sing,
Welcome, welcome, happy Spring."
S. S.

Religious.

Nine Views of Future Punishment.

BY REV. JOSEPH COOK.

Every great doctrine should be discussed under three heads—definition, proof, reply to objections. Here and now I attempt only definition. The first fault I find with the current loose newspaper discussion, and with much that pretends to be scholarly, is that it gives no definitions. It is very difficult to ascertain where a man stands, among the many forms of opinion on this theme. Canon Farrar makes these only four in number: but there are at least nine.

1. The Dantean view. This is often confused with the orthodox. Dante's poetry, his imagery of brimstone and fire, is not unfrequently spoken of as if it were to-day the official utterance of the latest scholarship. The Dantean view, strictly so called, is repudiated by scholarly orthodox. Allow me to say however, that I believe in the existence of a spiritual body, and that I know beyond a peradventure that in this life, when a man is under the terrors of conscience, strange thrills of pain shoot through him. He is bowed down. There are many indications that the finest fibres of his structure are at war with the nature of things. We do not know but that in another state of existence the spiritual body will be darkened and bowed down, and shot through with pain, as it is here. I cannot be sure that any one is authorized to assert that in the next life there may not be pains as nearly physical as the spiritual body is. There is a spiritual body; and here and now it lies behind the finest fibres of our flesh, and here and now we feel some of the pains and blisses of which the spiritual body is susceptible. I do not adopt the Dantean view of the state of the lost in another life; but I object to any man saying, who believes in a spiritual body, that there are no conditions adapted to that body to reveal God's displeasure there, just as similar conditions surely reveal the displeasure of conscience here. Let no man whistle on this theme until he is out of Dante's forest. There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of, in the pains that conscience gives us by its displeasure and the blisses it imparts by its complacency. When the cover of flesh is dropped, and we possess in fullness all the powers which now exist in embryo in this mysterious organism, who knows but that somewhere in the next state of existence we shall understand what the dim but vast prophecies of our instinctive gestures in contrasted moral states mean—standing erect, and having in our faces a light not of this world, or bowing down, feeling chains upon our limbs, and pains shooting through the inmost fibres. This quarter of the sky deserves a long gaze. We are fearfully and wonderfully made.

2. The Romish view. This does not teach by authority that the pains of

the next life will be physical; but yet asserts that it is dangerous to deny that they will be. In the *North American Review* lately (March-April, 1878), a Romish writer defends a theory of the state of the impenitent almost Dantean. Of course, the doctrine of the Romish purgatory is not upheld by Protestant scholars.

3. The Orthodox view. What is it? I know that I venture much; but I am asking no one here to endorse my propositions. I claim no right to speak for others. When I set aside all exegetical considerations, and use only the light of ethical science, my view of future punishment is summed up in these propositions:

(1.) Argument which proves that sin will cease involves principles which prove that it would never begin. It has begun. And optimism must adjust itself to this fact of experience.

(2.) Judicial blindness occurs under the operation of the two natural laws that repeated sin impairs the judgement and that he whose judgement is impaired sins repeatedly.

(3.) The self-propagating power of sin arises from these same laws.

(4.) The effectiveness of new light in another state of existence to cause reform cannot be scientifically predicted face to face with these laws.

(5.) Under the power of judicial blindness and the self-propagating nature of sin, a man may fall into permanent, voluntary moral remoteness from God and its consequences, or final permanence of evil character.

(6.) While sin continues, its punishment will continue.

Even after repentance, sin is not covered from the Divine displeasure without an atonement, consciously or unconsciously received.

4. The Second Probationist view. This does not necessarily teach that all men will be saved, but that those who die impenitent will have a second chance, and those that who do not improve will fall into eternal sin and go into eternal punishment.

5. The Annihilationist view. This affirms that the incorrigibly wicked will sooner or later cease to exist.

6. The Universalist view. There is very little difference between Universalism and Restorationism. The Universalist is a Restorationist of perhaps a more emphatic sort than the man who previously was called a Restorationist, but not a Universalist.

8. The Agnostic view. Those who hold this say that there is a background of mystery, and that the Bible reveals nothing on this theme.

9. The Optimistic view. This is Canon Farrar's position; and it affirms neither the Universalist, nor the Restorationist, nor the Agnostic propositions, but simply an eternal hope.

I might say that, in the last place, we have a materialistic view, which sometimes calls itself Christian, attempting to twist out of the Scriptures the idea that there is no immortality for any soul. We have erratics, unscientifically, foolish persons, who find no teaching of immortality in the Old Testament, or even in the New. Indeed, there is no use in carrying forward a debate with men so twisted by native constitution that they can twist the Bible into the negation of one of the plainest of its teachings—certainly in the New Testament—That there is immortality for both the evil and the good.

PRACTICAL TESTS OF THESE VIEWS.

For one, I have made up my mind not to go out of this life trusting my chances of eternal peace to the opportunity of repentance after death. In this assembly we profess to revere the scientific method. Let us try here a serious experiment. Nothing tests a doctrine like acting it out. How many are there in this hall that are willing to trust their chances of eternal peace to the possibility of repentance after death? Canon Farrar says that his gospel is one of eternal hope; and that, although he cannot preach the certainty of Universalism, he must yet lift up behind the darkness in the background of our

views of the next life a hope that every winter will turn to spring. He assures us that there is no opportunity of repentance after death. Will any one rise here and say seriously that he is willing to act on that assurance? It is safe to put truth into practice. "Thou shalt not steal." I am willing to take that as a guide at this moment. Thou shalt commit no murder." I am ready to trust my whole weight upon that plank in the theological platform. But, as for myself, I have personally made up my mind that I will not, if I have my senses, go hence trusting to a chance of repentance after death.

Am I willing to advise any friend to trust his chance of eternal peace to an opportunity of repentance after death? Not I. By as much as any man or woman is dear to me, by so much I should advise them to be shy of going hence trusting their eternal future and its peace to an opportunity of repentance beyond the grave. If I cannot advise John and Jane, William and Mary, to trust to repentance after death, I have no right to advise the ages to do so. John and Jane, William and Mary are the ages.

What, then, have we to do with this seductive clamor as to repentance after death—we practical men, who believe in the scientific method, and would put everything to the test of absolute experiment in life? If we cannot depend on the doctrine ourselves; if we are not willing to put our whole weight upon it; if we recoil with terror when asked to put upon it the weight of any friend; how dare we stand up and put upon it the weight of the ages, full of passion and blindness, heat and prurency, and what these forces may breed? As a practical matter the question for me is settled by a simple appeal to individual seriousness. You are not willing—I am not willing—to take the step into the unseen depending on the chance of repentance after death. And, if we are not willing to do that ourselves, God forbid that we should teach others to do what we will not do!

Ordination.

[We copy the following Questions and Answers from the *Zion's Advocate*, the organ of the Maine Baptist churches. With its utterances we are ordinarily in full accord. The answer to the 3rd Question is, doubtless, perfectly correct, so far as the right is concerned; the propriety of exercising the right, however, except under very unusual circumstances, will be called in question by some. The answer given does not seem to recognize any other officer but that of minister, whereas a church could hardly be said to exist without some one or more officers.

If the church is duly organized on New Testament principles (1 Tim. iii.) there must be one or more deacons, who are supposed to have qualifications to meet any emergencies or cases of necessity that may arise. Circumstances should be taken into consideration in any such case of carrying out this principle, or confusion would probably follow especially if opposition existed in the church to such proceeding. Jealousies might also be awakened and so injury come. In some churches a brother might be peculiarly qualified for such service, and no such consequences follow, then the church would feel the benefit of its freedom in this matter.—Ed. C. M.]

We are asked to answer a few questions.

1. Does ordination qualify a man to administer the ordinances?

Ans. For an orderly administration of the ordinances, Baptists hold that there are two classes of qualifications, moral and ceremonial. The moral qualifications are regeneration and a Christian walk. Then there are cere-

monial qualifications, such as baptism, church membership, and ordination. Baptists do not hold, however, that either the moral or ceremonial qualifications are indispensable to a valid administration of the ordinances. A man may have been in the Baptist ministry for a series of years, and it appear at length that during all this time he was an imposter. In such a case, no Baptist church would require that the persons he had baptized should be rebaptized. In other words, the validity of baptism does not depend upon the qualifications of the administrator. While, therefore, there are many reasons why Baptist churches prefer that the ordinances should be administered only by those who have been ordained to the work of the ministry, they by no means regard ordination as indispensable to a valid administration.

2. Is it proper to employ Pedobaptist ministers to administer the ordinances in Baptist churches?

Ans. By no means, for the reason that they are not in fellowship with our churches, and differ so widely from us in their view of the ordinances.

3. Has a church a right to appoint an unordained member to administer the ordinances?

Ans. Most certainly. In case an ordained minister cannot be secured, this is the proper course for a church to take. The first Baptist church organized in England was gathered by John Spilsbury, who was baptized by one of his brethren, and then in turn baptized the rest. This was the case at the baptism of Roger Williams and his associates at Providence. There are many cases to be found in the early history of our churches.

4. Has a church a right to appoint a man, not a member, to administer the ordinances?

Ans. By this is not meant, we suppose, a member of any church, but of the church making the appointment. This question, also, we answer in the affirmative. Oftentimes an ordained Baptist minister, who is supplying a pastorless church, is invited to baptize.

Who make too much of Baptism?

It is said that Baptists make too much of baptism. Is this true? The Baptist says each true convert should be baptized. Does the Presbyterian say that he may properly go unbaptized? Certainly not. He differs from the Baptist on the question as to what baptism is, but that the convert should receive baptism he insists just as earnestly as does the Baptist. Nay more. While the Baptist stops with baptizing the convert himself, the Presbyterian would baptize his children also. Where the former gives baptism to one, the latter would give it to half a dozen. Which, pray, makes the most of it? Which ascribes to it the greater efficacy? Romanists and Anglicans attribute to baptism a supernatural potency, even making it essential to salvation. And among Presbyterians this idea still lingers. Though their system, as a whole, repudiates it, Presbyterians will often speak of baptism as affecting the child's relations to Christ and his prospects of salvation. The Presbyterian clergyman is sometimes sent for at midnight to hasten and baptize the dying infant. There is no denying that not only Romanists and Episcopalians, but also Methodists and Presbyterians, have much superstition on this subject. Now not the most ignorant Baptist regards a man as any safer from perdition for having been baptized. Baptists regard baptism as merely a symbol of a change of heart—a symbol which ought to be observed indeed; but they hold that if a man has really been converted he will be saved even without baptism, while if he is not converted baptism will do him no good whatever.

It was this making too much of baptism that gave rise to the baptism of infants; and with it came the doctrine of baptismal regeneration—the doctrine that regeneration is through baptism; only through baptism; and then it was that people began to desire that their

children should be baptized. They began with children who were apparently about to die, and ended by giving the ceremony to all children. Baptists have always refused to give baptism to infants, because they have always contended that it made no difference with the child's salvation. Episcopalians baptize infants more regularly than the Presbyterians, because they ascribe to baptism greater efficacy; and Presbyterians practise it while Baptists do not, because they have superstitions which Baptists do not have as to the effect of the ceremony. As regards the supernatural efficacy of baptism, Baptists make less of it than any other Christians, unless it be the Quakers. The Presbyterians do not make as much of it as the Episcopalians and Romanists, but they make more of it than do the Baptists.

Again, it is a common thing for Presbyterians to administer baptism, or what they consider to be such, to one converted on a sick-bed and near to death. It is a very rare thing for Baptists so to do. It will be said that this is because the immersion of the sick is generally out of the question, while affusion is easily done. But how came Presbyterians to have this more convenient ceremony? The story of it is this: When men had come to make too much of baptism, and to believe that no one could be saved without baptism, the serious question arose as to what could be done when one was converted on his death bed, and the apostolic immersion was impracticable. It was decided that the divinely established ceremony might be departed from, and pouring or sprinkling used in its stead. The use of pouring or sprinkling never would have been thought of in any Church, had it not been for the rise of the doctrine that if a man died without baptism his soul would be lost.

Baptists reject this doctrine, and so when a convert is too sick to be immersed, they have no fears whatever about letting him die unbaptized. No other Christians except the Quakers let so many converts die unbaptized as do the Baptists. They need no other defence from the charge of making too much of baptism, than the fact that they so pertinaciously adhere to the primitive baptism, and therefore suffer so many converts to die without baptism.

Now who makes the most of baptism—those who are willing to let converts die unbaptized, or those who are shocked at the idea of this? Baptism in the sick room, like the Lord's Supper in the sick room, might often no doubt be administered with propriety, but Baptists seldom do it; and because they are afraid that too much will be made of baptism—that countenance will be given to the idea that it is in some way essential to salvation. They prefer to err in omitting the ordinance when it might properly be administered, rather than in making too much of it.—N. Y. Examiner.

To Conduct a Prayer-meeting.

The best way is not to "conduct" it at all. In other words, very little, if any, direction should be attempted. There should be perfect freedom. Let every one contribute in any way he may think proper. Only this restriction should be observed: Let every thing be done to edification.

There are several ways, however, in which a prayer-meeting should not be conducted. One of these is, where every speaker attempts to instruct the meeting as to how prayer-meetings may be made interesting. There are some people who may be, not inaptly, styled prayer-meeting killers. You will know them at once by the following marks:

1. They nearly always speak instead of pray.
2. They invariably begin their harangues by scolding others because they do not take part in the meeting.
3. The speech is generally a profound exposition of some difficult passage of scripture, or else an enforcement of some neglected duty.