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The Christian Watchman

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Original Contributions

For the Christian Watchman.

"THE WORD."

NUM[illegible]

FORM OF HIS M[illegible]ATION.

The world since its creation has been indebted to the Divine "Word" for all the knowledge of truth which it possessed, especially for its knowledge of religious truth. Ever since the first man became a living soul, the Word has been imparting or at least presenting truth, in the intuitions of the mind, the deductions of reason, the monitions of conscience—the hopes and fears, the disquietudes or longings of the human soul. Nevertheless the gentile world refused to be enlightened and remained in ignorance of its God, its duties, its condition and its destiny.

The "Word" drew still nearer to the Israelitish people. The patriarchs heard his voice, saw somewhat of his glory, and learnt to cherish sublime expectations. The children of Abraham saw his effulgence on the summit of Sinai, followed his guidance in the pillar of fire and cloud, and could have seen his form though mirrored forth darkly in the rites and ceremonies of their religion. He it was who caused to pass before the minds of the holy prophets those visions of glory which they so graphically described. In the latter days when his previous manifestations had failed to scatter the darkness which shrouded humanity, he came into the world, to the Jewish people, in visible form, with audible voice, to instruct and to save.

He did not descend from heaven to earth in all his divine glory and majesty—nor did he even know the radiant form and perfect nature of a spirit of heaven. When he came he laid aside his crown and sceptre and robe, and appeared in the formof a man. But he did not merely invest himself with a human body; he became a man. With man's form and substance, he also assumed man's nature. While the "Word" Eternal and Divine—he was in every respect human, in body and in soul. "The Word became flesh."

The body with which he invested himself was not a refined etherial and spiritual substance. It was not even like that, which we may perhaps suppose Adam to have possessed before he fell into sin, incapable of disease or death, but was in all respects as the human body has been since the curse of sin fell upon man. He was born of a woman. The infant Jesus was as helpless as any other babe. He grew in stature and in strength, from infancy, through childhood and youth to manhood, and exhibited the physical characteristics of these several periods. This body just like ours was nourished by food, refreshed by repose and sleep—and stood in need of clothing and shelter. In every respect this body was as sensitive to pain or distress as ours. When deprived of food he hungered, when deprived of rest he was weary, when smitten he felt the blow. He brought with him from heaven no antidote to the ills which flesh is heir to, but freely exposed himself to every deprivation which may distress and to every infliction which may rack the human frame nor did he even guard against the last enemy. The incarnate Word, though essentially eternal and immortal, was as liable to death, with all its agonies, as the frailest and most sinful of mortals.

But we come to consider a deeper and more inexplicable mystery. "The "Word," with a frail mortal body also assumed a nature in every respect human, except so far as that nature had been depraved."

The various mental faculties existed in him and were developed and manifested, as in and by us. We do not know how far the human mind resembles its author and original—how far he modelled it after his own image. But we know that the incarnate Word exhibited intellectual faculties, the same as ours. He not only possessed memory, imagination, taste, reason, but these faculties were developed, and operated in harmony with the laws which regulate the human mind. He passed through a period of unconsciousness in infancy. Through childhood and youth his mind enlarged its capacity, and increased in knowledge. He saw and heard and remembered, and reflected and reasoned, and enlarged his stock of ideas just as we do. It is said of him that "he grew in knowledge." His mind also, like ours, was influenced by his physical condition, shared as fully with bodily weariness or distress, and was as unconscious in slumber.

As we turn away from the contemplation of the human intellect of the incarnate Word, to consider his disposition, we discover that this was also human. The affections which are manifested by us in view of the relation in which we stand to others, he possessed. The pleasurable or painful emotions which are excited in the human soul, by what is desirable, or pleasant or the reverse, he also experienced. It is instructive to consider the frequency with which he exhibited affections and emotions, which, though in harmony with his exalted nature, are, so far as we can judge, human. While he exhibited a love for the divine Father, he forgot not the care and tenderness of the earthly mother. He not only treated her with the respect which her relationship to him required, but in the agonies of his death, he exhibited a touching example of the depth of his filial love. Towards those with whom he most intimately associated, he felt a warm affection. In his intercourse with his disciples, especially with John, and the family of Bethany, we have an illustration of the purest and most exalted friendship. His emotional nature was in like manner human. Now his heart is stirred by pity and compassion, and tears gush down his cheeks—and now he is moved to indignation, and vehemently denounces the enemies of truth and righteousness. His heart throbs with exultation, as he receives signs of the Father's approbation of his person and work, and again the ingratitude of those he loved, the anger and rage of those whom he sought to enlighten and to save, filled him with grief.

It is also to be noticed that the Word manifested in the flesh not only became a man with a human soul, as well as a human body, but also that he was regarded by God as a man. He released him from no human obligations, excused him from none of those trials which await the fallen descendants of Adam.

We must suppose that the Deity is under no obligation to obey the laws which he has instituted for the government of men. He does not sustain the same relation to his creatures which they do towards him, and also towards each other. But when the Word became flesh he placed himself under the laws which were devised to regulate man. Whatever was man's duty in affection, disposition, conversation or conduct, towards the Creator or creature, the "incarnate Word undertook to perform. He was to be devout, submissive, graceful, and full of love towards God. He was to be affectionate, meek, humble, compassionate, benevolent in all his thoughts, feelings and conduct towards men.—So completely did he identify himself with fallen and subject humanity, in his subjection to the law that we not only may but ought to imitate him in his disposition towards and his dealings with God as well as man.

Furthermore and this is most mysterious, he was under the law in the same sense as any other subject of the Divine Government. He, no more than any other man, could violate the obligation placed upon him, with impunity. If we can suppose the slightest failure in duty on his part, the consequences would have involved not only the failure of his mission, but the penalty of violated law to himself.

While thus under the law, and also under obligation to obey it to the very letter, he was also placed in a position of severe trial. All those circumstances in human life which either exhibit invincible virtue, or display the ruined depravity, attended his earthly career. He was no stranger to the seductive allurements of the world, nor to its slander, its contempt and its rage. Even Satan had liberty to pour into his ear language such as hitherto had overcome the virtue of the purest. He heeded the voice of love and of hatred, the acclamation and the curses of men, he was familiar alike with the solitude of the desert and the din of the crowded city; he sat at the table of the wealthy, and pined in the barreness of the wilderness; he experienced some hours of joy and passed through seasons of bitter agony. He shared the lot of man, exempt from no trial or affliction or suffering incident to humanity. Nay, it seemed as if more than others he was exposed to trial; it seemed as though God led him into situations of peculiar danger, and allotted to him peculiar trials; as though he allowed the great enemy, with hosts of his servants to assault with peculiar violence, this holy man. and under circumstances the most unfavorable. Well was it for a sinful and ruined world that all these temptations and trials only served to render his integrity, his minute and invincible virtue more conspicuous.

ALEPH.

For the Christian Watchman.

Conversion and Baptism of the Jailor.

The earlier portion of the time spent by Paul and his companions was passed without the opposition which they were accustomed to meet with from their fellow countrymen in other places. Already Lydia and her family with some few others had been converted. But severe trials awaited these teachers of the true religion, and other souls were to be won by the doctrines of salvation.

As Paul and his companions from time to time went to the place of prayer, by the river side, to persuade those who frequented the consecrated spot, to accept Jesus as their Messiah, these preachers of the gospel were persistently followed by a demoniac, a female slave, whose ravings, through the superstition of the people was a source of much gain to her owners.

The dæmon who possessed her prompted her as she followed the little band of Christians—to cry out continually "These men are the servants of God Most High—they announce to us the way of salvation. Paul pitied the afflicted creature and was grieved at testimony which though true, yet being prompted by a dæmon could only injure the cause of truth. Accordingly he expelled the evil spirit, and restored the possessed to a sound mind.

But this miracle of mercy excited the wrath of her owners, who saw their prospects of gain thus destroyed. In their rage they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them to the forum, in which the tribunal was held, and accused them to the prætors of Philippi as disturbers of the peace of the city—and also with having in violation of Roman law, sought to introduce foreign customs.

Such an accusation would naturally excite the hostility of a people who, as inhabitants of a Roman Colony, would be prejudiced against any who should, in any way strive to change Roman laws, customs, or religion. The prætors did not even pretend to give the accused a trial, but influenced by the clamors of the mob ordered Paul and Silas to be stripped and beaten; after a cruel beating they were condemned to prison, and a charge was given to the Jailor which authorized him to treat them with unusual severity. Faint and bleeding with the blows they had received at the hands of the lictor, they were thrust into the inner prison and their feet fastened in the stocks, an instrument of torture as well as of confinement.

But these persecuted followers of Christ could rejoice in the midst of their sufferings, and at midnight they sang praise to God. Seldom have such strains been heard within the walls of a prison.

While these strains of exultation, gratitude and praise were falling upon the ears of the astonished inmates of this receptacle of misery and crime, suddenly there was an earthquake, and the foundations of the prison were shaken, and its doors were all opened, and the manacles which fettered every captive were unloosed. Some mysterious influence alone prevented them from making their escape.

The Jailor was awakened out of his slumber by the noise and motion occasioned by the earthquake. He saw the prison doors all opened, and naturally supposed that his prisoners had fled. Stern Roman law held him responsible, and threatened him with ignominy and death. He determined to escape the disgraceful doom by suicide, and seized his sword to effect his design. But Paul who from his position in the inner prison could read the countenance, and perceived the movements of the Jailor, shouted out to him just as he was about to plunge the sword into his body, "do thyself no harm, for we are all here. Now relieved from his fears, he called for lights, and rushed into the inner prison. He was profoundly agitated. A new and dreadful fear oppressed him. He had heard at least from rumor, of the character and designs of these two prisoners; perhaps he had heard them preach. He had witnessed their patience and meekness in the endurance of injustice, and even torture; and now he regarded the earthquake, and the bursting open of the prison doors, and the loosening of the shackles of the prisoners, as evidence of a Divine interposition in behalf of these two injured men. He no longer feared for his life, but he trembled as he saw that his immortal soul was in peril. He respectfully addressed the men whom he now regarded as teachers of the truth and favorites of Heaven; then he removed their feet from the stocks, brought them out of the inner prison, and put the question which now so deeply agitated his soul, "Sirs," he inquired "what must I do in order that I may be saved." They replied, "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and this salvation is free not only to you, but to every member of your family who will accept of it." By this time the members of the household had all gathered around Paul and Silas. They then, surrounded by eager listeners, explained more fully the gospel of Christ and pointed out more at length the way of life. The words spoken under those circumstances were not in vain.

The Jailor, though it was in the dead hour of the night, now took Paul and Silas to a convenient place, and washed them, and cleansed them from the blood which had followed the cruel blows of the lictor. But not only had the feelings of the Jailor towards these servants of Christ undergone a change, his mind had been enlightened, and his heart converted. The members of his family also, had heard, and feared and turned unto the Lord. They did not delay to acknowledge their Saviour. That same night the Jailor with every member of his household was baptized.

He did not now remand them to prison, but lead them up into his own appartment, and set food before them. He with all his family rejoicing through their reception of the truth and the faith which they had been led to place in God.

NOTES. We are unable to perceive the force of the objection to immersion, which some have thought they have perceived in the account given of the baptism of the Jailor. Luke says that after the Jailor had taken Paul and Silas out of the inner prison, and with his family had listened to the preaching of the Gospel, "he took them and washed their stripes," but very soon after he with his family were baptized, and then that he brought them up unto his house. These circumstances are certainly in harmony with immersion. That the Jailor took them to a bath, pond or fountain is evident from the term elousen, "he washed" v 33. "The verb louo" says Dr. Robinson "means to bathe, to wash, but only the whole body." The verb nipto is used to express the washing of some part of the body. Evidently then if Paul and Silas had access to water sufficient for a bath, there was no obstacle to the immersion of the Jailor and his family. Meyer says, "the rite may have been performed in the same fountain or pond in which the Jailor had washed them." DeWette agrees with this supposition. Rosenmuller thinks that there may have been a bath within the limits of the prison; this is very probable.—Conybeare and Howson says, "In the same hour of the night the Jailor took the Apostles to the well or fountain of water which was within or near the precincts of the prison, and there he washed their wounds, and there also he and his household were baptized."

It is also extremely difficult to perceive how an argument in favor of infant baptism can be drawn from the statement that "he was baptized and all his, straightway." Luke informs us in the 33d v. that Paul and Silas spake the word of the Lord to him, and to all who were in his house," then after the baptism we are informed that "he rejoiced with all his household, having believed in God." Infants cannot hear the gospel preached, nor can they rejoice in consequence of having believed in God. But apart from these statements, on the term household, Olshausen says, "The remark in v 32, that Paul preached not only to the Jailor but also to all en te oikia autou is plainly not favorable to the view that infant children are included under this expression, for Paul could deliver no discourse to them. Conybeare and Howson: "It was a night of happiness for all. They praised God that his power had been made effectual in their weakness; and the Jailor's family had their first experience of that joy which is the fruit of believing in God.

X. Y. Z.

RECOLLECTIONS OF ROME.

NO. III

THE MODERN CITY—ITS REPULSIONS.

Throned beside the yellow Tiber, Lo the seven hilled city stands.
And she sways a double sceptre in her everlasting hands.

For a spiritual honor, she has changed her old renown,
And the diadem of Cæsar, for the triple Papal crown.

And she wears the laurel garland, which Athena owned of yore.
When o'er Art she ruled triumphant by the blue Ægean shore.

Shrines of saints and sacred temples reverently surround her there,
Swelling domes and towers uprearing like a city in the air.

Ancient monuments, and modern, in her galleries fill the scene.
Where the word of Art does homage to its own acknowledged Queen.

Yet in vain the laurel garland, and in vain the triple crown,
While her children shrink in terror from a Despot's angry frown.

While within her burn the memories of her glory and her fame,
Of the stalwart old republic and its deeds of deathless name.

Now the nations throng around her, and they watch with eager eyes,
From the vigils of the ages, Old Imperial Rome arise.

Crying, "Hasten Royal city. Thou with double garlands crowned.
Rise and break thy bands asunder, hurl the tyrant to the ground.

Rise majestic from oppression. Take thine ancient seat again.
And with freedom's nobler sceptre, o'er a nobler kingdom reign"

Now at last my eyes behold thee, Oh, my country, Oh, my home,
And my inmost heart rejoices in the very dust of Rome.

Through the streets, I walk familiar. I am not a stranger here,
Every stone to me is precious. Every spot to me is dear.

In thy grand and solemn silence, as I pass the scenes among,
Every monument is vocal, every stone has found a tongue.

In my childhood first I knew thee—then familiar as my home,
Came the thought of all the glory, all the olden might of Rome.

In the early dawn of boyhood, in the years of later age,
Thou didst't open wide before me, thy sublime historic page.

Here my spirit first awakened. Thought was gloriously born,
Here I first arose from darkness, to an intellectual morn.

And with years the knowledge deepened, for with each advancing year,
Hope, and wish, and thought, and feeling, ever fondly centered here.

Now at last mine eyes behold thee, and I claim thee as my home,
One among the world of scholars, I'm a citizen of Rome.

Before we ascend modern Rome it will be pleasing to us to inspect some modern eminence whence we may behold at a glance the capital of the popes. We ascend the Pincian hill the favorite promenade of all dwellers in Rome, whether natives or foreigners. From its summit the view is bounded by the Esquiline and the Capitoline, which shut out the ancient city and the Campagna, so that we have beneath us only modern Rome with the villas in its vicinity. Towards sunset the Pincian is thronged not only by the beauty and fashion of Rome, but by representatives of every civilized nation in the world. To our ear the accents of the English tongue spoken here and there is sweeter, even than the musical speech of Italy, and the English lady, her blue eyes beaming a quiet delight, is more charming than the Roman beauty, though so bewitching.

The sky is clear, the atmosphere is pure and exhilerating the panorama spread before us is very beautiful, and all the multitudes seem to be full of enjoyment, all but the pale and emaciated invalid who looks mournfully upon the animated scene around her, or with mingled pleasure and sadness, awaits a spectacle which she soon will see no more, the setting sun.

Perhaps she glances from the Pincian hill, towards yonder pyramid, which marks the position of the Protestant burying ground, and with a shudder wishes that she were at home, to die with all her loved ones around, and then to repose with kindred dust.

But evening is approaching—the scene before us becomes more exquisitely beautiful, and the gay throngs become silent.

The sun is setting, earth and sky,
One blaze of glory. What but now we saw,
As though it were not, though it had not been,
He lingers yet, and lessening to a point,
Shines like the eye of heaven.

The sun as it descends in cloudless splendor, brings into view many an object which before had escaped the eye, gives greater distinctness of outline to every form, and tinges the whole scene with hues of unusual brilliancy and gorgeousness. Innumerable domes rise from all quarters of the city in indescribable stateliness and magnificence. The villas in the vicinity of the city are bathed in verdure of a brilliant emerald green. But the eye ranging with pleasure over this scene reposes with delight on St. Peters. The majestic basilica with its piazza, fountains colonnades, porticos and gigantic domes—all tinged with purple and gold by the setting sun, appears more like a scene from the Arabian Nights than a reality.

As soon as the sun descends, the heavens for a few moments appear like a canopy of fire, and then the entire scene just now so glorious, rapidly disappears from the sight. There is no twilight, none of that gradual and delightful transformation of day into night with which we are so familiar. The transition from the extraordinary splendor which precedes, and the darkness which succeeds the setting sun is almost instantaneous. The air immediately becomes damp and chilley, and the Pincian hill is in a few moments deserted.

Let us now inspect Rome more closely. We notice with surprise the total absence of every thing which we have been accustomed to regard as indicative of material prosperity. The wide plains which almost encircle the city are desolate. Not a farm nor a vineyard, nor a grove, nor sign of human habitation is visible throughout the vast expanse of the Campagna.

Within the city walls all is stillness; we meet with no crowds of artizans going to or returning from their daily work, no railroad or telegraphic wire, or warehouse, is to be seen. In some of the shops of the Corso, Roman Mosaics are manufactured, and occasionally in the Campagna, a few lazy workmen may be seen pretending to make excavations, but these are the only evidences of industrial life which appear.

The Corso is the only street worthy of the name in the city. This street, though rather narrow, is kept clean, and with a row of old but substantial buildings on either side, is no disgrace to Rome. But everywhere else within the city walls the dirt and filth are most disgusting to the stranger, and most disgraceful to the authorities. The so called streets are in general but narrow and crooked lanes, and seem not only to serve as means of inter-communication, but also as receptacles for the filth of the city. The sun which at mid-day is powerful, even in winter, rarely penetrates into these narrow and disgusting lanes.

Those quarters of the city which are nearest the Tiber are most remarkable for filth and squalor, and far surpass our own York Point when it was in its glory. In these quarters of the city, are dismal wine cellars, thronged with men and women, who however never get drunk. Here also in these low quarters, are the lottery shops where the poor hazard their last bajocchi. These institutions are almost as numerous in Rome as whiskey shops are in Glasgow. It is a little remarkable that lotteries, though prohibited in nearly every civilized country, should be tolerated by the head of the Roman Catholic church.

The ghetto, the Jews quarter, is in the heart of the filthiest section of Rome. Here all the Jews resident in the city are compelled to live. It has but one entrance, and every evening at a stated hour, the inhabitants are locked in for the night. Over the gate and over the door of all the Houses are Hebrew inscriptions. When you bear in mind that these people are not over cleanly, and that four thousand are compelled to live in a district scarcely capable of containing the fourth part of that number, you can form some idea to the appearance of the Ghetto. I suppose this species of religious intolerance is preserved as a relic of the spirit of the dark ages, however it is no ornament to Rome.

The Palaces of the modern city are surpassingly numerous, but they seem for the most part to be in a state of decay. Some are quite deserted, others have degenerated into Cafes or lodging houses, while the greater portion of those which are still owned and inhabited by the nobility, are situated in dirty streets or piazzas, or surrounded by mean looking buildings, so as to appear to great disadvantage.

But have we a right to expect in Rome the industrial activity of Manchester, or the splendor and gaity of Paris, or the elegance, and quite beauty of Florence? Rome is a venerable cemetery, where the chief attraction consists not in the order and neatness of the walks, but in the beauty or antiquity of the monuments, or the celebrity of the men or epochs which they commemorate.

A.

From the Examiner.

Substitution at the Supper.

Much has been said and written on the prerequsite qualifications of persons worthily partaking of the Lord's Supper; but seldom do we see or hear communications specially on the elements necessary to this ordinance. It is supposed that there is suchentire unanimity of opinion and practice among the different denominations of Christians, and also with the local churches of the same denomination, as to render any such communication uncalled for? It cannot have escaped the memories of any who have been familiar with his writings that Moses Stuart, in his well-known essay on baptism, published in the Biblical Repository, 1833, advanced the opinion that "fish and water" might be substituted for bread and wine, and the ordinace in spirit be observed.

And we were told that many churches acted upon the suggestion, so far as to use water instead of wine. And the writer has the best reasons to know that, to the present day, there are churches, who, in their profession observance of this beautifully significant ordinance, substitute other liquids for the juice of the grape. And what is more surprising, some Baptist churches who are thoroughly and justly opposed to all substitution in any part of a positive institution, are doing this very thing.

But what, on this subject, is the Divine record?—"Jesus took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat, this is my body. And he took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it, For this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Now, what liquid was in that cup? Plainly the juice of the grape—for he adds—"I will not drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." This liquid, then, called the fruit of the wine, and no other, is the element which Jesus made choice of to represent his blood—"THIS IS MY BLOOD." Are we at liberty to say that any other liquid, the juice of any other fruit, is just as good—that it is equally the symbol of his blood? Does its being a symbol depend on similarity of color, as some pretend? Certainly not. It depends alone on the word of the Lawgiver. "This"—that is, the fruit of the vine—"is my blood." Every other liquid is therefore excluded. Just as the command to "believe and be baptized" excludes the baptism of any but a believer. Our Lord says—"Do this in remembrance of me." Do what? Just what Christ and his disciples did—take bread and wine—the fruit of the vine, and giving thanks, eat the bread and drink the wine in commemoration of Christ's death. The bread made of the flour of grain, and the wine made of the juice of the grape, represents by Divine and positive enactment, the body and blood of our Saviour.

Now, if instead of these elements we substitute a "fish," or a potato, with the juice of the apple, the raspberry, elderberry, or the juice of the currant, prepared in a palatable form, do we obey the command—"Do this in remembrance of me."

If any reply—the command, in the spirit of it, is obeyed—then we say, that on the same principle, the command to be baptized is obeyed when, from the fingers of the administrator, only a few drops of water are received on the person of the candidate, and especially so since, in the latter case, the element is not changed, only the manner of using it, which cannot be said of the former. If such substitutions are commenced, who shall say where they shall stop? It is important to distinguish between what is essential to this ordinance, and what is circumstantial. The time, place and posture of individuals receiving it are clearly circumstantial; so, also, whether the bread he leavened or unleavened, and whether or not the wine be fermented; in either case the element is unchanged, that is, there is no substitution. Equally circumstantial is it whether the bread be made of wheat or barley; both were common in Palestine when Christ was on earth. And whether the wine be made from either of the different kinds of grape, it is the same—the fruit of the vine. But with thanksgiving, the eating of the bread and the drinking of the wine, in the commemoration of our Lord's death, are essential to the command; for it is doing just what Christ and his disciples did, without addition, subtraction or substitution.

IOLAS.

DECLINE OF HEATHENISM.—An English Baptist missionary in Orissa, makes a remarkable statement in regard to the great idolatrous festival of that part of India. His words are:—

"You may remember my mentioning, when at home, that the last time I attended the Juggernath festival, the car was abandoned by the people and left on the road. A few days ago I went to the same spot, and expected to see two cars, and was told that one is too old, and with regard to the other, it was said the proprietor could not afford the usual fee to the Brahmins. But this is all a blind. The truth is, that the people have grown too wise to make beasts of themselves by dragging the car, and thus I have lived to see an end to the swinging and Juggernath feasts in the one and same place: and singular enough, there were no images of Juggernath offered for sale. Formerly there were. I infer that the god must be sadly out of favor.

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