

Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

QUESTIONS AND THOUGHTS FOR THE NEW YEAR.

LUKE XIII: 8, 9.

What more imperative command or more important duty did the Savior leave for his disciples than the last he uttered. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature"? Was there ever a time since that command was given when obedience to it was more binding or important? Where there ever more effectual and open doors, louder and more numerous Macedonian cries, or more facilities for the spread of the gospel? Were there ever more professed followers of Jesus,—more whom we might naturally expect to go and preach or send the gospel,—or more money at the disposal of the christian church? "Occupy till I come." "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world."

What a tremendous onset on the powers of darkness might we not behold, if all these forces were engaged. What an immeasurable blessing might we not expect if all these tithes were brought in. What inducements to increased sacrifice and consecration from the successes of the past. What incitements in the promises for the future. What examples in the lives of the most devoted, and especially of "Him, who left us an example that we should follow his steps." Should none but Peter and a few others say "We have left all and followed thee"? Surely, no less than for Mary, should our epitaph be, "She hath done what she could." Brethren and sisters, "it is time for us to awake." In the church's conflict with Amalek we need to have enlisted not only the higher grace of Ephraim, the resistless power of Benjamin, the ruling influence of Machir, the learned pen of Zebulon and the princely wealth of Issachar. We need all these, but more, we need the undivided efforts the combined strength of all Israel. Reuben has too long abode among the sheep-folds, Gilead beyond the Jordan, Dan in ships and Asher on the sea-shore; while Zebulon and Naphtali alone have jeopardized their lives unto death in the high places of the field. How long must the curse of Meroz vainly ring in the ears of self-indulgent cowardly professors. How oft must the withering blight fall from the lips of out-wearied compassion, because of "nothing but leaves." Sure that love that emptied Deity in yearning compassion for the perishing, must be growing impatient. Did "God so love the world that He gave his only begotten Son," and did "He who was rich, for our sakes become poor"? O that "this mind might be in us which was also in Christ Jesus. Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, * * * * * humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Surely no service can be considered too great sacrifice in return. I beseech you therefore by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." Who will consecrate himself this year unto the Lord?

I beseech you fellow christians by the innumerable, irrevocably lost opportunities; by all that is sweet to the soul in devoted self-sacrificing service for Jesus; by the worth of a world that is perishing, for whom Deity paid his blood-ransom; by the love that you bear to a once suffering, now interceding Redeemer; by the hope of that enrapturing "well-done," and the welcome to share in the bliss and the glories of the saints and the Savior; I beseech you by all that can incite in Heaven and in Hell, in time and in eternity to let the time past suffice for your own self ease, self-indulgence and self-aggrandizement, and let the present year confirm God's faithfulness. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse and prove me now herewith, saith the

Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

WATCHMAN.

For the Christian Messenger.

LOST TEXTS.

"Our Baptist friends are in danger of losing their two pet texts, which have done so much service in the cause of 'believers' baptism.' The most ancient and authoritative manuscripts of the New Testament, the Sinaitic and the Vatican, are found not to contain the passage in which occur the words that are on every Baptist tongue: 'He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.' Think of the sermons that will be useless, and the volumes of argument, against Infant Baptism that will become voiceless, if the critical editions of the New Testament shall throw out those words. The noted Baptist scholar, Dr. Conant, declares in the October *Bibliotheca Sacra*, the Vatican manuscript to be 'the highest single authority for the text of the New Testament.' The double authority of that and the Sinaitic manuscript must then be well nigh decisive. The to her text, an equal favorite, is that in which Philip replies to the request of the eunuch for baptism, 'If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.' This is not found in either of the three oldest manuscripts, the Sinaitic, the Vatican, or the Alexandrian, and it is rejected by the three highest critical authorities, Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Tregelles, whose united judgment no living scholar may reverse. Yet the Baptist revision retains it, and without withdrawing its claim to be a faithful translation of God's Word! But what is to become of the so-called 'believer's baptism,' if its supports shall be fired, when the magazine has been emptied?" — *Presbyterian Witness*.

Our Pædobaptist friends need not be alarmed on our account. The loss of the abovementioned texts, if it be admitted does not occasion us the least concern. We can afford to lose them, and ten times as many, as long as our Lord's commission, and the commentaries on it in the Acts of the Apostles and the Apostolic Epistles, retain their places in the New Testament:—we may add, as long as it remains true that Christianity is a spiritual system—"righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," and that in the profession which the baptized person makes, he "puts on Christ," and comes under a sacred obligation to "walk in newness of life," having given, in his baptism "the answer of a good conscience towards God." All this is utterly inconsistent with infant baptism, what ever may be the theory with which it is connected, whether that of the Episcopalians, the Presbyterians, or the Congregationalists.

The reference to Mark xvi. 6, is scarcely fair. The whole truth should have been told. It is not only the "pet text" of the Baptists that is lost, but the whole of the chapter after the eighth verse. Dean Alford has inclosed those twelve verses within brackets, in his Revised version, and says in a note,— "The twelve verses which follow are wanting in our two oldest MSS., the Vatican and the Sinaitic; and the passage is stated by the early Fathers not to have existed in the majority of other MSS. Internal evidence also is against St. Mark having been the writer. On the other hand, many ancient MSS. do contain it, and it is cited by some of the primitive Fathers. It probably was an addition, placed here in very early times. Its sources of information are evidently independent of the three Gospels; and it has ever been regarded as possessing the same canonical authority with them."

The Alexandrine MS. contains the passage and so does the Syriac version. It is cited by Irenæus, in the second century.

With regard to Acts 8. 37. Dean Alford's note is—"The words which follow here as verse 37 are not found in any of the ancient MSS. They were probably inserted

to suit the baptismal liturgies." In the revised version issued by the American Bible Union the following note is appended—"V. 37 is wanting in the best authorities." Yet the verse is also cited by Irenæus.

English readers may be assured that whatever alterations are required to be made in the received text of the Bible, according to the authority of the oldest and best manuscripts, are to be regarded as restorations of the original text. And ministers should be careful to avoid quoting any passages which are now ascertained to be of doubtful authority, or to be inaccurately translated.

How many "sermons" and "volumes of argument," in defence of the doctrine of the Trinity, have been founded on 1 John 5. 7. Yet it is now known and confessed that the passage is absolutely spurious, not existing in any ancient MS. or version.

How common it is to quote 2 Tim. 3. 16, as an Apostolic assertion of the divine inspiration of the Bible! But the best scholars are now agreed in translating the passage, with Bishop Ellicott and Dean Alford, thus—"Every Scripture, inspired by God, is also profitable," &c. The Apostle's object was not so much to assert the authority of the Bible as an inspired book, as to enumerate its varied excellences, and thus to show its adaptation to man's state and wants.

Yours truly,

J. M. C.

Jan. 18. 1870.

THE CONSTRAINING LOVE OF CHRIST.

THE CIRCULAR LETTER TO THE CHURCHES
COMPOSING THE WESTERN NEW BRUNSWICK
BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

WRITTEN BY REV. G. W. M. CAREY.

DEAR BRETHREN,—

The *Constraining Love of Christ* is the subject of this letter. Attention could not be called to a more important subject, for it enters into the very nature of spiritual life, and is the motive to Christian consecration and activity. By the love of Christ is signified all that Christ is in himself as the Eternal Word—all that he has revealed himself to be as the Godman—all that he has done in obedience to law, making atonement for sin, and bringing in everlasting righteousness—all that he is now doing as the glorified, interceding, and reigning High Priest of his chosen ones—and all that he has promised to do in subduing his enemies, crowning his people with eternal victory and delivering over to his Father a reconciled kingdom, glorious in the beauty of holiness, and triumphant in everlasting joy. No stronger argument than this love can the Most High urge upon the children of men. The love of the Triune God culminates in Christ, and manifests itself in Bethlehem, Gethsemane, Calvary, and the Mediatorial Throne. This love of Christ was the power which moved the Apostle of the Gentiles to spend and he spent in the spread of the gospel, and in laboring for the salvation of sinners.

Now this love will constrain the man who believes in it, and feels its power in his heart to consecrate himself to Christ, body, soul, and spirit. He will dedicate his complex being to the Saviour, who bought him with the price of his precious blood, and who is by virtue not only of creation and preservation, but also of redemption, his rightful Lord and owner. The sublime energies and aspirations of the spirit, the deep emotions of the soul, the affections of the heart will be Christ's; and the body, the earthly house, will be a temple for the Holy Ghost to dwell in; thus making the Christian the true Shekinah,—God in him, and shining through him, elevating a son of man to the rank of a Son of God—a partaker of the Divine nature. Whatever has been attained by culture, discipline, and experience; that which is gained from day to day; and the acquisitions of the future—all will be laid on Christ's altar as his purchased and peculiar treasure. The fix-

ed determination of the Christian's soul is "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." He will not keep back part of the price, nor attempt to rob his Redeemer; but as he hopes one day to bow at the foot of the throne, so now, he will bring all to the foot of the cross; and regard himself as the steward of the manifold grace of God. [Not that Christ needs any thing at the hands of his people, but love to him is shown by using the material good things of this life for the maintenance of his cause and the extension of his kingdom.] The farm and its first fruits, the flock and its increase, the shop and its profits, the investment and its interest, the stock and its dividend, the ship and its freight, the mill and its earnings, the capital as well as the income, will be devoted to Christ, and held under him; for he made it all, and gave it all, and when spent in his service, the accumulations of industry find their highest value, and life its significance and glory. In the case of many, alas! too many professing Christians, it is to be feared that they did not really give themselves to Jesus in what seemed to be the day of their espousals. They gave nothing that could be turned into money, or had its equivalent in silver and gold. They kept their time, strength, talents, substance, and advantages, to gratify the old nature, and to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. Now, what is that but covetousness taking to itself the holy name of Christianity—baptized selfishness stealing the name and garb of Jesus to serve the world, the flesh and the devil. Beware of covetousness, which is idolatry. May the love of Christ constrain his enrolled disciples, that henceforth they will not live to themselves, but unto him that died for them and rose again.

The love of Christ in the heart manifests itself in an increasing desire for truth, and the exemplification of it. Christ is the sum of the Bible. He is the central truth of the Law, the Prophets, the Psalms, and the Gospel. All other truths are subordinate to this grand one. Christ is the golden chain, linking together the great divisions of the Word of God, and various sections of the world's history. He that knows any thing of the love of Christ must love his truth, for Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is the King of the Truth. True love cannot bear falsehood or error. It is opposed to a false liberalism. "It rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth." The words of Christ to his true disciples are living bread and living water—sweeter than honey and the honey-comb. They are spirit and life. In keeping them there is great reward. The child of God delights in the leading doctrines of Holy Scripture; such as God's purpose or mercy which he purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began—a purpose which is the key to unlock and explain the mysteries of creation and Providence—a purpose Jehovah laid deep in the predetermined incarnation of His Son, and raised high in the inscrutable sovereignty of His Eternal Throne. The free, unmerited, and electing love of God, and the final perseverance of the saints, are precious thoughts to the Christian from the heavenly treasury. When Christ's love is felt, his faithful ambassadors rightly dividing the word of truth giving to each a portion in due season, and shunning not to declare all the counsel of God, are highly esteemed for their work's sake. Of them it will be said, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, 'Thy God reigneth.'" By those who love Christ doctrine and duty, precept and practice, will be taken together; they will not be separated. United they make a living child, and it is death to divide them. The beautiful symbolism of the Gospel in the ordinances of the Christian church—baptism and the Lord's Supper—will be highly prized, setting forth as they do, Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, and that his people live by faith in him. When Christ is loved and his Word understood, these ordinances will be kept in their primitive purity, integrity and expressiveness. "If ye love me, keep my commandments."