

The Prayerfulness of Jesus.

Communion with God in prayer is the most exalted privilege; and in habitual communion of the soul with its Maker there is evidence of the most matured spiritual life and excellence.

On one occasion we beheld Him spending the whole day around the shores of Lake Genesee, lovingly teaching the ignorant, patiently answering the impudent questions of cavilling infidelity, meekly enduring the vulgar insults of malice, tenderly healing the sick, restoring the maimed, and comforting the disconsolate, until His physical strength is exhausted.

The Redeemer, as already remarked, constantly bore about with Him the spirit of prayer. But He had hours peculiarly consecrated to the service of supplication, when he was exclusively and wholly absorbed in the contemplation of the sacred and sublime purposes of His mission to earth.

In this view of His prayerfulness, how mysterious is it! Though a sinless being, yet Jesus prayed. Though able by the fiat of His own will to minister to the varied wants of the suffering and the needy, who crowded His pathway during His brief mission among men, yet He himself prayed for the things necessary to satisfy His own wants.

Editorial Correspondence.

Yarmouth, May 1899. On Friday evening, the 7th inst., we left St. John in the steamer Linda, en route for Yarmouth, in compliance with the wishes of Dr. Day, and the people of his charge, to aid them for a few weeks in the promotion of the blessed work of grace in progress here.

We had an interesting conference with the pastor and brethren last evening, and received from them a cordial greeting and expressions of earnest desire for the divine blessing upon the ministry of the word, during our stay among them.

The services of the Sabbath have been full of interest to us, and we hope they will prove a blessing to precious souls. We preached morning and evening; and at the close, witnessed with joy the baptism of three interesting candidates by the pastor.

Two of them were Whitmans, originally from New Albany, brothers in the flesh as well as in the spirit. One of them was received on Saturday evening, and in the relation of his experience, told us that eighteen years ago, at New Albany, he was brought to taste the sweetness of redeeming love.

He leaves this evening for a visit to his family at Sheffield. May he have a prosperous journey by the will of God, and a safe return.

Christian Baptism.

BY REV. A. N. ARNOLD, PROFESSOR IN MADISON UNIVERSITY, N. Y.

A passage in the fortieth Homily of Gregory Nazianzen on Baptism, preached about the year 356, furnishes us with a very satisfactory key to this transition period in the history of infant baptism.

We feel no difficulty, therefore, when we are called upon to explain the rise, growth, and prevalence of infant baptism. Christian antiquity furnishes us with all the required data for answering this challenge.

On the other hand, if we suppose that infant baptism was a part of primitive Christianity, we are met by formidable and, as it seems to us, insuperable difficulties. How shall we explain the wide-spread neglect, nay, so far as the evidence goes, the utter abandonment, of the practice for at least two hundred years?

infant baptism; and it does so in a way which accords with the known tendencies and principles of the times, and explains the discordant utterances and sagacious of the early centuries. The Pedobaptist theory as a double work to do; to explain, first, the strange neglect of infant baptism for two centuries, in opposition to the known tendencies of the period; and then the subsequent revival of it under circumstances which bear every mark of being the gradual introduction of a new custom, rather than the restoration of a neglected one.

Ministerial Education—Ecclesiastical Leadership.

DEAR EDITOR—To pursue the course of thought that impresses my mind with the necessity of a high literary and scientific standard in our systems of ministerial culture, I would now advert to an evil, too often seen creeping into our churches, very antichristian in its character, and which has no better antidote than sacred and elevated culture, influenced and directed from on high.

We boast of our independence, but are sometimes seen very quietly putting our necks under a yoke of our own choosing. A little learning in leading ministers, or in accepted public journals, may suffice to give to a majority the notion of sufficient elevation to constitute such parties safe leaders; some popular prejudice may also be tickled, and denominational peculiarities flattered, until an injurious rule is established which may not be easily overturned.

Of this class of evils, is all denominational prejudice, which enlarged knowledge would render impossible. We hope, that as Baptists, we are greatly free from that ill-vised evil. Let us not, however, be too self-sufficient. No better guard against prejudice than to fear, and watch against, its entrance among us.

And with a revelation of profound wisdom like the Bible, acting through whatever is pure, or may be purified, in human thought, judgment, mental power, affection, and thus pressing men nearer and nearer to the light, must it not plainly be by knowledge, increasing daily in soundness and compass, that this spiritual growth shall go on towards its perfection.

There is, in Christendom, a growing sense, I think, of the existence of many and great evils in all churches, which have to be eradicated ere it will with us. I am happy to see the signs of this self-consciousness; and deep is my conviction that the very highest caste of intellectual improvement, will go hand in hand with that embryo conviction of evil needing to be remedied; and that no other fellowship will be finally successful than the fellowship of piety and sound learning.

Let me not be misunderstood. I am far from designing so monstrous a statement, as to count idolatrous, those limited schemes of knowledge, to which men are sometimes compelled of necessity, or the honest notion of necessity; but I refer to the preference without necessity, of which there is always danger, and thence the adoption by the people largely, of the ideas that our extended schemes of knowledge are evil, for that less is better.

But besides true independence of the churches, and their freedom from all blind submission to the domination of such as love to rule, to which sound and liberal knowledge must be a natural enemy, there is, nevertheless, to be sought, at the same time, a wholesome Presbyterianism—that gospel status of prebters or elders, which, while in our belief as Baptists, it rejects any institution of authoritative courts, conventions, sessions, or synods, is nevertheless to be recognized as a power, an influence, and even a "rule," which we cannot, as Bible students and disciples reject.

There must be duties then of the weightiest bearing belonging to the eldership of Christ's church. Such men, a large portion of whom, be it remembered, are ministers, are the natural leaders in every important movement. Every measure that depends for its success and wise influence, on judgment, prudence, knowledge of men and things, weight in council, frankness in guidance, rests, or ought to rest, on that eldership; and so wide a scope of important action is sufficient to show that, with true piety and deep devotion to the master, every aid of the most ripened knowledge and experience is demanded for so extensive and exalted a service.

The church, in the glory of its activities, is now, and is to be, I apprehend more and more at the head of all human actions and enterprises; and all human powers, all science, knowledge and training, are now and more to glorify in her Divine Master who serves. Yours, dear Editor, with undiminished respect and affection.

DEAR BRO. BILL—Please allow me to acknowledge through the VISITOR, the receipt of one hundred dollars cash, American currency, as a donation from my kind friends in Richmond.

Home Bibles.

NO. XIII. BY J. I. DUNSTON.

Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation;—even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

Richard Watson was, in his own way, an able theologian. His Institutes is a lasting monument of his diligence and industry. It, no doubt, will long retain its present position, as a standard work of its kind. It is, indeed, the first, if not the only, attempt to reduce—what has recently been termed Evangelical Armenianism—into a system.

His name became attached to them, on account of his celebrity, and his ability in stating, and in defending them. Antinomianism, in Mr. Watson's estimation, is near akin to Calvinism. It is, in his eyes, its legitimate offspring;—but a further development of it. Such, indeed, is not the case. The connection is ideal. It has, in reality, no existence. Calvinism, on the contrary, places the moral law, on its own proper basis, and vindicates its claims. Its tendency is to humble the sinner—to exalt the Saviour—and to promote holiness. It seeks not, as its neighbor, to mitigate the law of God—to make it milder than it originally was—to adapt it to our present state, and circumstances, that its perfect christian might come up to its requirements.

Justification is a judicial act—pronouncing a person righteous and treating him accordingly. Its ground is not his own merit, nor faith, nor evangelical obedience;—it is not even the work of Christ in him—it is the obedience of Christ for him. The beloved of God, at Rome, in Paul's time, rejoiced in this truth. Righteousness, then, lodged in it. The fine gold, however, has become dim. Things are changed. The church of Rome, now, has this doctrine under a ban,—and, with its severest anathemas, holds any one accused, that dares ever to assert it.

If this grand doctrine be fully established, and if we maintain its just preeminence, all other doctrines will be found to occupy their proper stations around it, in their due proportions, bearings, and influence. And there is no room of error, however gross, subtle, or specious, but may be detected by its want of harmony with this fundamental truth.

DEAR BRO. BILL—As the donation excitement has somewhat subsided, you and your numerous readers will be glad to hear from us. On the evening of January 19th, the church and congregation of this place met and took charge of my residence, prepared a sumptuous tea, both pleasing to the eyes, and, not less so, to the palates of nearly two hundred persons.

We may further say we feel a deep interest in sustaining the CHRISTIAN VISITOR. It is our own, and we cannot do without it, and any work that we can do in our own field in collecting for it we will do cheerfully at any time. With sincere desire for your spiritual and temporal welfare, I remain, yours in christian fellowship.

gtheousness—neither his own, nor his saviour's, in it, is in justice, God could not account him to it, what in reality, he is not. To say that God imputes righteousness where there is none,—and accounts a man to be what he is not, is impiety. It is, in fact, an impeachment of the divine veracity. In coping with this error, is another, of which it is but corollary. The work of Christ, as a sin-bearer, is defined by Mr. Mackintosh to Calvary. The other actions of the Redeemer's life, are, in his estimation, out sympathetic. In his Notes, the word sin-bearer is put for obedience, and, as in the Evangelical Armenian scheme, the whole work of Christ's active obedience is excluded. The surety of his people, as far as justification is concerned, might—according to this—have come at once, from heaven to the cross. At the bottom of all this, is the heavenly humanity view. Mr. Mackintosh says that Christ is a divine man,—the second man, who, as to his manhood, is the Lord from heaven. The expression, however, is not new;—nor is it peculiar to him. It was used by Valentinus—among his other vagaries about Christ—in the second century;—and, as it would seem, had its origin, in Gnosticism, even in the time of the apostles, against which—along with his kindred errors—John, in particular, wrote his epistles. Christ is not a divine man. He is both God and man, in one person. The humanity is not defined, nor the divinity modified. The Godhead remains immutable, and the manhood true. The union of the two natures is without division, separation, mutation, or confusion. Christ was made of a woman, a partaker of flesh and blood, in all things made like unto his brethren—sin only excepted. This was necessary for the work given him to do;—a humanity not human in an absurdity—an impossibility. The tone of Mr. Mackintosh, on some of the sacrifices, in a so-called kind;—and the new gospel, as propagated by him, has a tendency, in that direction.

In conclusion,—Calvinism alone—of all its rivals—is the only system that gives Jesus Christ full credit for all his work,—his entire obedience unto death—his active and passive righteousness.

We call the particular attention of our readers to the extract, in this week's issue, on the temper and tendencies of that very recent and peculiar class of religionists, called "Plymouth Brethren." Whether they assume and acknowledge any distinctive name, we are not prepared to say. It has never been our misfortune, during our ministry, to experience to any great extent those serious and schismatic evils which usually accompany the appearance and introduction of this phase of error. But we need to be on our guard, especially those who are long and praying for a higher and purer type of piety in our ranks as christians, for this is usually captivates pious men and women, and insidiously creeps into the churches of Christ under the specious disguise of eminently Biblical religion. We have more than once observed that as soon as a man is inculcated with Plymouthism, he considers himself called and consecrated to the special and laborious service of berating all church organizations and ministerial functions as the work of man, nay, of Satan himself.

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Plymouthism. The following is an extract from a sermon recently preached in the First Baptist Church, Montreal, by the pastor, Rev. John Alexander, and published in the last issue of the Canadian Baptist.— Within the last twenty-five years, a system has arisen (if system it can be called) which has been called Plymouthism, or rather, a system that competes for a valuable class of our church members, and that, too, often when successful, transforms the active and energetic into morbid, self-complacent professors, whose energies are largely expended in censoring, protesting, condemning; in attempts to weaken the aggressive power of the churches, rather than in earnest missionary inroads upon the outlying world. There is no hesitation in saying, and facts will show, who I and I am conversant will bear out the assertion, that Plymouthism is built up, not with recruits gathered directly from the ranks of Satan, but with good men despoiled from the churches—men generally of morbid and one-sided tendencies, who seem to have a constitutional affinity to the peculiarities of the system—whose usefulness is impaired in proportion as they imbibe its spirit; and who, too often, from the moment that they are admitted into the church, are lost to all the active enterprises of the christian church.

With a clear exhibition of the fundamental doctrines of the word of God, that is of those doctrines bearing on the question of the sinner's personal acceptance with God, are associated tendencies and errors, principles and views, that cramp the symmetrical development of christian character, occasion a morbid sensitiveness that leads the disciples to look upon society with the eyes of the misanthrope, or the cynic, rather than with an eye beaming with the compassionate and cheerful benevolence of the Divine Master—that make them excessively sectarian amid profuse professions of christian love, and the most earnest protests against all sectarianism.

Wherever the gospel is faithfully preached, I therein do rejoice and well rejoice. Wherever I see the image of Christ, I see one, I care not what his denominational name, whom I love as a brother in Christ. But I do so, because I feel that the very evidence and presence of genuine piety, and of the desire for the conversion of sinners may blind the unwary to the dangers of a system that too often puff up the christian with spiritual pride—that undermines the walls of Zion, that depreciates the influence and success of even the most faithful ministers, which, while it integrates and destroys, as the extreme democracy of ecclesiasticalism, offers no substitute for the organizations against which it aims its deadly blow.

I speak thus too, because I feel that the views and principles of evangelical denominations are misrepresented by the Plymouth Brethren, I shall charitably hope, because they are not understood. Plymouthism tells me that all organized churches are man's systems—that they ought to be no such persons as local organizations. The New Testament tells me distinctly of the churches of Galatia, Corinth, and other localities, visible organisms, as distinct from the one invisible church, that embraces all, and embraces only, the redeemed, the family, because its membership is determined not by man who may be deceived by external evidences of professed regeneration, but by God who knows the heart. The New Testament tells me that these local churches embrace only persons who are regenerate, who have been "baptized with Christ in baptism" or a profession of their faith—that each society of baptized believers is an organization distinct and independent, so far as government and discipline are concerned, but of necessity bound together by strongest moral ties—that "to set in order the things that are wanting," each society should have its Elders and Deacons, called of God, and that call recognized by the people; and that the object of each local organization is the celebration of the Lord's Supper, mutual edification and aggressive work.

Plymouthism tells me that no such class of men is recognized by Christ as ministers—that ministry is something exclusively distributed among the saints—and its disciples denounce "the one-man ministry," &c. The New Testament tells me of Pastors and Teachers, who are over the churches in the Lord—of "able ministers of Christ," of Bishops and Elders, whose qualifications and local work are described, who are called of God, but recognized and received as such by the churches, and who, if faithful, are "worthy of their hire," entitled to support in carnal things. Plymouthism practically, if not in theory, relieves its people from the obligation of giving to the support of the ministry; the New Testament enjoins this as one of the duties of the christian profession.

Plymouthism teaches that the only way to be saved is to be baptized in Christ, to pray for the renewed application of Jesus' blood to my soul. The deepest instincts of my regenerate nature often lead me to feel, that the prayer of the Publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" is just as appropriate to-day, as it was when first I was awakened to feel my sins, while these instincts are corroborated by such teachings as that of 1 John 1, 8, 10, when "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth even him who walks in the light and has fellowship with God from all sin."

DEAR SIR—No doubt you will be pleased to hear that the Lord has been blessing the people here. Since the last quarterly meeting of Carleton County, held at McKenzie's Corner, the little church here has been greatly revived; backsliders have been reclaimed, and sinners converted. We have baptised eight willing converts—five men in the prime of life and three women. Our meetings are still encouraging. This church though small in numbers, is an interesting branch of Zion, is composed of good material, has quite a number of faithful laborers who amidst much opposition have contended nobly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Pray for us.

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