

The Home Mission Journal.

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The Bible as Literature and Much More.

ROBERT STUART MACARTHUR.

XVI

(Continued from last issue.)

The Instructive Retinence of the Bible

Edward VI, King of England, was the son of Henry VIII and Jane Seymour. He was born at Hampton Court, October 12th, 1537. He had but little encouragement, at least on his father's side towards a religious life; and yet he early developed marked religious tendencies! He died under the age of sixteen, and was thus too young when king to exercise pre-eminent or even powerful influence on the statesmen or tendencies of his times. His coronation was an occasion of marked interest. Three swords were brought and laid before him at one stage in the ceremonies. These swords were the emblem of royal power in three different directions. Glancing at these swords, he paused a moment, and then said, "Bring another; there is one I need most of all—the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." The Bible was brought; the ceremony proceeded, and from that day to the coronation in her sweet girlhood of the noble queen, who now sways a sceptre over the mightiest empire the world has ever known, the Bible has retained its place in the coronation ceremonies of the kings and queens of Great Britain. It is an interesting fact that the Bible is the only symbol employed at the inauguration of the President of the United States. It occupied its usual conspicuous place when President McKinley, in the presence of uncounted thousands, took upon himself the oath of his high office.

The tourist in Spain is certain to visit the old city of Toledo; and while there he will find no place more interesting, not excepting the ancient and glorious cathedral and the zocodover, or "square market," than the Fabrica de Armas, the manufactory of Toledan swords. This is a high rectangular building, standing on the right bank of the Tagus. It was erected in 1788; but long before that time the Toledan blades had become justly famous. Iberian weapons, and the fondness of the people for them, are mentioned both by Livy and Polybius. The secret of manufacturing these famous swords, the Moors carried from Damascus to Toledo. The temper of these swords is so remarkable that it is said they can be curled up like the mainspring in a watch, without suffering any injury in the operation. The true swordsman must know his weapon. He must be absolutely familiar with its delicate temper, the sharpness of its edge, and the strength of its body, and he must have a quick eye and a supple wrist, as well as a trusty blade.

All true believers are swordsmen for truth and God. In their case, also, perfect familiarity with our weapon is necessary to success in its use. It is a remarkable fact that in the enumeration of the Christian's armor given by the Apostle Paul in the sixth chapter of Ephesians, there is but one offensive weapon mentioned, while there are five pieces of defensive armor, and this one offensive weapon is not the great Roman spear, but the sword, the sword of the spirit which is the word of God. No man can use this sword aright except he be familiar with its temper and all its characteristics. One element of weakness

in the church to-day is the unfamiliarity of so many Christian men and women with the peculiarities of the Word of God. Few could give an intelligent analysis of any one book in the Bible; fewer could give the trend of inspired thought in the gospels or epistles; and still fewer could trace the development of the divine purpose from Genesis to Malachi. One purpose of this series of Sunday-night lectures is to give the people additional familiarity with the sword of the Spirit. There is no sword like it. When properly welded by pulpit and pew, the slain of the Lord will be many. No minister can have his coronation of honor, power and glory, except ever by his side there shall lie (except when it is actually in his hand) the sword of the Spirit.

(To be Continued.)

The Communion Question.

As many of our people have to endure considerable petty persecution on close communion so-called, we give this month a few extracts on the subject from leading scholars of other denominations:

METHODIST.

The following may be found in "Hibbard on Baptism," page 174, "published for the Methodist Episcopal Church at the Conference Office, 200 Mulberry Street, New York:—

"It is but just to remark that in one principle the Baptist and Pedobaptist Churches agree. They both agree in rejecting from communion at the table of the Lord and in denying the rights of church-fellowship to all who have not been baptized. Valid baptism they consider as essential to constitute visible church membership. This, also, we hold. The only question, then, what divides us is, What is essential to valid baptism? The Baptists, in passing the sweeping sentence of disfranchisement upon all other Christian Churches, have only acted upon a principle held in common with all other Christian Churches, viz: that baptism is essential to church membership. They have denied our baptism, and as unbaptized persons, we have been excluded from their table. That they err greatly in their views of Christian baptism, we, of course, believe; but, according to their views of baptism, they certainly are consistent in restricting thus their communion. Their views of baptism force them upon the ground of strict communion, and herein they act upon the same principle as other churches *i. e.*, they admit only those whom they deemed baptized persons to the communion table. Of course they must be their own judges as to what baptism is. It is evident that, according to our views of baptism, we can admit them to our communion but with their views of baptism, it is equally evident they can never reciprocate to the Baptists than to us, inasmuch as the question of church fellowship with them is determined by as liberal principles as with any other Protestant Churches; so far, I mean, as the present subject is concerned, *i. e.*, it is determined by valid baptism."

EPISCOPAL.

The Episcopal Recorder testifies to the logical consistency of "close communion" in the decisive terms following, and the Southern Christian Advocate it dors the language as having been "very justly" spoken:—

"The close communion of the Baptist Church is but the necessary sequence of the fundamental idea out of which their existence has grown. No Christian Church would receive to its communion even the humblest and truest believer in Christ who had not been baptized. With the Baptist, immersion only is baptism, and he therefore of necessity, excludes from the Lord's table, all who have not been immersed. It is an essential part of the system—the legitimate carrying out of this creed.

PRESBYTERIAN.

After speaking of the very able and candid article by Prof. Hovey, in one of the numbers of the Bibliotheca Sacra, giving the reasons why Baptists invite only Christians of their own faith

and order to the Lord's table, the *New York Observer* says:

"It is not a want of charity which compels the Baptist to restrict his invitation. He has no hesitation in admitting the personal piety of his unimmersed brethren. Presbyterians do not invite the unbaptized, however pious they may be. It is not uncharitable. It is not bigotry on the part of Baptists to confine their communion to those whom they consider the baptized."

The following is from a correspondent of the American Presbyterian, who, in writing of Christian union, uses the following language:

"Open communion is an absurdity when it means communion with the unbaptized. I would not for a moment consider a proposal to admit an unbaptized person to the communion, and can I ask a Baptist so to stultify himself and ignore his own doctrine as to invite me to commune with him while he believes I am unbaptized? I want no sham union and no sham unity; and, if I held the Baptist notion about immersion, I would no more receive a Presbyterian to the communion than I would now receive a Quaker.

"Let us have unity indeed, but not at the expense of principle, and let us not ask the Baptist to ignore or be inconsistent with his own doctrine. Let us neither make an outcry at his 'close communion,' which is but faithfulness to principle, until we are prepared to be open communists ourselves, from which stupidity may we ever be preserved! Let us war not with his close communion, but with his doctrine that immersion is baptism.

Rev. John Hall, D. D., one of the greatest Presbyterian preachers on this continent, pays the following tribute to Baptist consistency:—

"There is a tendency to heap censure on the Baptists in this country because of the views generally held and acted upon regarding the Lord's Supper. 'Close communion,' that is, the restriction of the Lord's table to those who have been baptized in the way held by the denomination is being assailed by many in the interest of Catholicity. . . . It is a course of doubtful Catholicity to raise a popular cry against a most valuable body of people who honestly defend and consistently go through with what they deem an important principle.

Our love for the brethren should include, surely, the Baptist brethren. . . . And it is doubtful if, considering the lengths to which liberal ideas have been carried in this country, there be not some gain to the community as a whole from a large denomination making a stand at a particular point, and reminding their brethren that there are church matters which we are not bound, are not even at liberty, to settle according to the popular demand, as we could settle the route of a railroad."

CONGREGATIONALIST.

The *New York Independent*, in a notice of Dr. Stowe's book on "Christian Brotherhood," has the following remarks on the subject of communion:—

"For our own part, we have never been disposed to charge the Baptist Churches with any special narrowness or bigotry in their rule of admission to the Lord's table. Indeed, we have never been able to see satisfactorily how their principle differs from ours. We can see how it differs from Robert Hall's principle, and how it differs from that imputed to Mr. Beecher, of Brooklyn and Plymouth Church; but we do not see how it differs from that commonly admitted and established in the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches. The principle that only members of churches are invited to the Lord's table, that only baptized persons can be members of churches, and that in all disputed cases the church that gives the invitation is to judge what is baptism. When Congregationalists give up this principle perhaps Baptists will be constrained to do likewise. Meanwhile it can hardly be expected that the Baptists will be argued out of it, much less that they will be driven out of it by taunts and reproaches on their close communion."

BAPTIST.

"Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, Son and Spirit, to show forth in a solemn and beauti-