

British American Presbyterian

Vol. 5—No. 14.

TORONTO, CANADA, FRIDAY, MAY 5, 1876.

Whole No. 222

Contributors and Correspondents.

[For the Presbyterian.]

WRONG VIEWS OF REPENTANCE.

BY REV. W. MITCHELL, B.A., MONTREAL.

The careful student of the Scriptures, who has watched with any degree of interest many of the current methods of presenting the Gospel to the unconverted, must have been struck with the evident tendency of such methods to make repentance of too little importance in the preaching of the Word. Many of our modern Christian workers are so anxious to bring sinners to Christ, and have dwelt so exclusively on faith in Him, that they have rather hindered than helped the cause they have at heart. They neglect too much the declaration of God's judgments against sin, of the danger of a broken law, of the fearful character of moral evil wherever it is found, and of the absolute necessity of turning away from it as we draw nigh to God.

Never should we forget the very prominent place which repentance occupies in Holy Scripture. With repeated emphasis did Isaiah and Jeremiah, and the whole company of the prophets, exhort men to repent. When John the Baptist came to prepare the way of the Lord, repentance was the key note of his ministry. The very first message of the Son of Man, was, "Repent ye!" Twice again does he declare with double emphasis: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." And when the Great Apostle summed up the teaching he had given at Ephesus, it was all comprehended in two words,—repentance and faith: "repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ."

Let us not be wiser than Christ and His Apostles. If they preached it, so should we. If they believed it needful in awakening the careless, and in humbling the self-righteous, let us be sure that the best way to compass the salvation of souls is to follow in their footsteps. There is a way of preaching repentance that turns the eye inward, leading men to look to their own feelings for a warrant to come to Christ. I do not mean this; but there is a way of preaching it that convinces men of their unbelief, and makes them cry out with the multitude at Pentecost: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

Moreover, the grave mistake is often made of substituting a shallow, unfelt, inconsiderate acknowledgment of sin in general, for repentance. Nothing is more common than to hear persons say, "Of course I repent: I know I am a sinner," without perhaps having given five minutes real thought to the matter. In answer to this, let it be remembered that true repentance is a Divine work. We read that "God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life," and Paul urges Timothy to preach in meekness "If God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth."

This thought ought to cast out of our minds the very common idea,—that it will be easy to repent by-and-by. If repentance is a grace of the Divine Spirit as well as a duty, how do you know, brother, that you will have either the desire or the power to repent hereafter, if you refuse to do so now that God calls you to day.

A common mistake too in regard to repentance is when it is put in the place of a Saviour. Satan is forever raising up barriers between Christ and the soul, and thus seeks to hinder the salvation of the sinner. And perhaps he has no more subtle device than that of making the anxious soul fix its eye on repentance, instead of looking to Jesus. Some, it is to be feared, try to work themselves up to a certain degree of sorrow for sin, and come to Christ bringing this in their hands, expecting that God will grant forgiveness on account of this deep contrition and sorrow. Let it be remembered that repentance is not a preliminary work that must be done before we are welcome to a Saviour's love; it is not a barrier which, in some way, you must leap over, before you can come to the door of the fold. You are not bidden to keep at a distance from Christ, because your repentance is so slight, and your sense of need so shallow: to do this is to contradict the whole work of Christ, and all the promises of the Gospel. All you need Christ will give. He is exalted to give gifts "even to the rebellious," and with other things He will give you that sorrow for sin, that repentance which you need—"Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins."

"Regard not feelings, good or bad;
Trust only what He saith,—
Looking away from all to Him:
This is to live by faith."

Let us be careful not to separate repentance and faith—they must go hand in hand—they are inseparably linked together; they are twin sisters, fellow-helpers one of the other. Nor need we puzzle ourselves as to whether faith be an intellectual apprehension or a spiritual apprehension: a discerning Christ with the mind or a dis-

cerning of Him with the heart—it is all of these and more. And when you tell me which spoke of the wheel moves first when your carriage starts, I will tell you which moves first, a man's heart or his head, in the act of faith. The fact is, that which we call "the soul," that which our Lord constantly speaks of as something to be saved or lost, is the comprehensive term for the man himself, that in which the intellect, the conscience, and the affections centre; all indeed that belongs to a man as a moral being centre as the spokes centre and are held together in the hub of the wheel. Faith is the turning of the soul to Christ, and when it turns, all that constitutes the man turns with it.

And just here it is easy to see the meaning of the term repentance, which Peter enjoined upon those who were pricked in their hearts on the Day of Pentecost. They cried out—"Men and brethren, what shall we do?" And Peter said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you. Change your mind—let that mind which has been turned against Christ in enmity and bloody malice, now turn to Him in instant reconciliation and immediate acceptance."

There is one other mistake touching repentance which needs just now to be emphasized—and that is when repentance is regarded as a painful duty to be done at once and then left behind as we advance in Christian life. When so much is being said about the "Higher Christian life" there is danger that we may fall into the error of those who teach that Christians have no more to do with repentance and forgiveness and confession when once they are in Christ. I do not find this to be the teaching of God's Word. True, for believers there is no condemnation; they are fully accepted and justified in the beloved; but equally true is it that they have daily need to condemn themselves and humble themselves before God. As they come out the more into God's light, the more they see clearly the innumerable spots and blemishes and infirmities which cleave to them. The repentance of a sinner is indeed to be distinguished from that of the forgiven accepted child of God; in the one case it is the returning prodigal from a far country; in the other it is the humble confession of the child living in the Father's house, who still feels that he leaves undone the things he ought to have done, and that he does the things he ought not to have done, and that there is no health in him.

Wearied of earth and laden with my sin,
I look at heaven and long to enter in;
But there no evil thing may find a home;
And yet I hear a voice that bids me "come."

So vile am I, how dare I hope to stand
In the pure glory of that better land?
Before the whiteness of that throne appear?
Yet there are hands stretched out to draw me near.

The while I faint would tread the heavenly way,
Evil is ever with me day by day;
Yet on mine ears the gracious tidings fall—
"Repent, confess, thou shalt be loosed from all."

It is the voice of Jesus that I hear
His are the hands stretched out to draw me near,
And His the blood that can for all atone,
And set me faultless there before the throne.

[For the Presbyterian.]

A PLEA FOR THE MUTE.

It is a melancholy fact, that there are many afflicted ones passed by and left to struggle alone through this cold and pitiless world, without a second thought being bestowed upon them. Of these the above class are generally neglected.

They are permitted to grow up in total ignorance of all that renders man happy here or blessed hereafter, and cut off from all society—having no intercourse with the world at large—they pass on through life in silence and alone.

Who can tell what their feelings must be, when they see others in the full enjoyment of all the privileges bestowed upon man, and yet are debarred from participating in many of them: or engaging in all the recreations and enjoyments of the day, and yet must stand aside a lonely silent spectator.

Who can read those thoughts that must rush unbidden through their untutored minds, when they see others in daily converse, and dare not—can not—join them; or witness the playfulness of their youthful companions, and cannot echo their boisterous mirth. If they envy, who can blame them, but when they weep, who will pity and help them.

They see the beautiful landscape and they enjoy it. The wind may be hushed to the faintest zephyr, and coming wafted through the tall pines or outspreading oaks, become entangled among the lowly thorns or brakes and willows by the brook. The birds may be rendering the forests vocal with their praise as they sit from twig to hough in all their varied beauty. The little denizens of the forest may gambol among the fallen leaves, or with daring audacity cross the path at their very feet. The cattle may graze in the valleys, the sheep wander on the hills, and man be engaged in all the various employments of outdoor life, but, ah, to the poor mute, how terribly still is it all! The zephyr makes no mournful dirge among the pines, nor whistling through the brake, it may fan the cheek but brings no music to the ear. The little feathered songsters of the grove may hop from branch to bough,

but no sweet carol from nature's choir is heard by the lonely stranger.

The nimble little creature, may rustle the leaves, till the wind taking them up and sporting them aloft, bears them far away, but no sound interrupts the silence. The cattle may low in the pastures and the stray lamb bleat for its lost mother on the hill side, but they bring no welcome sound to his ear, no spell to break that terrible monotony.

The sweet hymn sung by an humble subdued heart, may melt the listener to tears, but the mute must silently wonder. The loud swell of the organ may thrill the heart and awake emotions of adoration in the worshipper, but to the mute it is an ornament, an useless machine.

The terrible roar of the tempest, and the fierce voice of the thunderbolt may strike terror into the bravest so that the most courageous crouch in abject fear, but the mute goes calmly on, wondering at the change. The pursuit of science may unfold and enrich, but to him it is unknown, and the perusal of the Sacred Writ may confirm and comfort, but to him it is forbidden.

Let us not revile, despise, nor neglect them, for God has said: "Who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or blind? have not I the Lord?" And Jesus when on earth did more than simply pity them, for the people "were beyond measure astonished saying, He hath done all things well; He maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak."

The time shall yet come when the words spoken by that wondering multitude shall have their fulfilment in that better land where every ear shall listen, and every tongue be vocal with praise.—T. T. J.

Supplementary Salaries.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

Sir,—It is pleasant to find men taking an interest in things outside their own parishes. The readers of the PRESBYTERIAN have been favoured of late with some letters which are entitled to serious consideration. The whole system of supplementing salaries must be reviewed; and in the process, would those in authority consider for a little the great expense of living in the country. We have heard ad nauseam of the great expense of living in cities, and particularly of living in Toronto and Montreal.

Let us have a change! The prices of the necessaries of life in the country are determined by the prices in the neighbouring towns or cities. Have we not as a rule to go to them for our supplies? When I purchase hay, I pay as high as my brother ministers in a city not very far away. Pardon me, Mr. Editor, I do not believe any of them keeps a horse—possibly one of them does—certainly as a rule. They must be kept by those whose salaries are the smallest. There is an impression abroad that ministers in the country have nearly everything given to them. Whoever originated such an idea deserves to be pilloried. In every congregation there are thoughtful souls "who bring presents and offer gifts;" as a rule we must make up our minds to pay for what we consume, and the older the country grows, and the more readily the products of the farm can be disposed of for money, the rule seems to grow in the direction of the universal. Take one case out of many. A minister has, let us say, five or six children; he keeps, or ought to keep, a servant; he keeps a horse; when his children have gone a few years to a public school (if happily one is within reach), they must be sent to a town or city to attend a high school; there they must be boarded, whilst the children of those who live there are kept at home, and as every one knows, at much less expense, and all these things must be done on six hundred dollars a year. How can it be done? I fancy I hear our city friends inquiring. It requires no little study, and it involves privations. Your correspondent will not blazon abroad. And yet, sir, we must help to supplement the salaries, it may be of unmarried men, or of married men without families, in some cases to sums quite above our own. This kind of thing, I fancy, is (pardon the expression) about played out.

Let us not hear (for a time at least), about Montreal and Toronto. We all admit the serious item of house rent, where house rent has to be paid; and where wood is consumed it may be admitted to be also a considerable item as compared with the same item in the country. In all other respects it is believed that in all discussions on this subject the expense of living in cities and towns has been greatly exaggerated as compared with the expense of living in a purely rural district.

Your correspondent does not complain. He only asks that this matter of salaries be looked at all round, and in granting supplements, as well as in determining the salaries of professors, lecturers, church agents, etc., etc., that the feelings of the great mass of the ministers of the church be more regarded in the future than they have been in the past. It is easy to vote salaries, unless you carry the conscience of the church with you they will not be paid.

We ought to have a sustentation fund, in which the whole church would be embraced. I (like others of your correspondents), despair of seeing it in my lifetime. We look for a broad-minded, enthusiastic, courageous man, be he minister or layman, to set some of our schemes on a broad footing of justice and comprehensiveness. Hitherto we have looked in vain, I could say much more, Mr. Editor, only I remember that I am only one of many who wish to take advantage of your column. Thanking you for the fair spirit which you manifest, as between all parties and shades of opinion, yours etc.
April 28, 1876. H.

Conscience vs. Orthodoxy.

A NEW WORD ON THE OTHER SIDE.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

Sir,—In the interests of truth and justice, permit me to point out that the writer of the article on "The Case of the Rev. D. J. MacDonnell" in your last number, in expressing his wish that Mr. MacDonnell should have done more to meet the difficulties of the situation, seems to forget that the matter at issue is a question of conscience, and that in such questions, there is a point beyond which a man cannot go. He may do much in the way of sacrificing his own wishes to meet the views of others, but if he is an honest man he cannot play fast and loose with his conscience, or alter his sincere convictions at will to meet any exigency. It is one thing to be willing to leave a mysterious and unthinkable problem, on which we all have much to learn, with Him who alone can solve it, without ourselves attempting a solution; and quite another to be called on to give an unqualified and absolute assent to human statements which we cannot consider infallible. This Mr. MacDonnell could not do, and there are many in our own Church, who, if brought to such a test, could do so no more than he. Such at least can appreciate his position considerably better than some of those with whom he has been brought in contact, and they know that he has said the utmost that he could possibly say. And I may observe, in reference to another remark in the above mentioned article, that it is quite possible to hold a vague and trembling hope in this matter, based on the Infinite Love and Infinite resources of Him with whom "all things are possible," and whose "mercy endureth forever," without at all feeling justified in encouraging others to lean upon such a hope, and perhaps suffer incalculable loss in so doing, when a far more sure and certain hope is in their power to secure. And I have never heard more earnest exhortations to repentance, more vivid representations of the evils of sin and the misery it must entail, than from some who, I know hold the hope I have referred to, including Mr. MacDonnell himself. Why, then, it should be taken for granted that a minister cannot preach in sufficiently solemn and earnest warning to sinners, because he himself holds such a hope, when the facts prove that he can do so, I certainly do not understand. I suppose it will be replied, "so much the worse for the facts!"

What Mr. MacDonnell was called to do by the Presbytery (and they are responsible for calling upon him to do this) was to state candidly his own mental position with regard to a certain question, not merely as he would say, to "prepare a statement, that would pass muster," a diplomatic document which might be constructed in different ways as suited the occasion. This, it appears, would have been more "satisfactory" than the course he has taken, which was to make known to his brethren as fully and frankly as he could do, the real state of his mind on the subject. It is worthy of remark that the writer of the article appears to regard his "charming frankness," as an altogether surprising and exceptional and unlooked for feature in a Christian minister's conduct in such circumstances. It may be so, but some will be surprised at the implied avowal. Mr. MacDonnell may have been too frank for some who have criticised him, more frank than they appear to have desired, more frank than many have thought he was called upon to be, to those who had to do with his public teaching, not with his private thoughts. But he has certainly not been too frank for Him who "requireth truth in the inward parts," for the approval of his own conscience and for the sincere respect of all who are capable of honouring a fearless integrity, and of appreciating a scruple of conscience in a noble heart and a candid soul. Much as he was loved and respected before, he has earned the still greater love and admiration of all who love practical truth and honesty, better than abstract theories, by the stand he has made for conscience sake, in circumstances where, it is to be feared, some might have putered its sacred claims. All that an honest man could do he has done, to meet the views of his brethren and terminate a discussion, which he was the accidental and unintentional means of raising, but which the Presbytery are responsible for keeping up. More he could not do, without sacrificing the truth of his nature, and that no man is called to do for any cause whatsoever. He has followed, in advance, the exhortation given the other day to the graduating class of Queen's University—may they all follow it out as nobly and consistently as he has done—Acknowledge no standard but that of truth, and trust from you whatever may tend to interfere with your allegiance to God. Then leave consequences to take care of themselves.

"Trust no party, church or faction,
Trust no leader in the fight,
But in every word and action,
Trust in God and do the right."

He has "trusted in God and done the right," like some of old who said "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O King."

I cannot refrain from adding that I think in Christian courtesy and the interests of private character, the unjust and uncalled for attack on Mr. MacDonnell, by an anonymous correspondent in your last issue, should not have been permitted to appear. It certainly does the spirit of its author no credit. As you have published it, however, you cannot refuse to admit a few words on the other side, from one who knows and admires Mr. MacDonnell's executive conscientiousness and his faithfulness to the Master to whom we all stand or fall.
Yours truly,
PRESBYTERIAN.
April 28, 1876.

The Sabbath Milk Traffic.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—The Christian people of this city have had to complain of being robbed during the hours of public worship on Sabbath with the milk vendors ringing their bells on the streets. Now this is bad enough in this so-called "Christian city" of Toronto; but were this the worst feature of the case we would not at this time trespass on the space that this would occupy in your valuable columns. There is reason to fear, however, that many look upon what they see and hear in the streets as the greater part of the evil. True, there are about two hundred who drive into the city with their vehicles on the Sabbath, but let us not forget there is connected with each of these a family averaging five; and as far as I know them personally this is below the average, making an army of one thousand who are entirely, or in part, depriving themselves of the most sacred Christian privileges for the sake of their ungodly gains. The result of this cannot be a higher state of morality, but the very opposite. No doubt as they have so much to do with their milk, they have but little leisure for "the sincere milk of the Word," as it would not be a healthy stimulus to the business on the Lord's day. I have visited a florist's family of this class, and the only excuse given for not sending their children to Sabbath School, "We must attend to this milk business or give it up altogether." It was but this week that I was called to the death bed of the mother of one of them, and while the cold hand of death was feeling for the cord of life, with what little strength was left she uttered in broken sentences: "It was that; that milk business. No rest. No rest nor time to go to church, brought on this trouble." "Yes," added the husband with a sigh, "that's true, but if she gets better we'll quit it." And not compelled by poverty to do this either! Now this is a sadder aspect of the case, but such is the fruit of Sabbath labor and desecration. But we ask is there no remedy? It does seem to me that there are enough Christian men and women in Toronto to remedy this state of things; and who would do it if they were fully acquainted with the extent of the evil, and were willing to deny themselves (for it must begin there) the use of the little drop of milk in their tea for that day of the week, than there would be a power in their influence to bring a blessing on the head of suffering humanity.

Yours truly,
W. AXOS, Missionary.
West End, City, April 28th, 1876.

French Evangelization.

Rev. Dr. MacVicar acknowledges with cordial thanks the following contributions for French Evangelization:—

Collected by Ann Jane McFall, at Nobleton, Kilmalburgh, Schomberg and vicinity: \$25; John Ferris, Edmonton, Ont., \$20; Presbyterian Church, Inverness, Que., per John McKenzie, \$21.17; Few Young People at Paris, Ont., per Rev. D. D. McLeod, \$16.50; Family of Friends, Eden Mills, Ont., \$5; New Carlisle, per Rev. W. Scott, \$12; per Rev. D. Anderson, (for the poor) Palmerston, \$6.50, and Rothsay, \$6; Knox Church, Oro, Ont., per Dugald Carmichael, \$7; Pembroke, collected by Mrs. John Bell and Mary Irving, \$47; Mount Stewart, Prince E. Island, per Rev. W. R. Frame, \$48; South Kilmors and Lucknow, Ont., per Wm. Grassick, \$28.85; East End Mission Sabbath School Montreal, \$11; Bowmanville Sabbath School, per W. Oliver, \$20; St. John's Church, Hamilton, per A. McKenzie, \$37.50; Wellandport Sabbath School, \$3, Thames Road Sabbath School, per Rev. H. Graey, \$21; Miss Power, (Woodlands), \$2; A Friend, \$1; Mrs. Ardagh, \$3; Mrs. H. O'Brien, \$1, in all \$8, per Mrs. Ardagh, Barrie, Ont.; West Puslinch, per Rev. N. McDermid, \$5; Young Men's Christian Association, Three Rivers, Que., per Geo. B. Houston, President, \$100; A Friend, London, Ont., \$10; East Ashfield, Ont., per Robt. Harrison, \$13, per Rev. D. D. McLennan, Luther, Ont., collected by Mrs. McLennan, \$7, and proceeds of missionary box, \$6; per Rev. Thos. Sedgwick, \$20, from the Ladies' Cent a Week Society of Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia; per Rev. Geo. Sutherland, \$8, being a second contribution from Fingal, Ont.; per Rev. J. S. Lechead, Atholstone, \$5; A Friend, Whitby, Ont., \$5; Thameford, Ont., per Rev. L. Cameron, \$32.80 for the relief of convent; A Friend, Perth, Ont., \$10 for aid of persecuted converts.

Pres. Col. Montreal, April 28th, 1876.

We are asked to make room for the following:—Our readers will remember that no more clothing is required, just now. The Honorary President of the Ladies' Committee of the Societe de Bienfaisance Protestante, Montreal, begs to acknowledge the receipt of the following contributions of clothings, and to thank the kind friends from whom they came. As the supply is sufficient for present wants, it is requested that further contributions of clothing be held over till the beginning of next winter:—Rev. A. Kennedy, London, one case and one bale; Mrs. Walker, Chatham, two cases; John Ferguson, Esq., Prescott, one case, the second; George Hay, Esq., Ottawa, one case; Ayr, per Principal MacVicar, one case; Miss Short, Woodstock, two cases; Messrs. McCrae & Co., Guelph, one parcel of woollens; Mrs. Redpath, Montreal, one parcel; A Friend, Montreal, one quilt; Mrs. Stewart, Colborne, two cases; Anonymous, per express, one parcel; St. Andrew's Church, Guelph, one case; Mrs. W. M. Roger, Ashburn, one case; Vice-Chancellor Prondfoot, Georg. Hackett, Esq., Rev. W. Reid, A.M., O. Hackett Robinson, Esq., James Campbell, Esq., Toronto, D. Fotheringham, Esq., Aurora, and M. E. John McCurdy Kirkton, one case.