

# The Canadian Evangelist.

"GO . . . SPEAK . . . TO THE PEOPLE ALL THE WORDS OF THIS LIFE."

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## THE Canadian Evangelist

is devoted to the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ; and pleads for the union of all believers in the Lord Jesus in harmony with his own prayer recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John, and on the basis set forth by the Apostle Paul in the following terms: "I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all"—Eph. iv. 1-6.

### Selections.

#### Predestination.

Predestination is a hard doctrine; who can accept it? Even Presbyterian D.D.'s are repudiating it. The Rev. Dr. Henry van Dyke recently preached a sermon at the Brick Presbyterian church, New York, on "The Bible against Fatalism, or the Liberty of Man by the Decree of God," in which he "vigorously attacked the theory of predestination as held by many in the Presbyterian church, and argued that each man is perfectly free to work out his own salvation. After showing the tendency of the ego to fatalism in general, he said that the burning question of the day is whether man is fated or free. He quotes from Dr. A. A. Hodges that free will underlies everything, and if brought to question is infinitely more than Calvinism. If free will is gone, the moral system is gone." We give the synopsis of his sermon as found in the *Christian at Work*, calling especial attention to two sentences: "We must proceed by induction from the facts, and not by deduction from a definition," and "We must not invent a logical theory and then come with it to the Bible for proof; we must look first at the facts, as they are contained in God's Word and confined in our moral consciousness, and then construct our theory in accordance with them." "He asks his audience to turn to the Bible, the source of authority recognized by Christians as supreme and final, and find from it whether the soul is fated or free:"

"The answer," he said, "is clear and distinct. It stands on the side of liberty. There is a spirit in man which is made free from the law of necessity in order that it may answer to the law of responsibility. By the decree of God man has liberty to decide between good and evil, between obedience and disobedience to his Maker's will, and the destiny of each soul must depend upon that choice. That is revealed as a fact in Holy Scripture, and facts are the foundation on which our theology must be built. We must proceed by induction from the facts, and not by deduction from a definition. We have no right to ignore or explain away this fact of human liberty in order to make

room for our definitions of predestination or foreknowledge. On the contrary we are bound to limit our theories so that they shall leave room for this fact.

"But how different is the course which men have followed in their theology. They say that there is a divine foreknowledge, and they go on to say that it must embrace all things because it is perfect. If everything is foreknown they say it must be foreordained, every decision of the human will is determined beforehand. But how absurd is this argument, how false to the facts, and how unreasonable under its appearance of exact logic. The perfection of the divine foreknowledge consists not only in its quantity, but in its quality. If it did not correspond to reality it would not be perfect. It is not a foreknowledge of things as they are not, but a foreknowledge of things as they are. If the moral decisions of each soul were determined from eternity God would foreknow it as determined. But since it is free God foreknows it as free.

"Consider also the extreme form in which the doctrine of predestination has been stated and see how it is vitiated by the same fallacy. It is said that God must have a purpose in the creation of the world, which is true enough, but it is also said that this divine purpose must include every thought and feeling and volition of the human soul, and that God must therefore predestinate every creature to an inevitable fate. This is certainly an example of accurate reasoning from incorrect premises. It is an amazing assumption to take it for granted that the divine purpose must include the volitions as determined. It may include them as free. God foreordains whatever comes to pass. It comes to pass that man has the power of choice between good and evil. Therefore human liberty is foreordained by the decree of God.

"This is the only sound way to seek the truth. We must not invent a logical theory and then come with it to the Bible for proof. We must look first at the facts as they are contained in God's Word and confined in our moral consciousness, and then construct our theory in accordance with them. We must not confine theology to Scripture. We must hold fast to the divine revelation of human freedom. A theology which includes all human thoughts and feelings under an external decree, and reduces the apparent liberty of the will to a mere power of fulfilling a destiny which was determined for every man before creation, is as contrary to Scripture as it is to our moral sense. A theology which makes the decisions and actions of our will link in an iron chain of predetermined causes and effects binds us to practical slavery, even though it fastens the end of the chain to the throne of God. But the Bible defends us from that bondage, for it is our stronghold against the fatalism of the age."

Dr. van Dyke argued that if man's actions were determined beforehand, he would be as irresponsible as the dumb animals. All through the Bible, Dr. van Dyke said, man's power of decision was instanced, the Apostles

following Christ, and the Pharisees rejecting him, Paul obedient to the heavenly vision, while Felix refused the offer of salvation. All this he claimed would be a vain show of salvation if an eternal necessity assigned to one man the part of a hero and to another the part of a villain. These figures in the pages of the Bible were real, not cunningly devised puppets. All through the Bible a free choice was offered, and this Dr. van Dyke declared would all be a mockery if the choice were already foreordained by God from all eternity.

"There is no hardening of heart by God," he exclaimed, "save for those who have first hardened their own hearts. God does not pass by any door unless it has been locked against him from within. Men may teach another doctrine. They may disguise the determinism of Huxley in the language of St. Paul, and teach a fatalism none the less absolute because it has been baptized. But the Bible cuts all the knots of their logic with the sword of the Spirit, and reveals the truth which our hearts confirm that 'man is free by God's decree.' All are free to resist and perish, or to come and live, and there is no eternal destiny to divide them."

"This, then, is the doctrine of liberty which is contained in the Word of God. It is the Bible against fatalism. It surrounds the freedom of man by the sovereignty of God, and defends it from all enemies by the Almighty power. It rises like a wall of adamant against the invasion of the spiritual world by the dogma of an eternal predestination of each soul to good or evil. If you refuse the Gospel preached to you, if you think that you are bound, foreordained, necessitated, driven by a power within then you have created your own fate. Much has been determined for you by causes beyond your control; your circumstances, your inheritance, your talents; but one thing has not been determined, what use you will make of them. Much has been ordained beforehand, the conditions of life, the way of salvation by a Redeemer; but one thing is left to you to decide and that is whether you will accept or refuse it."—*Christian Evangelist*

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"What is the church? It is more than a club for social chat. It is not a drilling-ground for young orators; it is not a theological entertainment, with a program packed with instructions to the minister as to what he shall preach; it is not a debating society for the discussion of the faults of deacons; it is not a repository for the storage of grievances; it is not a battlefield where every sort of contemptible grievance may be fought out; it is not a park where all the loiterers of creation may gather and lounge. It is the marshaling of the forces of the Christian life, and the hurling of them in all their serried glory, like the Life Guard phalanx at Waterloo, against the hypocrites, the corruptions, and the agonies of the world's life."

#### True Courage.

'Tis easy to stand on a vessel's deck,  
On a vessel, snug and trim,  
And to watch the foam from her flashing wake,  
And the rainbow bubbles swim;  
It is easy enough to climb the mast  
When hushed is the billow's war,  
And the zephyrs play  
With the pounon gey  
That floats from the highest spar.

'Tis another thing in the murky night,  
By the snaky lightning's glare,  
To climb and to stand on the dizzy height,  
When the tempest's arm is bare;  
When the masts are bending low with the strain,  
And the canvas all is riven,  
And the angry blast  
Goes whistling past,  
And the flying clouds of heaven.

'Tis easy enough to be brave and true,  
With a lying tongue to set us wrong;  
When the sky above is a cloudless blue,  
And the heart is full of song;  
'Tis another thing when the stormy clouds  
Are dark'ning over head,  
When the angel of wrath  
Stoops o'er our path,  
And the sky above is lead.

Oh! the Christian who stands thro' his fiery youth,  
When the tempter's power is strong,  
And who will not barter God's holy truth  
For the proffered hire of wrong;  
Oh! bring to him not the warrior's meed,  
'Tis a fading wreath, and dits; &  
Earth has no'zom  
For the bright diadem,  
That the Lord will give to him.  
—A. Thurston.

#### "Not Given to Wine."

The New Testament qualification for officers is exacting and inalterable. A perfect system of religion cannot be taught or enforced upon the hearts of the people by men whose lives condemn their teaching. Hypocrisy has no power to convert the world. It may gain converts to eloquence, it may group men about personal powers, it may enlist a fellow feeling that makes impenitent people wondrous kind, but the success is short-lived and wholly inadequate to satisfy the souls of those who love righteousness and hate iniquity. In all government, human and divine, law must have its rewards and its penalties. Law without penalty is dead, being alone. The ruler who enacts laws with no penalty to enforce them, virtually strips them of all authority. But he is no more at fault than the church which expects to convert men from drunkenness when its elders, deacons or preacher are given to wine or whisky. The fumes of sour whisky should not pollute the sacred word. No deacon's hand trembling with alcoholic poison should pass the cup of forgiveness. No elder charged with drunkenness should dare preside at the Lord's table. He should shrink from such high-handed outrage upon God's sacred ordinance. Can he forget that for less offence Nadab and Abihu fell before the Lord, offering strange fire, after strong wine had dethroned reason and made them force their polluted and polluting bodies into the tabernacle? Will men deceive their own hearts into thus prostituting

a sacred position? Will they rely upon mercy to efface presumptuous guilt?

It is certain that all officers who drink habitually, or occasionally, violate the law of God. They are standing in the way of success. Professing to represent temperance and righteousness, they in fact represent intemperance. Their own children hoot at their evil doings and despise such empty professions. Only evil can come from such league with sin. The officers of the church are set to condemn sin. When they become notorious for evil-doing, or are recognized as sapping their own health by secretly drinking wine or whisky, it is a disgrace to the cause of Christ to hold them in office. If they do not retire to repent, they should be called upon to vacate an office which their presence pollutes. Shame on the man who will thus stain his own life, block the cause of Christ and still pose as an officer of righteousness and peace to guilty souls! Nothing but a corrupt and vicious public sentiment could tolerate this two-facedness and crookedness in the house of God. The cause is paralyzed by a compromise with sin.—*Apostolic Guide*.

A sound discretion is not so much indicated by never making a mistake as by never repeating it.—*Bress*.

Many Christians have to endure the solitude of the unnoticed laborer. They are serving God in a way which is exceedingly useful, but not at all noticeable. How very sweet to many workers are those little corners of the newspapers and magazines which describe their labors and successes! Yet some who are doing what God will think a great deal more of at last never saw their names in print.—*Spurgeon*.

Do we know anything of what it is to take refuge from Christ's silence in Christ himself? If we do not, there are great depths of our religion still waiting for our souls to sound. You cry, "O Lord, solve me this problem?" and the solution does not come. "What must I walk in darkness?" your poor soul cries out; and then he comes and takes your hand and says; "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life." In place of the answer to your prayer comes he to whom you prayed. You have not got the solution of your problem; it still floats in doubt. You have not got the sure prophecy of the future; it is hid behind the wavering and trembling veil. You have not got the brother's dear presence for whose life you cried and wrestled; he is walking beside the river of life in the new light of heaven. You have not got what you prayed for, but you have got God! You have the source, the fountain, the sun! You have taken hold of the essential meaning and essence of all these things for which you prayed, in taking hold of him to whom you prayed. In his silence you have pressed back to him. If he had spoken, you might have rested in his words. Now you have pressed back to him. Not in the word he speaks, but in the word he is, you have found your reply.—*P. Brooks*