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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.

The Order of Confirmation.

Editor CANADIAN EVANGELIST:

Happening into the Free Reading room of this city a week or two ago, I picked up the copy of your paper for November 1st, and my eye caught the first article under the above heading. If we are searchers after truth we will welcome any explanation of views differing from our own, and I trust that you will permit me as Rector of St. James church, Guolph, to reply briefly to Mr. Sheppard's communication which refers to a Confirmation Service held in this parish. I shall hope to do so in a kind and Christian spirit.

I do hope that Mr. Sheppard, and those who think with him, will carefully study "the other side" of this question; and, if he will do so candidly and without bias, I am sure that he will not again condemn, in so wholesale a manner, as "unscriptural, anti-scriptural and absurd," a religious practice which was universally observed by the early Christians, and which to-day, seven out of every eight Christians, at least, hold to as a scriptural and apostolic ordinance.

Notwithstanding Mr. Sheppard's views as to the meaning of the passages quoted, viz., Acts viii. 17 and xix. 6, I venture to assert that the testimony of Bible students is against him, and the history of the rite upholds their view, not his. Has he forgotten or overlooked St. Paul's statement in Heb. vi. 1, 2? There the apostle states that the "laying on of hands" is one of the "foundations" and "principles of the doctrine of Christ," which every Christian should lay.

I do not purpose quoting the Church of England as an authority for confirmation, for however sufficient her testimony and authority is for us her children, it would not be so for Mr. Sheppard, who seems to have been boiling over for some time with righteous indignation at several (as he thinks) unholy teachings of the church. But perhaps he will admit the testimony of some who were and are as much opposed to the Church of England as he is. For example, Richard Baxter, who so earnestly opposed the Church of England, confessed that the want of confirmation was "the greatest corruption of the church of any outward thing he remembered." In

an elaborate work on "Confirmation and Restoration the Necessary Means of Reformation and Reconciliation" (Baxter's Works, London Folio Edition, 1707, Vol. 4) he lays down certain propositions, viz., 1. That imposition of hands was used in Scripture times; and so used, as may invite us to imitation, but not deter us from it at all. 2. And it hath been since of ordinary use in the Universal church in this very case, so that no other original can be found but Apostolical; yes, we have exceeding probable evidence that the use of it was never interrupted from the days of the Apostles down to the Reformation. 3. Nor is it laid aside in many of the Reformed churches. To that you will find that as it is easy to prove lawful, so it is more likely to be a Divine Institution necessary, *necessitate precepti*, than to be unlawful, p. 268. And the following on p. 271. 1. We find in Scripture a blessing of church members with laying on of hands. 2. We find in Scripture that the Holy Ghost is promised in a special manner to believers, over and above that measure of the Spirit which caused them to believe. 3. We find that prayer with laying on of hands was the outward means to be used by Christ's ministers for the procuring of this blessing. 4. We find that this was a fixed ordinance to the church and not a temporary thing.

Not to mention individual testimony that I could quote—Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational, etc.—in favour of Confirmation, I would mention that in one or more of the various divisions of the Baptists the "laying on of hands" is still practised. In the Confession of Faith of the "Seventh-day Baptists," adopted at a General Conference in 1833, the following is Section XV.: "Concerning imposition of hands, we believe it was the practice of the Apostles and the primitive church to lay hands upon the newly baptized believers, and it should be perpetuated in the church. We therefore practice it." (*Rupp's History of Religious Denominations, p. 31.*) The "Six Principal Baptists" took their name from the six principles of Heb. vi. 1-2, one of which was the doctrine of the *laying on of hands*, i. e., Confirmation. Listen, too, to the following declaration put forth by the Armenian Baptists about the year 1660: "That it is the duty of all such who are believers baptized, to draw nigh unto God in submission to that principle of Christ's doctrine to wit, prayer and laying on of hands, that they may receive the promise of the Holy Spirit, whereby they may mortify the deeds of the body, and live answerably to their professed intentions and desires." Of the American Baptists, Bonollet says: "The churches were all strenuous for the laying on of hands." The last quotation I give is from the thirty-fifth chapter of the Philadelphia Association, in Sept., 1742: "We believe that laying on of hands with prayer, upon baptized believers, as such, is an ordinance of Christ, and ought to be submitted unto by all such persons as are permitted to partake of the Lord's Supper, and that the end of

this Ordinance is not for the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, but for the further reception of the Holy Spirit of promise, or for the addition of the graces of the Spirit, and the influences thereof; to confirm, strengthen, and comfort them in Christ Jesus; it being ratified and established by the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit in the primitive times, to abide in the church, as meeting together on the first day of the week was, that being the day of worship or Christian Sabbath under the Gospel, and as preaching the Word was, and as Baptism was, and prayer was, and singing psalms, etc., was, so this laying on of hands was; for as the whole Gospel was confirmed by signs and wonders, and divers miracles of the Holy Ghost in general, so was every ordinance in like manner confirmed in particular." The texts referred to in proof are Acts viii. 17, 18; xix. 6; Heb. vi. 1, 2; Eph. i. 13, 14, etc. Their explanations of "the gift of the Holy Ghost in Confirmation" should satisfy Mr. Sheppard's mind as to the meaning of the words used by the Bishop of Niagara. I have referred thus fully to Baptist testimony because they, the Baptists, are as much opposed to infant baptism as Mr. Sheppard is; yet they do not seem to think, with Mr. S., that "the Episcopalians took it, with some modifications, from the church of Rome." I would, in all charity, suggest to Mr. Sheppard that he study very carefully Exod. xx. 16.

I trust, Mr. Editor, for the sake of fair play, that you will kindly insert this in your next issue, and I shall be very grateful; but I have no intention of entering upon any controversy upon the subject. Yours very truly,

A. J. BELT,
Rector of St. James' Church, Guolph,
Guolph, Dec. 1, 1890.

Methods of Raising Money.

There are some rather questionable methods of raising money adopted by the churches. These have been severely criticized and condemned, as inconsistent with the Christian religion. The Roman Catholics organize lotteries, which involve systematic gambling for church purposes. But the Protestant churches are not blameless. We hear of charity balls, church fairs, festivals, bazaars, fan-festivals, apron-parties, tableaux, grab-bags, and other devices which are practised as ways and means of getting money for church enterprises, because the people cannot be induced to give directly the amount needed.

We are often written to by correspondents asking whether we approve of certain doings which they describe. We do not undertake to answer such questions, partly because we do not assume to supply a standard of right and wrong in all things for other people, and partly because it is necessary to have a full and impartial knowledge of the facts in every case, before pronouncing judgment. Everything must be judged on its own character and tendency. The main question to be settled is: Is it contrary to any scriptural rule of life and duty? We see nothing wrong in charging an admission fee for a lecture or a tea-

meeting, even though it be admitted that the necessity of having recourse to this method of obtaining money may not be a sign of a high state of spiritual prosperity.

But whatever may be said in defence of these indirect and ingenious ways of getting money, they are adopted as a substitute for the direct gifts of the people. If the members of the church gave liberally and systematically to sustain every department of church work, these things would not be needed. With the wealth that is now in the hands of those who belong to the churches, if there was a just sense of obligation in regard to giving, there could be no necessity for adopting any questionable method of getting the money required. That some of these devices are *out of keeping with the sacredness of the place where they are practised and the dignity of the object*, must be frankly admitted. They are injurious, because they prevent the proper training of the people in liberality, even where they may not do direct harm. Let us have a genuine revival of liberality, and these doubtful catch-penny expedients will disappear. At the same time, those who withhold their gifts and do not give what they ought, are very much to blame for the adoption of these unscriptural methods. We have no sympathy for people who grumble and complain about these contrivances, but who do nothing to render them unnecessary. The ladies of our churches are not so anxious to take upon themselves the trouble of providing for tea-meetings and bazaars. Let every man give according as God hath prospered him, and there will be no cause to complain about questionable ways of raising money.—*Christian Guardian.*

The Metaphysics of Theology.

We are not fond of making nice distinctions in matters of theology, but "C. G.'s" note in another column seems to require a word in reply. It will be observed that "C. G." does not directly challenge our implied statement that faith is the means by which regeneration is wrought, but rather directs his criticism against a "false impression" that he fears may be conveyed by our way of putting it. No doubt the New Hampshire and Philadelphia Confessions of Faith are generally accepted, etc., as stated, though, after having belonged to various Baptist churches during a period of twenty-five years, we do not remember ever to have heard either of these Confessions read, or assent to its teachings asked, in more than one church. We have, indeed, always supposed that these documents were used simply as convenient general outlines of the views commonly held by Baptists. Unless we are much mistaken many influential churches decline to use them even in that indefinite way, not because of any serious objection to their statements of doctrine, but because they refuse to acknowledge any other standard than that of the New Testament. If it be not sound Baptist doctrine that neither Confessions nor statements of "representative Baptist teachers," but the New Testament, and that alone, is the creed of Baptists, we have certainly been all our lives under a misapprehension, and so, we fear, have many of our readers. If we were disposed for a moment to follow "C. G." into the metaphysics of the question we might state it thus: Either faith is "chronologically subse-

quent to regeneration," or it is not. If it is, then there must be an interval, however brief, during which the regenerate soul is destitute of "saving" faith, which seems very like a contradiction in ideas. But if the two are simultaneous and the priority merely "logical," is not regeneration without faith just as unthinkable logically as faith without regeneration?

Further, every New Testament passage which "C. G." may be able to quote to show that the unregenerate heart cannot exercise faith may easily be met with another to show that without faith regeneration is impossible, and that faith is the forth-putting of the hand by which the regenerating influence is received into the soul.

The question seems thus to our poor comprehension to resolve itself into one of the same kind as that discussed in another column, in which it is impossible for the finite mind to harmonize the two seemingly incompatible factors—the divine inworking, and the act of the human affections and will—both of which must nevertheless be present in every exercise of faith.—*Canadian Baptist.*

[As we gave in last number the criticism of "C. G." on the *Baptist* entire, we think it proper to give here the Editor's reply in full. The Editor of the *Baptist's* statement makes it clear that there is a wide difference among Baptist churches in regard to "man-made creeds." Many use them, while others reject them altogether and in that respect stand upon the same ground as the Disciples. We value this as a very hopeful sign. The Baptists are moving. Let us rejoice.—Ed. EVANGELIST.]

A Very Beautiful Prayer.

This is a short but very beautiful prayer that Dr. Arnold wrote for his own use before he went into the school of Rugby every day: "O Lord, I have a busy world around me; eye, ear and thought will be needed for all my work to be done in that busy world. Now, ere I enter upon it, I would commit eye, ear and thought to Thee! Do Thou bless them, and keep their work Thine; that as through Thy natural laws, my heart beats and my blood flows without any thought of mine for them, so my spiritual life may hold on its course at these times when my mind cannot consciously turn to Thee to commit each particular thought to Thy services. 'Hear my prayer, for my dear Redeemer's sake. Amen.'"

SELF-INFLICTED MISERY.—Many of us fritter our lives away. Indeed La Bruyere says that most men spend much of their time in making the rest miserable. On the other hand, "if the heart be right," says the *Imitatio Christi*, "then would every creature be to thee a mirror of life, a book of holy doctrine." Most of us can be rendered very unhappy by unkindness, the loss, the faults, even the coldness of those we love; but it is certainly true that no one was ever yet made utterly miserable except by himself. Marcus Aurelius wisely tells us to "remember on every occasion which leads thee to vexation to apply this principle—that this is not a misfortune, but that to bear it nobly is good fortune;" and he elsewhere observes that "we suffer much more from the anger and vexation which we allow acts to rouse in us than we do from the acts themselves at which we are angry and vexed."