

Pastor and People.

ANGEL VOICES.

There are voices softly calling
In the dawn of life's bright day—
Angel voices—thru' whose guidance
Erring footsteps never stray.
Voices loving, soft and gentle
In caressing accents tell
Of the merry days of childhood
That the angels love so well.

There are guiding, watchful voices
In the rosy days of youth
Whispering words of strength and courage—
Pointing out the paths of truth.
Voices patient, firm and pleading,
Breathing messages of love—
Helping mortals, weak and weary,
To the goal of rest, above.

There are quiet, peaceful voices
In the closing hours of life
When the hosts of earthly tempters
Fall—the vanquished in the strife,
Voices happy in thanksgiving
Looking backward o'er the past—
Angel voices softly praying
O'er another—saved at last.

—Lurana W. Sheldon.

Written for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

REJECTING THE MESSENGER.

BY C. H. WETHERDE.

Many people seem very slow in comprehending the fact that to reject God's authorized messenger to them is to actually reject Him. But there is no truth in the Bible more clearly and emphatically taught than this. Many times this is repeated in the New Testament. Even in the Old Testament it is set forth in plainest terms. God sought to profoundly impress upon the Israelites the truth that, in rejecting the prophets whom he sent to them, they rejected him. Those prophets were God's especially appointed agents. What they said, in God's name and by his authority, was just the same as though God were personally present declaring His thoughts to them. And just so it was in Christ's day. His chosen messengers were to be received as though He Himself were present. Hence He said: "He that rejecteth you, rejecteth Me." The same is true to-day. They who reject Christ's duly called and authorized ministers, reject Him. And what grave results follow such a rejection? It is no wonder at all that some churches are in an enfeebled, withering condition. They have rejected the ministerial messengers whom Christ has sent to them. The ministers did not have such a personal style as suited them. Carnal eyes passed unfavorable judgment upon the preacher and he was turned away, and thus virtually—aye, really—Christ was turned away! Beware how you treat the messengers of Christ!

Written for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

A MONOGRAPH ON RATIONAL CRITICISM.

BY REV. JOHN BURTON, D.D.

The results of criticism on Scripture interpretation must be of interest to every thoughtful reader of the Bible, and especially to the teacher, however rightly he abstains from perplexing his hearers with discussions thereon. A hesitating belief can never impart "grace to the hearers;" Paul's influence would have been nil in the edification of the saints had he written, instead of "I know," "I have reason upon the whole to trust Him who claims to be able to keep that which I have committed to His trust." There can be no doubt but that recent critical enquiries have tended to weaken the "I know," and men falter where once firmly they and their fathers stood. Therefore, we wrote the results of criticism must be of interest to the thoughtful Christian. We now add, let us be assured that what we call results are results, not mere ventures, ere we allow them to unsettle our faith in that which confessedly has been and is the most potent principle in raising men up to sit "in the heavens." This essay will be an endeavour to indicate by an example why

the busy and earnest toiler in the Lord's vineyard may patiently and confidently await "results;" meanwhile holding his faith unshaken.

Greg's creed of Christendom presents the conclusion of "rational criticism" in a calm, candid manner. Speaking of the Acts of the Apostles he writes: "The work is not perfectly to be relied on. It conveys a vivid, and, on the whole, in all probability, a faithful picture of the foundation of the early Christian churches, as a source for discovering the special doctrines preached by the apostles it is of questionable authority." The author of "Supernatural Religion" is much more decided:—"The writing is anonymous, we find no authority but late tradition assigning it to Luke or to any other author. We are absolutely without evidence of any value as to its accuracy or trustworthiness,—the work could not have been written by any companion or intimate friend of the Apostle Paul,—no certain trace even of its existence till towards the end of the second century," etc., etc. These are supposed "results," attained after most elaborate criticism and an abundant display of learned authorities.

A work has been recently published from the pen of Prof. W. M. Ramsay, of Aberdeen, "St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen," which is mainly a critical examination of the Acts of the Apostles. Dr. Ramsay has already placed the learned world under obligation by his work, "The Church in the Roman Empire," and is recognized as *facile princeps* on questions pertaining to Asia Minor in geography, history, and epigraphy. In prosecuting his special line of study, he finds himself brought into contact with the Acts "as an authority for the topography, antiquities and society of Asia Minor." Accepting in general the conclusion of the Tübingen school he uses the Acts with the fixed idea that it was essentially a second century production, "never relying on its evidence as trustworthy for first century conditions," till he came "gradually to find it a useful ally in some obscure and difficult investigations." Dr. Ramsay was thus led to review his position regarding the Acts, which he does in this work. Manifestly the details of the criticism cannot be transcribed to these columns, they who would follow them must consult the work itself, but the working hypothesis the author sets about establishing, and which he maintains may be briefly and profitably given thus:

The book was composed by a personal friend and disciple of Paul, hence there need be no hesitation in accepting the primitive tradition that Luke was the author.

The third gospel may be conclusively accepted as from the same pen as the two prefaces plainly imply.

The abrupt termination of the history in the Acts may be accounted for by an intention on the part of Luke to write a third treatise (read "first" instead of "former" Acts i. 1); an intention possibly frustrated by his being involved in the same persecution that ended the great Apostle's career.

Luke was eminent as an historian, a strong partisan if you will, but raised above partiality by his perfect confidence that he had only to describe the facts as they occurred, to make the truth of Christianity and the integrity of Paul as the Apostle to the nations apparent.

Luke wrote with a full knowledge of Paul's letters, and in his history explains and elucidates them, not professedly, but by giving facts, expecting the reader to image the situation.

The difficulties experienced by commentators in explaining the journeys recorded in the Acts, and the apparent inconsistencies between the history and the epistles, arise from attempting to force upon Luke a chronological exactness which was not in his purpose to give; and from many topographical applications of the record of travel. "I must speak," says Dr. Ramsay, "on this point confidently and uncompromisingly, for the facts stand out clear and bold and simple."

Taking the year A.D. 80 as a fixed point, the gospel appears to have been written in the years immediately preceding; the Acts belong to the years immediately following.

We have therefore in this work the most orthodox conclusions reached as to the authenticity, integrity and trustworthiness of the Acts by purely rational enquiries, thorough knowledge making sure what imperfect enquiries would render doubtful.

In working out this hypothesis many interesting details are given which cannot be expected in this resume; but "results" may convince some timid hearts that even rational criticism is not, when honestly and thoroughly followed, an abomination of desolation; and that still "the Word of our God shall stand for ever."

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A SPIRIT-FILLED MAN.

[Notes of an address given by Rev. A. T. Pierson, D.D., in Toronto, at a conference held for the deepening of the Spiritual Life. The Rev. Dr. Gordon was then living, but the value of Dr. Pierson's testimony has not been affected by the fact of his death since, nor the usefulness of the address impaired.—EDITOR.]

I think I can honor God most by concluding this very brief and unsatisfactory address on the Holy Spirit by just referring to Dr. Gordon as the example, the finest example that I have ever known, of a spirit-filled man. During one of the conferences at Northfield some years ago, Dr. Gordon being present, and being greatly moved by the truth that he there heard about the Spirit of God, engaged with others in a long meeting, extending during a large portion of the night, when they fell on their faces in the tent waiting for the anointing from God. He joined with his brethren in a definite seeking after a new experience of the Spirit's power that he might come under the control of the Captain of the Lord's host and henceforth do all his living, all his praying, and all his working in the energy and power of the Spirit. From that day, Adoniram J. Gordon was a new man. He went back to the Clarendon Street Church in Boston to undertake to show unto other men how far a man can be under the control of the Spirit, and how far, being under the control of the Spirit, he could guide a great congregation simply under the Holy Spirit. He often said he had no executive ability. It suddenly occurred to him that the Holy Spirit had come as the Captain of the Lord's host to be the Executive Officer of the Church of God, that He had come to take His seat in the Church as an Archbishop in His See, and that back of every pastor who recognizes the Spirit there is the Holy Ghost, so that he can say, as Peter said, "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God; ye have agreed together to tempt the Holy Spirit," Peter the nominal head, the Holy Ghost the real head. Notice in the 15th of Acts how beautiful it is, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." Now, Dr. Gordon was principally prominent for three things:—(1) he believed in a Holy Ghost book, (2) he believed in a Holy Ghost body—the Church, and (3) he believed in a Holy Ghost baptism for power in service. His belief in the Holy Ghost book—the Bible—led him to treat this book as a Divine Counsellor. I enjoyed his intimate companionship and fraternal fellowship, and he has often taken his Bible in his hand and said, "Whenever I am in doubt, whenever I want counsel, I go to this book with the same certainty that I go to you that I shall find personal advice, and I never take up this book without feeling that God is speaking to me through it." It reminds me of the 119th Psalm, "Thy testimonies are my delight and my counsellor,"—going to the Word of God to hear the breath of God in His inspired volume, and when you talk to the book have it talk back to you as the voice of God Himself. And this gave scriptural quality to his preaching. He held up the Word of God. He was the expound-

er and expositor of the scripture. He stood behind the Word, and held forth the Word, and the Word obscured the man. He sought to make everything in his life according to the pattern shown in the Word of God. He decided everything in his home or social life by the Scripture, and if they conformed not he said they must conform. The worldly choir disappeared, and a consecrated choir took its place: the worldly organist disappeared, and a noble, consecrated man took his place. They now hold prayer-meetings before they undertake to lead the service of song, that they may be guided in making harmony to the Lord. Every pew is free. All fairs, and festivals, and bazaars, and entertainments are banished, and the church moves together in everything for the honor and glory of the Lord. No appeals are made for funds of any kind. They trust entirely to voluntary offerings, and yet on one occasion their collection to Foreign Missions was \$20,000 one day, and yet that is a church of poor people with scarce any people with anything but moderate means within it; and, as he told me, and as you will find set forth in that charming book, "How Christ came to Church," he says that when he looked across the street and saw the trolley reaching up from the car and touching the delicate wire, not even laying hold of the wire but letting the wire lay hold of it, the car moved along under the direction of this invisible agent; and he says, "I have no power to move; I reach up and come into contact with the Spirit of God and let Him become in me the energy of God." And so that blessed man lived for God, and stood in this generation as the prophet of the Holy Ghost, and he has left behind him the sublimest book on "The Ministry of the Spirit" that, I think has ever been given to the Church in all these centuries. Oh, my beloved friends, as he often said to me, "That night at Northfield was not only to me an entrance into rest, but into power." Henceforth as a little child—for he always grew back toward childhood, humble, lowly-minded, insufficient of himself, dependent on the Holy Ghost—he didn't even attempt to start missions in his church, he committed it all to the Spirit of God—he said, "Here is the work to be done; take charge of this work." A man came to him and said, "Doctor, I am very much interested in intemperate men, I want to start an intemperant home," and so it was started. A home for fallen women was also founded, and so a Chinese Sunday School was established, and missions among the Jews, right there in Boston; and the man that had no executive ability found that there was a Holy Ghost behind him that was abundantly able to act as Captain of the Lord's host and conduct the Lord's campaign. Oh, my beloved friends, how many of us pastors, who may be here to-night, who may be working against the tide, and against odds, and fearful obstacles and we do not know how to do with this evil, we have no tact, no executive ability, no administrative power! What a blessed evening would this be if we would just loose our shoes from off our feet and bow before the invistble Captain of the Lord's host and say, "I am nothing but the servant of God, take under Thy control the campaign, conduct the hosts, conduct me, let me be but as the instrument in the hand of the only Agent, the only Worker, God Himself."

To be without principles is a preliminary condition to becoming unprincipled. The unprincipled man is usually one who has descended from having no principles to having bad principles. Every one ought to see to it that he has something positive, something true and tried, as a principle, to think, to decide, and to act by. He who would be a worthy reliance in emergency, and stable at all times, ought to know his principles; and, to know them, he ought to be able to state them so clearly in words that he can live them out in action.