

The Christian.

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EDITORIAL.

THE APPOINTMENTS OF GOD.

For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. I Thes. v, 9.

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth, etc. I. Tim. ii, 3, 4.

The more attentively we learn from the Word of God what he has been pleased to reveal of himself the greater will be our admiration of his wisdom and of his mercy to the children of men.

Nothing is plainer and more important for us to know than the appointments of God, and nothing perhaps is more liable to be misunderstood. Divine appointments are of two kinds, *absolute* and *conditional*. To ignore this distinction and to hold all appointments as absolute is a fatal mistake. God's appointments in nature are of two kinds. This is plain enough; and the Word of God as plainly shows that there are two in grace. An *absolute* appointment can never fail, a *conditional* one may fail.

In order that there may be food for man and beast God gives man a fruitful earth and fruitful seasons. He does this without any condition on man's part. But still it is only the willing and obedient who shall eat the fruit of the land. He gives man the *means* of good unconditionally but the blessing arising from the means he gives him conditionally. So the Bible makes plain the conditional and the unconditional appointments, and to ignore the distinction makes sad havoc of the truth.

The Hyper-Calvinist sees clearly in the Bible two resurrections, one to life, another to everlasting shame and contempt, and concludes that God has appointed to each their place before they were born. The Universalist sees that God has not appointed men to wrath but that he will have all men to be saved. That Christ gave himself a ransom for all that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man, etc., etc.

While the Calvinist and the Universalist differ so very widely in their final conclusions, they agree in ignoring God's *conditional* appointments and regard all of God's appointments as *absolute* which cannot be broken. One concludes that all *must* be saved because it is God's will to save all. The other concludes that it is not his will that all should be saved because all will not be saved. Both conclude that nothing can break the will or appointment of God although both Old and New Testaments repeatedly declare that his will is broken, and also that both these conclusions are untrue. God will have all men to be saved, and yet he that believeth not the Son shall not see life but the wrath of God abideth on him. John iii, 36.

In *absolute* appointments there is only the

will of God, but in the *conditional* God allows man's will to take part, and when it opposes his will he permits the appointment to be broken, which will fully appear as we proceed.

"Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house and the house of thy father should walk before me forever, but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me, for them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. I. Sam. ii, 30. Here the Lord emphatically declares that he had appointed the family of Eli to stand perpetually before him in the priests' office, but on account of the sins of Eli's sons that appointment was broken.

Again, "Thus saith the Lord, Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people." I. Kings xx, 42. Here the Lord had appointed Ahab to utterly destroy Benhadad, King of Syria, for his sins and repeated insults of the God of Israel. But Ahab had broken the appointment by bargaining with this man and sending him away, and for this breach Ahab's life had to go for this man's life, and Ahab's people for his people.

In the 18th of Jeremiah the Lord shows how his appointments either for good or evil concerning a nation are changed by the conduct of that nation.

Jesus says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Here are God's two kinds of appointments. His love for the world and his unspeakable gift was absolute. Man had no hand in it. No being could prevent it. But how different the other, "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This is conditional. 1st, God gave his Son without any condition on man's part; 2nd, He gives man eternal life on condition that he believes in his Son. How very plain the distinction. In this third chapter of John, from the 14th to the 21st verses, Jesus elaborates the subject as if he would make it so plain that even a child could understand how men are saved and why men are condemned. We ask for this beautiful passage a careful hearing. A popular preacher, who seemed to have no idea of a conditional appointment, said: "If God wants to save a man and he is not saved, it would prove Satan to be stronger than God." We would ask this man to read the Saviour's lament over Jerusalem. "How often WOULD I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings and ye WOULD NOT." Jesus was going to Jerusalem the third and the last time, when in grief he uttered these words. Would this man deny that he wanted to gather these Jews and still they were not gathered. Never was the will of God more clearly opposed by the will of man, and yet the latter prevailed. Did it prove Satan stronger than God. Luke xiii, 34.

As no passage in the Bible says that Christ died only for a part of the human family, or that any are condemned to eternal woe before they wilfully reject an offered Saviour, we will refer to passages which show that Jesus died to save all men, and that the lost will be condemned for refusing to believe in Jesus. Let us begin with the angel's messages at his birth, "Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to *all people*. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord." Luke ii, 10, 11.

A Saviour's birth could be no good tidings of great joy to any people but to those he came to save, which plainly shows that he came to save all people.

"That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."—John i. 9. Jesus tells every man how he can be saved because he died to save him and has salvation for him. None can truly say that the sun was not intended to lighten every body because some men go into, or are put into a dungeon; nor is it true that Jesus did not intend to lighten every man because some are shut out in darkness.

The passages at the head of this article speak plainly on the mission and work of Christ and on what are God's appointments through him to our race. He will have all men to be saved. . . . For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time.

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."—Heb. ii. 9.

"And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."—I. John ii. 2.

Such is the constant testimony of the Scripture respecting the work of Christ, which is in perfect harmony with the revealed character of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus constantly calls himself the Son of Man. Every man on earth can call Jesus Christ his brother and why should any man be hindered from looking to him his Saviour or have a doubt in his heart that Jesus died for him.

The Lord willing, this subject will be continued in next month's CHRISTIAN.

Correspondence.

NOTES OF TRAVEL.

On Thursday morning, May 4, Mrs. Bolton, Baby Iloe and I bade adieu to the friends in Westport, N. S., and boarded the little steamer "Westport" for St. John, N. B. We had a nice smooth run of twelve miles up St. Mary's bay to Tiverton, where freight was landed. As the boat could not get to the wharf, the tide being low, we bade adieu to the friends in Tiverton by the waving of handkerchiefs. We then launched into the