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THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR.

He knee-deep lies the winter snow,
The winter winds are wearily sighing,
Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,
And tread softly and speak low,
For the Old Year lies a-dying,
Old Year, you must not die!
You came to us so readily,
You lived with us so steadily,
Old Year, you shall not die.

He will not see the dawn of day,
He hath no other life above,
He gave a friend and a true love,
And the New Year will take 'em away.
Old Year, you must not go!

So long as you have been with us,
Such joy as you have seen with us,
Old Year, you shall not die.

He troth'd his banners (O his beam!)
A jollier year, we shall not see,
But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,
But tho' his foes speak ill of him,
He was a friend to me.

Old Year, you shall not die,
We did not laugh and cry with you,
We did not die with you,
We did not die with you.

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INDWELLING SIN AND CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

BY JAMES MIDDLEMISS, D.D.

SCRIPTURE PERFECTION OF BELIEVERS.—A PERFECTION COMMON TO ALL, AND A RELATIVE PERFECTION.—"COMPLETE IN CHRIST."—DOORS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND NO. OF SIN.

It is hardly any error, however consistent with the general teaching of Scripture, that men will not find, as they think, Scripture warrant for inferring to the error with which we are now dealing, it cannot be questioned that there are many Scripture statements which teach directly or by implication that Christian believers are, in this life, perfect in some sense, or rather perfect in more senses than one. But to appeal to these statements as proving that the believer may, in this life, attain to such perfection, in holiness as to live day by day without having occasion to confess sin, implies, we must think, the want of due consideration.

The Romish theologians of Reformation times generally held with the Pelagians of early times, in maintaining that the sanctification of believers might be perfect in this life, or that such grace might be given in this life to a believer, that his obedience might be so perfect that the eye of God could see nothing in it worthy of condemnation. The Pelagian teaching was vigorously controverted by the contemporary Fathers, and especially by Augustine. The views of our Reformers, as expressed in the *Westminster Standards*, have been already presented to our readers, in our quotations (in Article II.) from the *Westminster Standards*.

In opposing Pelagian and Romish error in relation to the perfection of Christian obedience in this life, our theologians show that the perfection that is in Scripture, ascribed to Christians is consistent with various degrees, and even with a comparatively low degree of moral attainment. They show that it is either, (1) a perfection of sincerity, implying that the genuine Christian believer is whole-hearted in his service of God—not half-hearted or divided in his aim, like those who would serve both God and mammon; or (2) a perfection of universality or impartiality, implying that the true believer "has respect to all God's commandments," and regards himself as being wholly, in all respects, the property of Him who bought him—not partial in his submission and obedience, or his interest or inclination may dictate, or giving himself to God with reservations; or (3) evangelical or Gospel perfection, implying that the believer being in living union with Christ, all the saving good secured by Christ's obedi-

ence unto death is assured to him in future, if not in present experience; or (4) a perfection of comparative maturity in the spiritual apprehension of Divine things. We believe it cannot be shown that any perfection is ascribed in Scripture to Christians that does not come under one or other of these heads. It will be seen that, under each of the first three heads, a perfection is referred to that is common to all believers, while the last head has reference to a perfection that distinguishes some believers from others. Keeping this distinction in view, we shall endeavour to show, by considering Scripture statements usually appealed to in this controversy, that they imply no perfection except such as is consistent with the present imperfection of the believer's sanctification. We need not deny that some of the statements referred to may, at first sight, appear to ascribe to believers an entire freedom from sin, thus occasioning perplexity of mind to those who see clearly that the general teaching of Scripture and the general experience of Christians oppose any such ideas. A little consideration, we believe, will suffice to remove all such perplexity.

Beginning with the Apostle Paul's assertion respecting believers, that they are "complete in Christ," the very fact that there are great differences among Christians in respect of moral attainment, forbids the idea that he ascribes to them, in that assertion, perfection in holiness or complete freedom from sin. Nor do we see how any one can doubt that his reference is to what is above distinguished as evangelical or Gospel perfection, or to the great truth that all the saving good secured by the obedience unto death of our Lord Jesus Christ is the indefeasible inheritance of all who are in living and believing union with Him. All believers stand in the same relation to God, and are all equally entitled to the essential rights and privileges of that relation. As subjects, once criminal and condemned, they are now wholly freed from condemnation. And they are all equally the children of God; though one may be only a babe, in Christ and another a grown man. The completeness and perfection referred to, being a completeness that pertains to the

to exist, is best explained by supposing that the Westminster divines were able to distinguish between an exhortation and a summary of doctrine. There is not a specific section devoted to the love of God in a single Confession of Christendom, the reason being that love is one of the divine attributes, and is considered usually along with God's justice and holiness in the chapter that treats of God. It has its proper place in the Westminster Confession, but was not discussed for he attributes were not discussed. It was not denied, and therefore there was no need of setting it forth in antithesis to error. In considering doctrinal ratios in a confession of faith or body of divinity, the critic needs some other unit of measurement than a thousand ems. But "the Confession does not neglect the divine mercy," as Dr. Briggs very correctly remarks in his recent book. "This is clear," he continues, "from the following statement where, if anything, the divine love is magnified above justice; 'most loving, gracious, merciful, long suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' . . . There is no neglect of the divine love here. The statement 'most loving' refers to the proof text 'God is love,' and the proof-texts for the rest of the definitions are the classic passages where the divine mercy is magnified. Here the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins is set forth in all its grandeur as the outflow of the divine love, grace and mercy." I should infer from this that Dr. Briggs would see no need of a revision of the Confession in order to secure a proper recognition in it of the divine love, and in this matter I am of his way of thinking.

Nor is there any reason for amending the Confession by omitting or modifying the passages already referred to. It can be done, however, without affecting the integrity of the Calvinistic system. So far as these passages are concerned Revision is unnecessary because:

I. The sentiments contained in them are legitimately involved in the Calvinistic system.

There is the statement concerning "elect infants." It has not been shown that the Westminster divines meant to teach in the Confession that any infants dying in infancy are non-elect; nor can the citation of passages from their writings or the debates of the Westminster Assembly affect our interpretation of the Confession. The language of the Confession is plain and our interpretation must conform to the fundamental legal principle that requires us to find our materials for the construction of a document within the four corners of the document. A great deal of most valuable historical research becomes use-

THE REVISION OF THE CONFESSION OF FAITH.

BY FRANCIS L. PATTON, F. D., LL.D., PRESIDENT OF PRINCETON COLLEGE.

It is possible, however, that in spite of these presumptions to the contrary, the sentiments of the Confession are as false or so unsuited to the demands of modern life that some revision of it is imperative. This will be said undoubtedly by many, but in estimating the value of such a statement some regard must be paid to the doctrinal attitude of those who make it. Those who advocate Revision can, perhaps, be comprehended in three classes:

1. Those who are Calvinists and who ask only for a few changes and for such as do not impair the integrity of the Calvinistic system.

2. Those who, whether consciously or unconsciously, are not Calvinists, and who make demands for a revision which would impair the integrity of the Calvinistic system.

3. Those who, whether Calvinists or not, are Comprehensionists, who are ready in the interests of Catholicity, to see the Confession superseded by a shorter creed, or its doctrinal area greatly contracted.

Let us consider these classes separately.

Those who belong to the first class desire to have the Confession amended (1) by making a more definite statement concerning God's love, and (2) by omitting or modifying such statements as those concerning: (a) elect infants; (b) the preterition of the non-elect; and (c) the salvation of those not professing the Christian religion.

less so far as the question of confessional interpretation is concerned in the light of this principle. The Confession teaches that only the elect will be saved; that those of the elect who are capable of faith are saved by faith; that those of the elect, such as elect infants dying in infancy, who are incapable of faith, are saved without faith. The antithesis is not between elect and non-elect infants, but between elect infants that do not die in infancy. It is true that the Confession does not dogmatically say that all who die in infancy are among the elect; neither does it say that any who die in infancy are among the non-elect. Those therefore who say that the Confession's teacher was meant to teach infant damnation do so without warrant; and it is unwilling to see our Church make a concession to her enemies by striking out of her Confession a statement that is strictly true.

It is said that the doctrine of preterition, or reprobation, as they prefer to call it, should be stricken from the Confession. It is said to be distinctively Arminian; but this is a mistake. Calvinism teaches that God elects individuals to eternal life out of His mere good pleasure. Now if men are saved because they are elected, and God elects none, certainly some must be left. We may say that God passed them by, or reprobated them, or did not save them. The statement of the Confession is simply an affirmation of the laws of thought governing the simply process of subtraction. It is said that logic does not apply to such matters. But if we are ready to take an agnostic position in a matter so fundamental as that the whole is greater than its part, we shall soon need a revision of the Confession, more radical than has hitherto been dreamed of.

Complaint is also made because the Confession teaches that men not professing the Christian religion cannot be saved in any other way, by their never diligent to frame their lives according to the light of Nature, and the law of that religion they do profess." If some Calvinists choose to indulge in a pessimistic hope regarding a few exceptional men among the heathen, no one will interfere with them. But it will be difficult to show that the Confession of the Westminster divines, as it stands, is not in accordance with Scripture. Does not the Bible teach that men are under condemnation—that there is no salvation by works? and that justification is by faith in Christ? Does he not preach the Gospel to the heathen because the heathen are in peril? Why then unless we are prepared to find fault with Paul, do we find fault with the Confession? It would be a great mistake in these days of awakened interest in foreign missions to amend the Confession by striking out what, after all, is one of the strongest pleas for missionary endeavour.

But a revision of the Confession, so far as these passages are concerned, is unnecessary also because:

II. The objections based upon them are really not the ideas specifically embodied in these passages, but to the Calvinistic doctrines that underlie them.

If we believe that God has elected some to everlasting life, we do not make the doctrine less obnoxious, because in stating it we omit the logical sequel, which says on the authority of Romans ix, that He passed by the rest. If only the elect are saved, and we know that adults are saved by faith, we cannot find fault with the Confession for saying that those of the elect who die in infancy are saved without faith, without baptism, and by the renewal of the Holy Ghost. If we believe that God intends to save only some, we need not be angry with the Confession for telling us that is God's plan to bring His elect to the knowledge of Christ by the preaching of the Gospel. We should give our enemies credit for very little discernment if we supposed that they would regard the omission of these passages as a liberalizing of our Confession. The better way to handle this matter is to take hold of the big end of the question. If we can face the criticisms urged against fundamental Calvinism, we need not be concerned about those that are based upon the inferences that follow from it.

It is to be feared, however, that whether they are aware of it or not, some who advocate Revision are not Calvinists; it is not strange, therefore, that their desire for Revision should assume a form that is disastrous to the integrity of the Calvinistic system.

(To be continued.)

Rev. Dr. Burns, of Halifax in a brief note to the Editor, says: "The good-bye to the Mortons was the largest, and in every way best, missionary meeting I have yet attended in these Maritime Provinces. They have done a grand work during their brief furlough, and return rejoicing, bringing their hearts with them. Dr. Robertson is making a deep impression and receiving a unanimous ovation. I doubt not the practical results will be most satisfactory."

THE EXHAUSTIVENESS OF CITY LIFE.

THERE are advantages in city life, but there are results that lessen the gains. It is not merely that there are risks from sewage gas and from crowded rooms, but from numbers that hinder interest. City life brings out the ingenuity of man, but there is a great exhaustion of vital power. There is constant wear and tear of the system by the multiplicity of things claiming attention. Think of the committee meetings to be attended, of the multiplied agencies demanding attention; of the fierce competition for existence; of the strain put on men of small capital by the existence and advertising power of large houses; of the many sights compelling thought; of the paralysis sometimes produced by the mightier work to be undertaken; and the difficulty of making oneself felt amid the moving crowds of the city. Then add the lateness of the hours the shops remain open; the amount of gas used and bad air breathed; the rapidity with which every customer has to be attended to; the distances it is necessary to travel, on trivial business frequently, in a city; the hurrying to catch trains; the complex engagements to be met—and it must be confessed that city life is most exhaustive. The drafts on nervous energy are constant. There is great excitement, and the loss caused is not so readily repaired as in the country. The air is not so pure. It has been vitiated by bad odours from every source breathed and rebreathed; there is no ozone in it. This accounts for the sense of lassitude so many experience. The superintendence of country toil or actual work has a more restorative influence than city work. Agriculture has been thought beneath many, and it has thus been left to lower minds, as though the best cultivator of the land would be one who had least cultivation of brain. To what, however, do men of leisure and competency so readily turn as to farming? It is evidently the normal state in which pleasure and profit are best combined. Man was not intended to be a mere machine to get money. The growth of cities means that men live rather to gain wealth than to enjoy life. Men may make money, but they cannot enjoy it.

Mission Work.

TRINIDAD.

LETTER FROM REV. JOHN MORTON.

We left New York at noon, Nov. 20th. Our party consists of Rev. F. J. Coffin, who goes out to fill the vacancy at Couva, Miss Archibald and Miss Graham, who go to take the places of Miss Semple and Miss Copeland returned, with Mrs. Morton and myself. We have been on shore here, and the wild delight of those who after ten days at sea stepped on shore to find a new world, was a sight to move old hearts. You will be cold enough in Ontario when this reaches you, so a few notes from the Sunny South may be a pleasant contrast to letters from the North-West.

What did we see on St Croix? A beautiful island of hill and valley, green to the mountain tops—green of various shades from trees and grass and sugar cane—a quiet town sleeping on the sea side with streets shaded by the tamarind, cocoa nut and other trees, and roses and frangipani in full bloom. In a cool West Indian house, with wide galleries and open windows, we sipped the water of green coconuts with the thermometer at 80°. It was so comfortable, the new-comers would scarcely believe that it could be so warm. After New York and after the rough sea, how quiet, how cosy, what a land of balmy air and end less beauty, where hurry is out of place and it is enough just to live. We landed sixteen passengers here—some residents who had gone to the United States for the summer, and some Americans who are to winter in the south. Some of these will require to give thanks for a month to make up for the grumbling of the past ten days.

A party of tourists who wished to take the round trip by our steamer, to escape the American coast and particularly Cape Hatteras, arranged that the boat should call for them at Brunswick, Georgia. Instead therefore of going direct across the Gulf Stream into warm weather, we steamed down the coast against persistent head winds to Brunswick. There we heard that the "Manhattan," which left New York a few hours before we did and on the same course, had come into collision with a schooner and sank with every soul on board. Even those who had murmured like the Israelites before, were stilled for a season.

From Brunswick we steered for Nassau, New Providence, to take in Sir William Robinson, governor of Trinidad, and his family. Nassau! Our United States passengers expressed abhorrence of the very name. We could not land, but we saw what some of them called "the detestable place" clearly enough from our ship. There were lively times at Nassau during the early part of the American war, when blockade running was the game and the business of the hour. The bales of southern cotton are gone beyond a trace, but the perfidy of Nassau will never bleach pale in the memory of the North. After a quarter of a century, when North and South are regarded as reconciled, this quiet town on one of the Bahamas is still "Accursed Nassau." Have you ever been sea sick, gentle reader? When you think how nice it must have been to land at St Croix, please remember the previous sea sickness. Our party were all more or less sick, some of them considerably more. The captain, whose duty it was to keep the ship steady, failed sadly. She would play a sick and toss, so there were empty places at table and sighs in the state rooms, and no one in Ontario will ever know how badly some young people felt and how much they went through, before they drank cocoa-nut water on St. Croix, or how much more they will have to go through before they drink it there again.

St. Croix is a small island about forty miles long by nine broad. It is one of the coolest and healthiest of the West Indies, and would make an excellent winter resort.

Dec. 1st, St. Kitts.—Finding that I can mail here to catch an early boat for New York, I conclude accordingly to sail on the S.S. "Trinidad," at 10 o'clock, Nov. 30, 1880.

THE BIBLE A MISSIONARY BOOK.

BY REV. JOHN ROSS, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM.

1. The Bible has a missionary purpose. There is but one God, and one God has but one Son, in whom He has designed for the human race in its entirety. (2) It is needed by all men, in every age, in every land, in every tongue, in every nation, and was to be carried into all its provinces, so this Gospel, which issues from the King of Kings, is to be borne into every part of the world. Search the Bible upon this point and it will be found permeated through and through by a missionary purpose.

2. The Bible abounds in missionary precepts. The Divine demand made upon men everywhere in the Word is first to come and receive the Gospel, and then to go and give it to others. The Church's "marching order" are found in Mark xvi. 15. See also numerous other passages which make missions obligatory.

3. The Bible contains a missionary plan. See especially the Acts of the Apostles, which has been well called a "Manual of Missions." (a) The Church in all its members constituted one great Missionary Society; (b) Special agents were employed in the work; (c) The work was begun at the centres of population. The heavenly fire kindled in the great cities is to flame over all the world.

4. The Bible presents to us missionary persons. The chief biographies of the Bible are missionary biographies; its most prominent persons are its missionaries, men of a genuine missionary spirit and who did a true missionary work: Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah and Isaiah in the Old Testament, and Christ and Paul in the New.

5. The Bible records missionary progress. Of this progress the whole New Testament is a history. The Gospels cover the period of preparation; The Book of Acts shows us the work begun on its world-wide plan, and traces its advancement from point to point, whilst the Epistles are mainly missionary letters from the early missionaries. It reveals how, in a little more than thirty years, the Gospel was carried into almost all the then civilized world.

6. The Bible is rich in missionary promises. It is literally gemmed with them from the first to last, every part of it sparkling with their heavenly light. Seek out these promises and mark each in your Bible with a star.

7. The Bible assures us of a missionary presence and power—Zech. iv. 6, Mat. xxviii. 18, 20. Christ is in the message which missionaries are to bear, and Christ is to be in the work which they are to do.

Search the Word and mark, in addition to the above, its missionary preaching, prayers, and praise, or its missionary sermons, supplications and songs.

A question for the reader.—If I would be a Bible Christian, must I not be a Missionary Christian, praying, working and giving for the cause of Missions?

saou, New Providence, to take in Sir William Robinson, governor of Trinidad, and his family. Nassau! Our United States passengers expressed abhorrence of the very name. We could not land, but we saw what some of them called "the detestable place" clearly enough from our ship. There were lively times at Nassau during the early part of the American war, when blockade running was the game and the business of the hour. The bales of southern cotton are gone beyond a trace, but the perfidy of Nassau will never bleach pale in the memory of the North. After a quarter of a century, when North and South are regarded as reconciled, this quiet town on one of the Bahamas is still "Accursed Nassau." Have you ever been sea sick, gentle reader? When you think how nice it must have been to land at St Croix, please remember the previous sea sickness. Our party were all more or less sick, some of them considerably more. The captain, whose duty it was to keep the ship steady, failed sadly. She would play a sick and toss, so there were empty places at table and sighs in the state rooms, and no one in Ontario will ever know how badly some young people felt and how much they went through, before they drank cocoa-nut water on St. Croix, or how much more they will have to go through before they drink it there again.

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