

Corporeal Christianity.

Practical Christianity.—I. e., genuine Church-Life Paul describes in these hortatory words,—“I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service; and be not conformed to the world.” This, yes, this is true Church-Life and Worship.

I. “Why, and on what grounds is it most reasonable that the Christian should render unto God such devoted service? To this question Paul’s answer is, because of “the mercies” he has received from God—those mercies he has detailed in chapters third to ninth of his epistle to the Romans.

Many professing Christians, and even many popular ministers and evangelists sadly misunderstand, misplace and misapply this supremely important doctrine of practical Christianity—of Christian holiness. They tell us, “You must be holy in order to secure and retain God’s favor in order to pass safely through the severe trial of the last day of judgment, in order to fit yourself for admission to heaven.” The apostle says no such thing; that is not his argument at all; but it is thus he reasons.—Because you are already the subjects of God’s securing mercies because you are already the regenerated children of God—“heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ”—therefore I beseech you, “Live like the royal family;” because you do now enjoy Jehovah’s everlasting redeeming grace, because you now are the favored objects of divine election and salvation, O I beseech you to live out your gratitude in your present physical and terrestrial lives! Holiness is no part of the price of our salvation, but only the God-glorifying evidence that we are saved. Rooted and grounded in Christ by the act of God’s sovereign grace, let us “have our fruit unto holiness.” What can be more “reasonable?” Indeed, it is “reasonable service.”

II. To whom is this exhortation addressed? I beseech you . . . that ye present? To what part of the believer is this addressed? Plainly to the Regenerated Spirit now dwelling in his body.

No need is there for Paul to exhort the Christian’s spiritual nature thus about itself. The nature and the life of the regenerated spirit is already essentially divine. He that is born of God sinneth not, for His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God.” In other words, all the inherent desires and aims, purposes, propensities, and passions of the Spirit-born human spirit are in harmony with the divine nature. Just as the lamb naturally loves the green pasture,—just as the fish naturally plunges into the pure depths of the vast ocean,—just as the Scottish lark, springing from the heather, soars, heavenward, singing as it soars, even so those who have been born again of the Spirit of God naturally love and long after heavenly things. It is no sacrifice for the spirit of the Christian to be holy. It prefers and enjoys holiness.

Thus it is obvious that it is about the body of the Christian the apostle is now speaking. He is speaking to the believing soul about the management of his corporeal faculties. And oh, how much needed is this exhortation! Our bodies are still unregenerate—fallen—bent upon the indulgence of those sins they naturally like. Yes, alas! after conversion, after years of Christian experience, our bodies are still Adamic and animal, corrupt and lustful and doomed to penal death. Thirty years after his conversion Paul’s own experience was, “In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.”

This is the real believer’s present compound state. “The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other.” For the inspired description of this chronic conflict of our two natures—the spiritual and divine with the Adamic and carnal—let us thoughtfully consider Romans 7: 14-23, and 8: 5-13. As the horse, if he is ever to be profitably used either in business or in war, must first be broken and trained into habits of obedience and then controlled, restrained and compelled to study persistent work by the master-hand of the teamster or rider, even so must our animal nature be conquered and controlled by the purpose and object, the eye and the hand of our spiritual manhood. In other words, our mental and corporeal powers and faculties must become the passive servants—the tools—the instruments of Christian spirit-service.

III. “How, then—in what way and manner are we, believing spirits, to use and employ our bodies?” To this question the plain spoken answer of the apostle is this: “Present your bodies a living sacrifice to God.”

Every reader of the Bible knows well what “sacrifice” signifies. Under the Levitical economy the Jews were required to present to God frequently animal and material offerings expressive of their gratitude, thank-offerings indicative of their obligations, burnt offerings, meat offerings, free-will offerings. Thus they made perpetual public profession of their covenant relation to Jehovah of their direct and continual dependence upon Him, and of his supreme sovereignty over them.

Now, under the Christian economy our own “bodies” are the sacrifice God demands. This is very, very plain in this first verse of Romans chapter the twelfth, as well

as in chapter the sixth and verses the 13th, 16th and 18th, and in Paul’s first epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 6 verses 13 and 20.

We cannot but notice that under both economies the offerings enjoined upon God’s people resemble one another in this important particular, they are both animal, both unregenerate, and both unwilling to be sacrificed in God’s service. Sacrifice means a thing consecrated totally and unconditionally to God and used in His worship and service.

Where can we see an illustration of this? Consider you pious Jew of the olden time—watch him closely as he sets about making a sacrifice to the God of his father Abraham. Having carefully selected the very best animal he can find in his flock or herd, he sets out for the holy city, distant seven or ten miles from his farm. The road is a mere foot path, and all the fields and pastures on each side of it are without fences. What an amount of labor, skill and patient perseverance it must take to drive that living sacrifice of his to the altar! All the long way the animal acts just like an animal. Here it sees a little fresh grass, and of course must taste its sweetness; there, down in a hollow five furlongs distant, it sees a pool of water glittering in the warm sunshine, and away it scampers for a drink; yonder, grazing upon a rising hillside are some of its natural kindred, and off it runs to enjoy congenial fellowship. “Nothing for it,” says the driver, “but a halter,” so round the animal’s neck he fastens a rope and pushes on to the city of the Great King. But even with the halter in his grip the journey is a crooked and toilsome one; he has to coax and admonish, to check and restrain his self-willed animal companion all the way, both through the fields of the open country and through the streets of the city. At last, after weary hours of zig-zag tramping, see the Jew near the altar and wiping the sweat from his face as he delivers his sacrifice to the priest.

Now, that pious Jew, driving his ignorant, wayward and unwilling animal sacrifice to the temple, is your example and mine in presenting our animal nature—our body—our corporeal faculties and strength to the Lord. Mark, it is “a living sacrifice,” and that is just where the difficulty and toil lies. Were it only dead we could shoulder our burden and carry it in peace, but it is “living,” with propensities and passions altogether out of sympathy with our spiritual desires, aims and objects. The religious labor of the devout Jew extended over perhaps six or eight hours of the day on which he offered his sacrifice. After getting to the temple in Jerusalem his care and toil were ended; he saw his animal sacrifice killed and part of it burned, and then he returned quietly home. But you and I, if we honestly present our Christian sacrifice, have a whole life-time’s work and care in doing so, from this Monday morning on to Monday morning following, from month to month, from year to year, by day and by night we and the animal nature we have to sacrifice are never for one moment separate. Our bodies are a daily sacrifice while they live. The apostle’s injunction could not be expressed in plainer terms than these, “Present your bodies a living sacrifice to God.” Certainly this means self-denial and incessant work.

IV. By what process is this living sacrifice to be made? By the Levitical knife and fire? No, but by holiness; for only thus can our sacrifice be “acceptable to God”—by practical holiness.

“Holy” means separate—separate from a common and worldly to a sacred use. In what sense was the gold of the Jewish Temple holy? In what sense was the metal of which the golden candlestick was composed holy? It certainly was not intrinsically and essentially, spiritually and morally more holy than any other gold. The only sense in which it was holy was its separation to the service of God. This is the sense of the adjective, “holy,” when we apply it to that volume we call the Bible. The Bible is the one book that stands separate from all human literature as the Word of God. It stands alone—separate—holy, that is “wholly” the Lord’s. That this is the idea of the apostle here is abundantly confirmed by this exhortation in his letter to the Christians of Corinth, “Come out from among them (from among all sinners and worldlings) and be ye separate, saith the Lord; and touch not the unclean thing.”

This idea is reiterated in these words of the second verse of this twelfth chapter, “And be not conformed to the world.” Christians are non-conformists and separatists; not in the narrow and sectarian historical sense of these terms, but in the moral and practical sense. Spiritual separation and non-conformity are the transformation of the relations, the motives and the conduct. “Be not conformed to the world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Non-conformity means transformatory.

Constituted as we are; related as we are to the people and the business of this material world, does not this apostolic exhortation about self-sacrifice appear very severe and extreme? No, answers our apostle. It is reasonable,—“your reasonable service.” Yes, indeed. Most reasonable it is when we look at the sacrifice made by the Son of God to redeem us. Jesus Christ consecrated body and soul in sacrifice for us. “He poured out His soul unto death.” “Who Himself bear our sins in His own body on the tree.” If Jesus Christ’s total personality bought us, our total personality is His. His sacrifice for us makes our sacrifice to Him only reasonable.

If the Baptist denomination emphasize any doctrine it is the doctrine of this text, for when we make public profession of our faith in Christ what does the ordinance plainly teach? How much of us is the Lord’s? Just as much as the baptismal waters cover. Spirit, soul and body, the believer is totally immersed; from the crown of his head to the very nails on his fingers and toes, the whole personality is solemnly consecrated to the Lord—“a living sacrifice.”

Dear brethren of the Baptist churches may I beg your very serious consideration of this practical subject.

J. DENOVAN.

A Year in North Carolina.

The People and Schools.

BY REV. JOHN LEWIS.

IN THE SCHOOLS. (CONTINUED.)

The race question confronts us again in connection with the school committees. At present there is only one committee in each district for the schools of the two races. Where the negroes are numerous they have often appointed men of their own race. Sometimes these are qualified but far oftener they are not. All goes well until the colored committee man claims his rights and exercises his authority in connection with the white school and teacher. If he insists on inspecting the white school and stands as the equal or superior of the white teacher there is trouble. The Superintendent has recommended to the legislature that separate school committees be appointed in each district. If the colored people want to elect white men all well, but no colored man will be allowed to inspect or manage a school for white children. The following incident, of which much was made during the recent political campaign, will show the condition of affairs and make clear, I think, that as long as the feelings of the races remain as they are today, there can be no solution of the race problem except through government by white men alone, dual government from top to bottom, or deportation of the negro. In Raleigh there is a State institution for the deaf and dumb, and blind. It has two departments. The buildings are in different parts of the city. There is but one board of trustees or directors and one principal. Under this principal the school has flourished. He was once secretary of the Baptist State Convention and Sunday School missionary and the name of Bro. John E. Ray is revered by our people everywhere. The board of trustees is composed of seven men appointed by the governor of the State. All went well till the Republicans and Populists, by fusing, got hold of the government. The Republican governor appointed a mulatto named James H. Young, but popularly known as “Jim Young,” as one of the seven trustees. He is the son of a white politician, is a graduate of Shaw University, a member of the legislature, an editor, a colonel of a regiment of colored volunteers, and Superintendent of the largest Baptist colored Sunday School in the State—a school which spends more money on Sunday School literature than any other school, white or colored in the State. Whatever about his character—and nothing wrong has been proved so far as I know—it is conceded that he has considerable ability as well as influence. Bro. Ray said that he had always conducted himself as a gentleman towards him and that he was sorry to see him resign to take charge of the volunteers, an impolite and offensive negro should be appointed in his place. It is probable that Young was appointed for the special purpose of looking after the interests of the negro department, but he had the same authority, privileges and responsibilities as anyone of the other six, and no more. He was appointed to inspect the condition of the institution. If he had simply inspected the colored department it is likely that very little, if any, fault would be found, but he inspected the white department as well as the colored. His name also appears on a marble slab on the corner of one of the buildings with the names of the principal and the other trustees, of course, as trustee he was in a sense placed in authority over the white employees, teachers and principal of the institution. It made no difference that there were six white trustees, some of them possibly less competent than Young, and that these white trustees inspected the colored department. But there was a hue and cry from one end of the State to the other, because this one colored trustee was made equal with the six, had his name placed with theirs on the slab, had the audacity to inspect the white department and be in authority over white teachers and principal. It was not a question of culture and competency, but of color and race.

That six white trustees should inspect the colored department and be over colored teachers was all right, but that one colored trustee should dare to inspect the white department and be over white teachers was all wrong. Even the Biblical Recorder said “If there must be a negro to look after the institution for negroes let there be two boards, but there exists no necessity.” Had When, however, it is considered that the bulk of the taxes for the support of that school, as well as for every other State school, is paid by the white tax payers, it is not so unreasonable that they should want the full control of it. And when it is borne in mind how many more negroes than white men there are who are utterly unfit to be trustees of such an institution the unfairness does not appear quite as much as at first. Then it must be borne in mind that capacity, ability, merit and fitness have very little to do with the making of such appointments. Under the spoils system, which is well-nigh universal here—and one must live here to realize what it means—“the pull” has a great deal more to do with the appointments than either principle or push. The Biblical Recorder says again:

“The people of North Carolina had better give the negroes once for all to understand that, though politicians

may cater to the keep to its place welfare of the S inferior to the necessity of putt both white and negro, the usuel infinitely better boards and whit but the demago to harangue “recognition, moment caring for the State or

Whether the blacks would b it is not likely t be. It is in the his authority, S and in some se numbers of his he is going to schools and wi For my own remain safe. I been the best education and of ingratitude aught I know people who ar with their own for his educati that education fit to occupy.

A great man of the negro as they may not Is it expedient from a debtor negro get mor out of politics ing his vote w inclined to thi my doubts hav let politics slo highest intere difficult questi or no, accordi ern white ma fairly treated, and the point well, he woul only as a serv If education s become a riv why should I school educat why waste education for why waste m the negro? State deman on the elem on the educa of the taxes? But whether people wiled and has held The fact that changed mal to get out of

I think t schools and negro estab are not in th Christians, something whether the white men exceptions, negroes? I sixty years keep them the prompt that negro are no long believe th politics bel beyond a d able progr odds again but they b become a s professions the opport will be har that those with negro entitled to

If I mist in the Nor never mak that a Sou fight any