

## The Christian.

ST. JOHN, N. B., . . . . . JUNE, 1888

## EDITORIAL.

## REPENTANCE.

But now He commands all men everywhere to repent. —Acts xvii, 30.

The ignorance of the past at which God winked was gross indeed. That men who acknowledged God to be their Creator would think that men could in return make God out of silver and gold, or stone, seems almost too much to believe, did we not witness the consummate folly of men even in this age of light and liberty. Men proverbial for their scholarship and research labor with inflexible determination to prove the doctrine of *evolution* or *derivation*. The Bible declares man's origin and exalted destiny so plainly that even children can understand it, and man's constant progression in light and knowledge corroborates Bible history and points him out as destined for eternal companionship with his Maker, while the history of the most sagacious of inferior animals shows no progression from their creation. Notwithstanding this, men in their efforts to refute the testimony of the Bible, determinately try to find for man another origin as if it were the very acme of intellectual greatness to prove themselves the honored sons of such sires as the baboon or the monkey, and to share with them the same destination.

Let us not therefore be astonished at the ignorance of past ages, but remember that while God winked at that ignorance He now commands all men everywhere to repent, and those who despise this command will be reckoned with in the day of judgment.

In a former paper repentance was shown to be an inward work of the heart—a purpose or determination to turn from sin to the service of God. While *faith* and *repentance* are operations of the mind there is a plain distinction between them. Faith is a heartfelt conviction that the gospel is true—that it is really true that Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose again the third day, etc., etc., and a confidence that He is waiting to save every one who will accept of salvation on His terms. Repentance is a determination of the heart to turn from sin and accept of that salvation on Jesus' terms. God's goodness leads to that determination. It would never lead the sinner to this determination until he believed in His goodness; hence, the absurdity of a man repenting before he believes the gospel which reveals God's goodness through His dear Son. The sinner must believe that he is lost and also that Jesus died to save him before he will purpose in his heart to turn from sin to the Lord. When he has thus resolved, and on Jesus' terms accepts of the great salvation, he *knows* whom he has believed, and being justified by faith he has peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. He not only believes that Jesus died for him, but believes that Jesus has saved him according to His promise. The latter belief he has after he repents and is baptized. Mark xvi, 16, and Acts ii, 38. But he must believe the gospel before he repents.

We may here contrast repentance unto salvation with what is called "death-bed repentance." A dying man cannot say, I am determined in God's strength to lead a new life, because his life is spent already. He may wish he had spent it differently, but that is of no avail. He may wish he had some of life yet to spend and promise to spend it differently, but both his wish and promise are useless, he must die; such is death-bed repentance. If we ask, What troubles the man? Is it because he has grieved the loving spirit of God? No, not that! It is the fear of punishment. He dreads to meet an angry God. Like Balaam, he wants to die the

death of the righteous although he was unwilling to live the life of the righteous. Sometimes he is persuaded that he has found mercy, but as a general rule those whose lives have been unexpectedly spared have showed the spuriousness of such repentance. It was the fear of hell and not the goodness of God which led to it.

A young man with life before him believes with all his heart that Jesus the Son of God died for his sins, that God so loved him as thus to give His only begotten Son for him. While thinking of his sins and the dying love of Jesus and God commanding him to repent, he finds himself on the broad road, its sinful pleasures and vast multitudes pressing him to remain and share its attractions. But he believes that Jesus died to save him from that road and its certain destruction, and now pleads with him to turn and follow Him in the narrow path. Two courses are before him, one of sinful pleasure another of self-denial and reproach. He must now make his choice. He determines to forsake the road to death, leave its deceitful attractions and follow his dear Saviour. Whatever of his life remains he resolves to devote to the service of God, regretting that so much of it has been spent against Him. There is something noble in this purpose of heart, God is pleased with it and angels rejoice over him.

Whatever a merciful God will in some cases do for those who cry for mercy at their death He keeps among His secret counsels. But the man who in life and health believes and obeys Him can rejoice in His proclaimed promises.

Let all men attend to this solemn command of God. He does not say it would be well for men to repent, or merely that it is their duty to do so, but he commands all men everywhere to repent, and those who will not repent are standing in defiance all the authority of the eternal God who has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He had raised Him from the dead.

## Original Contributions.

## THE TRIAL OF SIN.

[The following article is from the pen of a pupil in New Glasgow school, now in his 17th year, and the first year of his Christian life. We would say to our young brother, continue to study and to write.—Ed.]

Adam and Eve, as you all know, were our first parents. They were placed in the garden of Eden there to lead a happy life protected by their God. Was this the result? We answer in the negative. What reluctant scenes rise before our minds as we look far back at our mother in her weakness allowing Satan to persuade her in her ill-fated direction harkening to the words that charmed her young mind. Alas! the fate of man. Death and all its woes came henceforth upon him. We may see back in gloomy imagination the pale horse and rider. Death come tramping into that forsaken garden and those heart-stricken parents led in solemn procession into the wide world outside, henceforth to work and henceforth to die. Soon we find men multiplying on the earth, so also we find sin in its deepest dye. This we prove from the fall.

When the waters dashed their white foam against the sides of mighty mountains and cries of despair rent the topmost clouds, but by sacred blessedness eight souls were saved.

Again we find man filling the earth with sin, but the Lord proclaiming that it should no more be overwhelmed with the waters of the deep.

Many nations rose and fell, and often was the name of the Lord enshrouded in darkness. What

was the destiny of Sodom and Gomorrah, whose streets witnessed fearful scenes of riot and iniquity? They were struck by God's flaming sword and buried forever. That great and famed Babylon, the brightest of eastern cities, was trampled and crushed to the dust by the craftiness of a mighty monarch. Thus the Lord, over invincible, prevailed over this wicked people.

We shall draw a veil over the scenes from this time until the angelic hosts heralded the glad tidings to the shepherds quietly overlooking their flocks by night. What was the news? The news of a Lord sent from the celestial city to die on a Roman cross. How do we find man in this age? We find him crying for human innocent blood. We see him sending the bright spirit of Stephen to his Lord.

Another veil covers space, but it is a veil of darkness concealing under its shadow the time of the "dark ages." The darkest hour is before the dawn, and truly it was dark when Martin Luther first raised his voice against the doctrines of the Romish church. Christianity slowly spread its balmy wings over the then dark continent of Europe. England took up the joyful sound as John Knox sent his powerful voice like an electric shock over the land. But sin convulsed the island and the word was again biting the dust. Here England's dark scenes present themselves. The awful groans of despair went up disapprovingly before God. It was during those black stirring times that the venerable men, Crammer, Ridley and Latimer, lifted their voices to heaven amidst the fiery flames of reproach. If ever a man deserved a starry crown it is a faithful martyr as each of these men showed themselves to be. But these scenes came to an end—they could not stand. Civilization was gaining ground on the dark ball, and thank God man can now worship the Lord according as he understands His will. But man is still sinful. Great efforts are being made to send the gospel into the dark places of the earth. But we still find that out of a population of 1,434,000,000, scarcely 400,000,000 are God-fearing men. What a triumphal march the monster sin has had through the ages! Is it possible for God to look on such a state of affairs? Something must be done. Some one must seek out and find the lost and ruined children of Adam. Let us think of the darkness of Africans, Indians, Chinese and Japanese worshipping the works of their own hands. How many great men might rise out of the now dark continent of Africa. Are we to allow them to go on in their present state without our sympathy or support? At the present time little African boys are learning the rules of civilization and are destined to achieve future honor.

I shall stop here and call your attention to what is passing in our own country, even in this little enlightened and highly favored isle of the sea. Our court of justice has been crowded by spectators hearing the trial and the sentence of death passed upon one of our farmer's sons. Even that was slight compared with the ordeal that has since passed over this crestfallen boy. He has thus terribly passed into eternity while yet in his teens. Let it be a solemn warning to all the youth of this Dominion. Not four years ago he sat like ourselves in a schoolroom to receive lessons, which were to fit him for a useful and honorable life. But his life came to a sudden close on that dreadful scaffold. Like many another jolly fellow death was kept far in the distance, and between it and him was the motto, "Pleasure in youth." It led his soul into an early eternity without any deeds of goodness done on earth. We may feel above taking a father's advice or a mother's warning, but sooner or later they will rankle in our hearts. The home fireside with its looks and cheerful company we should value highly in the long winter evenings.

Schoolmates, do not waste your fleeting moments in idle dalliance around street corners or in any unfit place. Think of the words of Hillhouse: