

Provincial Wesleyan.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 1863.

In consequence of the official relation which this paper sustains to the Conference of Eastern British Churches, we require that Officers and Clergymen should be addressed to us from any of the Circuits within the bounds of the Conference...

"The Missing Link."

We have lately been reading a small volume bearing the above title. Though quite romantic, it is by no means a romance. Without the "plot," or any other of the attractions of even a religious novel, it is interesting as well as instructive, and thrilling as well as true.

The scenes which it depicts have been witnessed in London—that city of wealth and centre of Christian influence—yet for darkness and misery they could scarcely be surpassed in the land of heathenism. But as Paganism and its abominations have often been overcome by the grace of the Gospel, so have these cases been reached, and at last partially remedied by the same agency.

So mutual are the relations of the various orders of British society; so closely allied to each other are they by the principle of inter-dependence, that the simile of a chain is no far-fetched illustration of their corporate state. But, unhappily, the strain of commerce, in its modern and accelerated movements, and especially in times of depression, has a tendency to break of some of the weaker links; whose isolation from the respectable part of the community becomes therefore almost inevitable.

It is stated that—not only in the metropolis, but also in many of the provincial towns of Great Britain—while two-thirds of the population are rising towards affluence, and one-sixth has attained it, so, in like manner, two-thirds are descending towards poverty, and one-sixth has reached the lowest level, and is all but hopelessly sunk in wretchedness and vice.

The abodes—for homes they can scarcely be called—of these outcasts, for dirt and discomfort, beggar description. They are found in the alleys and lanes which represent the architecture of a former age—tolerable enough, when each house was but the residence of one family, and green fields or stately forests were on every side; but now, pent up in the heart of the city, every room a sepulchre, without ventilation, ill-supplied with water, seldom visited by the direct rays of the sun, these localities become the hot-beds of pestilence, morally and physically.

The inhabitants of these places eke out a miserable existence by the most menial services, or make a shift to live by peddling vegetables and fruit, or by pilfering and picking up an opportunity may arise. Truth, and hope, and courage, are either altogether unknown to them, or considered as qualities that were, but are not. They sometimes feast, but often famish. They know what is meant by bread, or cheese, by ale or gin, but they have no idea of a regular meal. Many of them never sleep in a bed. At night the rooms are stuffily over-crowded, and the stink of the gutter rises from the newly born, or the dying, or the dead—and sometimes for all together—to be found among sometimes groups of the living, who sleep huddled up on the bare floor. It is to be wondered at, then, that these denizens of the most christian city in Europe, should in the great majority of cases pass into eternity as ignorant of God and of Christ as the African Bushman, or the native Australian.

But public sympathy has at length been roused with reference to these city Arabs. Home Missions have been established, and are now operating most beneficially. Ragged Schools and Juvenile Reformatories have been originated for the children, and Mothers' Associations have been commenced with good effect. It was felt, however, that the lowest and the worst could scarcely be reached by any of these means. The visits of devoted ministers and self-denying philanthropists were often unsuccessful. The people were so poor that they were ashamed to be seen—they were always "out." Drunken husbands were afraid of their wives waiting while in conversing with the pious; and slovenly women could not understand why the ladies should intrude upon their society, if they were unwilling to lend them money.

Providence has raised up an agency to meet this peculiar necessity. And this, as it has seized upon the lowest grade of the community, and has been instrumental to a very considerable extent in restoring it to an honourable position, has well been named "The Missing Link."

from the prophetic seal of Divine truth; and while the amazing events of modern times demonstrate the reign of Divine providence, from these dens and rookeries of London come forth the most glorious displays of the efficacy of the Gospel of Christ.

The little work which contains this narrative is worthy of a large circulation. It should occupy a place among those elaborate volumes which treat of the education of Christians. Parents should put it in the hands of their children. It may make them more contented with their lot in life, and more grateful for the blessings which they enjoy. Let the young disciple ponder its instructions, and learn how much has yet to be done for a perishing world, how near and numerous the degraded are, and how easily the smallest talent may be turned to good account.

For the Provincial Wesleyan. Christian Circumcision. As the first day of the week is the Christian Sabbath in the stead of the seventh; and as the Lord's Supper is the Christian Passover in the stead of the Jewish Passover; so Baptism is the Christian circumcision in the stead of the Abrahamic circumcision. The Lord's day commemorates the Lord's resurrection, and is the pledge of our own, and the emblem of a spiritual resurrection; the Lord's Supper commemorates "the Lord's death till he come," and is the emblem of the death of sin and the life of faith in Christ; and the Lord's Baptism commemorates the baptism of the Father—the baptism of the Holy Spirit poured out on the day of Pentecost when the Christian Dispensation was fully opened, and is the emblem of Spiritual Baptism. That Baptism is Christian circumcision appears to me indisputable from the following texts: "And ye (Christians) are complete in Him (Christ) which is the head of all principality and power. In whom also ye are circumcised in the circumcision made without hands in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism or baptized into his death."

From this text we infer 1st. To be baptized is to be circumcised with the circumcision of Christ. 2d. If spiritual Baptism is the circumcision of Christ, without hands; literal Baptism must be literal Christian circumcision, with hands. 3d. Baptism is the completion of circumcision, "and ye are complete in Him in whom also ye are circumcised." Second text. "For ye are all the children of God by faith, for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have been put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus: And if ye are Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise."

We infer 1st. That the promise of covenant made with Abraham is still in force, and is the Christian covenant of grace. 2d. That Christians are heirs of the same promise with Abraham, the father of many nations. 3d. That Abraham's Christian seed are not circumcised as he was, into Christ, but baptized into Christ. 4th. That the female heirs of promise were exempted from circumcision, are now baptized, "for there is neither male nor female, but all are one in Christ. 5th. That Christians are Abraham's seed, and heirs of the promise in Christ Jesus as Abraham was. Third text: St. Paul calls Christians "the circumcision who rejoice in Christ Jesus," and "the Israel of God." These Scriptures I think prove that by Baptism in Christ's name, and that the Christians are the seed of Abraham, the father of many nations. We will continue until we shall be called to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Heavenly Canaan.

There is a similitude between circumcision and baptism, not in the element, but in their import both literally and spiritually! Dr. Watts views them as such:— Thus said the mercy of the Lord, To Abraham and his seed, To fill his house with children, and they shall be a seed to me.

Abraham believed the promise true, And gave his sons to God; But not so said his covenant now That one was sealed with blood. Thus Lydia sanctified her house, When she received the word; This she believing taught her girls, Her household to adore.

Thus later saints, eternal King, The ancient truths embrace, And thus they teach their babes, To have their hearts to grace.

This view appears correct from the following comparison between C. and B. meaning circumcision and baptism. C. was instituted at the organization of the church with Abraham and his seed. B. was instituted at the re-organization of the same church—say the same church, because "and" tells us that Christians are grafted into the same Olive Tree that Abraham and his seed had been from the beginning; and that the broken off branches, when they believe, shall be grafted into their original Olive Tree, from which they were cut off. C. was to Abraham a gospel ordinance. "For the gospel was preached before unto Abraham and he believed God and it was counted in him for righteousness, and he received circumcision the sign and seal of the righteousness of faith which he had. B. is to adults a gospel ordinance also, a sign and seal of their faith in Christ, the seed of Abraham, in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed. "If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest be baptized, and the Eucharist said "I believe that Jesus is the Son of God." At the re-organization of the Christian church, Peter enjoined upon the enquirers after salvation, baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus for the remission of sins, for the promise is unto you and to your children and to all who are afar off." The righteousness of faith is justification or the remission of sin by faith—the self-same blessing of Abraham—the sign and the seals only differing. And when the Samaritans believed Philip's preaching they were baptized men and women. C. to infants was a sign of original sin in them, inherited from Adam, which was to be cut off by the circumcision of Christ, and signified, that as they were born in sin, they must be born again to become Israel's spiritual seed and heirs according to the promise. "Ye uncircumcised in heart and ears." "I will circumcise thy heart and thou shalt love the Lord." B. to infants is a sign that we are born in sin, being born of the flesh, and that we must be born again of the spirit—regenerated by the washing of regeneration and re-awakening of the Holy Ghost shed upon us. C. as a sign assured them that all adults believing in Abraham had, should be saved; and that their children also were included in the promise of the covenant before faith, which nevertheless required faith at a proper age, in order to salvation; for Isaac and Jacob, who were circumcised in infancy had not afterwards believed, they could not have been saved. B. assures all adults, that upon believing, they become Christ's and so

Abraham's seed, or that he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned, and also that "the promise is unto you and to your children," as it was to Abraham and his children.

C. here was but one circumcision—"outward in the flesh, one inward in the spirit—"For he is not a Jew which is outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." B. there is but one baptism—"one with water and one with the spirit." As Paul said of the Jew, that he was not truly circumcised if his circumcision was only outward—so he would say of the Christian, that he was not truly baptized if his baptism was only outward. For water baptism is only the sign of the true baptism. "I indeed baptize you with water but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." C. in the flesh was not a saving ordinance "circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything, but a new creature." B. in the water is not a saving ordinance—"Jesus said to Peter—if I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." "Simon believed and was baptized," and yet was, "in the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity." Paul thanked God that he baptized so few, but he never thanked God that he had saved so few, for he said "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel;" and "to turn men from darkness to light." C. was not performed upon the children of Israel in the wilderness in their infancy, but was on account of their unsettled state deferred until adult age, but it was never repeated. B. is often deferred to adult age, by some from want of opportunity, by others from opposition to Infant baptism, but it was never repeated by the apostles. C. When circumcision was first instituted, Abraham and his adults were the first subjects; afterwards the infants Isaac and Jacob: the first after faith; the second before faith. Yet God declares himself to be the God not only of Abraham but also of Isaac and of Jacob and of his people; and all Three are now in heaven. B. When baptism was first instituted, adults were the first subjects; afterwards households; the first upon believing, the others upon the faith of their parents and before their own faith. When Lydia believed "and she was baptized and her household" "and the jailer believed and he was baptized and all his strategy" and many of the Martyrs and Reformers were baptized in infancy before faith, and afterwards believed; and is not God their God also, as he was of Isaac and Jacob who were circumcised before faith, and are they not sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Church above? Yes, and many like John the Baptist and the thief on the cross, who were never baptized are among the saved in heaven, because they had Abraham's faith, and thousands of children unbaptized are in heaven crying Hosanna to the Son of David and salvation to the Lamb. C. did not alter the relation of children to the church and to the covenant of grace, but confirmed it. B. does not alter the covenant, but confirms it also. "Be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus every one of you for the promise (is not dismantled but it) is unto you and to your children." "Else were your children unclean but now they are holy." Go disciple all nations, baptizing them, &c., &c. All nations cannot be baptized nor disciples, if children are excluded; for there is no nation without children; and consequently the church on earth can never encompass a nation or a kingdom or households containing children. C. The uncircumcised were denominated unclean until they were circumcised, then they were no longer "unclean" or "holy." When a stranger, and a proselyte, or the Lord let all his males be circumcised." Cornelius was counted unclean by Peter because he was not of the Jews but of another nation, Jewish speaking of the Holy civ, the church tells us, "that there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean"—and the circumcised Jews when they touched anything unclean were made unclean, and not until they were sprinkled and washed were they clean or holy—see Numbers xix. B. Paul declares the children of believing church members received the same denotation as their believing parents, "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by her husband; else were your children unclean (or not out) the church as the unclean heathen but with out are they holy" (or within the church as their believing parents) and as Moses and the Prophets in addressing the Jewish church, included the children with their parents and denominated them together "holy" "my people" "my flock," &c. So the apostle in writing to the churches includes the children with their parents—and denominated them "holy" in the same sense as the circumcised Jewish and Gentile children were, not really but relatively holy, to be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; that they might become believers and really holy. C. There was no ordinance apparently that disturbed the christian church so much as circumcision; and even the christened Jews taught that "unless the Gentiles were circumcised they could not be saved." B. Baptism has certainly greatly disturbed the church and some have gone so far as to teach that unless we are baptized we cannot be saved. If we have proved that baptism is christian circumcision, and instituted in the stead of old circumcision; and that circumcision and baptism are similar in import; then believers and their children are proper subjects of baptism as they were of circumcision. We conclude with the following remarks in the initiatory visible ordinance of christianity we see a pledge and affirmation of the salvation of children, independent of the emblematical rite. It was always, it is invariably a fact—that service intimates the fact and the manner of it, all dying at that age are blessed, all dying at that period are cleansed for that blessedness. Christianity in this beautiful institute, meets them with assurance of its grace on the threshold of life, and with the assurance of its glory on the threshold of eternity. A rite may be significant of it, may give certitude to it, but cannot operate to help the effect. We are satisfied that this arrangement depends upon the mediatorial system: we suspend it upon the mediator. Our children are members of the christian church in the same sense as they are citizens of an earthly city. In this there is a membership yet not to the same extent of the membership of adults. They cannot hold offices, are not responsible for the maintenance of the laws, though protection is secured to them. It is expected that numbers of them will die early; some by juvenile wickedness will unfit themselves for promotion while adults who most good characters will fall in due time the place of their fathers—"that instead of the fathers there may be their children." The circumcised, as the baptized, must at a suitable age exercise faith, or forfeit their inheritance. Isaac, though a child of promise, could not have come into possession of the implied blessing, had he not had faith. The religion of the first economy was as spiritual in its nature and holy in its requirements as is that of the second. Piety was as pure in the Patriarchs as in the Apostles, in David, as in John. Monday, March 5. J. V. J.

Duty, Ministers and Money.

This is called an age of progress, and in many respects the designation is correct, in others it is not applicable. We must make rapid advances in many particulars concerning our duty to God and one another, or we shall keep as we too long have done, far in the rear of the Old Testament dispensation. What! Christians of the nineteenth century, not so far advanced as the Jews 1800 years ago? Do you mean to imitate the Pharisees possessed a righteousness superior to that of many Christians. Precisely so.

In two particulars they evidently exceeded us, viz. Attendance on the means of grace, and giving to the cause of God. "I give gifts of all I possess," said one, and doubtless he spoke the truth. Now how many among us can make such a declaration? Do we give one tenth, or one twentieth of what we possess? But did not our Lord reprove the Pharisees, and all their hypocrisies? Yes, but not on account of giving tithes, but because they neglected "the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith." These, said the Saviour, "ye ought to have done, and not to leave the other unto." The subject of *judgment and mercy*, and *giving to the cause of God*, "I give gifts of all I possess," said one, and doubtless he spoke the truth. Now how many among us can make such a declaration? Do we give one tenth, or one twentieth of what we possess? But did not our Lord reprove the Pharisees, and all their hypocrisies? 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