

DIALOGUE

BETWEEN PAUL THE APOSTLE AND FATHER ABRAHAM.

P. I rejoice to call you "Father Abraham" after the flesh and more especially after the Spirit, and having read and written and preached so much of thee, I would like very much to converse with thee concerning these things, particularly for the benefit of others.

A. And I rejoice to call you my son after the flesh, but especially my son, in the one common salvation, and in the one common faith, by which that salvation is made both yours and mine.

P. Are we not to consider thee as especially raised up, to preserve—to show forth and to transmit the two grand fundamental truths of our most holy religion—viz., the sacrificial death of the Lamb of God for the salvation of the world, and of faith in Him as its only condition, producing a righteous and holy life before God and man.

A. These fundamental truths were held in tact by righteous Abel, Enoch, and Noah before the flood; and after the flood were by Noah transmitted to his posterity, save in a few families, such as Melchizedec and others, they were greatly corrupted by the superstitions and vain traditions of men, and were in danger of becoming obliterated; and it pleased God to reveal himself to me, and to renew the promise of a Saviour believed in by the Patriarchs before me, who should be born of my seed through Isaac, "in whom all the families and nations of the world should be blessed," and it was at this time, that "I believed God and it was imputed to me for righteousness," or in other words I was "justified by faith" as you have termed it.

P. And being made partakers of this precious faith, you were anxious that all in your household should be made partakers also?

A. Yes, "I commanded my children and household after me, to do justice and judgment, that God might bring upon me, that which he had promised, viz., to bless others, as he had blessed me with salvation through faith."

P. And thus your household may be considered as the first properly organized visible Patriarchal church?

A. And a type of the church of God in all time to come; and years afterward, when circumcision was introduced, they all submitted to that rite with myself as their head.

P. Did not God also promise thee temporal blessings?

A. God promised me a numerous seed through Isaac though not yet born; and the land of Canaan for an inheritance to them; but God, blessed be his glorious name, promised me a numerous spiritual seed through Christ, of whom my beloved son Isaac was a type; and a better country, even a heavenly one, of which the earthly one, was but an imperfect type; and it was when this spiritual seed was promised, that God called my name Abraham, saying "a father of many nations have I made thee, for in thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," and also "I will be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee."

P. Thou was then made a federal head?

A. To all believers and their seed, the same God who covenanted to bless me and mine, promised to bless them and theirs also.

P. And when so blessed, they are said to "be blessed with faithful Abraham who is the father of us all who believe whether Jews or Gentiles."

A. Verily so, for the covenant was "the gospel preached before unto me, and is an everlasting covenant."

P. Was thou not made also a pattern of all believers?

A. My son Ishmael by Hagar the bond woman, and my son Isaac by Sarah the free woman, were types—the son of the bond woman, who was cast out, was a type of all those who are born after the flesh, and who seek to be saved by the works of the Law; and therefore are condemned by that Law, which in vain they seek to obey, and must in the end be cast out; while the son of the free woman, is a type of those, who are born of the free spirit, and are children and heirs of the promise of eternal inheritance; and as regards myself as the pattern of believers, it is my faith which is imputed to me for righteousness and obedience which that faith produced in me before God and man, whenever I sojourned, that is to be imitated by all men, in order to the obtaining of the covenant promise: as I believed they are to believe, as I walk they must walk, and being faithful, they shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God, and all others be cast out.

P. Then the Mosaic Covenant made at Sinai did not affect the covenant made with that 30 years before?

A. That "which comes by Moses" could not and did not make void the covenant made with me, and all believers

unto the end of the world, for that covenant guaranteed to us "grace and truth by Jesus Christ."

P. Wherein then serveth the Law?

A. It was added because of transgression, and served as a schoolmaster, to bring them to Christ, that they might be justified by faith only, and not by the works of the Law, for by the Law is the knowledge of sin and not of salvation.

P. Then the Moral Law showed them their sins and need of a Saviour—the ceremonial with its sacrifices and divers baptisms, showed forth, the sacrificial and all atoning Lamb of God; and the Washing of Regenerating and Renewing of the Holy Ghost?

A. And "when times of the Reformation" came by Jesus Christ, the true Lamb of God dying for our sins, all that was typical and temporary in the Mosaic covenant, was done away, "for by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

P. Then, Christ came to fulfil and to confirm the Covenant made with thee?

A. He came to fulfil the promise made unto our Fathers, the oath which he swore unto Abraham, that we might be saved and serve God in righteousness and holiness and righteousness all our days. He came as a minister to confirm the promise unto the Fathers; and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy; that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles also, that they might be justified by faith, and—

P. So become the children of faithful Abraham, who is the Father of us all. Let me ask you Father Abraham what are we to understand by "the New Covenant which God promised to make with the house of Israel after those days."

A. It is called a new covenant, as contrary to the "covenant of works" made with Adam in Paradise; the terms of which were "Do this and thou shalt live," and as contrary especially to the Mosaic command made with Israel at Sinai; the conditions of which were "The man that doest these things shall live by them." This promised new covenant is as old as the fall, and is contained in the words spoken to Adam immediately upon his fall, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," or, "That the Son of God should be manifested to destroy the works of the devil;" and Abraham, Enoch, and Noah believed in the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and their faith was imputed to them for righteousness; and when their God and Saviour preached the same gospel unto me, I believed also and became fellow heirs with them of the righteousness of faith. And in the above promise to the house of Israel, God promises the same blessing to them also, by taking away their sins, and to write the law upon their hearts and minds, which he wrote upon the tables of stone; and it is called new also, because it must of necessity be new, when we first experience salvation, and it will always be new, because of the immeasurable love contained therein. Now, both in time and in eternity, the terms of the new covenant are the same as from the beginning, viz., believe and be saved; so that it is the old, old story, and yet the ever new, new story "of Jesus and His love."

P. Praise the Lord for this new covenant of redeeming love, may I still go on and preach it till I die, viz., salvation through the blood of the Lamb, by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

A. And in heaven, all kindreds of the earth, circumcised and uncircumcised, baptized and unbaptized, believers and non-believers, as little children, shall all sing the new song forever?

P. It was some years after you believed that you were circumcised. Can you tell me why you were circumcised?

A. Be assured of this, my son, that circumcision was by no means a condition of salvation, otherwise I could never have been justified without it; but God himself justified me, or constituted me righteous, by faith only, years before I was circumcised.

P. I ask again—Why then were you circumcised?

A. You, yourself, hast given the answer, in your Epistle to the Romans:—"He (Abraham) received circumcision as a sign and seal of the righteousness of faith, which he had, yet being uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all, whether circumcised or uncircumcised, that believed." So that in the justification of a sinner before God, no rites or ceremonies, no works done before, or done after, justification, can possibly justify the penitent sinner, but faith only, for by "grace are ye saved through faith, not of works, lest any man should boast."

P. Circumcision was then a gospel sign and seal; and was added to show forth visibly the grand doctrine of justification by faith as its only condition?

A. And also to show forth the circumcision of the heart, and as a seal, to assure us, that all who believed would be both justified and sanctified.

P. Outward and visible signs seem to be necessary not to salvation as also too many believe and teach, but necessary to us, in our state of ignorance and weakness, to remind of spiritual and important truths?

A. Just so, and hence God appointed animal sacrifices to remind us of the true sacrifice for sin;—and Divers Baptisms to remind us of the operations of the Divine Spirit: and the Sabbath, to remind us of the creation of the world in six days, and of its spiritual type, the new creation in Christ Jesus, and of the rest remaining for the people of God; and circumcision in the flesh, to show forth the doctrine of salvation by faith and purity of heart and life.

P. And now instead of animal sacrifices, we have bread and wine in the sacrifice of the Lord's Supper, to show forth the Lord's death till he come; and also our union and communion with Christ and with one another in him. Instead of the 7th day we have the 1st day of the week to remind us of Christ's resurrection, and of our future resurrection from the dead, and our spiritual resurrection; while instead of circumcision, we have baptism, to show forth the promised gift, and operations of the Holy Spirit, and to be a sign and seal of the righteousness of faith, which righteousness secures to us all the blessings flowing therefrom; but when that which is perfect shall come, all these signs shall be done away.

A. Outward and visible signs have changed, but the covenant confirmed before of God with me, and all believers, remains unchanged, and unchangeable, in its blessings, in its subjects, and in its conditions of salvation.

P. Baptism appears to me, to perfect as a sign and seal, what circumcision lacked. Ist. Circumcision signifies the putting away of the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ; baptism signifies the imparting of the Holy Spirit, for the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; while baptism with water is more merciful, more convenient, to all times, places, and peoples; and more charitable, in including the daughters of Zion in its application.

A. But see, my dear son, that you never preach it as a condition of salvation. Keep it as God would have you keep it, a sign and seal, of the gospel of our salvation.

P. I trust I ever shall do so, for when some gloried in being baptized, I thanked God that I had baptized so few, for Christ sent me, not to baptize, but to preach the gospel, and salvation, free, full, and present, by faith in the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A. As many as walk by this rule, peace be unto them and upon the Israel of God. Let me ask you, my son, if your fellow-apostle, James, holds forth the doctrine of justification by works?

P. He does, Father Abraham; and yet he by no means contradicts my doctrine of justification by faith only.

A. How so?

P. Because I refer, to an invisible justification of which none is cognizant, but the believer and God who justifieth, but James, refers to visible justification which took place, "when you offered up your son Isaac upon the altar." It was then, you by your obedience showed forth the faith, which you professed to have: The first was justification by faith, the second was the justification of faith, or faith proved to genuine. Both justifications may be illustrated by a carpenter's compass with its two feet: To form a circle, the two feet must move together; the outer one around the centre one; so with faith and works, both must move together: Justification by faith alone, answers to the centre foot, justification by works, to the outer foot; the first works by the second, or works by love and purifies the heart and life; and by the work of faith, the labor of love and the patience of hope, faith is made perfect, and thus a complete and rounded christian character is formed and made meet for heaven. And now I think I have but one more question to trouble you with, and it is this: why then did you administer circumcision to your infant Isaac before he believed?

A. First, because God commanded it, who promised to be a God not only unto me but also unto my seed; and therefore he was a child of the Covenant; and so also was my grandson Jacob. Second, because while they were unseeing infants they were in a salvage state, and the free gifts came upon them unto justification of life; and dying were saved into heaven; but if living and sinning, they were as all other sinners, to be justified by faith only. Now, both my son and grandson were trained up to believe in the Covenant God and Saviour of all, and when through grace they did believe they were justified, then their precircumcision was to them as it was to me, a sign and seal of the righteousness of faith, which they had not in uncircumcision but in circumcision, and yet, were not required to be circum-

cised; and God, who is the God of Abraham, justified by faith before circumcision, is also the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob justified by faith after circumcision.

P. The same may be said of baptism, for the same God of those who are baptized after faith, is the God of those who are baptized before faith. Both rites are signs and seals of the same Gospel covenant. Circumcising is anti-Mosaic, is 430 years older than Sinai's Covenant of Works. It is, saith Christ, not of Moses, but of the fathers. Baptism as a rite, is circumcision perfected; and as the Abrahamic covenant of grace includes both believers and their seed, and abideth for ever, therefore, of both Gospel rites, both believers and their infant children are proper subjects. And, in conclusion, of both Jews and Christians it may be truly said, "He is not a Jew nor Christian which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision or baptism which is outward. But he is a Jew or Christian who is one inwardly; and circumcision or baptism is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God." And now, Father Abraham, I thank you greatly and bid you farewell.

A. The grace of our Lord Jesus, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with us and with all the Israel of God henceforth and for ever and ever. Amen.

J. V. J.

GLEANINGS FROM HOPEWELL, N.B.

DEAR MR. EDITOR.—Feeling assured that a few lines from this Circuit will not be unwelcome to the readers of your "organ." I shall endeavour to give you a synopsis of the prosperity of "our Zion," in this extensive field of labor. It is with feelings of heartfelt gratitude to Almighty God that we say, we are in a position to report progress. During the year, my superintendent and I have labored together in perfect harmony. While toiling in the Master's Vineyard and pleading for souls, God has smiled upon us blest our efforts, and cheered our hearts, the times of refreshing that we have experienced will be treasured in our minds like remembered melody. In the summer months a revival broke out at Alma, and never have we seen a more general spread of religious feeling than that manifested at the above mentioned time and place. People appeared to be hungering for the wine that maketh glad the heart of man. From the surrounding country they flocked to hear the tidings of a Saviour's love.—on several occasions the church was crowded to excess and scores were unable to gain admittance to the building. As a result of united effort at this place, about forty persons handed in their names for church membership, all of whom have since been received into full connection with our branch of the Christian Church, and most of whom are regularly meeting in class. After spending some five weeks at Alma we proceeded to Point Wolfe where we conducted special meetings for two weeks. This place is now chiefly Methodist ground. The church was revived during the special meetings, and ten persons were convinced of sin, sought salvation through Christ, embraced the doctrines of Christianity and were made to "rejoice in the Lord." These have since connected with us in christian fellowship. We have a neat and beautifully finished church at Point Wolfe. Thanks to the benevolent Mr. McGibbon who came nobly to the front and took the enterprise in hand. True the people aided him to the best of their ability, and are deserving of praise for their generosity. Mr. Stevenson of St. John very kindly provided cushions for the seats at a cost of \$90. The church was formerly dedicated to the Lord in the month of December last. It has seating capacity for one hundred and fifty people, is free from debt with a fund of two hundred dollars with which to fence and improve the grounds in the early spring. We may say just here that our friends at Alma intend holding a new church in that thriving village in the near future—the old edifice being out of repair and too small for the accommodation of the congregation. In the month of January we began special work at Caledonia, a field opened up by us during the present year. The storms interfered with us to some extent, but our efforts were not in vain—God's presence was manifested in our midst and souls were truly converted. A society of eight persons was established there, seven of whom are now members of our church. Leaving this place we proceeded to West River a locality quite unknown to Methodist influence up to the commencement of the present Confederal year. Again God's presence was with us, His Spirit was powerfully felt, and soon the cry was heard "what must we do to be saved?" Sixteen persons experienced a change of heart in these meetings and last Sabbath evening Brother Wilson baptized four with water and received fifteen as members of the

Methodist Church—on which occasion he preached an able and most impressive sermon. We have a good congregation and have planted the nucleus of a church in this place. We purpose starting a Sabbath School both here and at Caledonia in the course of a few weeks. Our congregations are good on all parts of the circuit, and outside the special work, a few have come into fellowship of church through the regular means of grace. In reviewing the work of the year, we feel thankful to God for his goodness to us. While the circuit is very extensive, the exposure great, and the work arduous, yet we are comforted with the promise that they who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and we hope eventually to reap our reward. We pause ere closing, to meditate on the changes of the year, and as we do so our feelings are strangely intermingled with joy and sorrow. Death has been doing its work amongst us—while our ranks have been filling in with new members, the older ones have been "passing away." Many have been carried on the wings of time into the great abyss of eternity. We have followed to the grave, some whose locks were frosted with age, some who were in the hey-day of life, some affluent in the bloom of youth. Ours is the loss; theirs is the gain. Some of these death-bed scenes were solemnly blessed and the words that fell from the lips of the departing ones will ever linger in memories like the golden rays of the setting sun upon the mountains crown. Soon the scepter (so far as this circuit is concerned) will pass from the hands of the present Superintendent, and we will be removed to other fields of labour, and to form other associations. Bro. Wilson has spent two full terms on this circuit and many of the people are greatly endeared to him and his family, and his exit from them will leave a vacancy not soon to be refilled. Whither we are to be sent we know not, but being on the hands of a benevolent brotherhood, as servants of the most High we are trustful. Our ruling passion is to win souls for Christ and to be of service to the church. Bro. Dobson was, by the united voice of the Quarterly Board invited to take charge of this circuit for the ensuing term but as yet has not accepted. Thanking you for the space given me in your valuable paper and praying for the prosperity of Zion, I am Yours in Christ,

S. C. WELLS.

Hopewell, April 18th, 1880.

CHURCH PSALMODY OLD AND NEW.

DEAR SIR.—It was with pleasure that I read the article upon the above subject which lately appeared in your columns. In it you say, "That most of our organists are beginning to understand that singing congregations reflect the highest honor upon their leaders, and that the most damaging compliment a congregation can pay to those in the orchestra is to listen in silent resignation." I fully agree with these remarks, with the exception of the first few words, as I am somewhat doubtful that most of our organists see this matter as they should. The improvement of Church psalmody or congregational singing is a very important matter, worthy of much attention and thought. The plan suggested by your correspondent, "Laycock," re District Choral Unions, would (in choirs) be very beneficial and useful. But as a matter of general practical utility something simpler is wanted that would be more likely at once to meet the urgent and pressing need of our congregations. One great want of Methodism in its different sections nowadays is good, substantial, soul and spirit stirring congregational singing. Any scheme that would bring this about would really be invaluable. The degeneracy in our singing is most marked and widespread. A certain popular preacher, not a Methodist, states that he visited a Methodist chapel where the singing was rendered by a quartet led by an instrument placed on a shelf behind the preacher and not far from the ceiling, while the congregation sang very little or none at all. The grand hymns of Wesley were sung at one time, he says, until one felt like being carried up into heaven, but now they are sung so that ones heart sinks. That these words correctly describe the singing of our people in many places will be admitted, I doubt not, by most of your readers. Our people have allowed the large organs to come in as their substitutes in the matter of praise, whereas they were intended only to lead and to assist, to which instrument they seem to sing a sort of humming accompaniment in a subdued tone, or, as you happily described it, in a "genteel whisper." They must have the instrument above their voices, hence if it (the instrument) plays forte they sing piano; if it plays piano they stop altogether. They are afraid to sing heartily and lustily, "in tones louder than a gentle whisper," because they evidently think such singing partakes somewhat of "vulgarity" and "bad taste." Hence we frequently here such words following genteelly whispered:—

"Well crowd thy High as the hills And earth with Shall fill the praise"

Can people shipping after appears exquisite worshipper of god and learn that to praise Him three to press heart," with understanding

How to improve has been a quiet thought and at for some years Wales. A plan out by most de if adopted on the be the means direction. The what as follows of a circuit are to cultivating congr number of hymns from the Connex Book, and sent ing at each pla duty it is to call gregation toget learning these p usual in some p tion to meet an ervice. Af residing in the requisite qu out fee or rewai its turn to give ing. When the t iciently well, a ps at a central pla of ministers and in the matter arlemen deliver a critiquing the suggestions calcu future efforts, a noted by all part a taste for corre among the people in a marked ma singing at the St

For practical circuit is ground work upon with a have been tried ous. A plan like should be tried i it be tried. Why singing was once tic of the Method one of the means good of souls. L and fire of our fo then have differen have now. An in the matter, and correctly and he will be felt which to pow, reaching preacher and peo so to speak, the Word more earn power, and the praises of God; b and sinners, seein ous of preacher a strange influence out for the living by. All will feel Heaven comes dow And glory crowns

"Oh, that men Lord!" "Let o breath praise the Lord!"

A Lovin

VACCO

Speaking of the tion feeling in R American admits favorable to vaccin here or in Europe, confidence in vaci shaken. The figu form of the pra than an abrogati virus, not contami its virtue by over is, by repeated tra to man—is both f certain efficacy. this fact is require stamping out of st city. In view of general adoption of small-pox, but la of human scourg oughly brought. New York, that w tants there were la of the disease, a wise as it is absur to lend themselves of anti-vaccination

RHEU

I had for some ye troubled with Rheu ness in my knees, s difficulty that I coo from the failure of tried, I had despair thing that could cur vice of a friend, I g ERADICATOR a trial have completely cu felt any return of t using this medicine, years ago.

Canning, N. S., De