

Contributions.

The Order of Confirmation

Notwithstanding that the discussion of this subject in the pages of THE EVANGELIST must be getting rather wearisome to our readers, we think it necessary to make a brief response to the Rev. Mr. Bevan's last communication—but it shall be very brief, for an elaborate answer is not needed.

Certainly his language is frank and easily understood, though few, if any, will believe his statements: "A bishop can do exactly what the apostles did, and no more or less." "The apostles were men, and therefore laid on their hands; and what they did our bishops have done from the days of the apostles down to the present moment."

This is surely High Church with a vengeance, higher than the Church of Rome, with a much lower historic record for apostolic succession, and is a false and presumptuous claim, which we believe to be in discordance with the views of the more humble and unpretentious of Mr. Bevan's own church. Let the reader contrast what is embodied in the following words with the gifts and powers of modern bishops, and it is enough: "God also bearing them (those who heard the Lord) witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will" (Iob. ii. 1).

In regard to the commission, as recorded in Matthew, embracing only the Gentiles, is an assumption without any scriptural proof. As Luke records it in his gospel, and also in the second chapter of Acts, the apostles, as soon as they were qualified, began "at Jerusalem" "to preach the gospel," and, for the first time, there announced the conditions of pardon; and further than this, Peter calls to the mind of the Jews, when preaching in the temple, their priority in privilege when he says: "Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities" (Acts iii. 26).

Now, it is really too bad to bring forth a scripture which seems to flatly contradict a clergyman, but truth demands it. Mr. Bevan says that the word translated "nations" with the article always means the Gentiles only: "In every place it means just what I said, viz., the heathen world, outside Jerusalem;" and further on: "This distinction runs through the whole New Testament."

In Matt. xxv. 32, we have the following words of Christ addressed to the Jews: "And before Him shall be gathered all nations"—"Panta ta ethne," which are precisely the same words, including, of course, the article, as He used in the commission. Will our correspondent say that "all nations" in this passage did not include the Jews? And, furthermore, we wonder that the fact has been overlooked that in some of the passages quoted the distinction between the Jew and Gentile is stated—"Give none offence, neither to the Jews nor the Gentiles," which distinction is often necessary, for in several places in the New Testament the Jews are also called a nation. Let one quotation suffice, the words of One who spake by divine impulse: "And this spake he, not of himself, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad" (John xi. 51, 52).

As this ought to close the controversy, which is occupying too much space, and is to such a large extent become irrelevant to the subject in hand, we will very briefly refer to the third

part of the letter before us, in which the following words occur: "Infant baptism is the acknowledgment of a fact, viz., that Christianity is the hereditary religion of vast communities of the human race."

Hereditary means "capable of being transmitted from a parent to a child." Hence, according to the above quotation, Christianity can be transmitted from a parent to his child! Or, as it is put in a previous period: "Even by a natural birth he is born within the privileges of the kingdom; holy fruit of a holy tree, he is baptized."

Why baptized, if the exegesis of I Cor. vii. 14 given by Mr. Bevan be correct? The child is holy in a spiritual sense, and yet in the baptism of these "holy" infants as a minister of the Church of England he has to use the following words when he baptizes them: "Dearly beloved, forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin, and that our Saviour Christ saith none can enter into the kingdom of God except he be regenerate and born anew of water and the Holy Ghost, I beseech you to call upon God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that of His bounteous mercy he will grant to this child that thing which by nature he cannot have, that he may be baptized with water and the Holy Ghost, and received into Christ's holy church, and be made a lively member of the same."—Book of Common Prayer.

Instead of all this, let us, dear reader, be satisfied in regard to infants dying before they commit sin in their own person that Christ's words are in every case verified: "Of such is the kingdom of God," and instruct all who are responsible to obey the Gospel that they shall do so in accordance with the great commission of our Lord and Saviour.

E. SHEPPARD.

Memorial.

MEMORIAL FROM THE JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE KNIGHTS OF LABOR, THE SINGLE TAX ASSOCIATION, THE TRADES AND LABOR COUNCIL, THE WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT ASSOCIATION, THE EIGHT HOUR LEAGUE AND THE NATIONALIST ASSOCIATION.

To the Ministers of the Christian Churches:

Reverend Sirs,—We take the liberty of addressing you on what we cannot but feel to be a matter of most momentous importance, not merely from a social, but also from a religious point of view. We need scarcely remind you that the conditions at present existing in society are anything but satisfactory, nor do we see any tendency for them to become any better, unless great improvements are made in our laws.

The transformation in the methods of producing wealth during the past two centuries have been so extraordinary, that in many departments we produce ten, twenty or a hundred-fold what could be produced a few centuries ago.

What comes of that abundance? Does it go as the reward of industry to the toilers? Does it go to the men to whose industry it is due, to the men who work ten hours a day, and the women who work twelve or fourteen hours a day, or are we maintaining some method seriously unjust, whereby the laborer is deprived of the proper reward of his industry?

The increase of population on this continent is one of the wonders of history. In a hundred years the population of this country and of the neighboring republic has increased from less than four millions to seventy millions—nearly twentyfold. At the same time the urban population has

increased with tenfold greater rapidity. The effect, consequently, is that there is less available land for each. In our large cities, therefore, we see people crowding into back alleys, close, stuffy tenements, often whole families compelled to crowd into one apartment, till it is impossible to observe properly the decencies of life, and anything like the development of a full-orbed manhood—morally and physically—or the proper enjoyment of the blessings of existence, are utterly out of the question.

We take the liberty of asking what is the teaching of Christianity respecting these two facts, namely The abundance in products caused by industry, and the scarcity in land caused by the crowding of population? Does Christianity teach that those who by their industry cause abundance, should be punished with scarcity, while another portion of society should be endowed with the power to appropriate a large share of the product, not because they had aided in any way in begetting that product, but mainly on account of the monopoly of land, especially in the larger centres of population.

That is the law of this country today, and it is to this regulation that we desire most earnestly to call your attention.

To many of us this question is of the most momentous importance. On what principle can it be justified, that those who industriously and beneficently bring forth products in lavish abundance, should obtain only scarcity—poor homes, coarse clothing, degraded social standing, inadequate education, while other men and women who neither toil nor spin enjoy exceeding abundance.

Is this Christianity? Is this rendering to everyone his due? Is this honesty, or is it spoliation? Is this the righteousness that we are exhorted so earnestly to seek and to follow? What prospect to the most of us does the future offer? Every increase of population but increases the tribute that labor must surrender for occupying the earth. Wherever population is likely to centre, there awaits the speculator to extort from us the products of our industry. Every increase of population, increases his power to appropriate, and our compulsion to yield up our product. His growing fortune is the measure of our misfortune, his exaltation involves our degradation. No matter how many years we may continue this payment, no matter how many millions we may surrender, our obligation never diminishes or draws nearer an end. No matter how much we may increase the productiveness of our industry, the regulations at present in force will place us under a tribute so great that it will always keep us and our successors impoverished.

We cannot suppress the thought that we are living under conditions radically and terribly unjust. Brought into life, into this universe, with its immense possibilities and its wondrous surroundings, can we be satisfied with the regulations that now exist, regulations that must doom us and our successors, to be the mere drudges of society, to degrading servitude, and deprived of those advantages of culture and refinement that should be our desert, excluded from that higher learning, that intellectual prowess, "which doth so ennoble the man," and subjected to an injustice that excludes us from our fair share of the advantages of the civilization we should enjoy?

When we look at the glorious character of the teaching of Christ, heralding its dawn with the angelic chorus of peace and good-will to men,

appealing at once to the deepest sensibilities of the soul and the loftiest conceptions of the intellect, basing its foundation deep on the principle of justice, erecting its structure in righteousness and truth, crowning all, surrounding all, permeating all, with the dominance of love, calling on men everywhere to yield up their souls in loyal fealty to their highest convictions of duty, and ever endeavoring to weave humanity into one glorious bond of harmony and brotherhood; when we look at this and then behold the hideous contrast in our social conditions, we cannot but feel that this subject is by all means transcendently the most important to which we could ask your attention.

Instead of equity we find inequity; instead of society developing symmetrically, we see the growth of two monstrosities—millionaires at one end of society, and tramps at the other; instead of honesty, we find one part of society living by the spoliation of the other, instead of each toiling for the benefit of all, we find one portion oppressed, doubly burdened and impoverished, while the other luxuriates in special privileges.

We appeal to you as the evangelists of a Holy Gospel—the ostensible leaders in ethical culture; are we asking too much when we appeal to you to raise your voices with us in earnest protest against the injustice that now weighs with such terrible burden on so large a portion of God's children?

Respectfully yours,
F. E. TITUS,
Chairman Joint Committee.

Take a Religious Paper, Brethren.

A correspondent of a contemporary says:—

My observation has been that brethren who take and read a good church paper are, as a rule, almost without exception foremost in every good work. Families that are strangers to the literature of the church cannot keep abreast of the religious progress of the times. This I regard as essential to a vigorous, aggressive Christianity.

A religious paper ought to be in every Christian home. And it ought to be regularly read by every member of that home that is able to read.

Congregations could render no greater service to the community than to see that every family of the church (if not of the community) has a church paper.

The head of a Christian household should as soon think of dispensing with almost anything else as to think of retrenching by giving up his paper. It is not to be considered a luxury only, but a necessity. The man who begins to economize by leaving out of his calculations a religious paper is the poorest economist in the world.

For the foregoing and the following reasons take a good paper, brethren:—

- 1. It keeps you posted in the work of the church at home and abroad.
- 2. It keeps you in sympathy with the whole church.
- 3. It helps you in your study of God's word.
- 4. It gives you a broad conception of Christianity.
- 5. It sweetens and cheers home life.
- 6. It gives you a general knowledge of what is going on in this world.

These are only a few of the innumerable reasons that might be assigned. We have a periodical literature that will compare favorably with that of any religious denomination and that is a credit to any home.

If you want to be a bright, active, aggressive Christian, my brother, read your Bible and a good religious paper.

Selections.

The Bible.

Hast thou ever heard Of such a Book? the Author—God Himself. The subject—God and man, salvation, life, And death—eternal life, eternal death— Dread words! whose meaning has no end, no bounds! Most wondrous book! bright candle of the Lord! Star of eternity! the only star By which the bark of man could navigate The sea of life, and gain the coast of bliss Securely; only star which rose on Time, And, on its dark and troubled billows, still, As generation, drifting swiftly by, Succeeded generation, throw a ray Of heaven's own light, and to the hills of God, The eternal hills, pointed the sinner's eye.

—Pollock.

Should the Church Furnish Amusement?

There is a great demand for something attractive in connection with the church and Sunday school. The music must be charming, the preaching entertaining, and the exercises of the Sunday school such as will draw and please the children. Men are not so unwise as to insist on such qualities in connection with other institutions established for the improvement and progress of society. Do parents send their children to school to be amused? Do they require factories to furnish attractive entertainments for young people before they will send their sons to learn a trade? Children go to school to learn, not to be amused. Young men enter a factory or a store to learn business and to work, not to be entertained. The remuneration and the prospect of promotion furnish sufficient attraction. The sooner parents learn that the Sunday school and church are not places of entertainment the better. The less ministers and teachers pander to the thirst for amusement the better. They are called to teach, not to amuse. Let all men know that they may expect religious instruction and comfort and help in the house of God, and this will draw. —Christian Advocate.

Domestic Thunderstorms.

We have heard it asserted that a quarrel now and then in a family is not a bad thing—that it purifies the domestic atmosphere, rendering it pleasant and salubrious for some time to come; in short, that it is to the household air what a thundergust is to the general element.

Who so reasons thus is a simpleton. Eye lightnings are neither agreeable when "the sparks of fury" are being projected nor as they flash through the recollection, and tongue-thunder reverberates through the memory for many a long day after the storm. It is an egregious mistake to suppose that sharp words spoken in anger are soon forgotten. They often cut deep, and in some cases the wounds never entirely heal. Crimination and recrimination were never yet freely and frequently indulged in by man and wife without begetting enmity between them, or, to say at least, without destroying their esteem for each other. Marriage does not change human nature, and it is not human nature to love anybody one is continually quarrelling with. Pettish wives and surly husbands are advised to make a note of this; also all happy pairs fresh from the altar who desire to keep happy.—Ledges.