

Contributions.

The Outlook.

BY E. SHEPPARD.

A view of the religious world, from the watch tower of observation, in many respects, is neither very cheering nor encouraging. It is true that some of the religious bodies are expending comparatively large sums for the furtherance of Christianity both at home and abroad, and are meeting with a measure of denominational success. It is also pleasing to note that some of the harsh and ghastly features of Calvinistic theology are giving place to the smiling and lovely features of scriptural truth respecting the character and dispensation of the God of love. Also that iron-bound Sectarianism is breaking itself loose from its creed-riveted fetters; and, in the freedom of thought and sentiment, aspiring after unity and peace.

On the other hand, we are pained to see the large amount of apathy in places where every Gospel privilege exists, especially among young men, who rather pride themselves in standing aloof from churches, and who glory either in the courage of indifference or in the assumptions of vain deistical philosophy.

Then, in order to attract those who do not care for the simple truths of Christianity, every means is used by the great majority of churches, no matter how unscriptural those methods are, that their sensational and fashionable services may be more largely attended; and it is one of the most disheartening indications of religious declension that the larger the admixture of the sensuous in religious ceremonies and modern worship the more popular they are among the great mass of unthinking and emotional people.

In Christendom, Roman Catholicism and the Greek Church embrace about two-thirds of the whole. Even where there is full religious freedom, and every opportunity to understand and embrace a more scriptural faith, as in the United States and Canada, the Church of Rome secures more of success and larger congregations than the Protestant churches, owing very largely, no doubt, to the adornment of the churches with paintings, sculpture and drapery, and to the display of sacerdotal robes, burning candles, smoking incense and other methods adapted to the sensuous taste of the people.

Without naming the Protestant denominations who depart most largely from the simplicity of Gospel truth and apostolical precedents, the reader for himself can easily discover the fact already mentioned that the popularity of churches is, with very few exceptions, in proportion to the amount of human devices and expedients used to please and attract the hearers; while to preach Christ and Him crucified, to attend to the ordinances as they have been delivered to us, and to insist on a humble and self-denying life is to remain in the small minority of the professors of Christianity. And yet, dear reader, it is pleasant though we are thus beset with many difficulties and many discouragements in our efforts to restore primitive Christianity, to extend our outlook, and, with the eye of faith, to gaze at the "things above" and to know that our dear Redeemer views our faithful allegiance to Him with the smile of approval, and that by-and-by we shall rest from our labours and enjoy the society of all the holy ones who have overcome by the blood of the Lamb.

Walkerton, May 11, 1890.

'Saving' Faith.

Mr. Editor.—As one who has but recently come out of Babylon, the writer desires to make a simple statement of the difference between our teaching and that of the self-styled "Evangelicals" upon a very vital question—Salvation.

There is not that radical difference in principle between the teaching of our brethren and the "Evangelicals" which is generally supposed to exist. Hours have been wasted in aggravating and profitless debate on points of difference which had no real existence, and many a sinful war of words has been kindled to the bewilderment of the sincere and the scorn of the sceptical listener. We wrangle with "Evangelicals" on the question, "Does faith precede repentance, or does repentance precede faith?" whereas the simple truth is that they and we are in perfect accord in the matter. Then there is that useless conflict about "historical" faith and "saving" faith. Of course these terms are wholly unscriptural and bewildering, and should be firmly rejected. Nevertheless, the distinction which our "Evangelical" friends intend by these terms is scriptural, and no people recognize and insist upon the distinction more strongly than do the Disciples of Christ. That these assertions may be verified let us examine the three great steps which every alien must take in coming into the Kingdom. In so doing, allow us, for once, to adopt the language of Babylon, and employ the terms "historical" and "saving" faith.

"HISTORICAL" FAITH.—The gospel message must be proclaimed to men. Men must hear and believe it. But a man may hear the Gospel every day in the year—implicitly believe every fact and truth contained in revelation—and yet remain impenitent, a hardened rebel against God.

REPENTANCE.—The sinner, awakened by the Gospel message, desires to be delivered from the condemnation and bondage of sin. He turns Godward, seeking pardon.

"SAVING" FAITH.—The sinner can do nothing towards either meriting salvation or procuring pardon. All, then, that the penitent can do, is to appropriate the promise of pardon contained in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Baptism is that act of faith, in which the penitent alien casts himself trustfully upon the mercy of God and appropriates the Saviour's promise, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." As he steps down into the water, the language of his heart is—

"Just as I am—without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou biddest me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God—I come!"

Thus viewed, baptism is the expression of "saving" faith.

It is in Christ that we enjoy pardon, adoption, citizenship, and all the blessings of the new covenant. We enter into Christ by baptism (Gal. iii. 26, 27.)

Now, if we have correctly stated the position of our brethren, then our teaching regarding the order of faith and repentance does not conflict with that of "Evangelicals." They say Repentance precedes "saving" faith. We say repentance precedes baptism. Then the only question between us is—"Does the sinner exercise 'saving' faith by being baptized?" We say he does.

"But," asks our "Evangelical" friend, "how can a bodily act express saving faith?" To this we reply, "Was not the act of dipping in the Jordan an act of saving faith to Naaman the Syrian? Was he not saved from leprosy through that act of faith? (2 Kings v. 14.) Was not the act of looking at the brazen serpent an act

of saving faith to the bitten Israelite? Was he not saved from death through that act of faith? (Numbers xxi. 9.) Was not the act of washing in the pool of Siloam an act of saving faith to the man born blind? Was he not saved from blindness through that act of faith? (John ix. 7.) Was it not saving faith for Saul of Tarsus to arise and be baptized and wash away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord? (Acts xxii. 16.) Was he not saved through that act of faith?"

Unfortunately, we cannot persuade our "Evangelical" friends to admit these self-evident truths.

Yours in the ancient faith,  
E. MACDONALD.  
London, Ont.

Newness in Christ.

J. R. GAFF.

Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things are passed away; behold they have become new.—2 Cor. v. 17.

The idea of newness is radical in the Gospel of Christ. He came not to reform and to make things better, but to regenerate, to make new. He begins by making man new and will end with making all things new. 2 Pet. iii. 13.—Rev. xxi. 1-6.

1. Observe the condition of this newness: "If any man be in Christ." Christ Himself is presented to us as a person who was new to this world. He was "not of the world" but of the Father. He "came from above"—"came forth from God." In Him alone was life. Coming forth from God He connected Himself in this world with man, the one to be made new, that we might have life through Him. It is impossible to read carefully the Gospel by John and the writings of Paul and not see how they present Jesus as all that is opposed to the old conditions of this world. Paul presents Him as the "last Adam," a quickening spirit in opposition to the first; as "the man, the Lord from Heaven" whose "image we are to bear." In Him is "all the fulness of the Godhead." In the old horrid conditions of this world are death and corruptibility. In the new are life and incorruption. It is impossible therefore to be in Christ and not be a new creature and share His newness. To be in Christ is to be changed to what Christ is and to share "the divine nature." 2 Pet. i. 4. Entrance into Him is the beginning of a newness that is to grow into His likeness, and like Him to outlive time and to share with Him the glory of the Kingdom of incorruption. The preaching of a gospel that does not emphasize this radical idea of newness in Christ will not affect much the life of believers.

2. Observe this newness has not its source from any thing in the flesh, not even in Christ's flesh, tho' His flesh or body was made essential to union with humanity and His offering for sin. "Tho' we have known Christ after the flesh yet now henceforth we know Him no more." 2 Cor. v. 16. The key of the thought is in verses 14-15. "If one died for all then all died," not all were dead, as in the old version. When the body of Christ died, which he had in common with us, God regarded the whole Adamic race as dying. When Christ arose He arose above the power of sin and death for evermore (Rom. vi. 9 10) and became the head of a humanity new from its first begetting from sin unto its glorification with Him. "And He died for all, that they who live (the new creature) should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again" (15), that is, Christ died for all that all might become new creatures in the life offered through His resurrection, the source of

this newness therefore is in Christ as He is now in His risen life. While we read the cartoon-life of Christ in the Gospels, incomparable in His love in His divine character, it is in Christ dying and rising that all might enter into the conditions of a new creation with Him that we see our hope and rejoicing.

3. The condition on which we are made new is that on which He has entered into His risen life. It is dying and rising. We are to die to this world and rise to walk in newness. Rom. vi. 4. It strikes a death blow at the roots of the old things. We are not to live unto ourselves but unto Him. "Old things are gone, new things have come." Here is the importance in our preaching of insisting on this change. There must be a crucifying of the flesh with Christ in order to live. The "body of sin must be destroyed" before death by nature relieves us of it. Only as we die unto sin can we become new. A repentance that searches without mercy every corner of the heart breaking it off from the service of self and sin must be insisted on if there is really a new creature.

I have nothing to present as to how this is accomplished. The word of God insists upon the necessity and the fact. Jesus calls it "born again," or from above, showing its heavenly source. Peter calls it "born again by the word of God that lives and abides forever," showing that the word of God in the heart is the seed of the new life, and that the life will be as eternal as the word. This is the same thought as the parable of the sower where "the seed is the word" received into the heart by the hearer. Jesus says "born of water and of the spirit" showing that the spirit of life is the begetter of life and that the water of baptism brings the one begotten into the new relations of the Kingdom of Heaven. Paul puts the same idea in Rom. vi. 3-4, as having died and being buried by baptism into Christ's death and rising into this newness. Again he calls it in this double idea "the washing, or laver, of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit."

One who is a new creature possesses the same consciousness and powers as before, but a wondrous change has come. He has been "renewed in mind." Old things have gone and new ones come. He sees, and thinks, and believes differently, the world has changed to him. Its pleasures and joys are brief and poor at best, everything is fading and he stands upon the shore and sees thro' the mists a new world arising to the eye of faith, clothed in fadeless beauty and filled with enduring pleasures and joys. He has new views of death. He stands by the grave and sees it but the crucible through which the corruptible passes into the immortality of the resurrection. His affections are changed, "set upon things above." The old things of the heart are gone and the new ones are come of Christ, and God, and the home of the soul. He has now purposes to engage his heart and mind in living for Christ who died for him; his relationships are all new; the house of God with its spiritual joys, its foretastes of heaven is his delight; the old companionships of earth are gone, and he finds pleasure in the company of the children of God. He has a new home in prospect; earth is no longer all, and death no longer the end, but he has "a home not made with hands eternal in the heavens," whence we look for the Saviour "who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." Truly one in Christ is a new creature.

'Laying by in Store.'

JAMES LADIARD

In common with all preachers, elders, deacons and members, who are deeply interested in the welfare of the church and the evangelization of the world, I have of necessity had my attention called to the difficulties that lie around the "money question" in its relation to church work. Perhaps it would be true to say that no other part of the churches' duties are so indifferently performed, none so unsatisfactory in the results which follow, and very few which prove so great a hindrance to the work, or give rise to so much dissatisfaction amongst the brethren themselves. Is there any good reason why this should be the case? Any good reason why a Christian privilege should thus become a wearisome duty? I think not. Of systems we have an abundance. But they are only remarkable for their awkwardness and failure. Every church seems to have a practice, peculiarly its own, for supplying its treasury, and yet all sigh and groan over the difficulty of getting enough money to meet its needs, when even these needs are few, and the whole church work is being carried in a manner so economic that it borders on meanness. It is a question in many churches. How little can we do with, instead of how much can we advantageously spend in, our Lord's service?

In all churches this has been felt and many an effort made to increase the sum annually raised. Some of these methods have been shamefully improper, and have brought much discredit on the churches employing them; others again have been perfectly proper and have helped towards the desired end, in a few cases. The divine guidance has been sought and the divine directions carried into practice, only these last can succeed fully. In short, there are methods that are unworthy which should never be used, methods that are honest and honorable and may be used until we learn the way of the Lord more perfectly, and methods that are perfect and right and divine which we must use if we would succeed in our work on earth and please our Father in heaven.

The church needs a full treasury. For lack of it our home congregations are hampered in their work, for lack of it there are villages, towns and cities in Ontario where we are not known, and where the Gospel in its perfect simplicity has not been heard. I claim, therefore, that the money question is a most important one and should receive the prayerful consideration of every Christian. For fifteen years I have been occasionally preaching and writing and often conversing on this subject, and others have been doing the same and yet, while there is some improvement in this matter, it is so small that a very great extent the difficulty still remains. I have headed this article with the words that are to me the key to this whole difficulty. The one remedy for these evils, "Laying by in Store," a direct command simply stated, easily understood, easily practised if we are willing to make the effort. You recognize these words as part of a sentence uttered by Paul in the early days of Christianity, "On the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as the Lord hath prospered him"—God's system of finance for His church; a system better than the best ever originated by man; a system that has no weak points and no doubtful side; a divine system only waiting to be put in practice. It will so fill the treasury of the Lord that His people can give