

The Canadian Evangelist.

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"GO . . . SPEAK . . . TO THE PEOPLE ALL THE WORDS OF THIS LIFE."

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THE Canadian Evangelist

devoted to the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ; and pleads for the union of all believers in the Lord Jesus in harmony with his own prayer recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John, and on the basis set forth by the Apostle Paul in the following terms: "I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all."—Eph. iv. 1-6.

The Nations—Apostles—Bishops.

To the Editor of THE CANADIAN EVANGELIST: DEAR SIR,—I hope my friend, Mr. Sheppard, will not allow my being a clergyman to prejudice him against my arguments.

I still respectfully beg to differ from him on the matter of the meaning of "ta ethnē"; he seems to imagine he has an exception to the rule in Matt. xxv. 32. Our Saviour delivers a discourse, and in this discourse He gives, first, the judgment of the Jews, Matt. xxiv. 15-41. Then He gives the judgment of the church of Christ, Matt. xxiv. 42 to xxv. 30; and then, lastly, the judgment of the Gentiles, xxv. 31-46. Our Saviour recognizes the three-fold division—the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God.

In Holy Scripture the Jews are not "a nation" but "the nation," and the peoples outside the covenant are "the nations." May I refer Mr. Sheppard to his favorite authority, Dean Alford, who takes this view of the matter.

In Christ there is "neither Jew nor Greek," or, as it is put in another place, "Jews nor Gentiles (ta ethnē), and so we have Jews, Gentiles, and Christians.

One of the points in the Judgment of the Nations is their behavior to Christ's "brethren," who are clearly a different class to those being judged, viz., "the nations." "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did, etc." The word brethren may possibly refer to the Jews, Christ's brethren according to the flesh, or to members of His Body or Church; in which the members were a distinct class, neither Jews nor Gentiles, but the Church of God.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in Chap. ii. 3, 1, says: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation which having at first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard, God also bearing witness with them both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by distributions of the Holy Spirit according to His will." It is "merismous," or distributions, not "charismata," or gifts, of the Spirit; and it was God who bore witness according to His will,—God imparted not the Apostles. St. Paul would have been the last of the Apostles to have acknowledged that he had received the Gospel in any way but immediately from the Lord, and this is one among many reasons why Calvin, Luther, and very many in the early ages of the

church, and the vast majority of the learned to-day, do not think St. Paul wrote the Hebrews. Here, then, we have the opinion of an unknown writer, whose letter the church has accepted—and thus made it canonical—that God witnessed to the Apostles' work; but then he goes on to mention in Chap. vi. "the laying on of hands" as one of the abiding principles of the doctrine of Christ. What more could we ask for as a warrant for our "laying on of hands," than that a writer should mention the "laying on of hands" as an abiding principle, long after the date of the Epistles of the Apostles. In the Epistle to the Hebrews we have this crowning proof for our present rite. Yours faithfully,

WM. BEVAN.

As Mr. Bevan desires to be heard again, the Editor consents to the insertion of the above, giving me the privilege of responding.

In the first place I wish to remind Mr. Bevan and the reader that the dispute about "all nations" has grown out of the assertion that the Apostles assumed the responsibility of modifying, or rather altering, the formula of Christ's Commission, without the divine warrant, in leaving out the names of the Father and the Holy Spirit when baptizing the Jews; ergo, the Episcopal church has the right to change believers' baptism to infantile-rantism, and to supplement the change by, what I assert to be, the purely human rite of confirmation; and yet he, rather inappropriate to his illustration, turns about and declares that the Jews were not included in the commission at all.

Let it be understood that I do not deny that *ethnos* is frequently used in the plural to denote the Gentiles as distinguished from the Jews, but that I positively deny the unmodified declaration of my critic that it "always" excludes the Jews. Put this "always" beside this definition of a most learned and famous Episcopalian lexicographer: "*Ethnea*, plural, in the N. T. frequently signifies the Heathens or Gentiles as distinguished from the Jews,"—Parkhurst. In particular do we object to its limited application in the commission, which has in Mark's record, "*Paschē kē ktisē*," "every creature"; in R. V. "the whole creation"; which is as unlimited as is "*Pan ethnōs*," used by Paul at Athens. Acts xvii. 26.

Space will not admit of a full review of the remarks on Matt. xxv. 32. I know that some premillennarians, Olshausen, Steir and Alford, have taken such views as Mr. Bevan presents, but it would have been better that in giving what he styles my favorite authority, Dean Alford's views, that he had given his comments at the close of this chapter in the third edition (p. 238): "I think it proper to state in this third edition that, having now entered upon the deeper study of the prophetic portions of the New Testament, I do not feel by any means that full confidence which I once did in the exegesis, *quod ad* prophetic interpretation here given of the three portions of this chapter xxv. But I have no other system to substitute, and some of the points here dwelt upon seem to me as weighty as ever. I very much question whether

the thorough study of Scripture prophecy will not make me more and more distrustful of all human systematizing, and less willing to hazard strong assertion on any portion of the subject." This is honest, and I question if anyone who has no system to maintain will differ from Dr. Adam Clark, who says on this passage: "All nations, literally all the nations—all the Gentile world—the Jews are necessarily included, but they were spoken of in a particular manner in the preceding chapter." I could fill a page with philological and exegetical reasons for maintaining the inviolability of the sacred words of Christ, but I will close by asking Mr. Bevan if he is so thoroughly convinced of his position that he, as an Episcopalian clergyman, could, if called upon to baptize a Jew, nay, if he dare, in the face of his bishop, in opposition to the ritual to which he has solemnly subscribed—or, what is of much more consequence, in the presence of the Son of God, who gave the commission without any exceptional clauses—baptize him in the name of Jesus only?

Next we have more about Apostles and Bishops, but no retraction of the assertion made in a previous article, that the bishops of the Church of England have just the same powers as the Apostles had.

The passage in Hebrews was quoted to show the recognition of the Apostles' mission; a recognition not given to modern bishops,—as Mucknight put it, "God Himself bearing joint witness to the salvation preached of the Lord and His Apostles, both by signs and wonders and miracles of divers kinds, which He enabled these preachers to perform, and by distributions of the gifts of the Holy Ghost which they bestowed, not according to their will, but according to His own pleasure."

And there is the plain record that these Apostles did according to God's will communicate the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands, which bishops of no church nowadays can do, for all the signs are wanting.

"Long time therefore abode they, speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of His grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands." Acts xiv. 3.

"And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the Apostles." Acts ii. 43.

"And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied." Acts xix. 6.

Let these quotations suffice, by contrast with the most unwarrantable and presumptuous claims for ecclesiastical power ever made by man, to settle this matter.

But "in the Epistle to the Hebrews we have this crowning proof (vi. 2) for our present rite." Indeed! if this is his crowning proof, weak indeed and worthless must be the subordinate ones! In the first place Mr. Bevan and the writer of the Epistle take exactly opposite views. One says, "the laying on of hands is an abiding principle"; the other says, "leaving these principles of the doctrine of Christ." The one gives it as a crowning proof of the order of confirmation (*mirabile dictu!*),

including the previous christening of the subject in infancy, the appointment of sponsors, and the laying on of the hands of an Episcopalian bishop to impart the gift of the Holy Spirit; the inspired writer probably referring to the Jewish ritual; as Dr. Adam Clark puts it (and other commentators agree with him), "I am inclined to think that all the terms in this second verse, as well as those in the former, belong to the Levitical law, and are to be explained on that ground," or, at any rate, it is not explaining "our present rite"; and he that can see all the belongings of that rite in it must have either a miraculous or, more likely, a very bigoted eyesight.

I will close by a brief quotation from Barnes, whose notes on these words in Hebrews are before me: "The Saviour did not appoint the imposition of the hands of a bishop to be one of the rites or ceremonies to be observed perpetually in the church. . . . No one now is entrusted with the power of imparting the Holy Spirit in that manner. There is no class of officers in the church that can make good their claim to any such power. What evidence is there that the Holy Spirit is imparted at the rite of confirmation?"

E. SHEPPARD.

The Theology of the Future.

PHILIP SCHAFF.

In the scholastic periods, that is, during the Middle Ages and in the 17th century, the orthodox system controlled the Biblical and historical investigation. In the age of Anselm and Thomas Aquinas, it was Catholic orthodoxy as handed down from the Greek and Latin Fathers; in the age of Quenstedt and Turrotin it was Biblical orthodoxy as understood by the Reformers. In both cases the doctrines were settled beforehand by the Fathers or the Reformers, and confirmed by proofs arbitrarily selected from any part of the Bible, with little or no regard to its historic character and the difference between the Old and New Testaments. Now it is just the reverse. Exegesis must rule dogmatics, and the Bible must be used as an organic whole.

During the present century a new and most important branch of theological science has grown up, which is technically called *Biblical Theology*. It sums up the results of exegesis, and gives us a connected view of the teaching of the Scriptures in its unity and the variety of its types according to the periods of revelation and the peculiarity of the leading writers. Biblical theology must hereafter form the basis of churchly and speculative theology. We want to know, first of all, what Christ and the Apostles teach before we consult the Fathers and the symbols of the different churches. New and fresh truths are to be dug out of the quarries of the Bible, and old truths must be renewed and re-stated. The theology of the future lies in this direction. Then we shall have no more "bodies" but living souls of divinity. Pastor Robinson, the Moses of the Pilgrim Fathers, broke the shell of narrow bigotry when he said: "The Lord has more truth yet to break forth out of His Holy Word.

Luther and Calvin were great and shining lights of their times, yet they penetrated not into the whole counsel of God. I beseech you, be ready to receive whatever truth shall be made known to you."

A theology constructed on the metaphysical doctrine of premundano decrees, or on the absolute sovereignty of God, is out of date. It has done good service in the 17th century, but does not satisfy the wants of the 19th. Every age must produce its own theology.

What do we know about decrees, passed millions of years ago in the hidden depths of eternity? Can we conceive of God as deliberately discussing with Himself a plan of constructing a world, and finally coming to a conclusion and making out a program? Is this not subjecting the infinite and Eternal Being to the limitations of time, and the conditions of a logical process of ratiocination?

But we do know the historical manifestation of God in Christ. We do know the God of the Gospels and of the Epistles. And the God whom Christ has revealed to the world is a God of saving love. He is sovereign indeed; but Divine sovereignty out of Christ is a terror to a poor sinner. It belongs to the Old Testament rather than to the New.

There is no greater word in the whole Bible than the sentence: "God is love," and the other which is like unto it: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life." Shall we substitute for this: "God is a sovereign?" "God loved the elect?" Paul teaches that God "willeth that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of truth." (1 Tim. ii. 4) Shall we change all into some! And shall we in like manner pervert the plain meaning and destroy the force of the passage, 2 Peter iii. 9, where we are assured that God is "not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance?" John says as distinctly as words can make it: "Christ is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Shall we deliberately strike out the "not," and the last clause, to conform it to the doctrine of a limited atonement? *Amicus Augustinus, amicus Calvinus, sed magis amica veritas.*

God's love is universal in its aim and intent, and abundant in its provision for the salvation of every human soul made in the image of God and redeemed by the blood of Christ. If any one is lost he is lost by his own unbelief, not by any eternal decree of reprobation or an act of preterition or any lack of intention or provision on the part of God.

The idea of the love of God to all men and the consequent duty of the church to offer the Gospel sincerely to every creature have taken hold of the church of this age with irresistible force as never before. This idea has kindled all the philanthropic movements and all the missionary operations at home and abroad, and carries them on with increasing energy and success.

The theology of the future will be a theology of love and as broad as God's love, and as impartial as God's justice. Such a theology will give new life to the church and prepare the way for the re-union of Christendom.