

"THERE IS NO EXCELLENCE
WITHOUT LABOR"

CANADA

"HAPPY IS THE NATION
WHOSE GOD IS THE LORD"

CHRISTIAN WORKER

H. B. SHERMAN, Editor.

"WORK WHILE IT IS CALLED TO-DAY."

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CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE,

SINCERITY SEEKING THE WAY TO
HEAVEN.

CHAPTER VIII.

A short time after foregoing interview, *Sincerity* called to have another conversation with *Mrs. Priscilla*, which resulted in the following:

Sincerity. I understood you to say that in the Acts of the Apostles we have the only historical accounts of conversions to Christianity found in the whole Bible. Am I right?

Priscilla. You are right, when the statement is properly qualified. The Acts of the Apostles contains all the accounts of conversions to Christianity after the Christian institution was complete, and the full gospel in fact, was preached.

S. Let me interrupt you. What do you mean by the gospel being preached "in fact"?

P. I find a distinction made in the Bible between the gospel preached in promise and the gospel preached in fact. The gospel may be preached in promise and be believed in promise, without being understood. Paul says, Gal. iii, 8, that "The gospel was preached to Abraham, saying, In thee and thy seed shall all nations be blessed." This was the whole gospel, concentrated in a promise that God made to Abraham. But Paul defines the gospel, 1 Cor. xv, 3, to be "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." The language of the Abraham is a promise. The death of Christ is accomplishment of that promise in fact. The gospel in promise of Christ, and the gospel in him, many centuries before He came, but the gospel in fact is the death of Christ according to the Scriptures, and the full gospel developed through him, as Paul expresses it, "made manifest among all nations for the obedience of faith."

In other words, the promise to Abraham preached the gospel prospectively or as something good to come; but the Apostles, after the resurrection of Christ, preached it in fact, or as something good that had come.

All the good things which God had in store for the age to come, or all included in the new institutions, were embraced in the promise to Abraham, but hid from the world—even from the wise and prudent, and revealed to babes—the Apostles, that they might preach to the nations the unsearchable riches of Christ. The whole history of the Bible—the dealing of God with the patriarchs, with the prophets, with those of Abraham, with all nations, and all the promise clearly seen to be from the ontosame omniscient Ruler of the universe, all tending forward and pointing to the one great fact—the death of Christ. All the prophecies, all the promises, and all the revelations of God to man, concentrate upon the person of Christ. His death for our sins, his burial and

resurrection from the dead, according to the Scriptures, for our justification, may be regarded as the center of the whole spiritual system. God has now exalted him to heaven, and demands the attention of the world to him, declaring that to him every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess.

S. Allow me again to interrupt you in your interesting remarks. I am delighted with Christianity; it honors our Saviour. But I am surprised on reading the Acts of Apostles to find that they did not explain their views to their converts before baptizing them, nor do I find where any related their experiences or gave their views of the gospel.

P. I was going on to set that matter forth when you stopped me. As Christ and all Christianity were included in the promise to Abraham, so Christ and all Christianity are included in the fact that he died for our sins according to the Scriptures. Therefore, he who anciently received the promise received Christ; so he now who receives the fact, receives Christ and all that is contained in him. The Old Testament and the New center in him. God is in him. Heaven is in him. All the blessings that God bestows upon his children in this world are in him. The whole Christian revelation concentrates itself in him.

S. I can see now what is meant by "preaching Christ," as mentioned in Scripture. It included all that he authorizes.

P. Precisely so; and on the other hand, when Paul determined to "know nothing but Christ, and him crucified," he determined to know nothing except what Christ authorizes. Hence, receiving Christ is receiving all that he teaches, and rejecting him is rejecting all his teachings.

S. In that view of the subject I can see how people were converted immediately on hearing the gospel. They did not wait to understand the whole system, but simply received the Author of it, being assured that he was a divine person and could teach nothing wrong.

P. Yes, sir; and having such love for him and attachment to him, as to receive him with the determination to receive all he has revealed. The first converts of the Apostles were not converts to a long train of doctrines, but to the glorious and adorable person of Christ. After they had received him, it was the business of their lives to learn all they could of him and his doctrine and do his will.

S. This relieves my mind of what, for a time, was a difficulty. I could not see how Philip received the eunuch with so little ceremony. But I see now, that he received everything in Christ when he said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

P. It explains every case of conversion in the New Testament. The conversions all took place at the time of the first interview the Apostle had with the penitents. They never sent one away seeking

As a matter of course they did not indoctrinate them in any lengthy system, but presented them the system, as a whole, in the person of Christ. This is presenting the whole gospel in one proposition, so that a man may receive or reject it, by saying yes or no, and acting in conformity with that affirmative or denial. Your friend Mr. H., has blamed us for receiving persons as Philip did the eunuch, upon his confession of his faith in Christ and baptism; but this covers the whole revelation of God to man—includes all that God has revealed to the world. He who makes confession, repents of his sins and is baptized in his name, receives him and all that he and his holy Apostles have taught, and binds himself, by the highest obligations to do his commandments.

S. Do we not receive remission of sins through the name of Christ?

P. Most certainly, but you must come into his name.

S. Are we not justified by the Spirit of God?

P. Undoubtedly, when we come to his dwelling-place.

S. Are we not saved by his life?

P. Beyond all doubt, when we come to his life.

S. And yet his blood cleanses us from sin! How is this?

P. If you will examine every case of baptism, you will find that it is always to be administered in the name of the Lord. In baptism, then, the penitent believer takes upon him the name of the Lord. The blood of Christ flowed in the death. When we come into his death, we come to his blood. Paul says, "As many as have been baptized into Christ, have been baptized into his death. Baptism, then, brings us into the name and into the death of Christ, and consequently to his blood. Paul says to the Corinthians, "Ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in you." This shows that the spirit dwells in the body, church or temple of God. The life, also, has the same dwelling-place. To come then, to the spirit and the life we must come into the body, or into Christ. The Apostle says, we are "baptized into Christ." The man, then, who believes with all his heart in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Saviour of the world, confesses that faith with the mouth, and is solemnly baptized in the name of the Lord, comes into the name, to the blood, to the blood, to the Spirit, and into the life of his Lord and Redeemer, who alone can save him.

Not only so but it is here, and here alone, over the person who believes with all his heart in the Lord Jesus Christ, has repented of his sins, made confession of his faith in Christ, and is about to be buried with his Lord in baptism. That solemn August formula is authorized to be pronounced: "I baptize you into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Here, all Chris-

tianity concentrates itself in the great confession made by the penitent; and here, in his first act of obedience, he comes to the blood of the covenant, the Spirit of Christ and his life, and the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, is called upon him as if to concentrate the whole Divinity upon his poor soul, for its deliverance from sin.

S. Mrs. P., what evidence will I have that I am pardoned?

P. The Lord's own unequivocal promise: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." You have also the evidence of the Apostle, or the Holy Spirit speaking in him: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." His promise can never fail. Are you not willing to rely upon the promise of God for your salvation?

S. I certainly am, and truly thankful, too, that I have found how I could come to the promise of God, with assurance that I should be received. Where shall I go to make confession of my faith in Christ, and be baptized?

P. Attend our church on next Lord's day, and our preacher will baptize you without hesitation.

On the next Lord's day, at an early hour, *Sincerity* was in the Christian assembly, for the first time, to hear a man who preached nothing but Christ, no doctrine but Christianity, and none but of the Lord. He listened, with intense interest, to a clear and satisfactory discourse on the great elementary principles of Christianity. At the close, he went forward, and in the presence of the assembly confessed the Saviour of the world. In a few minutes after, he and the preacher stood side by side in the water, some three feet deep, and the large audience standing in breathless silence, while the following words were pronounced: "I baptize you into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." When these words had been uttered, the preacher gently lowered his noble form beneath the yielding waters. As he raised him up, the audience sang,

"How happy are they who their Saviour obey," etc.

Our young friend rejoiced, believing in the God of his salvation, and the Saviour of the world.

At three o'clock, p. m., of the same day, "when the disciples met together to break bread," *Sincerity* was present. An Elder of the congregation arose and read, in an impressive and solemn manner, the hymn commencing with the words:

"And is the gospel peace and love, Such let our conversation be," etc.

The whole congregation arose, and united in singing the hymn read. The audience was then seated, and the account of the Lord's death was read from John's testimony. The request was then made, that if there were any persons present who had confessed the Lord, and submitted to him as the Saviour of the world, who desire to unite with or take membership in the individual congregation

they would come forward while the disciples unite in singing the song beginning with the words:

"How sweet, how heavenly is the sight, When those that love the Lord, In one another's peace delight, And so fulfill the Word," etc.

During the singing, our young friend presented himself in front of the stand, and when the song was ended, the Elder stood before him, and addressed him as follows:

"My dear young brother, I am truly happy to have the privilege of receiving you into this congregation, and trust that the union we this day form will prove both a blessing to yourself and to the church. You have entered into a solemn covenant with the Lord, and are now bound by the highest and most important obligations that can rest upon a human being, to follow Jesus, to learn of him, to regard him as your infallible Teacher or Master, remembering that he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you, but will grant you grace and glory, no good thing will I withhold from you." He gave himself for you; He laid down his life for you; He made his soul an offering for sin, and in this has evinced his love to you. In this great manifestation of his love to you he has laid you under eternal obligations to love and serve him. Your conversion consists not in receiving a long train of speculative doctrines and notions, but in receiving him who came from heaven—in an identification with him—in placing yourself, as we all are, under him, as our great Leader and the Captain of our salvation. Look to him, then; but you whole trust in him. Read his blessed Word; call upon him every day, and do his commandments, that you may enter by the gates into the city, and have access to the tree of life."

After this address, the church united in singing the song commencing with the words:

"Blessed be the tie that binds Our hearts in Christian love,— The fellowship of kindred minds, Is like to that above," etc.

The members of the church all came forward, and gave him the hand evincing his cordial and Christian reception, while tears of rejoicing flowed down his manly cheeks. May he serve God all the days of his life.

Some one has presented the Methodist General Conference a new gavel. Its handle—we mean the handle of the gavel not the conference—is said to represent the Bible; and its head, the discipline. And now if the Bishop will break off the handle and rule the conference with the head alone, the figure will be in perfect keeping with the fact. O. P. G.—So we suppose the Bible is to be used as a handle to enforce the Discipline.

Mr. Leavell, a prominent Baptist preacher of Manchester, N. H., feeling cramped by "Baptist usage," determined to secede. In taking leave of his congregation he said:

"As I retire from this pulpit to-night, I leave both the Baptist ministry and the Baptist Church; but I do not retire from the ministry and Church of Jesus Christ."

Now that Mr. Leavell can understand the difference between the Church, we hope he will enlighten his Baptist brethren on the same point. "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren," said Jesus to Peter.—O. P. G.