

The Wesleyan

361

Rev. A. W. NICOLSON,
Editor and Publisher.

Published under the direction of the General Conference of the Methodist Church of Canada.

\$2 PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE
Postage Prepaid.

VOL. XXVII

HALIFAX, N.S., NOVEMBER 13, 1875.

NO. 46

WESLEYAN BOOK ROOM,
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THE RELATION OF CHILDREN
TO THE CHURCH AND CHRIST.

(Concluded.)

BY REV. CRANSWICK JOST, A. M.

"From Adam's offence resulted condemnation upon all men; from Christ's righteousness, justification upon all men. The condemnation would have produced the exclusion of the race from existence by the infliction of immediate death upon Adam. But, the justification of all, in view of the atonement secured the continuity of the race, by which every person comes into the world in a justified state." Now, we believe that every child taken away from the earth in the period of infancy, in virtue of this "justification of life," goes to swell the number of the saved, and to be a star in the Redeemer's crown for ever, and also, that every child who lives continues in the enjoyment of this "justification of life," until by an act of his own free will he voluntarily refuses the good and chooses the evil. Dr. Wilbur Fisk expresses the thought thus, "Guilt is not imputed, until by a voluntary rejection of the Gospel, man makes the depravity of his nature the object of his own choice."

Religious biography contained in the Scriptures and elsewhere abundantly confirms, in our opinion, the statement that there are instances in which children have never lost this "justification of life." By careful instruction and training their feet have been kept in the way of life and there is no remembrance on their part of a time when they did not enjoy a conscious assurance of the love of God.

They have never had such an experience of sin as to make a separation between God and them, more than that which any adult person may, though in a justified state, experience, and, consequently, they cannot point to a period, as the majority of converted persons can, when by the operation of the Divine Spirit upon their hearts, they were changed from a state of nature to a state of grace.

It may be objected that these views do not harmonize with Scripture teaching respecting the necessity of becoming a "new creature," of being "born again," and of being "converted;" for, if a child may retain the justification of infancy there need be no subsequent necessity for the change indicated by these phrases.

To illustrate our idea of the relation they sustain to the opinion we advocate, let us refer to another passage of Scripture, the Great Commission, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark; 16, 15-16.) If we are to interpret these words in their widest signification, we at once exclude any infant dying in infancy from the possibility of salvation; for such an infant "shall be damned." From this conclusion we shrink with horror.

It is worthy of remark as a historic fact that Ambrose, Augustine, and others of the church fathers, made a very similar mistake in their interpretation of the words of Jesus to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water

and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." (John 3, 5.) Taking this statement in its broadest sense they said all unbaptized children must be excluded from the Kingdom of God, though, as if to mitigate the harshness of such a conclusion, they assigned them to the milder grade of perdition.

We at once see the necessity of limiting the direct application of the terms of the Saviour's last command to those who have attained such a maturity of understanding as renders personal faith in Christ possible. And, in like manner, we must limit the direct application of the phrases before quoted to those who have lost the justification of infancy and therefore need a renewal, or we may say, another renewal of their nature by the power of the Spirit of God.

Any other opinion of the relation of children to Christ than that here urged involves in difficulty and doubt the familiar saying of the Saviour, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the Kingdom of God." (Mark 10, 14.)

For example, examine it in the light of the opinions that a living child is only justified on condition of its dying in its infancy. Then we must choose one horn of the following dilemma;—either we must believe that these children, who were there in the Saviour's presence, not all children, are spoken of, and that they were such as would die in infancy and were justified on that condition, or, we must believe that Jesus spoke not of children themselves as members of the Kingdom of God, but of certain characteristics of childhood as finding a resemblance in adult Christians, and thus make him employ only a bold figure of speech.

Which alternative will we choose? Will we say Jesus meant only some children, or that He was merely speaking in a figure? We conclude there is a deeper meaning intended than either of these suppositions would imply.

Again examine the saying in the light of another opinion, advocated by the late Dr. Nadal, (Meth. O. Rev., Oct. 7, p. 57), that "regeneration is not the condition of admission into the Church of Christ," and that, therefore, persons may be in the Kingdom of God and yet not justified or regenerate. The intention of this theory is to show that children may be in the Kingdom of God and yet not in any sense justified or regenerate.

On this ground we have the spectacle of Jesus holding up as models to which his disciples must conform the unjustified and unregenerate, a view we cannot admit.

As a lucid, and to us a convincing, exposition of the Saviour's meaning in this assertion, four times repeated in substance in the Gospels, we give the following from that great master of systematic theology, Richard Watson,—"That this Kingdom (of God or heaven) signifies the spiritual Kingdom of Christ or earth, and also that glorious reign of God over redeemed and glorified men in a future world are points not to be disputed; and the words of our Lord if they relate to one must relate to both. If little children are the subjects of his spiritual Kingdom on earth, then, until the moment that by actual sin, they bring personal condemnation upon themselves, they remain heirs of the Kingdom of eternal glory; and if they become subjects of the latter by dying, then a previous vital relation must have existed on earth between them and Christ as their Redeemer and Sanctifier; or else we must assign the sanctification of the nature of man, which even in infants is fallen and corrupt, to a future state which is contrary to the Scriptures."

We will not argue this position farther, but, will content ourselves with presenting a concise statement of the truth taught by the Scriptures and the standards of our church, as interpereted by one of our ablest living theologians,—"The true statement would be that they (infants) are born into the world depraved, but as Fisk expresses it, 'the atonement meets them with its provisions at the entrance.' . . . The atonement fills this probationary world with its influence, and the human being receives his atoning justification consequent upon his entering into it. Is it as if a room were filled with a purifying influence and a leper is cleansed by entering within its walls. The question is not as to the genuineness or the depth of the depravity, as derived from Adam or from the immediate parent. That depravity is done up in all the elements of the total man. Nor does regenerative baptism or adult absolutely remove it, until completed at the glorification; for, both infant and adult still retain susceptibility to temptation and sin, mortality, disease and death until the final renovation. . . . The state of the saved living infant is essentially the same for the infant as the state into which regeneration admits the adult. And so, infant justification is for the infant the same as that justification into which faith brings the adult believer."

*Scaff's Church Hist. vol. 2, p. 482, also p. 799. Bledsoe's Theology, p. 261-262.
†Quoted by Dr. Whedon, Notes on Matt. 13, 15. See also Watson's "Instit." p. 637-8, vol. 2.
‡Dr. Whedon, Meth. O. Rev., Jan. 73, p. 133.

LETTER FROM JOS. LAURENCE,
ESQUIRE.

East Kewick, Oct. 19th, 1875.

INTERESTING ANNIVERSARY MEETING IN
LEEDS ENGLAND—REV. PETER MCKENZIE,
—THE SLAVERY QUESTION, &c. &c.

On the 6th of October, 1813, the Wesleyan Missionary Society was inaugurated at Leeds under the presidency of Mr. T. Thompson, of Hull, a local preacher, banker and member of parliament. And thus, in 63 years has come, to its present colossal proportions a society for promoting Christianity, whose agents are found in every land under heaven, trying to diffuse that light of which they have been the happy partakers. Its machinery is vast, and the work done is immense. The effects for good upon the idolatrous inhabitants of heathen lands, in bringing them to recognize every man as a brother, have been so great that recognition has been taken of them in official government returns, and they have thus given impartial evidence of the power of the Gospel to enlighten, instruct and civilize the nations of the earth.

But, although a great amount of work has been done, and is being done by the society with which we stand more immediately connected; and though a large amount of money is annually raised for the support of missionaries and the progress of the work of God; yet a great work remains to be done. Co-operation and aggression are continually to be going on side by side in the mission fields. While the forward movements are constantly to be made, care must be taken to secure what ground is already got. It is with these two great ideas before the Christians of the Methodist Church, that the public are annually called upon to note the progress their Missionary Society has made during the year; what are their expenditures and to listen to their proposals for the occupation of new ground in the time to come.

One of these meetings was held in the town in which the Methodist Missionary Society originated, on Monday, October 11th, 1875, under the presidency of W. Farrar Smith, Esq., one of the original committee. The spacious chapel (Brunswick) was crowded—pews, aisle, platform, pulpit and staircases were literally crammed by an intelligent and enthusiastic audience. It is sup-

posed that no fewer than 4000 were present on the occasion. Yorkshire people are proverbially hearty and vigorous in the prosecution of any enterprise that they are convinced is good, and certainly the Leeds audience in the Brunswick chapel on that occasion did no violence to their reputation.

The meeting commenced by the Rev. J. S. Workman giving out the hymn beginning

"Earth rejoice your Lord is King,
Sons of men and angels sing."

The immense audience stood up to sing, and were led by the large organ and choir; and as they heartily sang the hymn of praise, the idea that the determination was still strong among the Christian of the Methodist body to spread Christ's Kingdom in the earth, perceptibly, was impressed on one's mind. The presence of such a vast concourse, some of whom came great distances, proves that the missionary enterprise was as dear to the hearts of Methodists as ever it was. The attention with which they listened to records of success, and the heartiness with which they cheered the different speakers, showed a growing attachment to the work of God.

When they stood up the sight was very imposing; and a young preacher near me whispered to his companion, "I say Mr. D—, would it not be a grand thing to preach Christ to all these people, and bring the unconverted to the Saviour. After singing, the Rev. Walford Green engaged in prayer, responded to by many a hearty "Amen," thus showing that the old Methodist fire was not yet quenched by the cold formalities of a fastidious age.

After prayer, the gentleman appointed to be chairman, W. Farrar Smith, Esq., was called to fill his post of duty, and was received with cheers as he sat down in the seat of government.

The chairman said that the honour of originating the Society whose interests they were met to promote belonged to his native town Leeds. He also had the honor of being a member of the first committee. After a few more terse remarks which showed him to be a Christian man and a gentleman, he called upon the Rev. John Pearson, Secretary of the Leeds branch of the Society to read the report.

The Rev. John Pearson said that they had great cause to bless God and thank their friends for the large measure of prosperity and success which had been given them during the past year. They had increased numerically and financially, and had great reason, from a consideration of the past, to take courage for the future. They had had a continued increase of income. It was true that much of this came from sources upon which they could not absolutely depend, and from which it was hardly probable that in successive years they would realize so large an amount. On the other hand, there had been a steady addition from the receipts of the various Districts in the United Kingdom, averaging for the last few years £3000 annually, is a cheering fact, indicating the growing attachment of our Churches to the Missionary cause. The receipts from Home sources, such as Mission House Donations, Legacies, &c., amounted to the sum of £136,409 2s. 3d.; from Affiliated Conferences and Mission Districts to the sum of £47,659 6s. 5d., making the total amount £184,069 8s. 8d., being an increase of £16,044 7s. 0d., in the preceding year.

The Central or Principal Stations called Circuits, occupied by the Society in various parts of the world. . . . 972
Chapels and other preaching places 5,949
Ministers and Assistant Missionaries 1,228
Other pd. agents as catechists, &c. 5,555
Unpaid agents, as S. S. Teachers 25,351
Full and accredited Ch. members 176,186
On trial for Church membership 18,630
Scholars, deducting for those who attend L. & H. day and S. schools 284,527
Printing establishments 5

He then went on to enter more into detail respecting the work, (1) in Foreign lands, (2) in lands professedly Christian. The reading of the report occupied half an hour, and when drawing near its close, the reader said "In conclusion"; At this point the Rev. P. McKenzie, who was on the platform, shouted so as to be heard by all "hear, hear." This caused loud and vociferous cheering. (By the way, this gentleman convulsed his audience on Wednesday morning at Oxford Place Chapel by saying that "the Pope's bulls had all died of rinderpest.")

The adoption of the report was moved by the Rev. Anthony Ward, who in a brief speech referred to the cheering character of the Report, and then turning his speech on the late Admiralty circulars, roused the feeling of his audience by denunciations of slavery, whether on board a British vessel or not.

The deck of a British vessel, he argued, is as much British territory as British soil, and a slave, as soon as he sets his foot on board a British Ship is as free as if on British soil, and no one had any right, if he recognized any laws of humanity or even British law to again deliver him up to his former illegitimate and cruel master. (We are glad, however, to say that the order has been withdrawn.) He said it was a blot on the English statute book.

The Rev. H. J. Piggott, of Rome seconded the adoption of the report. He wished the audience to look upon him, not so much as a person as a representative character. He did not wish them to regard him so much as Henry John Piggott, as a Missionary from Rome, come to tell them the progress Christianity and Protestantism had made in the fair and fruitful Italy.

He said that a few years ago the very idea of a missionary, and especially a despised Methodist minister entering into Rome to preach the Gospel in opposition to the interests and policy of the Popes, would have been thought preposterous. A revolution had to sweep over Europe before he could be there as a missionary from the city of the Popes, the head of Roman Catholicism. A mighty power had to be shackled and bound down, and the gates of Rome, the seat of his authority, had to be thrown open to its deadliest enemies. It was evidently the work of God. Then again, the way in which native ministers had been raised up to carry on the work, was evidently the handiwork of God, for they had come from places and circumstances where they would have least expected to find them.

The biographies of two or three of them he then related. Some of them were Romish priests, and had been enlightened by copies of the Bible, or portions of it, distributed by Protestant ministers or colporteurs. But when they applied to him, he gave them plainly to understand that they were not necessarily called to preach because they had been ordained by the Romish Church, and they must not expect as a matter of course, to be employed as ministers of the Gospel. They must show evidences of conversion, and prove their divine call to preach before he could give them any encouragement. They had got a noble staff of Wesleyan Methodist ministers, godly and zealous men, who had given themselves to the service of Christ. They had got a fair beginning in Italy. He did not wish to say that they had made great progress in Italy, but they had had a fair and hopeful beginning. They had full and entire religious liberty in the country. And even in Rome itself, he felt no more oppression on his spiritual lungs in Rome than he did in Leeds. It was a hopeful feature of the revolution in Italy, that it had given freedom of conscience and of worship. Though there had been a number of political administrations, and though there had been changes of policy, yet upon this point there had been no uncertain sound. They had liberty of conscience and of worship from the day when the revolution clamoured in the valleys of Piedmont, to the day when it reached its meridian—five years ago—when the Italian troops entered the city of Rome.

The adoption of the report was then put to the meeting and carried. The Rev. John Walton moved "That an enlarged means will warrant an increase of missionaries, openings for whom everywhere abound; particularly among the vast population of the East. This meeting records its conviction that frequent and fervent prayer ought to be offered for the bestowal upon the Church of suitable men, fitted by gifts and zeal for the long-felt requirements of the work in these days of great opportunity." The finger of God was pointing them at the present time to the East, to our Indian Empire. When they slept at their post in time past, they had been roused to their duty by pestilence, famine and sword; and now God was sending our future King (meaning the Prince of Wales) to visit the swarthy millions over whom he would one day rule. But he would not find the India of which he had read in books. He

(Continued on 4th page.)