

The Christian.

ST. JOHN, N. B., SEPTEMBER, 1896.

EDITORIAL.

THE GOOD CONFESSION.

I, Tim. vi. 12, 13.

In a world where so many things are said and done which are *not* good, it is most refreshing to hear the Holy Spirit affirm of works and words that they are good. We hear of good works, even of "a good fight."

We have before us what is called "*The Good Confession.*" Jesus on his trial before Pontius Pilate "witnessed a good confession," and Timothy at one time in his life made the same confession before many witnesses, for the good profession at the twelfth verse in the common version is the same in the original as the good confession at the thirteenth and is always rendered confession in the revised version.

Profession and confession when one speaks of himself are very different. The first claims to have something above others, not so with the second. This is clearly illustrated in the case of the two men whom Jesus said went up into the temple to pray. Each spoke of himself to God. The Pharisee *professed* and the Publican *confessed*.

The good confession means to repeat after another, to say the same thing or unite upon important testimony. In giving himself to Christ before many witnesses Timothy repeated the something which Jesus testified when on trial for his life. The eunuch did the same when giving himself to Christ, Acts viii. 37. Each one repeated the same great truth which God first proclaimed at the baptism of Christ, and again on the holy mount.

Jesus asked a pressing question on the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, etc., etc. But neither of these said the right thing and Jesus asks, "But whom say ye that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said, "*Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God.*" Jesus answered "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee but my Father which is in heaven." You are *petros* or a moving rock, but what you have heard my Father say of me and now repeated is *petra* a bed-rock, a sure foundation against which the gates of hades or death will not prevail. I will die for saying it but will leave death a conquered enemy and rise again to live forever. And I will build my church on this rock. This passage in the 16th of Matthew shows how prominent Jesus made "the good confession," that like the uncovered rock it might shine forth on the very brow of Christianity. The apostles emphasized it in all their efforts to save men. When one who heard Christ preached asked for baptism the answer was, "If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest." When he replied, "I believe that Jesus

Christ is the Son of God," he was baptized. If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shall believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation, Romans x. It is the test of love and loyalty to Christ. Many of the chief rulers believed on him but because of the Pharisees they did not *confess* him lest they should be put out of the synagogue. For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

It is a sure index of our eternal state, for Jesus says, He that confesses me before men I will confess before my Father and the angels. But he that denieth me before men I will deny before my Father. The side we now take of Jesus we will hold in the day of judgment. Deny him now and he will deny us then no matter what may be our reasons for refusing to confess him. Every one who confesses the Lord Jesus is urged to hold fast the confession and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end, and the Holy Spirit is imparted and the church and ordinances of the gospel, with all their blessed influences, are given to aid true believers in their grand struggle for eternal life.

The Disciples of Christ as a people require every one who applies for baptism to make the good confession. They do not require him to make a profession that he has in himself anything to rely on, but would rather see him dissatisfied with himself and all he has, and fully satisfied with Christ and anxious to love and obey him. When he, therefore, manifests a desire and determination to turn from all his sins to God, he is asked if he believes with all his heart that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God, and on a confession of this grand truth he is baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Baptism is generally done before eye and ear witnesses whether many or few. After the candidate's confession the administrator is the actor and the speaker. The Disciples are a unit on what he should do, viz. bury the person in water and raise him out of it, but they may not all agree upon what he should say. Still it is presumed that after due consideration very many will agree on making the good confession the principal thing, he says and the witnesses hear—that if Christ and the apostles were so particular in putting the great truth which God first uttered at the baptism of Christ to the front, so should the servant who administers baptism give it particular mention.

After long and prayerful study of this subject the writer has used for near half a century about the following formula—*Upon a confession of the great truth that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, I baptize you into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.* There being no set formula given in the New Testament we consider this the best we know, but would be thankful to any that would give us a better or suggest an improvement. We might say "By the authority of Jesus Christ I baptize you etc.," or "On a confession of your faith I baptize you etc." But while either of these may be true we cannot regard it as the particular truth to impress the minds of those who see believers baptized into Christ, while his Sonship is not mentioned or perhaps alluded to. Let the rock on which Jesus promised to build his church shine out as he has left it.

Often in the reports of additions we read that one or two or more were baptized on a confession of their faith. Now this is not the good confession whatever is meant by it. How much better to say, on a confession of

the Son of God or of the Lord. Jesus did not say, He that confesseth his faith before men him will I confess, etc., but he that confesseth *me* before men. Paul does not say, If thou shalt confess with thy mouth "thy faith," but if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead thou shalt be saved. It is as necessary to believe with the heart unto righteousness as to confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus, but men are not witnesses of that belief; God only can look on the heart, while men can see the action and hear the confession of the mouth.

How clear and important is the question of Jesus, "Whom do ye say that I am!" and how clear the apostle's answer. Men hear us make the confession and will watch us closely to see if, by a consistent Christian deportment, we hold fast that confession, and Jesus will certainly confess us if we do, before his Father and his angels.

ANNUAL MEETING.

(Continued from third page.)

large, that the name of Christ may be exalted in that land; and those who have not as yet been assisting in this work, will you not heed the calls as they come to you to-day, asking that you withhold not longer the message of salvation from those that are perishing for lack of it? but begin at once to labor for the lost ones in heathen lands.

Let us all, dear sisters, be determined to make this a glad year in the service of our Master; glad because we are permitted to labor for Him, and to partake more and more of His spirit; and because of other souls learning to "rejoice in the Lord," even the "God of their salvation."

Thanking all the brethren, as well as the sisters, who have assisted us in the past, and asking their help for the coming year,

I am, yours in His service,

MRS. J. S. FLAGLOR,

Sec'y to Maritime C. W. B. M.

The reports from auxiliaries were called for and St. John, Milton, Cornwallis, Halifax were heard from. Sisters Payson and Ford gave verbal reports from Westport and Lord's Cove.

Reports from mission bands were then read and West Gore was the banner band for this year, having raised ten dollars more than any band in the Maritime Provinces.

Sister Morrison's report of mission band work showed an increase of four bands, three new bands and one re-organized.

DEAR SISTERS—You have heard the reports sent by the Mission Band workers, and it must gladden your hearts, as it has done mine, to read of the boys and girls of our own churches meeting to work together for Christ and his Church.

The interest in the children's work—the most promising department of the church work, I think—is still growing. Since our last annual meeting, three bands have been organized—two over on P. E. I., at Charlottetown and at Summerside, and one at Tiverton, N. S.—their reports speak for themselves. I had the pleasure of meeting with the Summerside Band in June, and was greatly encouraged by the report of their interest in the work. I was also agreeably surprised at the large number enrolled. Besides these two new bands—one which had disbanded and had not been holding meetings for the past two years—has been recently re-organized. This is the band at Lord's Cove, Deer Island, N. B. Sister Ryan wrote me that they had just re-organized with a