

Pastor and People.

FOR THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN

A DAY DREAM.

BY ETTA, QUEBEC.

Sitting alone in the twilight,
Not very long ago;
Quietly watching the shadows
So softly come and go.
Methought I heard a whispering
Quite close beside my chair;
And paused in my Day Dream to listen
To that which I might hear.

It spoke of the days past and gone,
It spoke of the dying year,
It spoke of the absent loved ones,
And all whom I held dear;
And with accents soft and tender
Put questions, one by one,
"What hasty words have you spoken?
What deeds have you left undone?"

"Have you tried to do God's bidding?
To seek and save the lost?
To bind up the broken hearted,
No matter what it cost?
Have you thought of that loving Saviour
Who left His home on high?
For you He left His Father's house!
For you He came to die!"

How could I answer such questions?
Alas! what had I done?
I tried to recall a kindly act,
But failed to think of one.
Too often I had been hasty,
My tongue had gone astray,
And from those who needed love and care
I oft had turned away.

Had I tried to do God's bidding?
My conscience told me "No,"
I had overlooked God's saying,
"You reap just as you sow."
Yet surely I had done something
For Him who died for me;
Something for some of His children
That He alone could see.

In vain I coned my actions o'er,
They seemed but one dark blot,
My misdeeds were so numerous
All good deeds were forgot.
When suddenly that gentle voice
Was once more by my side,
And said: "Yes, thou didst comfort one,
For whom the Saviour died."

Did comfort *one*! and was that all
That I had done for Him?
With that my heart did grow quite sad
My eyes with tears grew dim,
Oh! that I could the past recall,
How much more would I do.
The future now is all that's mine,
Perhaps a short one too.

Another year had almost gone,
A year's march nearer home;
The New Year's morn might dawn for me,
Its night might never come.
When happiness and health surround
The pathway on this earth,
We all are tempted to forget
The hand that gave them birth.

But let us for the future days
A solemn promise give;
To try and follow His commands
As long as we do live.
Then, when by Him we're called away
From this dark world of care,
He'll lead us to our heavenly home,
And bid us "welcome" there!

THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT.

BY THE LATE REV. W. HAMILTON, D.D.

The Church of Rome has long maintained that regeneration is produced by water baptism, which may be administered by any one in the absence of a priest. That is, she teaches the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, or the necessity of water baptism to salvation. The Canons of the Council of Trent anathematize all who teach that Christian baptism is not superior to the baptism of John; and also she equally condemns all those who say that the text—John iii. 5—is to be understood metaphorically, as not having strict reference to water baptism. The Lutheran Church teaches that baptism is not absolutely necessary to salvation; but that it is the ordinary sacrament of initiation, and the means of reconciliation to all believers and their children. The followers of Alexander Campbell, commonly called "Disciples," hold, as their motto, that there is "no assurance of salvation without immersion."

But it seems evident that our Lord, in John iii. 5, does not refer to Christian baptism, which had not yet been instituted. It was impossible that Nicodemus, or any other of his hearers, could have understood Christian baptism by the words which Jesus uttered. But Nicodemus was a teacher in Israel. He was learned in the Old Testament Scriptures; and he knew what was meant in the prophecies by being washed with clean water. He knew that it simply signified purification. He had probably not been baptized by John. Besides, John baptized only Jesus. His baptism did not admit Gentiles to equal privileges with Jews. But Christ, in speaking to Nicodemus, who could have known only John's baptism, speaks of the salvation of the Gentiles also. In the sixth, seventh and eighth verses also, Jesus leaves out all allusion to water, and speaks only of renewal by the Holy

Spirit. The one passage explains the other; the one is figurative, the other is literal, just as it is in Matthew iii. 11, where John says: "I indeed baptize you with water 'into' repentance; but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Water is used in the one case figuratively, just as fire is in the other. Water and fire are means of cleansing or removing impurities and consuming what is vile.

I hope no reader will think such discussion as this useless, uninteresting or irrelevant. The whole Christian Church has been divided, and is now divided on just such questions as these. It is, I think, of great importance that we should hold clear, correct and Scriptural views on the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper. Exaggerated notions of the Lord's supper have produced the sacrifice of the mass, in which the priest professed to repeat the sacrifice of our Lord's death on Calvary. The consecrated wafer is lifted up, that the people may see it, and fall down before it in what we believe to be idolatrous worship and adoration. In like manner water baptism is held by many to be a saving ordinance,—without which no sinner can be cleansed from sin or admitted to heaven.

It seems, indeed, that there is in human nature a strong tendency towards dependence on outward symbols. Even when Moses was on the summit of Sinai, during his forty days' interview with Jehovah, Aaron, his brother, was tempted to meet the clamours of the people by setting up a golden calf, such as they had seen worshipped in Egypt. "And when it was finished he fashioned it with a graving tool, and they said, 'These be thy Gods, O Israel which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt:' and when Aaron saw it he built an altar before it, and made proclamation before it and said: 'To-morrow is a feast to Jehovah.' Thus did Aaron make them naked unto their shame among their enemies." In the same manner also when Jeroboam taught Israel to sin, he erected two calves of gold, and set them up at Bethel and Dan, and said, "Behold thy gods, O Israel! which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." They did not intend, in either case, to forsake the worship of the true God, Jehovah; but they wanted visible symbols of His presence.

Is it not remarkable also in merciful compliance with this human craving after sensible signs or outward symbols, that, when the temple of Solomon was erected on Mount Moriah, there were, unseen by the people, in the innermost chamber—the Holy of Holies—entered only by the high priest alone once a year, two grand cherubim, with wings outspread over the Ark of the Covenant, meeting the high priest's gaze as he made his annual entrance. This visible glory was all swept away when the Jews were led captive to Babylon. The captivity cured them of their feverish longing after idols, seen or unseen. They have, ever since their return from the captivity, been standing witnesses for God against the folly of idolatry. Enter any of their synagogues now; and you will see no symbols of the divine presence. You will simply see the aspect of a people almost hopeless: and listen to the words of the Old Testament Scriptures. May they soon see Jesus as the true image of His Father in heaven.

I shall now state some of the reasons we have for not accepting the doctrine of baptismal regeneration:

1. The testimony of our Lord Himself is, that the only essential and indispensable condition of salvation is faith in the Lord Jesus. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." Passing many other texts similar to these, let me remind you of the one with which I began this enquiry, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." Heaven and earth shall pass away; but these words shall never pass away.

What can be more painful to the believer's ear than such an appeal as this, at the beginning of a book on baptism, "Saved or damned?" These words presented to us naked as giving, in condensed form, the alternatives of sprinkling or immersion, I confess that I would prefer the Quaker view, and reject water baptism altogether rather than make any mere form one of the conditions of salvation. You remember reading in the book of Numbers that when the Israelites were in the wilderness, fiery serpents came and destroyed many of the people. Moses, by the direction of Jehovah, made a serpent of brass, and set it on a pole; and it came to pass that, if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived,—a very evident type of Christ being lifted up on the cross, that whosoever looks to Him in faith is delivered from eternal death. And yet we learn from 2 Kings xviii. 4, that good King Hezekiah, when he understood that the children of Israel burned incense to it, he broke it in pieces; and he called it Nehushtan—a piece of brass. It seems to me that Quakerism, which is the rejection of all symbolic forms, is the natural and necessary rebound of the soul from ritualism. May the Lord keep us thankful for the outward ordinances, while we do not substitute them for what they spiritually signify!

Again we argue that baptismal regeneration must be unscriptural; for, it must be admitted, that multitudes of baptized persons come far short of eternal life, tens of thousands of the water-baptized have lived in sin and died without hope. But Paul shows the connection between regeneration and eternal life (Romans viii.), "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate, and whom He did predestinate, them He also called, and whom He called them He also justified, and whom He justified them He also glorified." Here are the golden links in the chain of Mercy, by which the Saviour

unites regeneration and eternal glory. If baptism secures the new birth, then it is the same pledge of life eternal. Again, we say that the doctrine of baptismal regeneration is opposed to the general teaching of the word of God. Our Saviour taught that men were to be saved by looking to Him in faith, as the dying Israelites were saved from death by looking to the brazen serpent. The picture drawn by the Saviour of the Pharisee and the Publican is most instructive. They both went up to the temple to pray; but the Pharisee, in the confidence of self-righteousness, boasted how good he was, and how observant of the law; while the poor Publican stood afar off, scarcely daring to lift his eyes to the sanctuary, and smiting on his breast, he said: "Lord, be merciful to me, the sinner." "I tell you," said Jesus, "this man went down to his house justified rather than the other." The Jews thought that no uncircumcised man could be saved. Ritualists and Romanists teach that no unbaptized person can be saved. The doctrine of the Bible is that he is not a Christian, who is only outwardly; and the baptism, which saves and sanctifies the soul, is the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

Lastly, the doctrine of baptismal regeneration is contrary to experience. What is regeneration? It is a passing from death to life—from the bondage and misery of sin into the freedom and joy of spiritual life. It is a change wrought by that Spirit who passed over the face of the deep on the morning of creation, and said, "Let there be light; and there was light." It is like the rising of Jesus from the dead and His exaltation to the right hand of God in the heavens. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ,"—"in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of Promise." Surely we must expect that the heir of so glorious an inheritance will give evidence of his heirship. We expect that the heir of the throne shall exhibit royal qualities. But how many millions of men have been baptized into that inheritance, if the doctrine of baptismal regeneration be true; and yet how few bring forth in their lives the evidences of conversion! We must remember that all true baptism is real and permanent in its effects. The tree that brings forth no fruit when it is baptized by the breath of spring, is dead; and just so is the sinner who brings forth no fruit unto God. The breath of Jesus has not baptized him into righteousness.

There is a double baptism which every true child of God receives. One by which he is renewed in the Spirit, after the image of God, and another the baptism of Christian Unity, by which he becomes One with the Church of the Living God through the indwelling of the Spirit of Love. By the former baptism we are united to Christ; by the latter we are all joined into one body. This great work, begun imperfectly on earth, shall be gloriously complete in heaven. We shall then be One in Him.

How sweetly does the sainted Charles Wesley sing of this blessed union in his famous hymn!

"Let saints below in concert join with those to glory gone;
For all the servants of our King in heaven and earth are one.
One family—we dwell in Him—one church, above, beneath;
Though now divided by the stream, the narrow stream of death.
One army of the living God, to His command we bow;
Part of the host have crossed the flood, and part are crossing now.
Dear Saviour be our constant guide; then when the word is given,
Bid Jordan's narrow stream divide and land us safe in heaven!"

How sad to think that a difference about the mere mode of ritual baptism should separate, in the communion of Christ's death, those who are admitted on all hands to be one by Spiritual Baptism! Why should parents and children, nay, husband and wife be separated at the Lord's Table, when they are undeniably One in Christ Jesus? May the Spirit baptize all into the One Church, which is in Christ Jesus!

THE GOSPEL FOR ALL THE WORLD.

Over 1,800 years have passed since our Saviour gave His parting command to His chosen disciples, yet to-day, five-sixths of the world lie in heathen darkness. What a reflection on the professed followers of Christ! The early Christians, in obedience to the Lord's command, carried the Gospel to all parts of the then known world. We, on the other hand, with all the advantages, light and privileges of the nineteenth century, have been asleep. Awake, hear the voice of the Master still asking, "Whom will I send, and who will go for us?" May the power of the Holy Spirit enable some one to-night, to say, "Here am I, send me." Remember, the Gospel first came to us from foreign lands; then shall we selfishly confine it to ourselves, while millions in the darkness of heathendom go down to Christless graves? Some see only need of home work, and while that is very necessary, Christ has said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." Yet almost nothing has been done in regard to obeying the Saviour's parting injunction to carry the Gospel to the utmost parts of the earth. How can we pray, "Thy Kingdom Come," while we are not doing our part to hasten His purpose in this age, the calling out of a people for His name. Is anyone pleading insufficiency as an excuse for inactivity? God uses "the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty." When we are weak, then are we strong, for it is not by might, nor by power, but by His Spirit, that mighty works are done. The apostles were men of low origin and uneducated, yet to these was given the privilege of sharing in the glorious work of discipling the world. They left all and followed Christ. This tells the secret of their power; and if we would be used by Him, we must make full surrender of ourselves, time, talents, will and heart. If the Spirit has clearly shown us our work is at home, we are still under obligation to extend the Gospel in foreign lands, and this we can do by helping to send those who have been called, and have not the means to carry the glad tidings to the regions beyond. While it is most necessary to assist in this way (and do any one of us give till we feel it) earnest, believing, unceasing prayer is indispensable. May the Lord increase in us more and more a spirit of prayer. Dear one for whom Christ died, the Master hath need of thee. Make a willing surrender of all to Him, prove Him, and see if He will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. May the love of Christ constrain us to be more earnest and self-denying in this work, remembering the words of our King, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Let us put on the whole armour of God, and in the name of the Lord of hosts, "Go up at once and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." And "Lo I am with you alway."