

The Canadian Evangelist.

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

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THE Canadian Evangelist

is 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 Order of Confirmation.

While it is pleasant to notice the kind and respectful style of the Rev. Mr. Bevan's last letter in THE CANADIAN EVANGELIST on this subject, it is to be regretted that there is so much in what he has written that is either not to the point or is not in harmony with Divine truth.

Let it be distinctly understood that the matter at issue is: First, can a Bishop of the Episcopal church impart the Holy Spirit (or spiritual gifts) by the laying on of hands, as Peter and John did at Samaria or Paul at Ephesus?

Second, do these apostolical acts give authority or precedent for the Order of Confirmation, in which ordinance or sacrament the persons confirmed take upon themselves the vows made by their godfathers and godmothers at their infantile baptism?

These are the important issues before us in this controversy, which are only adverted to in the following words by Mr. Bevan: "However objectionable a few unimportant accessories of our English Confirmation Office may be to Mr. Sheppard, he will find it a difficult task to overthrow this sacred rite of the ages." In the name of reason and candor, we ask, WHAT NEXT? We are not writing about "unimportant accessories" to the laying on of hands in our "English Confirmation Office" but about the office itself.

This "office," we affirm, is not Apostolic nor Scriptural, and certainly is English or Roman, or both, Rome having the precedence though not accompanied by the laying on of hands but by a blow on the cheek! The Order of English Confirmation is not a Christ-ordained complement to Christian baptism, as affirmed by Mr. Bevan, but a human expedient to complement the unscriptural and meaningless rantism of infants.

Space will not admit of a review of all that appears on the subject of the laying on of hands that is in the communication before us, nor is it necessary, for the most of it is totally irrelevant. We do not call in question what is clearly related in the Scriptures, viz., that it was practised for the impartation of spiritual gifts by the Apostles, and in the ordination of church officers and evangelists.

As though he realized that the Order of Confirmation grew out of a change of a Divine appointment, our correspondent seeks a refuge in a most extraordinary and sacrilegious attempt to prove that both the Israelites and the early Christians made what he considers unimportant changes in God's appointments. Where does he find a command that the memorial passover was to be observed standing? At Mount Gerizim, in Samaria! at which place the "Samaritans, who followed their customs, and who clung to the Books of Moses no less firmly than the Jews." This is Mr. Bevan's record.

The following is the record of Jesus concerning the same people: "Ye dearly so as to be ready to be born again and to die" for Him; but it is often what we worship, for salvation is of thing not less great to be ready to die for Him." John iv. 22. Now let the up our daily cross and to live for Him.—John Caird.

sacredly kept the passover as God ordained, but that the Jews changed the attitude in observing it, and that Christ conformed to the human innovation, and he will see the force of the quotation from Christ's words.

How extremely inapplicable (to use the mildest words we can think of) is the following language, in view of the issue before us: "The laying on of hands is not an ordinance of man; in our dispensation it is an apostolic ordinance." With restrained indignation we ask, who is either affirming that the laying on of hands is an ordinance of man, or denying that it is Apostolic? What we are affirming is that the order of Episcopalian and Roman Catholic confirmation is both in "externals" and in "essence" an ordinance of man; and we emphatically challenge contradiction, and also ask for any proof that the Bishop of Niagara, or any other bishop, can in these days communicate the Holy Spirit or Spiritual gifts, as the Apostles Peter, John and Paul did at Samaria and Ephesus, as the language used in Guelph would lead us to infer they could. It is not a fair or an honorable thing to present a false issue and then refute the false statement.

But the quotation from Colossians second chapter was "torn bleeding from the context"; well it has not bled to death, for it stands there a living warning against all ordinances that are "after the commandments and doctrines of men," and the connection is a severe reproof to all that set aside what has been ordained by Him in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (ver. 9); and, as if through the Holy Spirit's inspiration, the holy apostle foresaw that the baptism of the believer would, in future ages, be superseded by infant baptism and its absurd complement, confirmation, writes: "Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead," Col. ii. 12. No other comment is necessary than to say again, in the Church of England the Sponsors believe for the subject, who is usually sprinkled with water instead of being "buried" in it.

There is nothing written in any language more sacred and sublime, or surrounded by more holy and enduring sanctions, than the great commission of Christ: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." To tamper, in any way, with its solemn import or administration, in order to get an excuse for a purely human religious invention, is not only, in our judgment, presumptuous but sacrilegious.

Look at this exegesis of our reverend apologist: "Our Saviour commanded that all nations (viz., heathens) should be baptized in the name of the Trinity. We find (see Acts) that Jews were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus only, being already in covenant with God the Father." First, let the record of Christ's words in Luke xxiv. 47 settle the matter about the import of the words "nations"; "And that

repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." So that instead of the Jews being excluded in the commission as our learned friend asserts, they were to have the precedence of all other nations. It is true that they were told to repent and be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, the import of which is, according to a distinguished scholar of Mr. Bevan's own communion: "On the confession of that which the name implies," while the baptismal formula is said by the same divine to imply: "An actual admission into the covenant of redemption."—(Dean Alford's notes in Greek Testament.)

"Then they that gladly received the Word were baptized" is the language of the sacred historian, without any mention of the formula, which we reverentially judge to have been according to the authoritative words of Jesus.

We call attention to the following words: "Even were it (Confirmation) only to stand upon an injunction of the church it would not be a mere ordinance of man. . . He has told us to 'hear the church.'" These last three words we suppose are quoted from Matthew, chapter xviii. and 18th v. and are in regard to the settlement of a faulty trespass and have not the slightest bearing upon the subject in hand; but certainly do have an important bearing upon the vain assumptions of the Church of Rome, and it appears upon some ministers of the Church of England.

As to picking out a few isolated passages, and a "text made to mean anything or nothing according to the prepossessions of the interpreter," we may give the above quotation from Matthew and the use made of it as a fair example of a man judging himself:—

Space will not allow of a review of several other subjects crowded into our reviewer's letter. Briefly: We have a Scriptural precedent for the churches to meet upon the first day of the week for the observance of the Lord's ordinances. The fact that the Bible has been arrayed against the advancement of science; that it has been quoted to justify slavery; that some doubt whether Paul wrote 2nd Timothy; or Peter the 2nd Epistle that bears his name; that Luther rejected the Epistle of James; or that there were many controversies among the early Christians about the Apocalypse and the Epistle to the Hebrews, or that the Quakers repudiate Baptism altogether; all of this, nor more of the same kind, does not justify any church in setting aside the commission of Jesus clearly and distinctly given, and substituting the faith and repentance of proxies for the faith and repentance of the subject of baptism, and supplementing the baptism by the ordinance of confirmation, embodying a blow on the cheek in the Church of Rome, and the laying on of hands in the Church of England.

E. SHEPPARD.

You can't teach from the head and have it reach the heart.

Calvary is a little hill, but it is the only spot on earth that touches heaven.

Bibles By The Million.

THE SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY'S WORK.

The seventy-fifth anniversary of the American Bible Society was celebrated last night (13th May) in Chickering Hall, New York, and the one word was for greater efforts in spreading the Scriptures. With this object in view, an effort will soon be made to so distribute the Bible that every child who can read or write shall have the opportunity of owning one.

The hall was well filled when a distinguished company of clergymen and church workers, headed by Enoch L. Faucher, President of the Society, and Bishop elect Phillips Brooks, of Boston, stepped out on the platform. Devotional exercises were conducted by the Rev. Dr. Theodore L. Cuyler and the Rev. Dr. Albert J. Lyman.

The Rev. Dr. Alexander McLean told of some of the work that the Society had accomplished in seventy-five years. It had its start at a meeting of sixty delegates from various churches and Protestant Christian organizations, and the bond between them had never been broken. There had been received in legacies and contributions \$9,900,000, and gifts of Bibles and special funds contributed made up a grand total of \$20,864,000.

Four general distributions of Bibles had been made in the United States. Every eighteen cents expended had represented a copy of the Scriptures. At the last general distribution, beginning in 1882, 8,000,000 Bibles in twenty-seven languages were sent out.

Dr. Brooks, in an eloquent address, spoke of the power of the Book of Life in adding perpetual inspiration and vitality to man's progress. The Bible, he said, was not a creed; it was not a law. It was a person, Jesus Christ.

Addresses were also made by the Rev. T. Aston-Binns, delegate from the British and Foreign Bible Society; the Rev. James Stalker, of Glasgow, delegate from the National Bible Society of Scotland, and the Rev. John Burton, of Toronto, Canada.

The Reasons Why.

How differently people come into the kingdom of heaven! We were at a prayer-meeting the other evening, when the pastor asked those present to state in a single sentence the direct occasion, so far as they could determine it, of their coming into the Christian life. Fifteen or twenty testimonials were forthcoming, and it might almost be said that no two were precisely alike. A mother's prayer and efforts, a Sabbath school teacher's word in season, a sermon in a tent, an expressed longing of a friend, the tender interest of a pastor, a series of sermons printed in a newspaper—these were a few of the human instrumentalities to which the speakers ascribed their conversion. The substance of their testimony was, in short, that they had become Christ's followers because, a long or short while ago, somebody had cared enough for their souls to point them to Him.

You can't borrow a holy life.