

Regular Contributors.

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THE OUTLOOK.

Perhaps never in the history of the current reformation, as far as it applies to Canada, was there a time when properly directed efforts promised greater result than the present. Every observer of the signs of the times, can distinctly hear the mutterings of discontent which pervade the sectarian world at the present time. People are beginning to think and act for themselves. Creeds, Confessions of faith, Prayer Books and Disciplines are losing their power over the people; and consequently many who have been taught to consult their creeds and their spiritual advisers on matters pertaining to their future welfare in preference to the word of the living God are turning from the former to the latter with pleasure and satisfaction. This is as it should be, although many of the so called clergymen look upon the lack of reverence for creeds, etc., which is everywhere being displayed, as a manifestation of indifference to religion itself. The fact is, the Bible is being read more—knowledge of what it contains is becoming more general, and the superiority of its teachings are so apparent, its adaptability to the whole human family so obvious to every diligent reader, it is not a matter of amazement that intelligent people are beginning to lose confidence in human creeds and human systems of religion. To my mind this denotes the dawn of brighter days for the cause of truth, and such being the case, should not the Disciples of Christ, the followers of the Saviour of mankind, gird on the armour of God more tightly and begin to wield the sword of the Spirit more vigorously, than we have been wielding it in the past. Every congregation in Canada should make arrangements for holding a series of meetings as soon as possible. The services of faithful evangelists should be secured to conduct such meetings and in the meantime every member should take as much interest in the meetings as though the success of such meetings depended on his or her efforts. Funds with which to recompense the evangelist should be in the hands of the treasury before the commencement of the meeting so that when it is progressing it will not be necessary to beg from door to door to obtain the money required. Let there be a forward movement all along the lines, and with the grandest and most rational plea to present to a dying world, with King Jesus as our leader; if victory does not perch upon our banners it will be our own fault. Up then in the strength of Judah's Lion? Be valiant for the truth! Put on the armour of light; and with all the gentleness and meekness and mildness there is in Christ—with all the courage and patience and zeal, and effort worthy of a cause so salutary, so pure, so holy, and so divine, determine never to faint or to filter till you enter the pearly gates—never to lay down your arms till with the triumphant million, you stand before the throne, and exultingly sing,

"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain; to receive power, and wisdom, and might, and honor and glory and blessing." H.T.L.

THE DEBATE.

We will in this paper give a synopsis of the arguments advanced by Mr Wilkinson on the proposition that "Infant Baptism is of Divine authority and has been practised by the Christian Church from Apostolic times." He said that error always does harm, and that he had prayed that he might be guided aright in this proposition, which was a somewhat complicated one.

To illustrate the proposition he had prepared a chart and had hung it up in full view before the audience, which represented Christianity as a great arch upheld by two pillars, one of which was marked the Atonement, the other Regeneration; on each side of the pillar marked Atonement, was a smaller pillar, one marked, The Passover, the other, The Lord's Supper, from which he argued that the Lord's Supper, under the Gospel Dispensation takes the place of the Passover under the Mosiac Dispensation. The Passover pointing to and symbolizing the Paschal Lamb. The blood of which was sprinkled on the door posts of the Israelites, and the Lord's Supper symbolizing the Lamb of God, who died for the sins of the world, and whose blood cleanses from all sin. On each side of the pillar marked Regeneration, was a smaller pillar, one marked Circumcision, the other Baptism, from this he assumed that Baptism takes the place under the new Dispensation that Circumcision did under the old. And we might say that on this assumption he endeavored to stand throughout the debate as the only scriptural proof for Infant Baptism. He did not endeavor to show when the rite was changed from Circumcision to Baptism, by whose authority it was changed, or that the Saviour and his Apostles ever referred to it as having been changed. The change was simply "assumed" on Mr. Wilkinson's part. He assumed that Col. 2:11 "being circumcised with circumcision made without hands," was spiritual circumcision, and that verse 12, "buried with Him in baptism" was spiritual baptism and that consequently spiritual baptism must be the same to us as spiritual circumcision was to the Jews. Therefore baptism with water must be the same to us now as circumcision of the flesh was to the Israelites then. And if baptism is the same to us as circumcision was to them, it would follow that as infants were proper subjects for circumcision, they must also be proper subjects for baptism.

Having concluded from the above assumptions that baptism came in the room of circumcision. He argued that to deny infants the privilege of baptism, would legally and logically send them to hell, for the male child that was not circumcised was cut off from among God's people. He did not presume that Mr. Harding believed that "unbaptized" infants went to hell, but said that the theory that denied them the rite of baptism must logically send them there. He also argued that if baptism came in the room of circumcision, that as circumcision was a token and seal of the covenant made to Abraham, baptism must be the token and seal of the new dispensation. That the blessings promised to Abraham were sealed to the infants in circumcision, and therefore the blessings of the new dispensation are sealed to the infant by baptism. Mr. W. also argued that as the Abraham's Covenant was an everlasting Covenant, it still continues in force, and as it embraced children

then it should do so now, that changing the seal from circumcision to baptism did not in any way invalidate the covenant. To show the necessity, or reasonableness of infant baptism, he proceeded to state that mankind is under a twofold curse; deprived by actual transgression, and deprived by nature. That although infants had not committed personal sin, their nature was depraved in consequence of Adam's transgression, therefore they required regeneration, and he further stated that they were renewed or regenerated to God by the Holy Spirit, and therefore the seal of baptism should be placed upon them. Just here he got somewhat mixed by stating that young infants were pure, as pure as the angels of God, and therefore on account of their purity should be baptized. From these two opposite theories he was not able to extricate himself during the debate, in fact he had three theories, namely the two stated above and a third, that infants were saved whether baptized or not. To the latter theory Bro. Harding did not object, only adding that the infant needed to be saved, but was already saved. On the latter part of the proposition, "Infant Baptism has been practised since Apostolic times." He found that infant baptism was mentioned by Tertullian, A.D. 209. And then "supposed" that it might have been handed down from John to Polycarp, and from Polycarp to others and so on. In this as in the former part of the proposition his speech was full of assumptions, presumptions, inferences, possibilities, and suppositions. We have now given the central points from which Mr. W. wished to prove infant baptism. He contented to the fact that verse "Suffer little children to come unto me, etc." did not refer to baptism because Christ's baptism had not yet been instituted. This was a sore trial for many Pedobaptists present, who had so often quoted with reverence the Saviour's own words, as proof for the unscriptural practice. It was also a great disappointment to many that he did not show from the household baptisms mentioned that there were, or might possibly have been infants in the families referred to, because many of the preachers present had often claimed to have done so, and what they could do Mr. W. ought to be able to do also. But he carefully avoided any reference to them. "In fact he did not claim that the scriptures afforded any example of, or direct precept for infant baptism, but said that the proposition only required him to show that infant baptism was practiced from Apostolic times, not back into Apostolic times, which was virtually admitting that the Apostles left no record of it being practiced during their time. As to church Historians and Bible Commentators, Mr. Wilkinson would have very little to say about them, because they were almost without exception against his theories; testifying that "the Church" had brought in infant baptism long after the Apostles were dead. He admitted that many Pedobaptists freely conceded that the scriptures did not teach anything concerning the practice.

We have now given the main arguments and assumptions brought forward by Mr. W. in affirming this proposition, our readers will observe that he has brought forward no clear or satisfactory proof for the practice. For this he is not to blame, because the Bible is silent on the question. What we find fault with, is, that he endeavors to make the people believe that they should sprinkle water on infants in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

and call it christian baptism, when no trace in Holy Writ can be found for it, neither precedent, command, inference, supposition nor reason can be given for it. No benefits, privileges, blessings or rights are conferred by it to those who receive it.

No curse or condemnation is pronounced upon, nor has sustained by the infant upon whom this ceremony is not practised.

In the next number we will give some of the arguments advanced by Bro Harding in opposing the above theories. J.C.W.

DEBATE WITH INFIDELITY.

ED'S WORKER.

A discussion will take place in Orient Hall, Welland, beginning on Tuesday evening, March 3rd at 7.30 between Elder Aaron Walker, Editor of the Christian Foundation, of Koko, Ontario, Indiana, and G. Watts, infidel, of Toronto.

The debate will occupy seven sessions of two hours each, closing on Thursday night, March 5th.

The writer met the officers of the Free Thought Association, in the town of Welland, Feb. 5th, and arranged the preliminaries as far as possible and the following agreement was made.

It is hereby agreed by and between Elder H. B. Sherman on behalf of Christianity, and John Ray on behalf of Free Thought, that a public debate shall take place in the town of Welland, between Elder Aaron Walker, Esq., of Indiana, and Charles Watts, Esq., Toronto. The debate to commence on Tuesday evening, the 3rd of March next, and to continue for three days at least. The subjects for debate shall be such as will cover the issues between Christianity and Free Thought. The ordinary rules regulating public discussions of this kind will govern the proceedings.

Signed H. B. SHERMAN, JOHN RAY.

Feb. 5th, 1885. We desire to say that ample hotel accommodation can be had for all that desire to attend.

This discussion will be watched with great interest, as it is the first attempt to call the infidel to account, and we feel sure that the christian religion is in safe hands, when Bro. Walker is at the helm. Bro. Walker sends the following proposition, which he will affirm during his alternative of the debate:

"The christian religion as set forth in the scriptures of the old and new Testaments, is worthy of acceptance by all rational human beings as true."

This you will observe, presents a fair issue, as it contains the very thing which infidel deny.

I have not yet reviewed Mr. Watts affirmative proposition, but I have the promise of it in a few days.

The brethren everywhere may rest assured that the debate will come off as above stated, unless something unforeseen hinders, I will gladly answer all inquiries for those who will send stamp for reply. Already the letters of inquiry are pouring in, and I give this full notice as an answer to the many to whom it is impossible to write. Welland is on the Welland R. R., and can be reached easily by the C.S.R.R., G.T.R.R. or G.W.R.R.

Fraternally, H.B. SHERMAN, Beamsville, Feb. 6th; 1885.

DEAR BRO. WHITEHEAD,

We have been having the best meetings during the past four weeks ever held in the Fourth and Plum st. meeting house. The weather has been greatly against us but we have had good hearings right along

and thirty-six additions thus far with good prospects for more. Nearly all of these additions were from families not previously connected with the Church. It is the most we ever had at one meeting as we do not countasmuch on protracted efforts for additions as many churches do. More than half of our additions since I came here have been brought out in our regular meetings under the preaching of home talent and I am told that nearly all the additions in the earlier days came in that way.

We had nine additions at the mission just previous to the debate at Meaford, so this makes in all forty-five baptisms quite recently. Bro Harding does not wear out, as many evangelists unfortunately do. He has held six series of meetings for us within four years and every time he came among us we liked him better, and he did better work.

Our Bible reading suggestion worked wonderfully well. Just about all the members are at it and a great many outside have taken it up as well. There are about 500 people as nearly as I can learn reading the same chapters simultaneously.

We are getting out plans for another city mission, which we hope to build early in the spring, and we are also carrying on quite a successful mission out in the country, about an hours ride by rail. We have a little congregation of a dozen members started, and a good interest in the community.

Times have been exceedingly dull in this city this winter, and as a result much poverty exists among the laboring classes. To help those around us the sisters have been quietly doing some very effective, and systematic work, chiefly among families whose children attend the Sunday Schools. They meet twice a week at the church and sew and fix over old clothing, etc., contributed by the members and they have made many a child, as well as grown up people comfortable during the inclement weather we have had. This practical exhibition of Christianity is reaping fruit already. We believe in working and the Lord is wonderfully blessing us in his work.

Affectionately yours, A. T. TROUT, Detroit, Mich.

CHURCH MANNERS.

While we are upon this subject we wish to call attention to two matters in which the majority of congregations might easily improve their manners and add to the impressiveness of the services. It is a common habit when the audience are to stand during the singing of a hymn to wait until the first line is begun, and then ruin the verse by the confusion of the rising. Again during the latter part of the last verse the clattering of books into the pew racks before the close of the song is a serious interference with all devotional effect, and especially so when that opportunity is seized for the putting on of wraps, rubbers, etc. No one would do this during the closing sentences of a prayer; why should it be done during the inscription of praise to God? Hundreds, yea thousands of people thus thoughtlessly mar the song-worship in the sanctuary. Musical Herald.

NEWS ITEMS.

I am now in a meeting at Stratford, three persons made the good confession last night and were baptized. A. Scott, Feb. 10.

On Monday Feb. 15, one made the good confession and was baptized the same hour of the day at Ephraim. J.C.W.

Bro Lediard is fully employed at Ridgeway, the field is a large one and Bro L. is young and strong.

Bro. C. J. Lister is now at Cobourg.

It is announced that Bro S. M. Jefferson, late editor of The Disciple, of Cincinnati, will soon enter the foreign field as evangelist to Africa.

The Guide Publishing Co. send us samples of a new edition of The Popular Hymns, suitable for Gospel meetings. They are of convenient shape, with strong paper cover and wire stitching. Price \$15.00 per hundred. The Popular Hymns have had a wonderful sale, and are really an excellent selection.

Bro Sherman sends notice of the coming debate at Welland. Read it.

Bro. Hertzog speaks encouragingly of the work at Welland.

We publish a private letter from Bro. Treat of Detroit. The brethren there are to be commended for working so harmoniously, and it must be encouraging to the preaching brethren there to have the sympathy and assistance of the congregation, in so many places the brethren give no encouragement or assistance, to local or home talent which is almost the only talent by which new churches can be successfully planted and cared for until they are able to go alone. A committee of three, Bros. Trout, Sanderson and Gray, arranged a course of daily scripture reading for the Church, by which they read the Bible through in one year.

The following excellent compendium of what a house of worship should be, is from an English paper: "Free from all draughts, free from all obstructions, from all false doctrine, free to all men, and free from all debt."

AUSTRALIA.—D. A. Evans writes to the Gospel Advocate and says: "The number of disciples in the colonies is about 7,300, distributed as follows:—Victoria, 3,500, South Australia 1,500, New South Wales 500, Queensland 200, Tasmania 400, New Zealand 1,200. These figures are if anything below the mark.

Probably, including scattered Disciples, there are fully 8,000 in good standing. There are about 130 churches, and some 26 evangelists. The cause is steadily advancing. At her last annual meeting Victoria reported net increase of over 600, and probably the net increase every year now approaches 1,000 for all the colonies."

Stratford, Feb. 9th, '85. Spent yesterday with the young church here, took the confession of one candidate in the evening. There are 3 or 4 others awaiting baptism, having been brought out through the labours of Bro. Macklin. Several others are almost persuaded. I wish some of our brethren would come here and take from the brethren a few lessons on how to get ready for a good meeting. Bro. Scott will continue the meetings. There is a bright outlook for a large gathering.

THOS. L. FOWLER