

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.

This paper, while not claiming to be what is styled an "organ," may be taken as fairly representing the people known as Disciples of Christ in this country.

Results of the Controversy.

I. H. GRUBBS.

I close here the discussion on the design of baptism, as far as I am concerned, by stating the results which appear to me to have been clearly gained. Let it be borne in mind that the controversy did not originate in somebody's statement of his position and another's attack on that position, but grew out of the false charge that the teaching of our brotherhood on this subject involves an "unspiritual and mechanical" view of the gospel and fosters the spirit of "legalism" and a belief in a supposed "sacramental efficacy" in the ordinance. In opposition to this it was clearly shown that the injurious charge confounded two things that are the irreconcilable opposites of each other. Intelligent belief in baptism for the remission of sins necessarily involves belief in salvation by grace, in justification by faith and a repudiation of all legalistic pretensions to a self-righteous ground of acceptance with God. The need of forgiveness is the need of divine grace, and baptism apprehended as a condition of forgiveness, divinely appointed as such, is the penitent's contrite petition for the pardoning mercy of God. Legalistic reliance on self-righteousness is the very opposite of this. The clear enunciation of this contrast and consequent refutation of this unjust and damaging charge above referred to was the first result of this discussion.

Connected with this was the refutation of another charge as to a supposed consequence of our position on this subject, which will be more conveniently set forth further on. Just at this stage of the controversy one of the editors of the *Christian Evangelist*, in which periodical the discussion had thus far been exclusively conducted, requested the writer of these lines to furnish a more elaborate consideration of this subject in a Quarterly article, which was accordingly done. In this article it was demonstrated, in the judgment of thoughtful men, that "a man is saved by grace, is justified by faith, when he is baptized for the remission of sins, and being thus baptized, his act stands in thorough contrast both with Pharisaic legalism and Romish sacramentalism." In reference to this the *Christian Evangelist* spoke in the following generous terms: "This position clearly gained, the whole ground-

work of the opposition to our teaching on the design of baptism gives way. This [the supposed legalism of our teaching] is the Gibraltar of the combined opposition of all the larger Protestant bodies to the doctrine of baptism for remission of sins. If Prof. Grubbs does not capture it, and that too with Pauline guns, we are not able to judge of the strength of an argument." Yet there appeared about this time a series of elaborate and pretentious articles which, instead of manifesting appreciation like that of the *Evangelist* of the service done to truth in showing the relation of baptism to grace and faith in the act of justification, brought against our teaching the charge of "rationalism" which was repeated *ad nauseam*—a charge as completely the reverse of the truth as that which had been previously refuted. The gifted Plattenburg fitly characterized those articles and gave a searching and satisfactory review. Meanwhile an esteemed personal friend wrote for the *Christian Standard* what he called "a review" of the Quarterly article, and thus transferred to that paper the controversy, so far as my connection with it was concerned. This brother, Prof. Shackelford, made no effort to answer a single argument of the Quarterly article, but made an issue as to its teaching, and contended on the basis of Acts x. 43 and other Scriptures, that a man is "justified by faith when he exercises faith," and thus "receives remission of sins" before he is "baptized into Christ."

Now let the reader notice carefully the exact issue here made before we proceed further with this history and bring to light the additional results of the discussion. The question is not about the possibility or probability of divine mercy for earnest believers who have made mistakes on account of unfortunate surroundings. The only point at issue is this: When men come to Christ through faith and baptism, do they "receive remission of sins" through faith when "baptized into Christ" by faith, or before they are thus baptized? It is thus important to determine the question and to determine it from the teaching of the Scriptures, that we may in our preaching tell men when they may rightfully claim the divine promise, and not substitute for this our own speculations and opinions touching the religious condition and prospects of the "pious unimmersed." We have received no commission of this sort, nor have we been authorized to force a meaning into the Word of God from our own conclusions respecting any supposed claims of human piety upon the favor of God.

In our effort then to learn from the Scriptures, and from them only, what the will of the Lord is in this matter, appeal was made to them under the sure guidance of certain undeniable laws of interpretation, which are but axioms of common sense applied to usage, to show that the position maintained in the Quarterly article is the only one consistent with the harmonious utterances of the divine Word. These laws, so far from being called in question, have been passed by in utter silence, and the conclusions reached under their application must, therefore,

be regarded as established. As a consequence my last opponent in his last article in the *Standard* completely abandons the one only issue between us and goes off into a discussion of the religious condition of sincere believers who are involved more or less in error on this subject—a question that has no logical connection with the issue that has all along been under consideration. Of this we have more to say in a moment.

Now those who have thoughtfully followed the discussion step by step will recognize as a second very important result of the controversy the ascertainment of the relation which trust sustains to "the obedience of faith" in an earnest compliance with the conditions of remission as divinely appointed. This, like the relation of obedience to grace, can not be too strongly emphasized. Yet it seems to have been almost, if not altogether, overlooked in the discussions on this subject. One may have full faith in the ability and willingness of a benefactor to bestow a promised blessing, but when that benefactor has imposed conditions of this bestowment, who of those who understand the promise and see the conditions of its fulfillment, have a right to trust for the actual reception of the blessing, apart from a compliance with those conditions? If a wealthy and benevolent man says to a needy beggar: "Come to my house and I will give you a check for a thousand dollars, what right would the latter have to trustingly expect the actual bestowment of the promised gift without a compliance with the stipulated condition? And so when Jesus says to all who hear the gospel, "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved," how can men properly rely on the actual fulfillment of this promise apart from submission to these requirements? In contending then for the necessity of obedience in order to the reception of divine blessing we show ourselves to be the people who emphasize with special propriety the faith of trust. We believe in this form of faith because we believe with James that "faith without works is dead, being alone."

And in this connection, too, of divine promises with the divinely appointed conditions of their fulfillment is based, as we have clearly seen, the "divine assurance" of this fulfillment. The demonstration of this constitutes the third important result of the controversy. It was assumed in the article which gave rise to this discussion and has apparently often been supposed that the representation of baptism as giving "assurance of remission" is a modification of the view of the ordinance originally defended. The supposition is as thoughtless as it is untrue. There has been no deviation from our early position on this subject. Some of its advocates may not always have been happy in their expressions when handling the question, but they could, nevertheless, perceive the truth with more or less distinctness, and their real position was as demonstrably correct in the early stages of our movement as it is to-day. "Baptism for the remission of sins" involves "a blessed assurance" of that remission simply and alone because of its con-

nection with that blessing through the divine promise. How in the name of reason could baptism convey this "assurance" in any other way? If a man comes rightly and intelligently to the ordinance and has already evidence of pardon previously received, baptism would come too late to give the "assurance" in possession beforehand. And if he has already received forgiveness without evidence of this fact he could not find it in his baptism on account of a lack of connection between the ordinance and the blessing independently received. No, it is through the divinely appointed connection of the ordinance with the blessing on the basis of an infallible promise that baptism involves "a blessed assurance of remission," and we can not see how the ordinance could otherwise stand connected with the assurance. Jesus said, "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved." He, then, who truly complies with these conditions has the evidence of pardon on the ground of an unfulfilling promise as conditionally connected with these requirements of our Lord.

Finally, we mention as the fourth result of this discussion the refutation of the charge made in its beginning, that our position on this subject involves the condemnation of those who piously strive to do the divine will, but who have been led into error as to the act of Christian baptism through the influence of a defective religious education. It certainly exhibits a strange conception of God to represent him as absolutely powerless to save any under any circumstances who are not contemplated in a promise connected with conditions of his own appointment. I fully agree with Bro. Shackelford that "baptism was made for man and not for God," and this very sentiment ought to have shown him that I am not "inconsistent" in regarding baptism as an appointed condition of forgiveness, and yet supposing forgiveness possible for many who have been misguided in their sincere effort to do the whole will of their Lord. Yet this concession does not spread out over all creation and include such as see the truth demonstrated and through unreasonable prejudice misrepresent it and reject it with scorn. My argument speaks only of those "who would rejoice in doing the whole will of God as increasing light might show them the way." And I have elsewhere clearly shown that to argue from God's promise to save A and B, that therefore he is unable to save C and D, is to fall fallaciously into what logicians call "an illicit process." Is not the mercy of God infinitely broader than any covenant that has ever been made? Are not all infants saved through "the uncovenanted mercy of God?" And right here I must be permitted to say that I have no respect whatever for the needless, not to say senseless, prejudice against this expression that has been manifested by some writers. The ridicule that has been heaped upon it and upon the idea it embodies only intensifies my disrespect for such procedure.

But now while it does not require a covenant with man or a promise to him to clothe God with the power of salva-

tion, we are not, on the other hand, to determine his will as to the method in which he proposes to bestow this blessing by our own opinions respecting the condition of men under the present unscriptural state of the religious world. Still less have we any right to reject anything clearly taught in the Scriptures on account of our own deductions as to supposed consequences resulting therefrom, especially when such deductions are as illogical as the one which has just been exposed. To do so is not to act the part of believers but of unteachable rationalists. We must learn the will of God from his own divine Word, and learning that will must faithfully teach it to others, leaving him to look after consequences, and persistently refusing to substitute for his teaching any of our own speculations and uncertified opinions.

As this discussion, so far as I stand connected with it, has partly been in the *Christian Evangelist* and partly in the *Christian Standard*, I send this concluding article to both papers.—*Christian Evangelist.*

Fallen Asleep.

Only a little dust—
So small that a rose might hide it;
And I trust in God—or I try to trust,
When I kneel in the dark beside it.
I kneel in the dark and say:
I only dream that I weep;
She would not leave me and go away—
She has only fallen asleep.

Fallen Asleep, as oft
She climbed to my heart to rest—
Her white arms twining my neck, as soft
As down on a dove's sweet breast.

Tenderly—unawares,
Sleep came in the waning light
And kissed her there on the twilight stair
That leads to the morning light.

And that she will wake I know,
And smile at a grief like this;
It could not be she would leave me so,
With never a good-night kiss.

So I kneel in the dark and say:
I only dream that I weep;
She would not leave me and go away—
She has only fallen asleep.

—FRANK L. STANTON.

Whisky is responsible for a great deal of wretchedness and crime in the world and there is no doubt that people would be better off without it. Every day almost the long list of the victims of King Alcohol is swelled by the addition of some unfortunate man or woman. Doran's murder of his child and his own suicide form a terrible object lesson of the evils of drink, and show what may happen to those who permit themselves to be controlled by their habits. It always seems like battering one's head against a stone wall to preach about the folly of intemperance, while all over the world the breweries and distilleries are busy turning out casks and bottles night and day. Will the time ever come when the manufacture of liquor will be prohibited by law and men will be protected from themselves?—*Hamilton Herald.*

"God nothing does nor suffers to be done"
But thou would'st do thyself, if thou could'st see
The end of all things here as well as He.