

Christian Worker.

"WORK WHILE IT IS CALLED TODAY."

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CENTRES. OUR NUMBER.

The example of the Apostles is of great value to us of these modern times. We should be imitators of them in doctrine, in zeal, and in labor. In fact in all respects were their manner of life comes in contact with ours. It is proposed, briefly to call attention here to one of the characteristics of their work. It is that they us to centres, of large cities. For example, Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Rome, Philippi, Thessalonica, were diligently cultivated and the cause of Christ well established in them, in the very beginning. No doubt the apostles in so doing, acted as "they were moved by the Holy Spirit." If, therefore, we wish to be primitive and apostolic, and scriptural, we should seek to become firmly established in prominent and popular places.

It is not necessary to argue the wisdom of such a course; it being apostolic it must be wise. Yet one might pause to observe that the sun is in the centre of the solar system, and not off to one side; and we shall be wise if we imitate the creator, and place ourselves in the centres of influence, and of population.

In the Province of Ontario speaking generally, the Disciples of Christ are conspicuous by their absence from the cities and large towns. In the capital of the Province we are "a feeble folk," and will continue to be until some energetic measures are adopted and carried out. It is a question of work. The truth will not work alone. It has pleased God to commit it to the hands of men; and if men are unfaithful, the interests of the truth suffer.

Toronto is becoming more and more every year a centre commercially, educationally, and religiously. It is of the highest moment that we should be well represented there. In order to that a properly situated, and equipped meeting-house is a necessity. It may be news to many of the brethren, that the Disciples do not own a single house in Toronto—a city of say, 100,000 inhabitants. But such is the fact, yes, the lamentable fact. The brethren who meet in the West End meet, and need a house of their own. They are unable of themselves to secure one; the brethren in the Province at large are able. The course is plain. Let us be "fellow workers" with them. It is scarcely necessary to enlarge upon the good results that would certainly, and speedily follow the erection of such a house.

Young brethren and sisters going to the city to be educated would find a pleasant and profitable church home, and would carry with them from the city to their life work, the enthusiasm of an active and successful congregation. As things now are the probability is, that if not discouraged, they will be alienated, and many have been, from the Disciples of Christ.

Let us be primitive in all things, and then we shall prevail. Gore Bay, July 6th '85.

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH— CONFESSIONS OF OPINION.

After all that has been said on this subject, there is not a sect in this country, of which we have heard, that has a confession of faith, properly so called. They have books and pamphlets, which they call by this name, and by which they impose upon themselves and upon one another. If it be not too late, we would give them a true and proper name, a name which we are assured every man of good sense and of common education must approve, as well as agree to discard the common name as a misnomer, as incorrect, and as absurd. The proper name of those instruments is, doubtless, according to the English language, A Confession of Opinion, or Confessions of Opinions. If there be any difference between faith and opinion, (and that there is, all languages and dictionaries declare), then the name we have given them is perfectly *apropos*, and their common name perfectly incongruous.

All writers on faith, properly so called, define it to be, "The belief of testimony, either human or divine." And opinion is, "the notion, judgment, or view which the mind forms of anything." For example, I believe the testimony which God has given of Jesus of Nazareth, or I believe that Jesus of Nazareth, is the Messiah, the Son of the living God. This is a well attested fact. In proof of which the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit have given, or agree in one testimony. Concerning this person, his mission, and character, various opinions may be formed. All things testified of him are articles or items of belief; and all views, judgments, or notions formed of the things testified, are matters of opinion. Now all the abstract views of God and man, of things present and future, with which these confessions are replete are matters of opinion; and as the general character of these books should fix upon them their name, they should be styled Confessions of Opinions. To speak philosophically, I believe what is testified, I know what I have observed or experienced, and I am of opinion in all things speculative. It is true, in one sense, I may be said to know what I have believed, when my faith has been proved by observation and experience. But the terms faith, knowledge, and opinion, should never be confounded. I believe that Jesus Christ died for our sins, I know that the sun gives us light, and I am of opinion that all infants dying shall be saved.

A person's faith is always bounded by testimony; his knowledge by observation and experience; and his opinions commence where both these terminate, and may be boundless as God's creation or as human invention. Perfect freedom and liberty should be granted to all opinions. The faith of Christians should be guarded and circumscribed by the revelation of God; and every man's knowledge admitted to be co-extensive with his observation and experience. In matters of

this world those distinctions are realized and acted upon every day. A killed B. C believes it, D knows it, and E is of opinion that A killed B. C believes it to be true, because three credible persons have sworn that they saw him do it. D, one of the three witnesses, knows it to be true, because he saw it done. And E, who neither heard the testimony nor saw the deed, but from some circumstances detailed to him, is of opinion that it is true. These distinctions are, we presume, evidently correct. A superficial reader may object that Thomas is said to have believed what he saw. But those who attend to all the circumstances will see that he believed the testimony which he had before heard, when certain evidences were presented to his eyes. In this sense the term may, by even correct speakers, be often used. But enough is said to suggest a train of reflections which must issue in the conviction that our confessions of faith, are confessions of opinions, and as such ought to have nothing to do with the union, communion, and harmony of Christians. "There is one faith," says the apostle; but no where in the volume is it said, There is one opinion. Every new religious establishment, founded upon one opinion, will come to ruin, as all the past have done, and as all the present are doing. But the gates of Hades shall not prevail against those who build on the one faith, which is beautiful and properly called "the Rock."

A. CAMPBELL.

THE CONDITIONS OF AC- CEPTABLE PRAYER.

Those who approach the mercy seat of the King of kings and Lord of lords, should understand that in order to come to God acceptably, there are certain conditions that are very essential to be observed; and without the observance of which we have no assurance that God will answer our prayers.

1. We must come to God in faith. For, says the apostle, "without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Heb. xii. 6. Again, "If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the winds and tossed." James i. 5. "Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them." Mark xi. 24.

2. We must pray with proper motives—not with a covetous spirit, "ye ask and receive not because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." James iv. 3. "If any man prays for God to prosper the works of his hands with no higher motive than to satisfy his lustful desire, he has no promise that God will hear and answer his prayer."

3. We must pray according to God's will. John says, "If we ask anything according to God's

will, He heareth us." I. John v. 14.

4. We must pray with a forgiving spirit. "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and come and offer thy gift." Matt. v. 23, 24. "But if we forgive not men their trespasss, neither will our Father forgive our trespasss." Matt. vi. 15. We can not come before God in prayer, holding malice in our hearts against any one, and expect at the same time that God will forgive us. We must forgive if we expect to be forgiven.

5. We must pray and do at the same time. "Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Matt. vii. 21. Then our prayers should be coupled with obedience in order to be acceptable in the sight of God, our heavenly Father.

6. And last, our prayers should be offered through the name of Jesus. "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask and ye shall receive that your joy may be full." John xvi. 26. For there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Acts iii. 12. "Give thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Eph. v. 20. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God and the Father, by him." Col. iii. 17.

We infer from this that no Christian can come to God acceptably but through the name of Jesus Christ. And all pray that ignores the name of Jesus, are abominations in the sight of God. Hence I take the ground that the prayers laid down in the rituals of all secret organizations that know anything about are contrary to the teaching of Christ and his holy apostles, and cannot be conscientiously engaged in by any true believer in Jesus, for they ignore altogether the name of Jesus.

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—O. P. Guide.

ROGER WILLIAMS.

In point of time Williams' dated considerably before Wesley, but he was in another country and performed a very different part of the work from Wesley. He was in one of the colonies of America, the one now called the state of Rhode Island. He, with eleven other persons, from the reading of a version like the common one, with the word baptize, transferred, or anglicized, and not translated, found that John baptized in Jordan; that he "baptized in the river of Jordan" that he "baptized in Ebon, near Salem, because there was much water there;" that when Jesus was baptized: "he went up straightway out of the water;" that Philip and the officer of C. inlance "came unto a certain water;" that "they went down both into the water;" that "they came up out of the water;"

th "the disciples were said to be "buried by baptism," "buried in baptism," "planted together in the likeness of His death;" that they were "born of water and of the Spirit;" that their "bodies were washed with pure water;" and they came deliberately to the conclusion that they had never been baptized at all. The twelve went "to a certain water," and one of their number immersed Roger Williams. He then, in "turn, immersed the others.

So far as history informs us, these were the first persons immersed in the colonies of America. From this immersion commenced in that country; it has increased till about one fiftieth of the whole population are now immersionists. This will serve the purpose of a basis on which to make an estimate of the time it will require for the whole population to become immersionists. This is what is new coming, and unless some plan can be invented to stop the wheel from turning, the time will come, and that, too, at no distant day, when the whole population will be immersionists.

Williams, and those associated with him, at once commenced defending what they had done, and laboring to convince others. Immersion commenced spreading, and their number commenced increasing rapidly. This roused opposition and persecution. Their opponents, and we may say their enemies, said everything against them that could be thought of.

They called them "duckers," "dippers," "divers;" compared them to the water-fowl, animals, and everything that they thought could degrade them; asserted that they dipped people in mud-holes, drowned them, &c., &c.; but there was no stopping it. The plain reading of Scripture, the clear expressions in a translation made by spinners, carried conviction to the hearts of the people.

BENJ. FRANKLIN.

A HAPPY DISCRIMINA- TION.

The Disciples of Christ in California, Pa., where the writer is now engaged in a meeting, were some years ago holding a prayer-meeting in the town of Greenfield which is a little distance farther down the river. They had invited some members of the Methodist Church, who lived in Merchanttown, just across the river, to assist them. They came—and at the meeting, was progressing, several persons having offered prayer; the leader called for Scripture recitations. Quite a number were given by disciples who were then present; whereupon a Methodist man arose and said that he would give a recitation, but not from Scripture. He continued to speak and among other things said that he thought the time could be more profitably spent in praying than in reciting and reading Scripture.

When his speech was ended a Scotch brother arose and said that an important subject had just been mentioned, viz, how they could most profitably spend the time they might remain together; who then praying or singing ex-

clusively or in reading and reciting and setting forth the Scriptures, in connection therewith. To this he added that as it respects the ideas that it should be praying and singing rather than in reading and reciting the word of God he had, this to say,—"In prayer we talk to God; but in the Scripture, God talks to us. In view of this it seems strange that we should in a meeting like this spend all the time in talking to God and not allow him by his word to talk to us."

It is useless to inform the reader that no more speeches were made on the subject. That one happy discrimination had the happy effect of settling that question happily at rest.—Selected.

FRAGMENTS OF THOUGHT.

It is said of a Greek maiden that when asked what fortune she would bring her husband, nobly responded, "I will bring him what gold cannot purchase,—a heart unspotted and virtuous without a stain, which portion is all that descended from my parents." Let the young lady who reads this endeavor so to live that she could truthfully make a similar response to the question propounded to the Greek maiden, and let the young man who reads it solve that he will be worthy of one possessing such a heart and virtue.

How can the religion of Christ be otherwise than joyous and elevating, since it is the exercise of the noble faculties on the best, purest, holiest, sublimest objects it is possible to contemplate? Then if we consider the mysteries which the religion taught in the New Testament presents and the hopes it gives, there can evidently be but one conclusion:

The principles of exegesis adopted by many are not intended to get at the real meaning of certain Scriptures; but, to remove the difficulties which those Scriptures present to their systems of religion. Any interpretation, however absurd, will be adopted which will answer their purpose.

Truth and reason may be called "win-winners," born of God and sent from heaven to bless and guide mankind. All truth is reasonable when understood, and the truth which it is most reasonable for all to accept is that which is recorded by the eight writers of the New Testament.

The reason why preaching does not take more effect no man is not because the gospel is difficult to be understood, but because man does not appreciate his danger.

We judge both truth and error by their fruits and by the people who advocate them.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no division among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."—PAUL. If any man speak let him speak as the oracles of God."