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A GREAT ENGLISH STATESMAN  
ON THE WAR QUESTION.

The Hon. John Bright, a Quaker by birth and education, holds, naturally, strong views against war of any kind, under any circumstances. His strong common sense; the amazing command of the Queen's English which he always displays in both written and oral addresses; his elevated, unselfish principles so long-trying and always consistent—these traits have given him extraordinary influence with the Nation. A speech which he delivered recently, has been remarked upon, with varying comment of course, by the leading English papers. We give an extract:

Now seeing what was paid for the Russian war, and seeing what an entire... turned out with regard to the pretended objects which it was supposed likely to secure—for the people of England did not go into war even in their passionate moments without some idea that some good was to follow—seeing how much we have lost and how great was the crime we committed, as it not astounding there should be any man, much more than man should be in the lofty position of Prime Minister of this nation—"hear, hear," and applause—who should, by unadvised, unwise speaking, invite the nation to involve itself in any war—that may cause equal loss and equal slaughter, and that undoubtedly will result in a total failure, as did the war which we had twenty years ago. (Loud applause, and a voice, "She is against war.") It is the same story now, just as it was in those days, that Russia is an aggressive Power, I am afraid almost all Powers, as opportunity offers, have been aggressive; but he would be a most ingenious calculator who could show that there was any Power in the world that during the last 100 years has been more aggressive than that Power of which we in this meeting form a humble and small party. It is said now, as it was said then, that Russia was aggressive, that Russia intended to conquer Turkey, to capture and hold Constantinople, and to dominate alike over Europe and over Asia. There was not the slightest proof of it at all—the proof was the other way. At this moment you are told that Russia is aggressive; there is not the slightest proof of it. (Hear.) Russia from the beginning of these disturbances has made the most distinct and frank offers as to the terms on which the Russian Government and people believe that peace might be made to the enormous and permanent advantages of the Christian Subjects of the Porte. (Applause.) It is said now, as it was said then, that Turkey was the safe keeper of the Straits of Bosphorus and the Dardanelles—that is, the straits which leads from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. The Port held those straits for 300 years, and would not allow any mercantile ship to pass through them; and it was only by the power of Russia, and by a treaty with Russia after the war with Russia, that these straits were opened to the navigation of the mercantile ships of the world. (Applause.) No doubt the time will come and must come when these straits will be opened not only to mercantile ships but to the ships of the navies of all the nations of the world. (Cheers.) At that time it was said that England's interests were at stake; interests in India and interests in the Levant. There was no proof of it then, there is no proof of it now. Of all the speakers in public, of all writers in the press who have written against Russia in this matter and in favour of Turkey and in favour of war, there is no one who is able to lay down accurately and distinctly any kind of proof that the interests or honour of England were concerned in the course we have taken

with regard to this Great Eastern question. (Cheers.) The nations that are nearer to Russia are not afraid of her. Germany is a powerful country, and Austria is powerful, though less powerful than Germany. But both of them, having interests as direct and as clear as any interests that we can pretend to have, yet can be tranquil. They do not go into a passion; their Prime Ministers do not speak what I call rhodomontade and balderdash. (Loud cheers.) They do not blow the trumpet and call the nations to arms for purely fancied causes like this, in which (I say it with as much sincerity as ever I have said anything in my life), in which we have not as much interest as would justify us in sending one single man to slaughter. ("Hear, hear," and cheers.) But I hope and I believe that out of this matter there will not be war.

THE *Canadian Methodist Magazine* does us the honour of copying our letter on Bermuda almost entirely. We are sorry they were not more worthy of its pages. Written partly on shipboard, and at intervals of hurried travel, they were merely designed for cursory reading. Our thanks are also due to several journals which have kindly noticed those letters.

The prospectus of the Fifth Volume promises great things. Among the contents will be a steel portrait and sketch of the Rev. Gervase Smith, M.A.; a charming serial story, entitled "The Days of Wesley"; Sketches of the Heroes of Early Methodism, by the Editor; Papers by Dr. Wm. Cooke, solving the mysterious problem of the Great Pyramid; Religious and Missionary Biography; valuable Essays and sketches by the leading minds and skilled writers of the Methodist Church; Book Reviews; Papers on Popular Science; Articles on Practical Religion and the Higher Christian Life; a page of choice music with each number, and many other valuable articles. This is the only Magazine in Canada giving steel engravings. This is a remarkable bill of fare for the low price of \$2.00. Methodist families, at least, should support this vigorous Connexion Monthly. The January number will be ready for Christmas.

DIPHTHERIA STILL.—This disease continues to carry off large numbers of victims, especially in some rural districts. We would like to see, in tabulated form, the relative success or failure of medical men in treating diphtheria. It is very certain that some doctors can cure a large proportion of the cases for which they are called in. Is there a professional privilege by which this knowledge is retained to the disadvantage of human life? Or are inexperienced doctors unwilling to ask favours of this kind from others? The *Witness* of last week says, very justly:—

Diphtheria is painfully prevalent in Halifax, as well as in the rural districts. If small-pox or Asiatic cholera were destroying a tenth of the victims of diphtheria, the whole country would be in a panic. Somehow, there is almost a fatalistic helplessness in dealing with the prevailing scourge. Some doctors will declare that it is not contagious, and this prevents due care in isolating the sick. In some districts the feeling prevails that it is incurable, and this leads to neglect in the use of the proper means. Families of eight or ten often lose six or seven members! Sometimes the old fall victims, but more commonly the young are affected. It is surely not creditable to the medical faculty that a disease so old, so well defined, and so easily studied, should still prove so unmanageable.

HOW GOOD DEEDS TRAVEL.—Nothing is more pleasing to the British people than the record of brave actions. Willie Francis is going the rounds of the English papers. We give one of the instances, the remarks taken, as will be seen, at second-hand. It is from a prominent London newspaper. Other papers in England have copied the details from the *WESLEYAN*.

A Gentleman writes to the Spectator to narrate a case of heroism that occurred in Nova Scotia a little while ago. Two little boys were fishing from a wharf, when one of them fell into the sea. The other, named William Francis, who had arrived at the mature age of nine years, jumped in after him, swam fifty yards in the face of the tide and in a heavy rain,

which began then to fall, caught hold of his little comrade and held him till other rescuers came. The little fellow said in amusingly boyish language: "I was almost gone myself, the water was so cold; but I am glad that I did what I did and saved him. I lost my fishing line, though, and my shoes and hat, and was afraid mother would scold me, but she didn't." Sir Cooper Key, the Vice-Admiral of the Fleet in those waters, presented him with three sovereigns, and is going to try to get him a medal, which we must all hope the little boy will receive, and live long to wear.

A SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE HALIFAX DISTRICT CONVENTION IN NOV. BY REV. J. S. COFFIN.

ACTS XIX. 2.

"Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" The incident which is referred to in the beginning of this chapter, occurred in connexion with Paul's second visit to Ephesus. Amongst the various classes and characters whom he found in that great centre of concourse, were certain disciples—probably Asiatic Jews—who, many years before, had heard the preaching of St. John, and had received his baptism, believing in the coming Christ whom he preached; but who, down to the time of Paul's visit, had obtained no further instruction in the Christian religion. Observing the indications of their defective piety, the Apostle put to them this question, preparatory to their more complete instruction in the mystery of godliness, and their more efficient investiture with divine peace and power, such as the baptism of the Holy Ghost so soon secured to them.

And, how great was that change in these disciples, which resulted from this holy anointing! If they were whom we have supposed them to be, twenty-six years had elapsed, since the "voice in the wilderness" awakened them to efforts to bring forth fruits meet for repentance. For twenty-six wearisome years, impressed and convinced, they "vainly hoped and strove" for peace and power; until, at length, the day of liberty dawned, when, guided by the watchful providence of God, Paul came, and preached to them Jesus; and then, at that prayer of faith and love, the intensity of which is so vividly portrayed by the expression, "When he had laid his hands upon them," their darkness was dispersed; and "in might of power and light of truth divinely bright," the Holy Ghost came, transforming their hearts, and making them "mighty in signs and wonders," by his own Almighty energy.

And, brethren, is the fear unwarrantable, that amongst those who name the name of Christ, there are many who serve only with the fear which hath torment, having never attained unto "the gospel hope, the sense of sins forgiven?" Or who, having known the joy of pardoning love, have lapsed therefrom: and now, have only, amid their heart aches, the remembrance of the "peaceful hours they once enjoyed," "when the candle of the Lord shined upon their head, and His secret was upon their tabernacle?"

I desire to speak to you of the Witness of the Holy Spirit to our pardon, as the present and abiding privilege of every believer in Jesus; and to note some of the evidences of the possession of this divine assurance.

1. That it is the privilege of the child of God, to have some inward consciousness of the divine pardon, few will deny. Under the Old Testament dispensation, which, in point of knowledge and advantage were so greatly inferior to the Gospel day; we find that the worthies who lived therein, had the most explicit assurance of the favor of their God. I need mention only the names of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, David, amongst scores of others that might be cited, to recall to your memory, facts which abundantly confirm this statement. So also, in connection with the former times; we find almost numberless inspired utterances, which, in the most definite manner, declare the possession of the heart-knowledge of the favor of God—such joyous and triumphant expressions as that of Isaiah, "O Lord I will praise thee, for though thou wast angry with me, &c." (Isa. 62: 1, 3). Coming to the New Testament, we find Paul declaring, "Therefore being justified by faith, &c. Rom. 5:

1, 3. And once more, Peter speaking of the final appearing of the Saviour, says, "Whom having not seen ye love, &c. 1 Peter, 1: 8, 9. The force of these facts and utterances, is very apparent; and they establish the position, that the true believer is assured of his present interest in the pardoning grace of God; and that this certain knowledge is obtained by him, not merely by some logical process of reasoning, but by an inward and heaven-born communication, made immediately to his heart. But how can such testimony be given, save by some supernatural agency, directly controlled by God? The act of pardon, is one which is passed in heaven; it is a secret, deeply buried in the Father's heart, and in the very nature of the case, can never be known to us, but at the Father's will, and through the medium of some spiritual agency under His direction. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so, the things of God, knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." (1 Co. 2: 11.) If, therefore, the Holy Ghost do not assure our conscience of its part in its Redeemer's blood," we can never experience inward peace or joy, but must go forward under a burden of doubt and sorrow. But that the believer does not so live in anxious uncertainty as to his true state, but experiences a delightful conviction of his pardon, both human experience, and the Word of God emphatically assert and confirm. Therefore, it is proven, that this assurance is given to us directly by the Spirit of God.

And that such communication of this blessed fact is thus made directly and immediately to the believer, is verified, by the positive assertions of Scripture. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, &c. Rom. 8: 15, 16. Now, a "Witness" is no inferential deduction, however logical in its processes; it is a direct, implicit testimony, given with the greatest care and distinctness. And exactly according with this passage, is that in the epistle to the Galatians, "But when the fulness of the time was come, &c." Gal. 4: 4, 6. No language could have been chosen, to point out with greater plainness, that the testimony of God, to the fact of our forgiveness, is imparted to us, with unerring directness and precision, by the Holy Ghost Himself.

There is one other passage which I will quote in this connexion, because of its evident bearing upon the event recorded in the paragraph of which my text is a part. Eight years after this occurrence, Paul wrote a letter from Rome, to this same Church; in which epistle, referring no doubt to this very circumstance, he says:—"In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, &c." in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest, &c. Eph. 1: 13, 14. What language could more clearly declare the truth, of the immediate agency of the Spirit of God, attesting to the gracious reception of the Father?

I have thus sought to lead you into such examination of the Scripture, touching this matter, as will serve to show clearly, the meaning of the term "The Witness of the Spirit." You have seen that this witness consists in a satisfactory persuasion and feeling, wrought by the Holy Ghost in the heart of the believer, of God's pardoning love; by which testimony, thus borne, our shy distrust is banished; our fears silenced; our painful anxieties removed, and our souls filled with a grateful sense of our unspeakable obligation to his redeeming love and goodness.\*

It may be asked by some—"How do you explain this phenomenon? What philosophy have you to advance concerning it?" I can only reply that while, in our present state, we apprehend spiritual facts, in their effects, the mode is beyond our scrutiny. It is one of those doctrines which we cannot comprehend, but are yet required to believe. Nor is there anything abject in such submission of human reason, more than is required in regard to thousands of facts in physical nature. The attractions and repulsions which hold and govern the universe; the wind that "bloweth where it listeth;" the blade of grass

springing from the earth; the mysterious margin at which the will meets and grasps the muscles of the body; connected with all these is a line which marks the extreme verge of our researches; and with all our boasted vigor of intellect, we are compelled to accept this for our quietus; "It is so, because it is so." And, concerning the great doctrine of the Witness of the Spirit, in its essence, it is not given to us to unravel the mystery. I cannot tell how the Holy Ghost comes in direct and blessed contact with my poor fallen polluted Spirit, driving away my darkness and sin, and shedding abroad his own light and love; I do not know how he does it, but I know it is done! Yes, all praise to his name! I know it is done!

2. The passages already quoted, and the arguments advanced have rendered it unnecessary that I should do more than glance at the fact, that this divine assurance is the privilege of every believer.

That it is the prerogative of only a favored few, and granted to these only at the very close of life, are so manifestly mere assumptions, repugnant to every syllable of the Word of God which treats at all of the doctrine, that it would seem almost like trifling with your time and patience were I to tarry to discuss such points. As truly as pardon, regeneration, adoption, and sanctification are parts of the common salvation, so is this witness of the Spirit. Not because ye are possessed of extensive and profound knowledge; or are marked by shining moral virtues; or are singularly holy; or have hoary hairs; or are about to die; but because ye are sons.

God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts. The words of Peter to Cornelius are peculiarly appropriate here, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, &c." Acts. 10: 34, 35. In the beautiful language of the "Tongue of Fire," this witness "is the common privilege of a common faith." In the heart now throbbing for the first time under the inspiration of spiritual life, it is the same cry, as in the heart of the aged saint, on whose face is falling the light of a better world than this. Each may say, "Abba Father! my Lord and my God!"

3. This gracious assurance of our acceptance with God, is the abiding privilege of every believer.

It is a serious matter, indeed, to yield to unfaithfulness, and thereby lose our sense of acceptance with God; but it is a far more serious matter, to ascribe the results of our own perverse departure from God, to the sovereign hidings of his face; as though in the mere exercise of His will, he would ever withdraw from a faithful child, the assurance of his favor. As constantly as the Father loved the Son, and as the Son loved his disciples, were they required to "continue" and "abide" in his love. In the grace of conscious acceptance, we are permitted to "stand," and to "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." It is our gracious prerogative to "walk in the light;" and, as regards this blessed witness of the Spirit, abiding in Him, we "shall not walk in darkness." I grant that seasons of providential distress may come, when "the fig tree shall not blossom, nor the fruit be in the vine. When the labor of the olive shall fail, and the field yield no meat; when the cattle shall be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stall;" yet even then, amid all our withered joys, and wrecked hopes, and ruined prospects, it is our wonderful privilege to "rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of our salvation."

God is faithful to His covenant engagements and promises. He will never leave his people—no, not for a moment—while they are faithful to the conditions imposed upon them. It is true that by reason of mental disorder, the medium through which the Holy Ghost communicates to man, may become impaired or destroyed, so that such communication—at least, in this sense—shall be cut off. But apart from such cases, the truth of God teaches that, as regards the sense of divine abandonment, "The Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that He will not hear." Isa. 59: 1, 2. "The withdrawal of the Divine favour, is a chastisement for disobedience."

\*Vide, Dr. Bunting, on Justification