

immediately after, marking out the distinction among these office-bearers by the exclamation—"Are all Apostles?—are all Prophets?" &c. In confirmation of his exposition of the passage, we may refer to three very different authorities. Chrysostom translates "helps," as persons who have the care of the poor; and "governments," as persons appointed to conduct and administer spiritual affairs. Thorndike, as quoted by Dr. Miller of America, in his discourse on "Religious Assemblies," says—"There is no doubt that the men whom the Apostle, in 1 Cor. xii. 28, calls governments, were those Presbyters who preached not; for there were two parts of the Presbyter's office, viz., teaching and governing, the one whereof some attained not, even in the Apostles' times." The opinion of this High Churchman accords with that of Dr. Davidson, respecting the Congregationalists. "Every Church should be ruled by a body of elders, and we are not bound to think that all the Presbyters in the Apostles' times preached." The conclusion of the whole, as stated by Gillespie, is this, "They who have the gift and office of governing the Church, and are different from those who have other gifts and offices in the Church, can be no other than the ruling elders."—*Irish Tracts.*

THE DIVINE AND HUMAN PLANS OF SALVATION CONTRASTED.—*Concluded.*

In striking contrast with the human, stands the divine plan of salvation. The condition upon which Naaman's cure depended was, that he should "wash seven times in the Jordan." No matter what a man's *profession* and *station* in society may be; whatever may be his moral and intellectual attainments, and however rigid and severe he may be in the exercise of his religious duties, if he is to be saved at all, he must take his proper place in the dust before God. The soul must be *cleansed* and *cured* of its Leprosy, and this can only be effected by the application of the blood of Christ. Human wisdom and philosophy,—human effort and expedient are of no avail. But the gospel cure is powerfully efficacious. There is no case so desperate—no sin-leprosy so obstinate as to resist its virtue. He that would desire to be *cleansed* and *cured* must apply to the Physician, and must abide by his prescriptions. Naaman might have washed in his own native rivers, and been refreshed: but his cure depended upon his washing in the Jordan.

And so, there may exist in the mind a feeling of security: one may be *pressed* by no serious convictions, and, the adoption of some unscriptural dogmas may calm and pacify the conscience. One may fancy he is increased in goods when in reality he is blind, and naked, and in need of all things. He may hope to be saved; but Christ himself has said "not every one which 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."

Here then we have the line of distinction and of opposition drawn between the human, and the divine plan—between what man himself does, and what God has enjoined him to do, to be saved. "He that doeth the will of my Father, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." This will may be comprehended in the following brief and impressive statements. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "Repent and believe." "Without faith it is impossible to please God." To the law and to the testimony: if these speak not according to this word, there is no truth in them.

There may be mysteries in the word of God: there may be some things which baffle human wisdom, and resist the efforts of man to find out. But everything connected with the sal-

vation of the soul is so plain, that he who runneth may read. The intellect of a child can grasp all. And if men pursue false methods, it is not because of any defect in the Bible—not because its statements are obscure, and confused, but because they are either proud in their own conceits—either puffed up by worldly wisdom, or else, "the God of the world hath blinded their eyes, lest the light of the Gospel should shine into them."

"Go and wash seven times in the Jordan," was the command of Elisha, to Naaman the Leper. What can be more plain, and more explicit than this? But equally plain and explicit is the command "repent and believe." "What shall I do to be saved," was the earnest to inquiry of the trembling Jailor? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" is the striking response.

Faith and repentance are incumbent on every man; not because either, or both of these two things are the *procuring* cause of salvation, but simply because they are the conditions on which God will save him.

The eternal condition of the sinner rests with God. "Am I God," said the King of Israel, on reading the letter on Naaman's behalf, "to kill and to make alive that this man doth come unto me to recover a man of Leprosy?"

The cure of the leper depended not upon the King of Israel. The water of Jordan, possessed no healing properties. All that the Assyrian Captain could do was to follow the instruction of the prophet. The event of the cure lay with the Almighty.

And thus it is with the sinner. He may check the irregularities of his conduct—he may observe the decencies of life—he may accustom himself to fasting—he may through the intensity of his zeal, inflict upon himself the most severe penances—he may become an ascetic, and deny himself the common necessities of life—he may keep nightly vigils, and confine himself to contemplations and the rubric,—all these and a thousand other things he may do, to make an atonement for sin. But, the leprosy of the soul is not to be cured by human expedients, and priestly craft. The seat of its malady is far removed from earthly curatives. No man, nor church, nor minister can come and stand, and strike his hand over the place and recover the leprosy of the soul. Nature with her thousand beautiful and beneficent adaptations cannot do it. Nothing in the wide universe—nothing but the application of the blood of Christ can restore the poor sin-sick leper—can call up the warm gush of life into dead souls—nothing can restore him to spiritual health but the "sprinkling of the blood of the atonement." If ever the sinner is to be saved, then it must be by *this* cure. He must come rejecting all unwarrantable and unscriptural expedients—with no vain ideas of personal worthiness—with no dignified notions of worldly position and influence—with no lofty pretensions of moral attainment,—he must come as a sinner, as a beggar, as one ill deserving to be cured. He must come in the spirit of faith and say, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."

The only hopeful condition of a sinner is when he seeks to do what God has enjoined. He may be,—as has just been hinted—decent and honourable in his worldly transactions—correct in the *externals* of religion, observe with fastidious niceness the moralities of life. He may be decided in his religious opinions and ecclesiastical affinities, but unless he has had recourse to the blood of sprinkling, and has appropriated in the power and spirit of faith the righteousness of Christ, there is no alternative for him: he must die in his sins.

There is a legal meritlessness which many have dared to constitute a ground of hope for salvation. There is one stone upon which the

unsanctified architect of his own salvation has delighted to build, and that stone is *personal merit*. There is another stone which many a professing christian builder practically rejects, and that stone is *Christ*. There are a thousand and one influences—a thousand and one motives, captivating enough they may be, but of a certain destructive tendency, operating in the carnal mind, all of which conspire to set aside the sacredness and authority of the divine will in the most essential article of the plan of salvation viz. the article of the justifying righteousness of Christ, and faith appropriating that righteousness for justification.—And so long as these influences and motives, are permitted to counteract the authority of the divine will, in a matter so vitally important as this—so long, in a word, as human and divine expedients, the human and the divine will remain at practical antagonism—so long as the carnality of the heart, and the blindness of the mind, and the stubbornness of the will remain explicitly at variance with the gracious overtures of God—so long as the righteousness of the sinner, and the righteousness of Christ are opposed to each other, so long will there be not only a negative of the fitness of God's plan to save the sinner, but a full and entire want of that which every nominal believer professes to possess—a perfect and unlimited reliance upon the merits of the Redeemer.

God's thoughts are not our thoughts: neither are his ways our ways. The plan of salvation may not accord with the principles of human wisdom; it may not meet the views of those who would be wise above what is written—it may not serve the ends of a designing priesthood—it may not countenance ritual solemnities, and efficacious sacraments—it may not sanction moral observances, and bodily performances, but it answers its own end—it *saves the sinner*, levels human systems in the dust, and triumphantly asserts the wisdom of God its author.

Is salvation through the blood of Christ not sufficient, that men will append to it "efficacious sacraments," good works, penances, holy water, holy oil, holy images, confessions? Is the gospel so obscure, that it must needs be illustrated by the trickeries of a designing priesthood? Is a God reconciled in Christ never to be personally appropriated and realized but through these ghostly expedients? Is the poor heart-broken sinner to be *prevented* from falling into the outstretched arms of a pleading Christ, and in the language of the leper of old to say, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean," till he comply with these blasphemous absurdities? Never, never has any of the redeemed on earth, and never has any of the redeemed who are now circling the throne in glory been saved except through faith in the blood of Christ. And never shall there be any other way, or any other name by which men will be saved, than the way opened up in the gospel, and the name of Jesus. The promise was to our fathers, is to us, and shall be to our posterity, "whosoever believeth in the name of Jesus shall never perish but have everlasting life."

D. B.P.

Corner for the Young.

NEW YEAR ADDRESS TO THE YOUNG.

FROM PROVERBS 3. 17.

"Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

Now, my young friends, just think a little on these words. Whose ways, you ask are here spoken of? They are the ways of religion.