

3.—Because it is the very best instrument of moral culture. To establish this we do not require to disparage ethical systems produced by heathen philosophers and others as containing no truth. Some of them contained a great deal of truth. But looking over them from the days of Aristotle and Plato to the time of the latest pagan writer this may be safely said of them all that they lacked the great fundamental principle which is the backbone of Christian ethics, *viz.* an infallible standard by which to judge of right and wrong. This was their great defect. Men have looked in vain for the standard of right in self-interest, in utility, in feelings of benevolence, in pleasurable emotions, or in the *dicta* of unenlightened conscience—these are all shifting and uncertain. But the Bible reveals an infallible standard. The ultimate rule of right is God's nature. God is always right. But how can we know Him? His nature is revealed in His works and in His word, and hence we are bound to observe the laws of the physical world as well as the Ten Commandments; but in that Decalogue we have a far more perfect representation of the Divine mind, so that the Bible should be given to all men as conferring upon them immeasurable benefits did it contain nothing more than the ten commandments, the Lord's prayer and the parable of the prodigal son. But it contains infinitely more than these.

What a superlative system of ethics for our schools and our homes! By general principles and specific precepts, by a comprehensive summary in the Ten Commandments, by the lessons of inspired prophets, by the whole history of the chosen people, and by the works and words of Jesus Christ and His inspired apostles, the whole duty of man is enforced. How wrong, how criminal, therefore, on the score of morality is it to withhold this Book from the people. I tell you what you know, that to purify and elevate our commercial, political and ecclesiastical activity, what we need is the simple, old-fashioned morality of this book; by which truth means truth and lies are lies, and abominable, by whomsoever spoken. But I urge the circulation of the Book upon a higher ground than any of these.

4.—Because it reveals salvation to men. We miss the very pith and marrow of the book, we falsify its contents and its mission, unless we take this into account. From first to last it speaks of salvation to men. It tells us that this world is not the be-all and the end-all of our existence; that we have souls to be saved or lost. It testifies that there is forgiveness, and we know that we need pardon, for we have sinned. It testifies that

THERE IS SPIRITUAL AND ETERNAL LIFE IN CHRIST, and we know that we need it, for we are dead in trespasses and sin. It testifies that there is spiritual purification through the blood of the Redeemer, and we know that we need it, because we are defiled; our very righteousnesses are filthy rags, and the more rags we have the worse we are off. It testifies that there are spiritual power and liberty through the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and we know that we need these to resist evil forces from within and from without. It testifies that there is a Father's house, an eternal resting place for our souls beyond the grave; and who does not feel amid the storms and sorrows of this life, that we need such a home? Talk of national progress, wealth and stability; here is the secret of it all—firm adherence to the morality, the truth, the integrity, the uncorrupted righteousness taught in this book. What has made the throne of our sovereign, Queen Victoria, who is the purest and the best monarch that wears a crown and wields a sceptre upon earth, strong and immovable? Simply that it rests upon the truth of God. As we would be, therefore, loyal to our sovereign, loyal to humanity, to all the nations of the world; as we value their souls destined to immortal existence, as we would be loyal to our great Redeemer, let us give His truth to all the world. Amen.

ORGANIC UNITY OF CHURCHES.

MR. EDITOR.—The fusion of the English courts of law into one, preserving the ancient existence of each as divisions of the same supreme tribunal, suggests a scheme for the organic union of churches, the desirability of which Principal Grant, with characteristic vigour, has so ably advocated in the *Methodist Magazine* for September.

The scheme is this: Let the Protestant Churches in Canada set an example of Christian love and duty to the world and unite, forming "The Christian Church in Canada," retaining their separate existence as

branches thereof, under the name of "*The Episcopal (or Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, etc.) branch of the Christian Church in Canada.*"

The articles of union might be few and comprehensive, affirming only what all concede—that the rule of faith should be the word of God as contained in the Scriptures. That the affairs of the united Church should be managed by a general council, representing all; that each branch of the Church should enjoy its separate corporate existence, revenues, property, colleges, etc.; control its own expenditure, and promote its own missions and other objects; that no minister or member of any branch of the Church should be subject to discipline or to forfeit his standing or privileges, or preaching or practising the doctrine or polity of another branch, but that he should be recommended to ally himself with that branch of the Church most in harmony with his views, etc.

A union such as this would concentrate the forces of Christianity in their war on Romanism and Infidelity and Heathenism, and enormously promote the cause of Christ amongst ourselves—taking away the immemorial reproach that Protestants are divided against themselves and not members one of another.

By such a union the Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Congregationalist, or other evangelical Christian would not surrender a jot of the distinctive doctrine and church polity to which he is attached, and he would only concede what Episcopal Synods, Presbyterian General Assemblies, Methodist Conferences, and Baptist and other unions so repeatedly and cordially affirm in the fraternal greetings they annually interchange, that one is their master even Christ and all they are brethren—that Christ is the true vine and they are the branches.

Toronto, 28th September, 1884.

F. FENTON.

PREACHING ON BAPTISM AND ITS BENEFITS.

Perhaps no question has received so little attention in the pulpits of the Presbyterian Church as that of Baptism. Many of our people, and among them the writer of this article, have sat for twenty-five years listening to sermons and Bible class lessons, yet they have never heard this subject clearly and fully discussed in their own Church. On the other hand it is almost impossible to spend a day in a Baptist or Campbellite place of worship without being told, we are not baptized and consequently form no part of the Church of Christ, and never partake of the Lord's Supper without eating and drinking unworthily.

To such an extent have these bold assertions been made without any reply, that many of our people have begun to think that we have the weak side of the question and find it politic to remain quiet. Our ministers, too, have remained silent so long that they have begun to think that it would be persecution even to speak of the subject.

But to this rule we found an honourable exception in visiting Meaford a few weeks ago, when the Rev. J. T. Paterson, pastor of Erskine Presbyterian Church in that town, announced that he would deliver two discourses, one on the *subject*, and the other on the *mode*, of Baptism the following Sabbaths.

Strange to say, although the immersionists in the place have hardly ever been known to preach a sermon without discussing this subject, and in their zeal closing the door of the Kingdom of Heaven against nine-tenths of the Christian world, making water instead of faith the way to life, yet the very day that Mr. Paterson announced his subjects, they raised such a hue and cry about persecution as set the whole town in an uproar. A number of the members of the Presbyterian Church preferring peace to *truth* took occasion to express their disapproval, and tried to persuade Mr. Paterson not to enter upon the discussion of the subject.

But all to no avail, Mr. Paterson held it was a part of his duty to educate his people in the doctrines of the Church, and as far as possible counteract the pernicious teachings of the Campbellites, no matter who might be offended, and according to announcement delivered two most convincing and masterly discourses dealing with the subject and mode of Baptism. The church on both occasions was crowded to overflowing, and the discourses were listened to with such rapt attention that they will not soon be forgotten by any who were present.

And now let us look to the result, and in doing so we shall find that it was not so serious as some of the cautious members feared it would be. During our sojourn in Meaford we met with many who admitted

that they had had serious doubts as to the authority for Infant Baptism and the validity of Baptism by sprinkling, and were now perfectly satisfied and grateful to Mr. Paterson for having made the matter so clear. Besides this there were some seven or eight who were about to be dipped, but when they heard these discourses, returned to their old faith, being fully convinced that sprinkling is the more scriptural as well as the most sensible mode of Baptism; and one young lady who had for some time been seriously contemplating uniting with God's people in the Presbyterian Church, but could not see her way clear to do so on account of the views which she held in reference to Baptism, had her mind put at rest on the subject and came forward and was baptized and is now a member in full communion with the Presbyterian Church. A systematic effort had been made to prevent one young couple in particular from having their child baptized, books and tracts advocating the immersionist side of the question had been put into their hands, and had it not been for the timely interference of Mr. Paterson, they might have succeeded in detaching them from the Presbyterian Church. It must have been a sad disappointment for them to see the following Thursday evening at the prayer meeting some seven or eight children baptized and the child of the young couple in question one of the number. We mention the above facts to show that it is never dangerous to preach the truth, and never safe to hold back any doctrine of our Church, for fear of giving offence. Our ministers we know have far too high an idea of their responsibility to remain silent on this or any other question through policy. We can only account for it, then, by believing that they have never seriously reflected on the importance of the subject as a sacrament of the Church. Let "Christ and Him crucified" be the centre of our preaching, as it has been in the Presbyterian Church in the past, but surely there is a mistake when men with gray hairs on their heads have never heard the question of Baptism discussed from a Presbyterian pulpit.

A VISITOR.

COMMUNION WINE.

BY REV. JOHN STRAITH, SHALBURNE, ONT.

At the last meeting of the General Assembly, there was presented a memorial from the "Woman's Christian Temperance Union" asking the Court to give a decision in favour of using pure unfermented wine at the Lord's Table. I know I express the feelings of very many in saying we were grieved at the harsh treatment said document received at the hands of a D.D. west, and another east of Toronto. I hope the utterances of these brethren as they appeared in the *press*, did not fairly represent them, much less the mind of the Assembly. I cannot believe that they or those who think with them, would throw contempt on the well-meant object of that body of Christian ladies. That the purest and best wine to be had, should alone be used in Sacrament, none will dispute; and if there is in any kind an element fitted to kindle up a latent evil passion in any person, that should not be tolerated on the Table of the Lord. I have no sympathy at all with those who insist on extreme views, and would regard the ordinance invalidated if the wine be fermented, nor do I think it edifying to discuss speculative questions as to whether or not there was a drop of alcohol in that used by our Lord and His apostles, or in the "good wine," made in Cana of Galilee. Of that it is impossible, in my opinion, to bring conclusive proof. It is not a matter of speculative philosophy or chemical analysis, but of common sense and Christian charity. I trust few will deny that much of what is used at our communions is not "good wine," but a base drug, ill fitted to represent the precious blood of atonement; and it is well known that the ardent spirit has sometimes kindled the flaming fire of the reformed drunkard who rose from the "cup of the Lord" to "drink the cup of devils." In conversation with an esteemed brother in a neighbouring town, I was told that some in his flock receive the bread but pass the wine, test by it they should be made to stumble and fall. I know others who absented themselves altogether from the Lord's Table for the same reason. If wine can be got free from this dangerous element surely the duty of the Church is plain. It can be had in make good supply at many places. Any one can get it from Concord grapes and others with little expense and most satisfactory. I hope to see the Church move forward in this direction; we might have a "central wine press" from which congregations could be all supplied.