

The Breeze.

THEY RECEIVED THE WORD WITH ALL READINESS OF MIND, AND SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES DAILY, WHETHER THOSE THINGS WERE SO.—ACTS XVII. 11.

No. 43.]

QUEBEC, THURSDAY, JANUARY 23, 1845.

[VOL. I.]

SLEEPING IN JESUS.

Asleep in Jesus! blessed sleep,
From which none ever wakes to weep;
A calm and undisturbed repose,
Unbroken by the last of foes.

Asleep in Jesus! oh how sweet
To be for such a slumber meet—
With holy confidence to sing,
That death has lost his venomed sting.

Asleep in Jesus! peaceful rest,
Whose waking is supremely blest;
No fear, no woe shall dim that hour
Which manifests the Saviour's power.

Asleep in Jesus! ah—for me
May such a blissful refuge be;
Securely shall my ashes lie
Waiting the summons from on high.

SCOTTISH HERALD.

THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BRIEFLY STATED,

BY JOHN BIRD SUMNER, D. D., LORD BISHOP OF CHESTER.

(Concluded.)

What then was the difference between this Ethiopian, and the many Jews with whom Paul remonstrated and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken unto you: but seeing that ye put it from you, and count yourselves unworthy of eternal life, Lo, we turn unto the Gentiles?" The difference was simply, that the Ethiopian believed the words spoken by the apostle, and the Jews believed them not. The Jews trusted that they were already possessed of God's favour, and refused to believe that eternal life was in Jesus Christ. The Ethiopian believed, that having in himself the sentence of death, through the atonement of Christ that sentence might be reversed. Therefore he "attained to that righteousness, to which Israel did not attain."

This it is to be "justified by faith." And thus it is, that they who believe, are justified, whilst they who believe not, are condemned. Our Lord sets before us as an example the case of the Israelites in the wilderness. For them there was one remedy; to look upon the brazen serpent which Moses was directed to raise. If any had refused to look up, denying that the image could convey a cure, their plague must remain upon them. So likewise for Noah, when the deluge was impending, there was one mode of preservation: "Being warned of God, he prepared an ark for the saving of his house." But if, like the rest of his generation, he had mocked at the threatened danger, and refused to betake himself to the "refuge," he too must have perished in the waters. These are examples of the way in which, when God has revealed "one name under heaven, and no other," whereby man may be saved; they who believe in that name are justified, and they who believe not, are condemned. Because God has provided an ark, and they refuse to enter it. God has pointed out a rock on which they may fix their house, and be secure for eternity; but they build on another foundation, and when the waters rise, their house must be overthrown.

When, therefore, Paul says, that faith is counted to us for righteousness; or when our church says, that we are accounted righteous before God for the merits of Jesus Christ by faith; this must not be understood as if faith were a work of obedience or an act of duty, which God accepts instead of other duties or other obedience, and that therefore the man who has faith is justified, whilst the man who has not faith, is condemned for wanting it. The meaning is, that Christ has "redeemed from the wrath to come" "as many as receive him, and believe in his name;" but that he must be trusted by those whom he redeems: that his death must be relied on, in order that it may be efficacious for salvation: faith being, as it were, the graft by which a believer is united to the "true vine," and separated from the natural corrupt stock, to the root of which the axe is laid.

The cures which our Lord performed illustrate this. We are told, for instance, of a woman who pressed through the crowd which surrounded him, till at last she came near, and touched the hem of his garment. And immediately the plague under which she had been long labouring was removed, and she felt within herself that she was whole. He called her to him, and when he had made all the by-standers acquainted with the circumstances, "he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole: go in peace."

What, then, had her faith done for her? Nothing more, than that it induced her to overcome all hindrances and discouragements, until she reached him who as she believed could restore her. It was his divine power, not her belief in that power, which really

effected her cure. Her faith was the cause of her being healed, and without that faith the "virtue" of Christ would not have been exercised in her behalf: she would have remained under her malady. But it was not by her faith, that her constitution was recovered. Her "faith made her whole," by bringing her to him who had power to heal.

Simple and evident as this seems, many of the cavils which have been employed against the religion of the Gospel arise from overlooking it. Sometimes men speak of faith, as if it were represented as a virtue, in the same sense as honesty, or temperance, or charity, are virtues; and as if God had revealed a reward to faith, which he refuses to temperance, or charity, or honesty. Sometimes, again, the counsels of God are charged with inconsistency, because man is condemned for the want of that which he cannot command by his own will. If a fact be clearly proved, we are told that a man must believe it. Whereas we cannot believe it, unless it be proved to our satisfaction.

All this originates in misconception. Jesus Christ is the Saviour of them that believe, and of them only, just as a physician, who has the sole remedy for some prevailing pestilence, is the preserver of all who come to him for aid, but of no others. Confidence in the physician brings the sufferer for advice: faith in Jesus Christ brings the sinner to his cross, trusting that "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved."

But the worst and most injurious misrepresentation of this doctrine, is to suppose that it destroys "inherent righteousness;" that a man justified by faith is therefore exempt, or can consider himself exempt, from the necessity of obedience. Our Lord did not set his disciples free from the obligations of duty, when he showed that they could claim nothing for the discharge of duty, and said, "Ye, when ye have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which it was our duty to do." Neither does St. Paul exempt the Roman Christians from the obligation to holiness, when he affirms that "as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men unto condemnation; so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." "To them that are in Christ Jesus there is no condemnation," because "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all;" but they that are in Christ Jesus, "walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit;" knowing, that "if we live after the flesh, we shall die; but if we through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live." "For if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

It may seem a nice distinction, to allow that a man is not saved without good works, and yet to deny that his works contribute to his justification. But though a nice distinction, it is perfectly intelligible and reasonable. Above all, it is scriptural. It is that conclusion from the whole volume of antecedent revelation which St. Paul was empowered to indite for the instruction and guidance of that world, for which Christ died. Whereas to follow what is, in effect, the Romish system, and unite together two things so distinctly separated in the Christian scheme, as man's justification and his sanctification, is, in effect, to devise a scheme of salvation for ourselves. It confounds the new state in which we are placed, with the new nature which we are to receive. It removes the distinction between what is, and what is not, inherent in us: between what Christ has done, and what he enables us to do. Man's condition, without the satisfaction of Christ, may be illustrated by that of Peter, when, being cast into prison by Herod, he was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains; and the keepers before the door kept the prison. An angel came, raised him up, released him from his fetters, opened the prison doors, and set him free. In all this Peter had no more part, than man has in his justification. It is "the Lord our righteousness," who "delivers us from the wrath to come." But man being thus delivered, is "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise," and walks before God in righteousness and holiness; just as Peter gave proof of the liberty which he had attained, when he hastened to the house of Mary the mother of John, and joined the assembly of the disciples.

This may serve as an illustration of the manner in which the believer is first justified, and then sanctified. He begins by perceiving himself lost, and betaking himself to Christ for deliverance. He proceeds to live, as his deliverer instructs him to live, and enables him to live, and declares that he must live, it is to receive the promised inheritance. But his instructor and strengthener, is still his deliverer; even if his works were perfect, he is still his deliverer; because without him he would have been lying in darkness: but his works are not perfect, and need his constant thankfulness that they are not his trust; that his ground of confidence is in Him who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification—though still he has no satisfactory evidence that he is entitled thus to depend upon his Lord and Saviour, unless his conscience bears testimony that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, he is living "righteously, soberly, and godly in this present world," and striving to "be perfect, even as his Father who is in heaven is perfect."

So that the doctrine on which St. Paul insists, is this: that the good works which the Christian performs, whether before or after believing, are no meritorious cause of our salvation; have no share in effecting our ac-

ceptance with God. And St. James, when he affirms that "by works faith is made perfect," does not mean that those works procure our reconciliation with God, but prove it; and in declaring that "by works a man is justified, and not by faith only," he means that a man does not with his heart believe unto righteousness, who does not in his life make confession unto salvation. "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law are justified." No others have been justified before God. "Known unto him are all things from the beginning." And none are ever received into his favour, in whom the principle of obedience is not implanted, which will show itself, when opportunity is given, by "patient continuance in well doing."

There is, in truth, in the doctrine itself a provision against the licence which is sometimes alleged to spring from it. The more the atonement of Christ is dwelt upon, the greater will appear the heinousness of sin, requiring such an explanation. St. Paul lays great stress on this, and repudiates the idea, that those who have been "baptized into the death of Christ" for sin, "who believe in his death as a propitiation for sin," should yet admit it into their practice, instead of being deterred by the example which that affords.

And if anything can be relied on as the result of experience, this may be fearlessly maintained, and must be re-asserted whenever it is denied: viz. that they who have most intimately understood, in their own hearts, the doctrine of justification by faith, have been the most "careful to maintain good works;" and that they who have most clearly proclaimed that doctrine, in their public ministrations, have been the most successful in producing, through the power of the Holy Ghost, that "holiness" in others, "without which no man shall see the Lord."

Still, in defiance of such experience, the doctrine of justification by faith is exposed to perpetual cavil. In the many, there is a sort of conventional apprehension of it, as if it must necessarily be connected with licentiousness. And others, of larger information, are swayed unconsciously to themselves, by the unwillingness of the heart to resign all pretensions of its own; and are thus led to mix up and confound together the merits of Christ and the works of Christians, till there remains no sure ground to rest upon. They plead as their excuse, that morality and works of righteousness are in danger. The same accusation was made against the apostle himself. He was obliged to meet the objection, "Shall we then continue in sin that grace may abound?" "We are slanderously reported, and some affirm that we say, Let us do evil that good may come." It is no argument, therefore, against the scriptural truth of this doctrine, that it lies open to these imputations. Nay, rather, that such imputations are made, is proof that the doctrine is scriptural. We may not know to what extent it was understood by the people of God under the first covenant; or how far it was revealed to the prophets "who prophesied of the grace that shall come, when they testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." But after the mysterious sacrifice had been completed, salvation through that sacrifice was proclaimed by St. Paul, "according to the wisdom given unto him," more systematically, though not more certainly, than by the other sacred writers: and it is recognised by our church as a compendious statement of the counsels of God, that we are "accounted righteous before him only for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works and deservings."

CHARGE TO PREACHERS AND TO HEARERS.

The minister of Christ goes forth with his commission in his hand, and may not go beyond the word of the Lord his God to say less or more. And to him should the people hearken, as did Cornelius and his friends to Peter, when they said, "We are all here present before God, to hear all things which are commanded thee of God." As the one is bound to declare, so are the others to receive "all the counsel of God." The preacher is not allowed to prophesy smooth things, nor to accommodate his doctrine to the wisdom or to the desires of men; his business being not to please, but to save them, he must teach that which humbles the sinner, exalts the Saviour, and gives all glory to God. The Gospel preacher should imitate the faithful physician, who regards not so much the taste of his patients, as the nature of their disease, and prescribes that which will restore them to health, rather than what will give them immediate pleasure. Every congregation of God's people should be aware that when the preacher's words are most delightful to their ears, he may be departing from his duty, and unfaithful to his souls.

There is danger, from the infirmity of our natures, of being too much influenced by a dislike of some doctrines or tenets, or by a partiality for others, and of giving, by forced construction, to passages of the Scriptures the sense which we prefer, rather than that which the Divine Spirit intended. It is natural, and not uncommon, with serious and well-meaning christians, to cite chiefly the texts which seem best to agree with their own views; to confirm their favourite creed, or the distinctive principles of their own sect or denomination;—to urge them much, and dwell upon them, while they neglect, or more seldom refer to such passages as seem to be less favourable to their own sentiments. We should be aware of this weakness, and of the evils which it

produces, being ever ready and desirous to teach and to hear the truth, and the whole truth, as it is in Jesus Christ, though it may not be according to our own wisdom. Every thing which the Scriptures make essential, whether of faith or of works,—of doctrines or of duties, let us cordially receive. Some christians prefer to hear chiefly of the doctrines, while others prefer the precepts of the Gospel. To please some, the preacher must dwell most upon what the Lord has done to save them, while others desire chiefly to hear what they must do to be saved. One is delighted with reasoning in sermons; another with declamation. Some think it most profitable to dwell on the terrors of the law, while others are satisfied with nothing but the invitations of the Gospel. Let it be remembered that the faithful preacher must give to all their portion of meat; he must keep back nothing which "is profitable to doctrine, for reproof, for correction, or for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." He must not be partial in dispensing the word, lest some part of his flock should be sent empty away. And whatever God's minister is commissioned to teach, let his people devoutly and gladly hear.

The great subject of our preaching is to be "repentance towards God, and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ." The morality we teach must be christian morals. We can build on no other foundation than on Him, "who, of God, is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." We would not that the preaching on moral duties should be underrated; but without that faith which reneweth the heart, and "worketh by love," we can never do, or be, what the Gospel requires. Little good has resulted, or is likely to result, from all the fine things that have been preached on moral rectitude, as unconnected with faith in Christ, and Christian love. What is called natural religion is too obscure to bring life and immortality to light. It is the grace of God bringing salvation in Jesus Christ which renews the heart in hope and love, and constrains men to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." It is the mighty power of the Holy Ghost, accompanying the preaching of Jesus Christ and him crucified, which alone can make men wise unto salvation;—which can show "how man can be just with God," and how God can be just in justifying those who have transgressed his laws: how they who have been dead in trespasses and sins may be pardoned, and accepted, and rewarded, as righteous in the sight of God. There is nothing devised by the wisdom of man which can authorize those who are concluded under sin, to raise their eyes in hope to a reconciled God. No human comforter can pour the balm of forgiveness into the wounds which sin has inflicted, disarm death of its sting, the grave of its victory, and give songs of joy amidst the heaviness of sorrow.

Permit us, then, to repeat and to urge upon your devout consideration, that preaching Christ is the great instrumentality appointed of God, for diffusing the knowledge of eternal life, and renewing the heart with a lively faith and holy affections. We know from experience, and as matter of fact, that it has this effect. Preachers who in some things differ one from another,—they indeed who in other respects are faulty and erroneous, if they preach the doctrines of the cross,—if they exhibit the Saviour in his true character, and the scriptural doctrine of justification through faith in him, their preaching is in fact successful in converting souls to God; it is made, through divine grace, instrumental in renewing the heart by faith, and bringing forth the fruit of good living. Though some should "preach Christ of contention, not sincerely," God may overrule it to the effecting of some good, and we may well, even in such case, rejoice with an apostle, that Christ is preached;—that he is made known to man in his true character of Prophet, Priest, and King, and that men do in fact submit to the righteousness of God. But be it carefully remembered, that the less these true doctrines of the cross are mixed with error, in other points, the better will be the effect. From any material error we humbly trust, and may well believe, that the doctrine and worship—the order and discipline of our Church are free; and that, if we adhere to our own standards, and are as zealous and faithful as others, none will be more successful.—From Pastoral letter from the Bishops of the P. E. Church in the U. S. September 5, 1838.

SAFETY OR OPEN DEALING IN MISSIONS.

It is generally found advisable to begin with the opening of a school for children. This, indeed, is the best introduction that a missionary can have to the inhabitants around him. But let him be on his guard against every temptation to conceal his real object. No missionary would be justified in spending his time and strength, and the sacred funds of his Society, in the support of schools where Christianity is not inculcated. From the first, Christian books should be put into the pupils' hands. This, I am aware, may excite a suspicion that you mean to compel them to embrace your religion. I have myself been threatened with the loss of scholars on the alleged grounds, that their parents feared that it was intended to transport them to the island of Ceylon, and there impose upon them the Christian faith. But a little explanation, and steady perseverance in the usual course of religious and secular instruction, generally, I think I may say invariably, succeeded in removing such apprehensions. It is always desirable to be open with them, and to declare that it is the wish of your heart to see them all, both parents and children, humble believers in

Jesus Christ, and faithful followers of His steps. At the same time, it should be carefully explained to them what are the only grounds on which they should be received. So far from using any deceptive or violent measures to induce them to embrace Christianity, you may distinctly disclaim such an intention. And they should be candidly told, that they would not be allowed to join the church unless they gave satisfactory proof that their minds were convinced of the truth of Christianity, and their hearts under the influence of its Spirit. To make such christians, you may tell them, is not in the power of man. There can be little doubt that such an avowal would satisfy them; and having made it, you may introduce what books you please into your schools without exciting their suspicion. Less ingenious conduct, however, would keep them perpetually on the alarm, and occasion frequent interruption to yourself. Nothing should be left to be found out. In missionary schools, they would soon discover that the object was, not merely to teach their children to read and write, but to instruct them in the doctrines of Christianity; and then they would cease to have any confidence in your pretension to do them good.

Since this work was prepared for the press, I have read a passage in the Memoir of Bishop Middleton (see Le Bas's "Life," vol. i. pp. 390-392), which so strikingly confirms the suggestion here offered, that I am glad of such an authority to support an opinion which was at one time considered very questionable.

Writing to a friend in England, in 1817, on the prospects of Christianity in India, he adds, "I am aware that Christianity has vast difficulties to overcome. But I am also convinced that the prospect within these very few years is considerably improved. The natives, especially those of the higher class, who have much intercourse with the English, begin to feel the weakness and deficiency of their own systems, and evince a strong desire of knowledge; and I am called upon, sometimes, to explain to the Hindoos, at their own request, the evidences of Christianity. They do not, indeed, say much. But their minds are evidently at work; and they certainly display no bigotry, and betray no alarm with regard to the diffusion of our religion. The wealthy Hindoos have just set on foot a school, or college, without any aid or countenance from the government, who (very wisely, I think) have wished the work to be done by themselves. I inclose a copy of the regulations. The superintendent is a military officer, and the only Englishman connected with the establishment. Without such assistance nothing could be done. As no grammars, or other school books, could be found, into which the subject of religion did not enter, the superintendent was obliged to adopt the books used in English schools. But to avoid all appearance of seeking to make converts, he tore out, or pasted over, the passages which related to Christianity. This was observed by the managers, who are all Hindoos of wealth and consequence; when one of them wrote to the superintendent a note, of which I send you a copy, evincing the feelings of this class of people respecting us. On the same occasion, two of the managers declared that they had read the Bible, and had found nothing in it which could do their children harm."

The note which the Bishop here mentions is as follows:—"I have looked over the accompanying two books, and found nothing to be struck out; but felt very much for the passages pasted over, and consequently beg of you not to spoil any other books in a similar way; as the boys, whose parents are averse to allow them to read whatever alludes to the Christian religion, may leave out the same.

(Signed) RADHAKANT DEB."

To F. Irvine, Esq.

Jan. 17, 1817.

From Missionary Vademecum, by the Rev. James Hough, formerly East India Chaplain.

THE VIRTUES OF HEATHEN HEROES.

If we would see the tendency which classical reading has to pervert the mind in its estimates of vice and virtue, we must turn to the pages of infidel writers, who not having the Bible in their hands and hearts as a counterpoise, have learned to call good evil, and evil good; sweet bitter; and bitter, sweet. Thus the sneering infidel Lord Shaftesbury says, in his profane style of banter in his "Essay on the freedom of wit and humour," "I could almost be tempted to think that the true reason why some of the most heroic virtues have so little notice taken of them in our holy religion, is because there would have been no room left for disinterestedness, had they been entitled to a share of that infinite reward which Providence has by revelation assigned to other duties. A Christian would have informed his lordship that the reason why the Bible does not applaud what his classical reading had taught him to regard as "the most heroic virtues," is, that many things, which heathens and infidels account splendid, are poor, mean, and above all, sinful, when measured by the standard of unerring truth. Oftentimes "that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." After drinking deeply into the spirit of the Homeric heroes, it may sound strange to read "Blessed are the poor in spirit;" "blessed are the meek;" "blessed are the merciful;" "blessed are the peace-makers;" yet the divine Founder of "our holy religion" so taught; nor was his severance of a blessing from "the most heroic virtues," as the author of the "Characteristics" calls them, grounded on the reason ironically assigned; that "there would then be no room for disinterestedness for the who made man, and knew what was

* Acts xiii. 46. † Rom. ix. 31.

† John vii. 14. Numb. xxi.

† Gen. vi. 11. Heb. xi. 7. † Acts iv. 12.

* At first sight this notion may appear to be countenanced by the expression, Rom. iv. 6,— "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness;" but the context disproves such an idea. It will be seen that Paul's object is to show, not that faith is meritorious, but that eternal life is gratuitous; not of debt, but of grace. Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. He staggered not at the promises of God through unbelief, and therefore he obtained the promise. So the Christian staggers not at the promise of eternal life through Christ Jesus, and becomes heir of the kingdom.

At the same time, there is no doubt that the state of mind in which faith is produced, has much that is pleasing to God: and that self-righteousness, pride, hardness of heart, are commonly at the root of unbelief; as our Lord often showed in his reproofs to the Jews. † Luke xviii. 43.

* Luke xvii. 10. † Rom. v. 18.

† See Rom. viii. 1—14.

† Acts xii. 5, &c.

* James ii. 14—26. † Rom. x. 10.

† Rom. ii. 13. † Rom. vi. 4.

† Rom. iv. 1; iii. 8. † 1 Pet. i. 11.

* Art. xi.