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THE CHRISTIAN.

VOL. III. }

SAINT JOHN, N B., JULY 1847.

{ No. 7.

CONDUCTED BY W. W. EATON.

Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.—*Peter.* On this Rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.—*The Lord Messiah.*

STUDY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

No. 6.

EPISTOLARY WRITINGS.

BY A. CAMPBELL.

PREFACE TO THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS—[CONCLUDED.]

Now placing before our eyes the congregation of Christians in the great city of Rome, the mistress of the world, A. D. 57; every day visited by travelling Christians, both Jews and Gentiles, from all nations; considering the notoriety of this congregation, having the eyes of the philosophers, priests, and illustrious men of Rome fixed upon it; bringing near to ourselves the prejudices of Jews and Gentiles, against each other in former times, and the high conceptions of the former, as being the only people; righteous, elected, approved, and beloved of God; remembering, too, their contempt of the Gentiles, rulers and ruled; their keen sensibility on every topic affecting their national honor; at the same time fixing our eyes upon the author of this letter, his deep knowledge of the human heart, his profound acquaintance with the Jews' religion, and with the character and feelings of his countrymen; his great abilities as a logician; his divine skill in the Christian religion; his tenderness towards his brethren of the Jews; his zeal for their conversion;—keeping all these things in remembrance, and above all, *his design* in writing this letter, let us attempt an analysis of the argumentative part of it:—

1st. After his introduction and usual salutation, he gives an exact exhibition of the religious and moral character of the Gentile world.

2d. He deliberates the religious and moral character of the Jewish people.

His design in this part of the epistle is to prove, that the mass of the Jews and Gentiles were equally vile and obnoxious to divine vengeance; that neither of them could constitute any claim on the righteousness of God; that they were equally destitute of national righteousness, and of every plea founded upon their own character or works. He also shows that individuals amongst Jews and Gentiles, who acted in conformity to their means of knowing the character and will of God, were also equal

in the divine estimation. In a word, he proves the Gentiles and Jews, whether considered nationally or individually, as "*without any difference*" respecting the great question which he discusses. He proves them "*all under sin*," and that God is equally "the God of the Gentiles and of the Jews."

3d. He, in the next place, exhibits "*the righteousness of faith*" as equally accessible to them both, as bearing the same aspect to them nationally and individually. In establishing this point, the difficulties existing between Jews and Gentiles, converted to Christianity, are decided. Forlet it be admitted that the Jews and Gentiles, *before* converted to Christianity, were *without difference*; that *when* converted to Christianity, they were *without difference*, as respected the righteousness of faith; and the consequence would be, that they should, *without difference*, be admitted into the Christian communities. This is the scope, design, and termination of the argumentative part of this letter, which closes with the end of the eleventh chapter.

But the Jews had many objections to make to the positions which the Apostle lays down; and in exhibiting their objections, they argued from various topics, which the Apostle was obliged to discuss before he could triumphantly establish his positions. The principal topics were—*Circumcision, the Covenant with Abraham, the Promise of Canaan, the Law of Sinai, the Election and calling of the nation as the covenanted people of God*. These embrace the chief topics of argument, and these Paul must meet and repel, before he can carry his point argumentatively.

In the third chapter he meets the first objection. He introduces the Jew saying, "*What profit is there in circumcision upon this hypothesis?*" This objection he meets, and while he acknowledges that it was an advantage to the Jew in several respects, he shows it avails nothing against the question he discusses. That circumcision made no man righteous, he fully proves; for in this respect the uncircumcised was as acceptable to God as the circumcised, and in some respects the Gentile condemned the Jew. After meeting a number of subordinate objections, growing out of this one, and fully proving from David's own words that the Jews were no better than the Gentiles, in the fourth chapter he meets the second grand objection, viz: "*What do ye, on this hypothesis, say that Abraham, the father of the Jews, obtained from the covenants of promise, and the works enjoined upon him?*" He shows that neither his circumcision, nor any work proceeding from that covenant, was accounted to him for righteousness; but that his *faith*, which he had as a Gentile, or "*before he was circumcised*," was "*accounted to him for righteousness*," and that his becoming the heir of a world, or of the promises made to him, arose not from any of the Jews' peculiarities. And while meeting their objections on this topic, he introduces those drawn from the *law*, and shows most explicitly that neither righteousness nor the inheritance of Canaan was derived through the law;—that Abraham was righteous, or had that righteousness in which the Gentiles are now accepted, and was secured of Canaan for his seed, without respect to law: for God gave Canaan to him and his seed by a *PROMISE*, centuries before the law was promulged. And thus he makes the co-

venant with Abraham an argument in favor of his design, proving from it that the Gentiles were embraced as his seed. And here let it be noted that the justification by works, and that by faith, of which Paul speaks, and of which our systems speak, are quite different things. To quote his words, and apply them to our questions about faith and works, is illogical, inconclusive, and absurd.

In proof that the Gentiles were included in the promises made to Abraham, and actually participated in his faith, in the beginning of the fifth chapter, he introduces their "experience," and identifies himself with them. After detailing these, and showing that Jesus died for them, as well as for the Jews; and that they, being reconciled by his death, would, most certainly, be saved through him; from the twelfth verse to the end of the chapter he shows the *reasonableness* of this procedure. For although the Jews might continue to cavil about the covenant of peculiarity with Abraham, he shows that the Gentiles were equally concerned with the Jews, in the consequences of Adam's fall; and this section of the letter is decisive proof of the correctness of his arguments from the covenant with Abraham. While on this topic he expatiates on the superabundance of favour, that presents itself in the Divine procedure towards mankind, irrespective of national peculiarity, in a most striking contrast of the consequences of Adam's disobedience and the obedience of his antitype.

He meets an objection, in the sixth chapter, to the superabundance of this favor, and expatiates on it to the close; and in the seventh resumes the nature and design of the law, and by placing himself under it, and showing in himself the legitimate issue of being under it, proves its inefficacy to accomplish that for which the Jews argued it was designed.

In proving that the believing Jews were *not under the law*, he carries his arguments so far, as to lay the foundation for the Judaizers to object that he represented the law as a sinful thing. He might say, "*Is the law sin, then?*" an apparently natural conclusion from what he had said of its abrogation. This he refutes, and proves it to be "holy, just, and good." Then the Judaizer retorts, "*That which was good, then, was made death to thee?*" No, says Paul, but the law made *sin* death to me. This he demonstrates to the close of the chapter; in which he most lucidly represents the wretched condition of a Jew seeking eternal life by a law, which made his sins deserve death, and which he was unable to obey. The law clearly demonstrated goodness, righteousness, and virtue, but imparted no power to those under it, by which they could conform to it.

Thus, he is led, in the eighth chapter, to exhibit the privileges of the believing Jews and Gentiles as delivered from the law. In expatiating on the privileges and honors of these under the New Covenant, he represents them as the adopted sons of God, as *joint heirs* with Christ. He also shows that while they continued in the faith and "jointly suffered" with the Messiah, they were considered as the people of God, the called, elected, justified, and glorified ones; and that no distress nor power in the universe could separate such joint sufferers from the love of God. On this point he is most sublime. But in representing the Gentile believers as *the called* according to God's purpose—as the

elected, justified, and glorified members of his kingdom, he wounds the pride of the infidel and Judaizing Israelites, whose were the adoption, the glory of being God's people, the covenants, the law, the worship of God, the promises, the fathers, the Messiah! He invades their prerogative. This leads him to discuss their right to be always exclusively considered the chosen people of God. He examines their arguments, points out their mistakes, and repels their objections, with great ability, tenderness, affection, and zeal, to the close of the eleventh chapter.

In the ninth chapter he meets *three* objections to his leading argument:

1st. That on the hypothesis of God's choosing the Gentile nations, in calling them to be his people, his "promises to Israel (that is, to the nation) had fallen." This he refutes by showing *who are Israel* in the sense of the promises.

2d. That in choosing Jacob, and excluding Esau from the honor of being the progenitor of the nation (as Paul represented it), and in now excluding Israel and choosing the Gentiles, there appeared to be *injustice* with God. Paul, from the lips of Moses, their own lawgiver, demonstrates that there was no injustice in this procedure; that his humbling the Egyptians and exalting Israel was an act of justice as respected the Egyptians, and of merciful good pleasure as respected Israel; and that in so doing he advanced the knowledge of his character and exhibited his glory through all the earth.

3d. That from the principles which Paul exhibited as the basis of this procedure, the question might be put, "*Why does he find fault, for who has resisted his will?*" The Apostle, from the just and acknowledged principle of human action, shows the wickedness of such a question; that God had carried, with much long suffering, the Jews, long since ripe for destruction, for the purpose of making their example, or his procedure to them, of benefit to the whole human race, and of rendering conspicuous his mercy to such of the nation as believed in the Messiah, as also to the Gentiles. And all this he proves to have been foretold by their own prophets.

In the tenth chapter he again exhibits the righteousness of faith as still accessible to both people, and the fatal ground of mistake which must consummate the ruin of Israel; and meets other objections growing out of the ancient oracles, which he applies to this case. In the eleventh he answers other objections, such as "Has God cast off all his people?" "Have they stumbled on purpose that they might fall forever?" "Were the natural descendants of Abraham broken off from being his people to make room for the Gentiles?" After removing every objection to the calling of the Gentiles to be God's people "*through the righteousness of faith,*" whether drawn from any thing in the past election, calling, or treatment of the Jews; from the promises made to their fathers, from their own prophets, or from the moral character of the God of all nations; after triumphantly proving the positions with which he had set out, he concludes this chapter with appropriate admonitions to the Gentile believers, against those errors which had been the ruin of Israel. He corrects some mistakes into which they might fall, from what he had said concerning the election and rejection of Israel.

From this to the close of the letter he admonishes and exhorts the brethren in Rome, both Jews and Gentiles, to bear with, and receive one another, irrespective of those peculiarities which had formerly been ground of umbrage or alienation; that as Christ had received them both to be his people, they should mutually embrace each other as such, and live devoted to him who had called them to the high honors and privileges which they enjoyed.

Such is the scope, design, and argument of this letter. To go farther into an investigation of it, would be to assume the office of a commentator, which is foreign to our purpose. These very general hints and remarks may serve to suggest to the reader a proper course of reading and examining the apostolic letters, and to impress his mind with the vast importance of regarding the *design* of each letter, and to guard against the ruinous course of making detached sentences the theme of doctrinal expositions, and of "classifying texts" under the heads of scholastic theology—a method, the foily and pernicious tendency of which, no language can too strongly express.

QUESTIONS.

WE re-print the *Queries*, by "Senex," that the reader need not be under the necessity of taking up the last number to refer to them :

"*Query 1st.* What is Christian forbearance? On what commands, doctrines or institutions is it to be exercised, and what are its *true* boundaries?"

"*Query 2d.* Does the New Testament teach that it is the duty of the sisters as well as of the brethren, to impart public instruction to the church when they meet for edification, exhortation and prayer? If so, what does the Apostle mean in 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35; 1 Tim. ii. 12."

"*Query 3d.* Do the Scriptures teach that in a christian church it is the duty of all the brethren, indiscriminately and regardless of their ability to edify the church, to occupy the time of the church while the Pastor and other brethren are present, who are more competent to instruct the body? If it is their duty, what are we to understand by 1 Cor. xii. 29, 30."

REPLY TO "SENEX."

Venerable Sir, or Madam, [we know not which]—Were not the preceding queries submitted by ("Senex") an old man or woman, we would not, contrary to our general rule, give them a place on our pages. Conductors of all publications have a right to know the real authors of all articles sent to them for publication, though they give them to the public over fictitious names. The article has the style and appearance of a sincere inquirer after truth; and the questions are of such a character (though the remark may appear paradoxical) we are rather pleased than otherwise that we can get no clue to the author. We think it probable that the queries were made with reference to some practices sometimes prevalent in the Congregation of the Lord in this city, and therefore the duty of replying to them, becomes the more imperative.

Query 1st. is threefold: (1) "What is Christian forbearance?" Forbearance implies command of temper; lenity;—and lenity in its full extent of meaning is mildness, mercy, tenderness. Christian forbearance then is, that command of temper, mildness, mercy, and tenderness, which was so strikingly manifest in the Lord Jesus, and shone forth so conspicuously in him amid all his ignominy, reproach, and suffering.

(2) "On what commands &c. is it to be exercised?" This is very ambiguous. Does the writer ask whether we are to exercise Christian forbearance towards those only who hold the doctrine and institutions of christianity in their purity? or does he desire to know if it should extend to all others? Or does he desire to ascertain whether a Christian should leave a Congregation of the Lord where practices of the character indicated in the second and third query obtain? Not knowing the design of the querist a definite answer cannot be given; but one, perhaps, covering the whole ground suggests itself. Paul says (Eph. iv. 2-6): "With all lowliness, and meekness, with long suffering *forbearing* one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond, of peace. [For there is] one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." And again, in his letter to the Colossians (chap. iii. 13), "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." The first quotation shews who are members of the Christian body, and both, the conduct of the members of that body towards each other. But if "Senex" wishes to know whether Christian forbearance means that kind of fellowship and union that has lately obtained among those sects which compose the "Christian Union" or "Evangelical Alliance," we answer in the negative. We are, however, inclined to think that Christian forbearance should be manifested toward all men, as members of the great family to which we all belong—not by fellowshipping them as the disciples of Christ, but as brethren in Adam—by doing all for their present and future happiness in our power. Thus in noticing the second part of the query, we have answered the last—namely, the true boundaries of mildness, mercy, and love.

Query 2d, in reference to Sisters imparting public instruction in the meetings for worship, is more definite; but a satisfactory solution not so easily given, especially while Queen Victoria not only rules the British empire politically, but is also head and ruler of *THE Church!!* How can we decide this question when Doctors disagree! Hear Dr. Adam Clarke; "Let your women keep silence in the Churches," &c. This was a Jewish ordinance: women were not permitted to teach in the assemblies, or even to ask questions." After some quotations from the Jewish Rabbis, he adds: "This was the condition until the time of the Gospel, when according to the prediction of Joel, the Spirit of God was to be poured out on women as well as the men, that they might prophesy, that is teach. And that they did prophesy or teach is evident from what the Apostle says (chap. xi. 5), where he lays down the rules to regulate this part of their conduct, while ministering in the Church.

"But does not what the Apostle says here contradict that statement, and show that the words in chapter xi. should be understood in this sense? For, here it is expressly said, that they should keep silence in the church; for it was not permitted for a woman to speak? Both places seem perfectly consistent. It is evident from the context, that the Apostle refers here to asking questions, and what we call dictating in the assemblies. It was permitted to any man to ask questions, to object,

altercate, attempt to refute, &c. in the synagogue; but this liberty was not allowed to any woman. St. Paul confirms this, in reference also to the christian church; he orders them to *keep silence*: and if they wished to *learn any thing, let them enquire of their husband at home*; because it was perfectly indecorous for *women* to be contending with *men* in the public assemblies, on points of doctrine, cases of conscience, &c. But this by no means intimated, that when a woman received any particular *influence from God* to enable her to teach, that she was not to obey that influence; on the contrary she was to enjoy it, and the apostle lays down directions in chapter xi. for regulating her appearance when thus employed. All that the Apostle opposes here, is their *questioning, finding fault, &c.* in the christian church, as the Jewish men were permitted to do in their synagogues, together with the attempts to assert any authority over the man, by setting up their judgment in *opposition* to them; for the Apostle has in view, especially, acts of disobedience, arrogance, &c., of which no woman would be guilty who was under the influence of the spirit of God."—*Clarke's Com. 1 Cor. xiv. 34.*

As there are in the above comments several references to 1 Cor. xi. 5, we will here give the Doctor's remarks on that also:—" *But every woman that prayeth, &c.*" Whatever may be the meaning of *praying* or *prophesying*, in respect to the *man*, they have precisely the same meaning in respect to the *woman*. So that some women, at least, as well as some men, might speak to others to *edification, and exhortation, and comfort*. And this kind of prophesying, or teaching, was predicted by Joel (chap. ii. 28), and referred to by Peter (Acts ii. 17). And had there not been such gifts bestowed on *women* the prophecy could not have had its fulfilment. The only difference marked by the Apostle was, the man had his head *uncovered*, because he was the *representative* of Christ; the woman had her's covered, because she was placed, by the order of God, in a state of subjection to the man; and because it was a *custom* both among the Greeks and Romans, and among the Jews an express *law*, that no woman should be seen abroad without a *veil*. This was, and is, a common custom through all the east; and none hut public prostitutes go without veils. And, if a woman should appear in public without a veil, she would *dishonor her head, her husband.*"—*Ibid, 1 Cor. xi. 5.*

We will now hear Doctor MACKNIGHT on both passages; and first on 1 Cor. xi. 5. * * * "Many by the women's *praying* and *prophesying* understand their joining in the public prayers and praises as a *part* of the congregation. Yet as it is reasonable to think, that this praying and prophesying of the women, was of the same kind with the praying and prophesying of the men who acted as teachers, mentioned in verse 4th, we may suppose these Corinthian women affected to perform these offices in the public assemblies, on pretence of their being inspired; and though the Apostle in this place hath not condemned that practice, it does not follow that he allowed it, or that it was allowed in any church. His design here was not to consider whether that practice was allowable, but to condemn the indecent manner in which it had been performed. For the women, when they felt, or thought they felt themselves moved by the spirit in the public assemblies, throwing away their

veils, prayed and prophesied with the head uncovered, and perhaps with their hair dishevelled in imitation of the heathen priestesses in their raptures. This indecency in the manner of their praying and prophesying the Apostle thought proper to correct, before he prohibited the practice itself, because it gave him an opportunity of inculcating on women that subjection to the men which is their duty, though many of them are unwilling to acknowledge it. Women's praying and prophesying in the public assemblies, the Apostle afterwards condemned in the most express terms."

"Chapter xiv. 34. 'Let your women be silent in the churches, &c.' For determining the question (whether women should or should not speak), it may be of use to observe, that in this chapter the Apostle, after describing prophecy (verse 3), and explaining the inspiration by which the prophets spoke (verse 6), and ordering them to pray and prophecy in an unknown language (verse 7, 12), or if they prophesied in a foreign language, to do it so as it might be interpreted by some one in the assembly who had the gift of interpretation (verse 13), and after giving them directions concerning the orderly exercise of all their spiritual gifts, founded on this fact, that the spiritual gifts of the prophets were subject to the prophets (verse 32), he adds (verse 34), 'Let your women be silent in the churches, for it hath not been permitted them to speak.' The prohibition standing in this connexion implies, that the Corinthian women were not to pray and prophecy in the church as teachers, on pretence of being inspired and unable to restrain the motions of the spirit. Next, the means mentioned by the Apostle show that the prohibition was absolute and general. Christ had not permitted the women to speak in the church as teachers to the men; neither had the law of Moses permitted them; for it commanded them to be in subjection to the men. Accordingly, he terms it (1 Tim. ii. 12) an usurping authority over the man. They were not so much as to ask a question in the church, even on pretence of learning something, lest it might give them a handle for entering into disputation with the men. But if they wished to learn any thing they were to ask their husbands at home (verse 35). Nay, it was indecent for women to speak at all in the church; being inconsistent with that modesty which is their greatest ornament. In short, to cut off every pretence for women teaching in the church, the Apostle asked them, Did the word of the Lord go forth from you into the world? or did it only come to you by the ministry of the men? Plainly telling them, that whatever inspiration of the spirit they might be favored with, no inspiration was given them for the purpose of enabling them to teach publicly, or to lead the devotion of the church.

"But it may be asked, since women were not allowed to pray and prophesy in the church, for what purpose were the inspirations of the Spirit bestowed on them? They were bestowed for enabling them to instruct their own sex in private; especially those of the younger sort, and those who were newly converted. Perhaps, also, some of the married women who were eminent for their gifts and knowledge, may, in private conversation, have assisted among the men; as we find Priscilla expounded the way of God to Apollos (Acts xviii. 26); and as the

daughters of Philip the evangelist may have done, who are said (Acts xxi. 9), to have 'prophesied.' For *prophesying* does not necessarily imply the foretelling of future events by inspiration, but most commonly signifies the speaking by inspiration to the edification of others. At the same time if the daughters of Philip had the knowledge of any future events given them by inspiration, it will not follow that they uttered these prophecies in the church. They may have published them in conversation like Anna (Luke ii. 38), whereby all the ends for which these events were revealed to them, may have been answered.

"Verse 35. 'It is an indecent thing for a woman to speak in the church.' This is the Apostle's third reason for prohibiting women to teach in the church. It is contrary to the modesty natural to the sex, and to the manners of all nations. The Apostle adds a fourth reason (verse 36), that no woman had been commissioned by Christ to preach the Gospel to unbelievers. To conclude, if any of the women were inspired in the public assemblies, they suffered no hardship from this prohibition; because having the command of their gifts, they could keep silent till they went home, where in their own families they might utter these revelations. Or they might do it in meetings of their own sex, privately gathered for that purpose."—*Dr. Macknight's notes.*

On 1 Tim. ii. 12, Dr. Clarke says: "This is generally supposed to be a prohibition to women's preaching. I have already said what I think necessary on this subject in the notes on 1 Cor. xi. 5, and xiv. 34, 35, to which places I beg to refer the reader." On 1 Tim. ii. 12, Dr. Macknight gives no *note* only on women's exercising authority; but his paraphrase of the twelfth verse is: "For I do not allow a woman to teach in the public assemblies, nor in any manner to usurp authority over a man, but I enjoin them in all public meetings to keep silent." We have not room to add a word of our own at present. If necessary, we may when our pages are not so much crowded.

3. Your reference to 1 Cor. xii. 29, 30, leads to the conclusion that you deem the remarks of the Apostle applicable to the present state of things. Paul was writing with reference to the profitable use of the spiritual gifts then in the church—gifts then necessary to the formation and growth of the body of Christ. In these are not included those of Bishop, Deacon, or Exhorter. Though some of these men might have filled these offices, yet the Apostle is writing to show the manner in which gifts—miraculous—are to be made profitable to the congregation of the Lord, and not to point out the particular duties of the ordinary officers of the christian church. The latter part then of your query is first answered.

The general point in your third query is of much importance: Is it the duty of all the brethren to speak in the congregation of the Lord? Few questions have agitated those who are contending for the ancient order of things more than this. Would to the Lord we could see it theoretically and practically settled! That every congregation of the Lord should meet every Lord's day to break the loaf in memory of the Saviour, is a question we deem settled in the affirmative. That all the talent in the church should be brought into requisition to honor the Lord, to instruct, edify, and build up the saints; and to convert sinners is a proposition fully sustained by the very genius of christianity. That the

meeting of the disciples to break the loaf and to attend to the ordinances of the gospel should be at a time and place which will be most convenient for the brethren, needs no proof. That no church will grow in grace and be an efficient instrumentality to the furtherance of truth and righteousness, without taking measures to call into active exercise the speaking talent of the brotherhood, has been proved to a demonstration in the history of every religious assembly in Christendom. This last position will not be so readily admitted as the former. We would, therefore, explain ourself. We do not mean 'hat a mass of respectable moral people may not be gathered through the instrumentality of a single man, and that he may not keep them together as a congregation, and that through their good conduct they may not produce a favorable effect upon the community. But we mean that without the exercise of the speaking talent of the congregation—on the Lord's day—when it meets to commemorate the death of the Lord, a church must inevitably run into the one man system, and settle into cold formality. The zeal, intelligence and perseverance of Paul, and the eloquence of Apollos would be insufficient to keep up a continued interest, and that christian fervor and devotion which characterized the early christians, unless the brethren often exhorted, and admonished, and comforted each other. As well might you expect a family to live in a pleasant social manner—taking a deep interest in each other's happiness, who never conversed with each other, and never heard a word spoken but by the father, as for a company of disciples to love God with all their heart and each other with pure hearts fervently, without social religious converse. It is true, that children, under a family discipline which inhibits all speaking but that of the father, would be very circumspect in his presence, but when he was gone they would soon cease to be a family. Every one conversant with religious societies knows that this is the case with them. The expression—"support the gospel," means to pay the pastor; "blessed with the means of grace," means supplied with a minister of religion. The one man system as certainly leads to Popery as the neglect of God's word leads to spiritual death. It is true that the effort to bring into requisition all the speaking talent of the church has been attended with strife, contention, and sometimes confusion, under an inefficient Eldership; but these are light evils compared with the glorious boon, the privilege, the honor of all doing what we can to forward the cause of the Redeemer. The Baptist monthly conference, and social prayer meetings, the Methodist class, band, and other meetings, partially fill the blank felt by the entire formalist; but many of these meetings are human devices, and must necessarily be imperfect, and of doubtful tendency. The meeting of the Lord's people every Lord's day around the Lord's table to commemorate the Lord's death, furnishes the most fitting occasion on which the congregation may edify each other.

We now come to the main point in your query, namely, "Is it the duty of the brethren, indiscriminately and regardless of their ability to edify the church, to occupy its time in the presence of the pastor and others more competent?" That none should occupy the time and attention of the church but those who are capable of edifying the body would seem to be a self-evident proposition; but that no one should speak in an as-

sembly but those the most capable, would generally exclude all but one—as in all congregations some one individual would be preferred. The Apostle teaches that we should covet earnestly the best gifts. Prophecy he deems of great importance: he defines it a speaking “to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.” 1 Cor. xiv. 3. All, therefore, who can so speak, so as to edify, exhort, or comfort the brotherhood, should be encouraged to do so; and every brother should study diligently to acquire that amount of information, and seek fervently for that courage and engagedness which will make him an acceptable and useful speaker. It is not the taste of the community, nor the vitiated taste of some members of the body which is to be our standard. The oracles of God and the wants of those addressed are to be kept constantly in view. All then who love God’s word and their fellow men, will be interested if we speak with that fervor which christian love and the spirit of Christ inspires.

Parents, and elder members of a family are often very much edified by the imperfect words and broken sentences of the younger members. We consider it perfectly proper therefore, for all to speak, whatever may be the amount of intelligence possessed, providing they are capable of edifying, exhorting, or comforting the brotherhood generally. The Eldership ought to be the best judges of the fitness of members to edify the body.

We have seen churches of the Reformation running into two extremes. All speakers, irrespective of ability to edify, and the one man system. The former system has injured the cause by the ignorance and confusion attending it. The latter, by the coldness and unsociality of the brotherhood, has turned christian love out of doors. An active, efficient Eldership who do their utmost to call into active exercise all the talents of the church, is the only true and safe ground to occupy.

These thoughts are hastily thrown together. More on this subject when the cause demands it.

W. W. E.

LETTERS TO A YOUNGER BROTHER.

No 3.

MY DEAR BROTHER:—In my last I did not design to attempt to prove the existence of the Supreme. In a letter to *you* I would not attempt such a task. A glance at that hastily written epistle does not at once disclose its design. It is an exception to a rule which I adopted long before I wrote any thing for the public. It is to write and speak not so that I may *possibly* be understood, but so that I cannot be *misunderstood*. I do not fear that I shall be misunderstood in the sentiments expressed; but in the *design* of them. I anxiously desired to impress your mind with the idea of your great indebtedness to the oracles of God for all your knowledge—not only of the spiritual world—but also of the very existence of the great I AM. Students of Philosophy, Chemistry, and Astronomy, become so enamored with these interesting studies, that they not only neglect their Bibles, but sometimes imagine that they can learn from the study of nature alone, all that is necessary for them to know in order to the perfection of human nature. As you are well aware, I protest

against all religious knowledge not derived from the word of God. Not that we may not learn something of the great author of our being from all His works; but the Bible is the teacher. From this, or from those instructed by it, we receive the first ideas of our origin, and of our destiny. The ancients in oratory, in literature, architecture, &c., excelled the moderns—the volume of nature was spread out before them in all its beauty and grandeur—the sun shone as brightly—the moon was as beautiful, and the stars sparkled as brilliantly in the skies of Greece and Italy as they now do, and yet the great poets and orators, over whose productions you have pored so earnestly, brushed from their marble images the cobwebs of antiquity and devoutly bowed down and worshipped the work of their own hands. If these philosophers, with all the lights of nature beaming upon them, and all the traditions concerning the true God, failed entirely in acquiring and imparting the true knowledge of the Eternal, what is to be expected of the masses, without literature, without science!!

Men have never been able to originate an entirely new idea. As well may we suppose it possible to construct an edifice, surpassing in beauty Solomon's Temple, without materials, as to imagine that man can possibly, aided only by nature, acquire the knowledge of a spiritual world and a being who never began to be, and whose existence can never terminate!

Infidelity, Heathenism, and all false religions have never been able even to fabricate original names for their gods, or the acts of worship by which to honor them. The Greeks and Romans, most enlightened in their idolatry, obtained names for their gods from the seasons, employments, &c. A tyro in the languages at once perceives that the name of their leading divinities Jupiter and Jove, are a corruption of the incommunicable name of Jehovah. Their altars, sacrifices, priests, &c., are corruptions of the true worship of God. Of every false system in the world we may make the same remark: there is no manifestation of *mind* about them—except, perhaps, in their defence. The truth has been presented—it is either opposed or counterfeited. A plain history of all false systems would sufficiently expose their nakedness without an argument against them.

While on this subject I will transcribe a problem addressed by the editor of the Christian Baptist, to the Harmony Gazette, a paper at that time the focus of all the sceptical light in America. The writers for that paper boasted of being in possession of the best library, and of being the most intelligent men on the continent.

“You think that reason cannot originate the idea of an eternal first cause, or that no man could acquire such an idea by the employment of his senses and reason, and you think correctly. You think also, that the Bible is not a supernatural revelation—not a revelation from a Deity in any sense. These things premised, gentlemen, I present my *problem* FOR ATHEISTS in the form of a query again:

“The Christian idea of an eternal first cause uncaused, or of a God, is now in the world, and has been for ages immemorial, you say it *could not* enter into the world by reason, and it *did not* by revelation. Now as you are all philosophers and historians, and have all the means of knowing, *how did it enter into the world?*”

To this question they could return no answer. The fact is that sceptics attribute to ignorance and imposture the most magnificent thoughts, the most sublime ideas that ever found an abiding place in the human soul. What a glorious thought that there is a great eternal—pure spiritual mind that never began to exist—that never will cease to be. Is there a mind always acquainted with the workings of mine? An eye always gazing upon me? A being always interested in my happiness? And did these thoughts originate in ignorance and enthusiasm? Blessed delusion! And may I hope to dwell with the pure and happy through the wasteless ages of eternity? No hope fills the soul with such exquisite delights. And is this hope the offspring of superstition? If so, may I live and die among the superstitious. But we, my brother, know that earth's greatest benefactors have been those who had the greatest confidence in the facts and hopes of the gospel.

We know that in this world we cannot desire that which does not exist. Before we possess an appetite provision is made to supply it. From the greatest to the least of the works of God in the animal kingdom, full and adequate nourishment is provided, previous to the existence of the creature. But there is something that we all greatly desire, especially in view of that great change which is soon to pass upon us—another life, a life of happiness. Has the author of my being been so careful to provide for my body, and has he left this mind that soars among the countless worlds, and so ardently longs for immortality in a world of peace and joy—to be extinguished as a taper, to be blotted from existence entirely? The matter of which my body is composed would enrich the soil—the meanest reptile will fatten the earth—and must my mind be annihilated—not even produce a blade of grass, or live again in the rose bud? Forbid it reason, forbid it Heaven! Ah, how weak the reasoning of boasted scepticism and infidelity. How zealously have some men labored to prove themselves brutes, rather than deny themselves of all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly; rather than imitate the life of the meek and lowly Saviour they will tug and toil to prove him the greatest of imposters, and themselves superior to brutes only in the greater weight of the brain. “Like brutes they live, like brutes they die.” From this gloomy picture, my brother, let us turn away. A brighter prospect is before us in the Gospel. God's own Son has visited our planet. He has died for our offences. He has arisen for our justification. It is a faithful saying worthy the reception of every human being, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—even the chief. Those who not only believe in him, but manifest that faith by an entire conformity to his word, enjoy life, and will enjoy it more abundantly.

I am happy to hear reports so favorable of your devotion to your studies, and the success attending your efforts; but much more delighted to learn from your own hand that you have exalted views of the Christian character, and especially that you estimate the value of the Christian profession by the influence that it has on the lives of those who make it. You are only in doubt as to the propriety and necessity of a public confession of Jesus in the positive institutions of his own ordination. In my next, the Lord willing, I shall endeavour to place this matter in a scrip-

tural light before you. In the mean time, I hope you will attentively consider the design of my second and third letters, namely, that the Oracles of God are the fountain head of all true theology. May the Lord bless and prosper you. Such is the unfeigned prayer of your brother,

WENTWORTH.

QUERY ON BAPTISM FOR REMISSION OF SINS.

I noticed in the fourth number, page 58, a "new exposition" of Acts ii. 38, "Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins." The subject of which has been much talked of latterly.

Dear brother, for the satisfaction of several of your readers, I should be much gratified if in some future number of your paper, you would state your views more fully, as to the design of baptism. Is being baptized in water, synonymous with being born again (John iii. 5), or in other words, is immersion in water, regeneration? If it be, then of course, no one can have his sins pardoned until he is immersed in water. Does the kingdom of God, spoken of in John iii. 5, mean the church on earth, or the church above—the kingdom of God in this world, or the kingdom of glory? If the latter, there seems to be something like an exception to this rule. Our Saviour when on earth forgave sins previous to the person's being baptized. Matt. ix. 2; Luke v. 20—vii. 48. Also the thief on the cross. Would it have been proper to say to Cornelius, "be baptized for the remission of your sins." Acts x. 48. Likewise the twelve disciples at Ephesus, who were re-baptized. Acts xix. 5. I submit these few hints to your careful consideration. Please pardon errors. I have written in haste, and longer than I expected when I began. It is truth I seek—pure, undisguised truth—divested of tradition and sectarian prejudice.

Your's in Christian bonds,

CHARLES W. GARRISON.

Sheffield, May 12th, 1847.

REMARKS.

MY DEAR BROTHER GARRISON—That faith, repentance, and reformation, are necessary to the enjoyment of pardon is a doctrine admitted theoretically by the greater part of Christendom, papal and protestant. Nearly every written and printed creed admits a connexion between the enjoyment of remission and baptism; but strange to say—though we practise what we preach in this particular—in the estimation of the sects, on this point, we are most heretical. If with the Baptists and the Presbyterians we should publish to the world, a printed creed, that we believe that "*baptism is a sign and seal of remission of sins,*"* and then proclaim that there was no connexion whatever between baptism and the enjoyment of remission, we should be perfectly orthodox!! Or if with the church of England, we should declare over an unconscious babe, "Dearly beloved, seeing this child is regenerated and born anew of the water and of the spirit," we might be, with all our errors, in their estimation, true sons of the church. Or if we should be perfectly scriptural, and with the celebrated Wesley say, "Baptism to real penitents is both the *means* and the *seal* of pardon—nor did God ordinarily, in the primitive church

* See Prov. Con. chap. xxiii; and Phil. Bap. Articles, chap. xxx.

bestow this (pardon) on any, unless through this means;”* and then with the greater part of the Wesleyans of this province ridicule the idea of any benefit whatever derived from obeying that command of the Lord Jesus by his Apostle Peter—“be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins,” we might have with them, notwithstanding the charge of Arminianism by Calvinists, be invited to a part with them in the evangelical alliance!!

My brother, I am sometimes tempted to conclude that the more one’s general practice is opposed to the plain teachings of the New Testament, the more popular and orthodox he becomes!

But to the question. “What is the design of baptism?” The New Testament as plainly teaches that it is required of the believing penitent *for the remission of sins* as that Christ’s blood was shed for that purpose. For every argument and scripture that any living man can bring to show that he who disbelieves that Christ died for sinners is an unbeliever in him, can I bring to prove that he who disbelieves in baptism for remission of sins is an infidel. So confident am I of the futility and weakness of the opposition and the strength of truth, and so many times have we stated and proved the scriptural design of this divine ordinance, that I feel strongly inclined to dogmatize. The scripture never ascribes to baptism any other object or design than that which is akin to the enjoyment of pardon. It is not said that it is in the place of circumcision—for the purpose of giving names to children—for the consecration of infants to the Lord—for the purpose of joining the church—for making a public profession, or for any other purpose than remission of sins. He who opposes it, opposes God’s word—he who would reject it, tramples on the authority of Heaven.

2. “Is being baptized in water synonymous with being born again?” or in other words “is immersion in water, regeneration?” No, neither. A man may be baptized fifty times, and neither be regenerated or born again. All the ordinances of the new covenant are curses rather than blessings to those who are not penitent believers. Brother G. you did not certainly ask this latter question for your own satisfaction! If I thought you did, I would give it more attention. We never taught that baptism was regeneration. Faith in the blood of Christ, and genuine, heartfelt repentance—the full surrender of body, soul, and spirit to the service of the Lord Jesus in immersion, are all necessary in order to obtain a scriptural assurance of the new birth. If any of our readers will refer us to one who was recognized as a child of God, as born again, after Jesus ascended on high, without immersion, we will give the account of his conversion a conspicuous place in our publication.

3. The “kingdom of God” spoken of in John iii. 5, we understand to mean the church on earth.

4. When our Saviour was on the earth, he disposed of men as pleased him. Some eyes were opened by a touch, by a word, and others by the application of clay, and washing. Lepers were healed by a word, or on their way to the priest. He forgave sins conditionally, or unconditionally for aught we know, just as he saw fit, when here with men in the flesh. But just as he was going to glory, he committed to the Apostles the word of reconciliation, which was—“preach repentance and

* See Wesley’s notes on Acts xxii. 16.

remission of sins to all nations in my name, beginning at Jerusalem "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." When the Apostles opened the Will on the day of Pentecost, they exhorted the people to be baptized for remission. They never preached differently. So soon as their hearers believed the gospel, they forthwith baptized them. That the Saviour however forgave any of those persons who waited upon him, without baptism, during his personal ministry, can be proved by no one. The strong probability is that they had all been baptized under John's ministry. John came to prepare a people for the Lord, and he immersed multitudes. Who can say that all these had not "justified God by being baptized with the baptism of John." Luke vii. 29. Even that *pons asinorum* of orthodoxy—the case of the thief on the cross—has never been proved to be an exception to the rule. Who is authorized to say, much less to prove, that he had not received baptism; that he was not one of those who having become offended by the Saviour's teaching, had gone away and walked no more with him. How did he become so well acquainted with the character of the Lord: hear him (Luke xxiii. 41), "We receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing amiss. Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Is this the language of one wholly unacquainted with the Saviour. From whence did he gain all this knowledge of the Lord. Who can believe that he had not previously listened to the gracious words that fell from the Redeemer's lips? Remember I do not say that he had been a disciple of either John or the Messiah. On this point the record is silent. But the stronger probability is, that this long harped on exception is no exception at all. But though all that the objector asserts could be proved, it would furnish no exception to the doctrine of baptism, in order to remission, because it was an act of a dispensation which preceded the christian.

(To be Continued)

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—An "Anxious Inquiring Subscriber," in defence of "Faith alone" and "Total depravity," is laid on the table. We must have the real name of every one, however friendly, before we can give him a hearing. We have sometimes engaged in conversation with strangers, and have endeavored to answer their queries, and subsequently learned that their only object was to get some expression from us to hold up to ridicule. We however hope better things of our correspondents, though we thus speak. We must therefore for the future exercise our own discretion in the disposal of all anonymous communications. We do not object to publishing articles over a fictitious signature; although we would much rather every writer would unmask himself, and in his true garb look every man full in the face. Our "Anxious Inquirer" manifests much sincerity; and if he will give us his real name it shall be kept a profound secret: if he be what his mask would lead us to suppose, he shall have a full hearing, and we will endeavor to solve his doubts; and though he should be totally depraved, we hope to convince him that the faith of the Gospel and the obedience of faith will bring him into the enjoyment of the life of God which is in Christ Jesus the Lord. Several other communications have been received.