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WITNESS OF TRUTH.

Vol. IV.

OSHAWA, MAY, 1849.

No. 5.

From the Millennial Harbinger.

APOSTASY AND REFORM.

“So he drove out the man,” closes the recital of the first apostasy. When man made himself an apostate, God made him an outcast. When man departs from God, he never wishes to return until compelled by pain. Mercy was mingled with the judgment when man was first driven from the presence of the Lord: for nothing but experience could teach him what he had done in breaking communion with the fountain of his own life. When cut off from “the fountain of living waters,” his consolation soon dried up. But, alas! the thirst for these waters abates as he recedes from them, and finally he loses all taste for them. Man, indeed, made in the image of God, and fitted for the enjoyment of his friendship and favor, when separated from his presence, so far falls beneath himself as to worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator, and seeks for happiness in forgetting God rather than in knowing and adoring him.

To quicken man, to impart new life to him, is only possible to him who created him. This power is now in the word of God; not that word spoke in Eden, nor that spoke on Siani; but that which was spoken on Calvary and first published in all languages in Jerusalem: a revelation of God not imputing men’s trespasses to them, but a revelation of God in Christ reconciling a word to himself, making him who did no sin a sin-offering for men, that they might be made righteous through him.

Man has been treated by his heavenly Father in all respects as a son. Adam the Son of God was placed in full possession of an estate every way becoming his rank in the creation. He became a bankrupt. He was then placed under a pension or annuity of a certain amount, but held nothing in fee simple. This, too, his family squandered; and as they became poorer and more wretched by every new delinquency, God, the Father of the whole degenerate family, gave a new estate, but placed the inheritance in his own Son, and vested man’s right of enjoyment in him. so that all his rights, immunities, and honors are *in the Son*, by virtue of an everlasting institution, called, “the sure mercies of David.” The life which Christianity proposes is *in the Son of God*.

He that is united to him has this life ; he that is not united to him, has not this life ; but the old sentence of death remains upon him.

But an apostacy from this union, as respects individuals, and from the engrafting word, from the whole Christian institution, was not only possible, but has actually taken place. Many branches have been broken off from the true vine ; for many who have tasted the powers of the new world have fallen away. " Because of unbelief they were broken off," for under this economy men " stand by faith," not by flesh. " Take heed, brethren, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

As the branch can bear no fruit of itself unless it abide in the vine, so no person can enjoy the life which is hid in Christ, who is our life, nor bring forth for the living fruits of that life, unless he adhere to him. Hence apostacy from him is death to the individual. This is a sin unto death. For him that wilfully and wittingly renounces Jesus as his Lord, there remains no sacrifice for sin, there remains nothing but the fearful expectation of certain and irremediable destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power.

But there is a declension or an apostacy from the institution of Jesus Christ, where there is acknowledgment of its divine authority, and no personal renunciation of Jesus. This falling off, this waxing lukewarm, this indifference to the excellency and purity of the Christian institution, is intolerable in the estimation of the King : " I will spue thee out of my mouth," is the promise of the Faithful and True Witness, to those who become cold in their attachment and lukewarm in their adherence to his person and cause. " Remember whence you are fallen, and reform, or else I will come to you quickly and will remove your candlestick out of its place unless you reform."

Concerning apostacies we may learn their nature and consequences from a strict regard to those leading apostacies to which we have alluded. Concerning reformations and returnings to God, we have abundant information in those preached in past ages ; indeed, in all reforms proclaimed in both the Testaments. But in these reformations the following characteristics deserve attention :—

First. They are all *personal*. Though the nation of the Jews, as such, apostatized ; yet reformation could not be effected by the government without the people, nor by the people without the government, nor by the people but in their individual character. Reformation of manners, of government, or of religion in its integral character, must necessarily be composed of units. When the persons composing a family, a congregation, or a nation, reform ; then there is a family, or congregational or a national reformation. But reformation is always, and must necessarily be, a *personal* thing.

Second—In every reformation there are promises tendered on condition of it. These are motives to obedience ; and there are also threatenings presented on condition of disobedience ; and these, too, serve as motives to enforce it. Something is always gained by reformation, and something is always lost in consequence of not reforming.

Third—There is only one “*reformation unto life;*” and they who comply with it, obtain remission and life; and those who disdain or reject it, incur eternal separation from God.

Fourth—But there is a reformation of manners which is announced to those who have obeyed the gospel, and which becomes indispensable when they have in any wise fallen off from the purity of the gospel institution. This is the point to which all that precedes is preliminary.

Now it so happens in the very genius of this institution, that none can enjoy it who do not carry out to the full, the reformation which it contemplates and enforces. Hence the partial and limited enjoyments of Christianity which are found among those who do not embrace and fully carry out the principles of reformation propounded by the great Reformer and Saviour of men.

It is almost universally acknowledged that Christians, as we call them, among us, do not enjoy the same confidence in God, the same clear and unfaltering hope in the Saviour, the same joy unspeakable and full of glory, which characterized the profession of those who first received Jesus into their confidence as the Great Apostle of Jehovah—the Messiah of four thousand years’ expectation.

The reason is, they do not so fully and unreservedly give themselves up to be guided by him in everything. The same causes must produce the same effects, moral as well as natural. Let professors make the same unconditional surrender of themselves to the Lord Jesus which they did who first trusted in him as the Only Begotten of the Father, full of favor and of truth, and their hearts will exult like theirs; their joy will be as complete, because their lives will be as pure.

But the sects cannot enjoy the salvation of God, because in every sect there must be something anti-Christian; for the fact that there is a single human institution incorporated with the Divine, is that which gives to any community its name, its sectarian designation, when compared with the institution of Jesus Christ. And this, though it be but a unit, is a worm at the root of the Christian’s enjoyment.

The envies, the jealousies, the hopes and the fears, the likings and the dislikings which grow out of a sectarian peculiarity, like a cancer, vexes and torments the whole body in which it is found; and this afflicts every spirit which composes the mystical body of Christ. There must be schisms and all their hateful train where such institutions are enthroned in the minds of the people, were it in conjunction with all the Apostles’ doctrine.

A return to the whole institution in principle and practice, in sentiment and behaviour—we say, “*the whole institution,*” without addition or subtraction, and without any new modification, is indispensable to the restoration of that holy spirit which filled the first saints with righteousness, peace, and joy. We must have the same religion, if we would have the same fruits which adorned and blessed the ancient disciples.

But such a profession would make a new sect, or rather receive the old one. It must be a sect so far as all mankind do not embrace

it, or so far as any sect of mankind oppose it. The whole constitution, laws, ordinances, and manners of the kingdom of Jesus Christ revived would make the people who understand, believe, and practise them so far a sect as they are opposed; but no farther. And most certainly none of the sects hitherto existing are built exclusively upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets; for even the ordinances, nay, the constitution, and the naturalization of citizens as respects this kingdom, have not as yet by any sect been so understood as they are now beginning to be understood. In a word, christians could not, in the true sense of language, enjoy the christian religion; for it was not understood, and it is now fully understood by any sect, or by a minority in any sect in christendom. While christians, so called, are warring about their opinions, and erecting exclusive establishments and maintaining the sects and schisms which their fathers made, it is proof positive that they are estranged from the simplicity which is in Christ; that they are in Babylon, and, as they often confess, in a cloudy and dark day, in the wilderness. The whole head is sick and the heart faint, and unless a reformation, radical and coextensive with the apostacy is effected, men may profess, but cannot enjoy, the religion of the Saviour of the world.

But the old cry, "The temple of the Lord is with us," we have been blessed, we are his people, "we are the true circumcision," blinds the eyes and hardens the hearts of many against a radical reformation. We are rich, we are full, we are honorable, &c. is the cry which prevents thousands from stooping to inquire what means the command, "I counsel you to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; and white raiment, that you may be clothed; and anoint your eyes with eye-salve, that you may see." Unless a distrust is created, none will examine; and therefore none will reform.

Professors need not accuse us of making a new sect, nor pretend that they can be happy in God without a reformation as radical as that for which we contend. If the revival of the uncorrupted religion of the New Testament, free from any humanisms, make a new sect, then it will only prove that all the sects are more or less gone into the apostacy. And if it did not only prove this, it would be an argument against it. But so long as no humanism is advocated by us or made preliminary to admission into the Christian kingdom, nor enforced upon them in the kingdom, the cry of a new sect is only a calumny. And that the experience of all professors, when compared with what the New Testament exhibits, is defective, every honest man in those establishments has only to examine himself to find the proof. But it must be remembered that we plead not a reformation of systems, but a *personal reformation of principle and manners*, an entire submission to Jesus as the only Prophet, Priest, and King of divine authority.

And this, too, is the highest ground which can be assumed, and the only ground on which a man intelligent in the scriptures can stand approved before God, the universe, and his own conscience. None

that come after us can go farther back than the day of Pentecost; none can plead for more than an unconditional surrender to Jesus and his Apostles in their official designations; none can reasonably ask less. We are confident, then, that we stand upon the only tenable ground in the universe; that we have the approbation of God, angels, and all the dead saints; and that were all the Apostles and Prophets again to revisit the earth, they would take sides with us in this controversy; and if blamed by them it would not be for the ground we have assumed, but for our failure to stand fairly upon it, or for our delinquency in carrying it out in all its details. In case of such a rebuke from them, we would reply, 'Show us our errors; we wish to see them; our hearts are right in the matter, and we wish our efforts to correspond with them.' Such confidence have we towards God in the cause we plead.

Our opponents may be sincere and honest; some of them, we doubt not, are so; but none of them have presumed to say that they can have such confidence; nay, they have said so much already of a contrary import that they cannot now say it. None of them say that things are as they ought to be in the schemes which they support. They are afraid of changing for the worse; but all admit the possibility of changing for the better. Not a man will lay his hand upon his heart and say, that before God he thinks that the present order of things is the order of things established by the Apostles. None will say that christians are what they ought to be, under the uncorrupted institutions of Jesus Christ. They cannot, therefore, unequivocally vindicate their cause nor their course.

It is to no purpose to say that they prefer their order of things or their views and traditions to that reformation which we plead, because they do not see it fully developed, they see things only in progress, or perhaps they do not put themselves to the trouble to examine into the real merits of the cause. They must admit the ground we take is unexceptionable—it is *apostolic*; and our failure to exemplify it fully, is to be charged to them, in a great measure, who throw obstacles in our way, and endeavor to turn away the ears of the people from the ancient gospel and order of things. But to the Lord, and not to us, they have to account for this.

Let those who plead this cause give them no real occasion to speak reproachfully of it, or of them, and we have the approbation of our king, and shall be pleased with the measure of success which he is pleased to bestow on our efforts, which has hitherto incomparably transcended our most sanguine expectations. This reformation must be effected soon or late; else the promises and the plainest predictions shall have failed for once. But this cannot be. The only question with any can be, Is this the time for it? And let us answer this question as we may, we are sure that it is *our* time and *our* duty to plead for it, because we have been made to know what is not the institution of Jesus. And no man lights a candle to put it under a corn-measure, but on a stand. We are, therefore, divinely called to work.

THE RELIGIOUS PRESS.

SHALL WE HAVE PERIODICALS?

REQUESTS have long since been made, asking us to pay some attention to the position, power, and practical utility of the press, and the duty of religious men to employ it for the liberal extension of those principles by which they were themselves set free. The subject until now has been deferred. Months have passed away, and these calls are yet without response. For this seeming indifference we offer two reasons: 1st, Other subjects had a prior claim. 2nd. There was no certainty of a full and candid hearing while the question was so engagedly discussed by others. And if any one desire a third reason, he may have it in the anticipated possibility, that, had we put our pen into the subject previously, some sinister motive might have been attributed to the effort. As matters now stand, this is not only highly improbable, but altogether impossible.

But, at the very commencement, may we ask, has it become necessary to turn logician for the purpose of arguing this question? Has the power of the press, to any one, in any cause, become a debatable point? If so, our task is intolerable beyond the boundary of hope, provided, indeed, we are expected to produce conviction. Logic in a case so forlorn would be lost. Arguments are for those who reason—contemplate—reflect; but he who cannot, at a glance, in this age of light, perceive the potency and utility of the press, may be safely set down as out of the reach of logical approach. The attempt would be equal to proving that trees grow green leaves for the benefit of a person without eyes.

Still, among those who can see, there is such a thing as seeing dimly and seeing clearly, and then we have degrees such as more clearly and most clearly. Presuming, therefore, that those who request particular attention to the claims of the press, require no additional light on their own account, and presuming also that they are chiefly desirous that others may see their duty as clearly as they have been led to see it, we shall, with these things before us, offer a few observations upon the whole premises.

There is, indeed, a class of well meaning Christian men who seem to regard every thing with suspicion that they cannot find in so many words on the pages of the inspired oracles. These, we might say, are scrupulous over-much, and they not unfrequently, by their stringent rules, work out, in practice, a heavy judgment against themselves.

When called upon for a passage giving a divine warrant to erect a building in which the saints of the Lord may stately worship, they are as much at a loss to find the chapter and verse as their brethren who are less exact; yet they subscribe to the expediency of building, and gladly and conscientiously partake of the blessing. If they are requested to furnish a precept from the Lord directing those who qualify for proclaimers to learn grammar in order to speak correctly, it is nineteen chances to twenty if they will make the attempt to quote from either prophet or apostle on the subject, knowing of a truth that all the inspired men are silent on the expediency of learning language; yet they advocate the propriety of taking lessons on the art of correct speaking. Their principles and scruples therefore sometimes betray them, and lead off into bold inconsistency.

To print, furnish, and circulate Bibles, belong to a chapter of services the expediency of which is acknowledged universally; but who ever saw a precept either in the Jewish or Christian oracles, referring to a printing office, a book bindery, or a Bible agency? The man who demands direct inspired authority for good works of this category, may be regarded, and is generally regarded, either as a contentious and stoical quibbler, or wholly ignorant of the spirit, scope, and object of the gospel institution. None of the apostles ever saw a printed Bible. They could not therefore give directions to multiply copies of the scriptures for general distribution through the press. But they could say that "the scriptures are able to make men wise to salvation"—that "the gospel is the power of God"—that we are to "do good as we have opportunity;" and hence the intelligent professor, knowing that Heaven's truth is contained in the scriptures, and knowing that there is only one grand medium through which the scriptures can be effectually distributed, has his eye open to the duty of employing the press for the accomplishment of this most desirable object.

No inspired man ever saw a telegraph wire, and hence we have not the least hint about the use or the abuse of this means of transmitting thought; but if a speaker was engaged in meetings at a certain place, where the prospects required in his judgment immediate assistance, and the new means of intelligence could communicate his wants with lightening speed to a speaking brother a hundred miles distant, he would be sinning against two kinds of light, the light of the Bible and the light of electricity, if he availed not himself of this improvement in the art of communicating.

Before referring to the power of the press in the advocacy of

religious truth, let us enquire, in a general sense, what is the influence of the press in any cause. Take, for illustration, the power of the press in the diffusion of novels. We shall suppose there is a community of a hundred thousand. A periodical devoted to novels, established for this people, concentrates and brings into a focus the entire novel talent found in this community of a hundred thousand, so that if there be one, two, ten, or fifty superior minds, the talent of these, in its combined force and variety, can be embodied and brought to a focal point, as though the whole strength, eloquence, and diverse influence of this accumulated talent belonged to one man. The press itself—the iron machinery—speaks not, nor has a mind; but it concentrates many minds into one most splendid and master mind, and gives it a tongue of proportionate potency.

But it is not simply the union and powerful harmony of many gifts. There is another equally important influence in the fact that this accumulated talent is made available to all. The press multiplies talent a hundred, a thousand, or a hundred thousand fold by bringing it within the reach of every reader—a consideration pre-eminently heightened by the fact that there is no other possible means by which such treasure can be so extensively circulated. See then what mischief can be wrought by our novelists through the press, when they can unite and embody their whole intellectual ability, and then circulate themselves to be heard by every reading man! Still, the influence increases as we proceed—for—

The placing before the whole community the same things at the same time is also of immense power. Talent itself is brightened and augmented by this operation. This however is not all. Thousands of men are thinking at the same moment of the same subject, and hence if any union of effort be necessary, any quick intellectual movement required, or any speedy action of common interest become expedient, the press summonses every mind and every hand, and, like the toll-bell of a city, congregates aid where aid is immediately and largely needed. Here then we have the double influence—the very essence of influence—embraced in speed and strength, the two cardinal points, especially in things mental. It is conceded without debate, by all who have any pretension to judge, that the man who can bring the most thought to bear upon a given point in the shortest given time, is the man who has the most mind, and, other things being equal, exerts the greatest influence. The same principle applies to the power of the press. The means that secures the greatest amount

of thought, in the shortest period of time, for a given purpose, is the highest class of means, and either for good or evil must exert the foremost influence.

Besides, there is a stability—a leading steadiness—a master tone given to a cause which is espoused and helped forward by the press. This arises from a variety of considerations, some of which may be very briefly hinted at. First of all, the very existence of a press is the result of firm resolves, settled design, co-operative ability, and more than a little outlay. The operating establishment, when called into being, requires a decision and steadiness of purpose superior to the shiftings of the wind, and more than a trifling investment. Stability, then, is really the origin, and subsequently the true result, of this commanding power. Next, it is evident, as well from fact as from argument, that the best minds are intimately connected and fairly interwoven with the workings of the press; and this centralization of intellectual ability constitutes for its friends generally a kind of advocating fortress, a source of reliance, and a permanent rallying point. Especially is this true in a cause where much opposition follows in its wake. Men are so constituted, that, while there reigns in their breast a desire for mastery, there is also a strong propensity to place dependence upon something which has the name and holds the rank of superiority. They look for help. They trust to authority. A directing power they must have, and this power, too, must be of such a character, that, while it directs, will likewise be a deposit of dependence and permanence.

We may also include in the above primary specification a host of direct answers to objectors, warnings, appeals, and incitements, carrying with them death to foes and life to friends. The press embodies and distributes the weightiest, the most numerous, the most enlightening, and the most convincing arguments. It grapples with the strongest, and lays open the fortresses of the mighty. It builds up and throws down. It tramples to the dust the whole race of snarlers, whose malicious lingo, from the lips of many-tongued rumor, sharpened by the quint-essence of prejudice, drowns the single voice however candid, truthful, and courteous. It furnishes the best logical weapons to all its advocates, and seals the lips of opposers by making every friend capable of defence.

But we cannot, in the mean time, specify further, lest we swell our remarks into tediousness. Let us now see, if indeed it be possible to

see, how these general advantages of the press may be enlisted in the service of Christianity.

The cause of religion is dear to every true professor, and each, according to his ability, has a work to perform in promoting, spreading, and helping forward this cause. This is generally acknowledged. Though all have gifts, all have not gifts alike. Hence we have varied talents, of smaller and greater degree, in the church, as in society at large. Now talent is given, not for the benefit of those who possess it, but for the good of others. This is the order of nature, and, too, it is the order of scripture. The eye sees, not for itself, but for the protection and benefit of the other members of the body. The ear hears, not for its own advantage, but for the general good of the person who possesses and exercises this organ. Now an apostle says, "as you have received the gift, so minister." It is, then, to minister or serve that gifts are bestowed. To serve what or whom? Serve that organized spiritual body which is the "pillar and ground of the truth." The press, then, is the instrument, as we have shown, to concentrate the whole talent of a whole people, and the argument applies in all its force to a community enlightened and regenerated by the gospel of Christ. Nay, the argument is stronger when brought to bear upon the Christian brotherhood; for the church, as a whole, has a divine right to all its gifts—a claim which no reasoning can set aside, and as binding as the inspired word. As this is a point of some importance, and the grand centre on which all other bearings more or less depend, we shall pay it due respect.

The Christian organization makes a draft upon the gifts it embraces for the two great purposes of its existence, namely, for its own edification and perfection, and for the illumination and regeneration of the world. Gifts, in primitive times, whether of the order we call natural or inspired, were bestowed for these objects. The apostles, fully and divinely gifted, labored to make unbelievers into believers, and then to perfect those believers into a holy people, chosen of God, and precious in his sight. By what means did they accomplish these purposes? We answer, by speech and pen, by word and writing. They spoke and they wrote. They taught both the converted and the unconverted by word of mouth and by the power of the pen. Matthew writes a history for the benefit of a nation, a nation of unbelievers. So does Mark, and so does John. Several of the apostles write epistles to churches, and Paul, whose zeal and ability more than equalled the rest, writes fourteen letters at different times for the upbuilding of the

congregations in Christ Jesus. And to the saints in Colosse he was induced to say "when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans." The apostle seemed fully to credit what some of his enemies affirmed, that "his letters were weighty and strong;" and therefore of much account in building up the cause of the Lord.

Very true, these writers did not hand the labors of their pen to the printer. There is a better than a good reason why. But the object, the use, the merit, the principle of writing is the same whether the press re-writes, or the manuscript remains with its original marks. The press alters not the sentiment, the style, the design of any letter, narrative, or essay. It multiplies copies, condenses into smaller room, cheapens, beautifies, facilitates reading, and increases readers; but it changes not the object nor the sentiment. An essay written with a steel pen, a gold pencil, a goose quill, or chalk, is still the same essay as it respects its morality or immorality, its learning or want of learning, its nature and power; and so, whether we write on parchment, banyan leaves, or paper, and whether we employ a pin or a pen, a press or a patent lever, to inscribe and make legible what we have to communicate, is a matter which may be justly classed with the popular non-essentials—as immaterial as whether we shall eat from a silver, a china, or a wooden plate, since it is what we eat, and not the form or style of eating, that benefits.

The apostles then, believed in writing; so do the intelligent now. They wrote upon parchment, we upon paper; they wrote with the pen, we with the press; they wrote in Greek or Hebrew, we in English.

But here a critical friend desires to whisper, 'Stop, Mr. Editor, you are not inspired. The apostles were gifted by the Spirit. What they wrote was divine.' The objection is understood, and has been weighed in the balances. We are as much inspired to write as we are to speak. If we cannot write because not divinely qualified as the apostles, it is equally true that we cannot use speech to teach the things of the kingdom, because of the same lack of qualification. Unless it can be shown that we have inspired power when using words and syllables with the tongue, and that the inspiration departs when we lift the quill or enter a printing office, the objection, we think, may, without a coroner's verdict, be numbered among the suicides.

There is a bold contrast between the sagacity, activity, and efficiency of worldly men, and the professed men of light, as it respects perceiving and employing the mightiest of all human agencies—the press.

We cannot elaborate this department at present. A few sentences from the pen of a London writer will be read with interest:—

“Is the *pulpit alone* to possess the right of teaching and ministry, and to refuse to share these honorable services with that power which was called into existence by him who chooses “things that are not, to bring to naught things that are?” Has not the press multiplied our bibles, and scattered God’s Word over the whole world, and in every tongue, rendering a famine of the letter of life a thing almost impossible? *And is the press to be the exclusive property of the men of the world?* Are they its friends? So are we. Are their liberties the offspring of its effects? So are ours. Does it minister to their idol gods; and shall it not minister to the one living and true God? Let us, therefore, consecrate the press in the midst of our churches. Let some of our most talented ministers of the gospel, who are adapted to the work, devote themselves to *teaching by the press*. The world requires their services. Millions of minds can only be reached by means of the press. Does any one shrink back, fearing lest “the office of the ministry” should be degraded? Groundless objection! The Christian ministry is doubtless of divine institution, but the narrow confines of the pulpit-floor will never satisfy a soul enlarged by God’s love. Such an one beholding London alone, and seeing in it an empire peopled by upwards of two millions of souls—many myriads of whom never come within the range of the pulpit, and other myriads of whom only gather round it to be willingly deceived, will long to warn every man; to teach every man; and to preach to every man the “unsearchable riches of Christ,” no matter in what way he attains his object.”

So we think. Let him who thinks differently speak out in full accent for the good of all. We designed offering a few thoughts upon the duty of the religious community in view of the commanding influence of the press; but our limits forbid. Our attention may be directed to the subject at another day.

CONDUCTOR.

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From the *New York Observer*.

### SPECIMENS OF GIVING.

There is in the English language a certain word of unwelcome sound, and unpleasant association. It is the word *stingy*, and is of so odious a savour, that no man is willing to have it applied to himself, however much truth there may be in its application. The more the truth, the deeper the aversion. Liberality is, on the contrary, in high esteem

every where. No man objects to being thought liberal, whether he is so or not. And of those who fancy themselves so, the number is much greater than those who really are so. Stinginess is not only condemned by all intelligent minds, but it lies under the mute reprobation of nature itself. Nature has been called economical, but she is not stingy; she is liberal, often profusely so. Behold the sun amid his morning glories, his meridian splendors, or his evening magnificence. What a beautiful benefactor to millions of glad recipients! Gaze on the starry firmament amid the "adoring silence of the night." What a profusion of softened beauty is poured on the enchanted vision of him who has a heart to commune with the "poetry of heaven." Think of the atmosphere that surrounds us. How it delights to distribute the rich sunlight it receives, to diversify beauty to the eye in all the splendid variety of colors, to assist the voice of man or instrument, in conveying melody to the ear; to help the little flowers—themselves so prodigal of beauty and sweetness—to impart fragrance to the senses; and finally to sustain millions of denizens of the air on their elastic wings, while they revel in mirth and music. How it upholds the mighty masses of clouds, while they drop their fatness upon the needy earth, and teach to man a lesson of unbounded generosity. How softly does it deposit the rich dew on flower and field, while it gives the breath of life not only to the lungs of man, beast and bird, but to those of the host of the vegetable world. These are parts of its ways, but how little a portion of it, as of its Creator, is understood! It is always giving. It gives us the Spring with its tender beauty, the Summer in all its pride and gaiety, the Autumn with all its munificence, the Winter with its solemn grandeur, and its "like wool."

The Ocean, too, is not alone sublime in action—beautiful in repose. It is not alone "the image of the invisible," as it creates elevated thoughts and emotions in a contemplative soul. It is vast in its beneficence. It gives in charge to the atmosphere those treasures, which are not hoarded, but speedily prepared to enrich the earth. It is not barrier between nations, but the bearer of their bountiful exchanges. From its capacious repositories it furnishes without stint the living millions that supply the wants of man, drawing them to its banks, or sending them at certain periodical seasons up the numerous rivers to meet the demands of the lord of creation.

The earth, too, is giving, always giving, a thousand fold for all it receives. Its teeming bosom is at this moment preparing those immense supplies, which are to gladden the hearts of dependent, un-

grateful men. In a thousand ways does it give. Let but the hand of industry touch it, and quickly as by enchantment, it yields the abundance, which, like all the works of God, testifies to his boundless beneficence.

To crown all, God gave that gifts of gifts, His own SON to live, to labor, and to die for man. Shall man then be ungrateful? Shall he alone be niggardly? Oh covetous man! All that you see and hear reproves you. There are innumerable silent monitors that reprove your selfishness, and command you to be generous. God himself teaches you by his own example, to be benevolent and bountiful, yes, to make some great sacrifice. What wilt thou then do this year for the welfare of thy fellow men, and his glory? D.

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### LESSONS TO TIMOTHY BY PAUL.

*For the Witness.*

*Norval, April, 1849.*

BROTHER OLIPHANT:—I have just been reading a very interesting letter, written by an old man named Paul, to a young friend whose name was Timothy. His object in writing, as he himself states, was to instruct his friend how he ought to behave himself in the house of God, which is the congregation of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

In pursuance of the above object he writes—"I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and all that are in authority; that we may live quiet and peaceable lives, in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge [acknowledgement] of the truth," &c. &c.

It is in the house, the congregation of the living God, that this is to be; and to be done *first of all*, because it is good and acceptable in the sight of God, and that we may live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

When God proposes and appoints means for the obtaining of any end, they must always be the very best means for the obtaining of that end.

How then can any congregation expect to live in all godliness, while in the Lord's day meetings they neglect to pray first of all, for all men, &c., and in omitting this, neglect what is good and acceptable in the sight of God? And I believe there are many congregations of professors who neglect this exhortation of our great apostle.

In the prayer taught by the Lord Jesus to his disciples, as recorded in the 6th of Matthew, the first petition is, "thy kingdom [reign] come." That petition was granted on the day of Pentecost, when, as an evidence of our Lord's coronation in heaven, the Holy Spirit came

and gave to the apostles, in one instant, all the dialects of earth, that they might obey the command to preach to all nations.

The second petition in that prayer which remains yet to be answered, is, "thy *will* be done in earth as it is in heaven." Part of that *will* is, that all men should be saved; so that the first petition now in this prayer, is in fact the same as what Paul requires *first*, to pray for all men.

We profess to be guided in all things by our Lord's last will and Testament, and to believe that all his commands are "always for our good." Let our obedience prove that our profession is in all sincerity and truth.

That I be not farther tedious, I subscribe myself your brother in the hope that maketh not ashamed. W. A. STEPHENS.

## DISCUSSION.

### INFLUENCE OF THE SPIRIT.

(Continued from page 21, and concluded.)

The letters given below appear at this late date because of our protracted absence. These epistles conclude the correspondence between "A Methodist" and the Editor of, the *Witness*. Let every one read and judge for himself. We offer no remarks in advance to prejudice the mind of the reader:—

*To the Editor of the Witness of Truth.*

DEAR SIR:—According to the arrangement, this is to be a review of your three replies to my three articles. The existence of the Spirit both admit. You admit with me the influence of the Spirit, you say, as far as respects the fact of such influence. Then I understand you to say that the holy Spirit operates upon the heart of man in order to his conversion to, and acceptance with, God. This is all I contend for. But you say we differ as to the manner of its operations. I think we do fairly come to an issue upon this point. One statement you made in your first reply calculated to misrepresent me, and lead your readers astray, I wish to correct before proceeding farther. It is found in your first reply, page 221, vol. 3. You make me say the Spirit invariably works one way, or by one kind of means. If you will take the trouble to look over the article to which you allude, you and your readers will find I have made no such statement. You accuse me of being very ancient in proof, even beyond the flood, as though all that is said in God's word of his dealings to man previous to it was too remote for Christian use, or even to Christ, down to his ascension and glorification, and the out-pouring of the holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. I infer this from what you say of dispensations.



Now, sir, I have been taught that conversion is the same thing under all dispensations, and acceptance with God equally so. If I am correct, your shift to one dispensation will be of little service in your cause. Conversion is the same—acceptance is the same—and God is the same, who changes not. I am of opinion your readers are satisfied that assertion is no proof on any subject. The first notice you take of my proof found in *Gen. vi. : 3*, you say there is no ground to infer how the Spirit strove; but you omit to notice the proof annexed to it from *John xvi. : 15*, to show the manner of its striving. You might with equal propriety ask me to show the manner of its striving in the apostles, when they were enabled by it to speak several different languages. You, sir, I trust, will admit it affected their minds and judgments, not by an audible voice, for none heard it, but all the apostles were affected by it.

The case of Cornelius is one in point. There Christ said to him, "As the wind bloweth where it listeth, and you hear the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Please in your next to be a little more particular in giving proof with less apparent boast than is found on page 223, vol. 3, in these words, "Remember that in a combat we must employ weapons." I should like to know what you call weapons if plain declarations of scripture relevantly applied are not, as I think has been done, your assertions to the contrary notwithstanding.

On page 259 you employ language too lofty for my use, (if it is lofty.) You say I believe in a Spirit that is itself "the naked power of God to seize a sinner by the heart, and set him free, without judge, jury, or witness." This is a singular manner of expression, exhibiting a strange understanding on your part, and in my judgment purely imaginative. In which of my letters have I said any such thing? No where. On the same page you assert that I say the Spirit operates without means: I ask you where or when? I say the means by the Spirit are those peculiar to the Spirit. I ask you what are the means used when the wind blows where it listeth, and cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth? If you can tell, then you will understand better my meaning of the Spirit's means of operating.

Page 260, you say the Spirit in my theory is full of groanings which are "uttered in all possible forms." Please prove what you here assert. I have never admitted it or asserted it. Such assertions are easier made, my dear sir, than to disprove my arguments as found on page 258, to which I call your attention. "I will take away your stony

heart, and give you a heart of flesh," says God, "I will write my law upon it—I will lead you by my Spirit."

I am amused with your manner of wholesaling the proofs I have adduced. On page 18, vol. 4, I would call your attention to the saying of scripture which is, "It (the Spirit) taketh of the things of God, and showeth unto us;" also your omission of a notice of a saying of Christ, "I stand at the door and knock." Our bodies are the temples of the holy Spirit to dwell in, when we are converted to, and accepted of, God.

Consider me still inquiring after truth. I have been profited by this discussion. Some passages I view differently from what I did, and I shall review the subject again with care.

Yours in respect,

A METHODIST.

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REJOINDER.

And so, my dear sir, the controversy, on your part, ends. Your candor I have all along admired. Your cautious modesty has not been unobserved. Your courtesy, too, has been noted and appreciated.

But your theological logic belongs to another department, and it is in this capacity that I am required to view and review you. If, in performing this work, there has been exhibited to your mind "an apparent boast," "a strange understanding," or "pure imagination," perhaps you will be disposed, in the abundance of your charity, after grave reflection, to place the same to the credit of something less unworthy than pure perversity or personal rancour. Let me refresh your memory with a few hints given at the commencement of the correspondence, in order to advise you of the spirit and style you might expect in my replies to your letters:—"Personal courtesy and logical courtesy are with me two distinct things. Courtesy to persons is of a mild, placid, and sauvitive nature; while the courtesy properly belonging to argument grapples with strength, boldness, and vigorous virtue. True courtesy, when truth is at stake, seizes a strong weapon, and uses it with all the muscle that genuine energy and well directed zeal can command." I will not then say anything farther upon either my style or yours, but leave every reader to form his own judgment and arrive at his own conclusions. The facts and documentary proof we offer to the community are of higher consequence than the mere verbiage of their delivery, and reverence for the Book of God much more to be observed than any particular style or mode of expression.

As you have led the way in administering a little censure, permit me in turn to express my regret that you were pleased to write a number of letters without taking up or laying down a single logical proposition, and throwing your battlements of reasons around it like a true workman for the purpose of fortifying the position implied in said proposition. Can you tell, my friend, what you have proved? Are you able to say, on a review of your own letters, what you have attempted to prove? It is true, you employed your pen as a friendly controversialist, desirous of truth, and measurably regardless of partizan-ship. But you were either a Methodist or not. You either believed in a special and direct operation of the Spirit or you did not. You were convinced that God's holy influence to save men from sin is either conveyed to the human heart through the medium of the gospel, or that this holy influence is the Almighty's breath miraculously infused into the heart of the saved without gospel agency. Now, why not have laid down a cardinal or tangible point or proposition, and built upon it, and given us at least a fair specimen of the strength of the system to which you have been fully attached.

In this manner, too, you would have befriended yourself in your pursuit of truth. There is nothing that better proves to our own mind the strength or the weakness of the principles we hold, than to embody them in a leading proposition, and then submit this proposition to the severest test of argument and evidence. There is no danger of the truth. Neither is there danger of adhering too strenuously to former tenets, partially suspected of unsoundness, provided we are determined to discover and receive the truth. No man should be censured for holding and maintaining his tenets firmly. It is weakness to be vacillating. Whatever in religion is worth holding, is worth being held with the tenacity of life. Let the world call him too tame or too determined, the person who resolves to follow the "one best Book" should not occupy half ground upon my great question. But here permit me to say with the greatest possible emphasis, that, while we should hold our religious principles with a firm grasp, we should be equally disposed to listen candidly to an investigation of them, and to abandon them immediately upon due evidence being furnished that they are aside from the holy Record. It is here, friend "Methodist," that there is so much in the professing world that is truly censurable. Men are not prepared to yield to evidence. Reverence is turned into superstition, and to sit at the feet of Jesus is no longer regarded as a proof of heaven-approved humility, but to kneel before some delegate to a council, some member of a conference, or some partizan reformer,

zealous of a fresh creed, has become the all-engrossing mark of a contrite heart. When testimony the most clear and indisputable is adduced from the living oracles, even after the resources of opposition are run out to the letter, the true partizan clings to "my creed," and burns with new zeal for "my people."

But I must attend to your letter. Before advancing farther let me enumerate the items in which there is a mutual concurrence:—

1st. That the Spirit of God exists.

2nd. That the Spirit not only exists, but exerts an influence.

3rd. That man's heart is the place for receiving this spiritual influence in order to his conversion.

4th. That without the Spirit's influence conversion is impossible.

While however we unite upon these cardinal facts provable by the Bible, we are at variance concerning the mode or the manner in which the Spirit performs its work, or takes possession of the heart. We both say it operates, savingly operates; but *how its operates*, which is the real question at issue, there is the following difference between us:—You say, or your system says, the Spirit operates without the gospel, by "means peculiar to the spirit," or in a direct manner apart from the instrumentality of language; while on the contrary it is my faith that the Spirit exerts its influence by, through, or in the gospel. The gospel, in my creed, is *the power of God* which carries with it salvation to all who believe. With me, therefore, the gospel includes spiritual influence; with you, as I understand, spiritual influence is out of the gospel, and distinct from the influence of the gospel.

Now if you contend for a peculiar and special operation of the Spirit, how shall we account for the following two sentences found in your first paragraph, where, in speaking of me, you say: "I understand you to say that the holy Spirit operates upon the heart of man in order to his conversion to, and acceptance with, God. This is all I contend for." You have, in my judgment, not only mistaken me, but mistaken yourself in so saying. The Spirit's existence, office, and influence, I have, both in word and writing, always admitted; and therefore you have wholly misapprehended me if you have supposed that in my mind these were questionable. And you have mistaken yourself in affirming that you contend only for the operation of the Spirit, for you are unsound in the faith, both as a "Methodist" and as a consistent writer, if you fail to contend for a particular mode of operation by the Spirit. You, then my friend, if I understand you, contend for the Spirit's influence, and something more—this influence in a peculiar manner or by peculiar means.

The whole difference between us, so far as relates to spiritual power, is summed up in a single sentence. God, you say, sends his Spirit into the heart of man, uniformly in a direct way, where, when, and how he pleases, independently of the gospel of Christ; and I, in dissenting wholly from this view, affirm, that God sends his Spirit, with all his love, all his mercy, and his whole saving power, not by means apart from, or added to, the gospel, but in and by the gospel itself. You have not indeed stated your side of the question in the above language, neither have I written my faith in the words now given; but these two cardinal views may be fairly gathered from our letters. Now what proof have you furnished from the divine Word that the Spirit works by "peculiar means," which, when examined, prove to be no means at all? Let us see:—

You quoted *Gen vi*: 3. "My spirit shall not always strive with man." It was shown that this passage stated a fact, but did not even hint how the Spirit accomplished its work. Along with this, to which you again invite notice, you summoned to your aid a verse in the xvi of *John*.—"The Holy Spirit shall take of mine, and show it into you." These words also speak of something done, but reveal not the manner of its execution. Still, if we accept of your own commentary, offered in your present letter, we are saved from the inconsistency of abstract power; for, you properly say that the apostles, to whom this promise was given, "were enabled by it [the Spirit] to speak several different languages." You will confute and refute yourself and your own darling system if we only allow you time enough.

The case of Nicodemus, which you have made Cornelius, is brought up by you as though I was obliged to show what it means. You, my dear sir, have the affirmative, and, in the affair of argumentation, it is my province to follow and not to lead. Had you attempted to show that the Saviour's words to Nicodemus signify that the Spirit when it converts acts by itself, without agency, separate from God's own revelation, then my friend you might have some claim to enlist me in the discussion of this passage. Still, for the truth's sake, let me say what it does not mean. The words of the text are frequently mis-quoted. Jesus does not say, "So is every one born of the Spirit;" but he says "So is every one *that* is born of the Spirit." *So is* a letter *written*, and so is *a letter that is written*, are very different expressions—as different as the writing of a letter, and the describing of a letter that has been written. Hence we perceive there is nothing said in this passage about the manner of the Spirit's operation.

But this letter is sufficiently lengthy, and I must come to an abrupt close, promising to consider some of the scriptures you quote at a future time by embodying them in the form of an essay.

Yours in controversy,

D. OLIPHANT.

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MODERN TEACHING.

Lancaster. Erie Co. N. Y., 5th March, 1849.

DEAR BROTHER OLIPHANT:—We are usually well at present in this vicinity, hoping and wishing you well, and prosperity in the good cause. When we take a view of the world of mankind, and see the condition in which they are, in a religious point of view, we cannot help bidding God speed to all laudable efforts in order to advance truth and light. But many are the efforts, and various are the means, to Christianize the world, which I cannot bid God speed.

Jeremiah says, in the name of the Lord, "I have heard what the prophets said that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed." "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my counsels, and caused my people to hear my word, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings." "They are prophets of the deceit of *their own heart*, which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams."

Our world is full of such dreamers now-a-days, who go about preaching themselves instead of Christ and him crucified, who tell their own dreams, visions, feelings, and imaginations instead of the ways of the Lord, who think that *gain* is godliness, and they *do* make merchandise of many an honest soul. I have often wondered why men would be misled by such teaching. Paul says, the gospel is the power of God. O, if we could always realise this great truth, and not give heed to "cunningly devised fables." God saw what man needed when he sent his own Son into the world; therefore he adapted the *plan* of salvation to man; and after the Son had received "all authority in heaven and earth," he gave that plan, and commanded that it should be proclaimed through all the world.

Paul, speaking of the gospel, says, "If I or any other, even an angel from heaven, preach another gospel, let him be cursed;" yet, notwithstanding all this, men will listen to dreams—to those who claim to have received a vision or a revelation—in preference to listening to the apostles. Some people say in regard to some of the command-

ments that they are mere ceremonies—that there is neither hurt nor good in obeying or disobeying them. A certain young man once came to the Saviour, and asked him which was the *greatest* commandment, as though there were some small commandments. People now talk about the essentials and non-essentials, as though God commanded some things that are not essential. Whatever is commanded in the word of God, is a *great command*, because it comes from *great authority*.

In the Acts of apostles, we see what the apostles commanded—what sinners should do to obtain remission of sins. In the Epistles, we see what the same apostles, having the same authority, commanded the saints to do to continue steadfast in the faith, and to walk circumspect before the world.

Yours in the blessed hope,

BENJ. SUMMY.

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#### INTELLIGENCE FROM ABROAD.

The subjoined letter, although relating to affairs afar off, will doubtless be perused with attention and interest. We have only leisure to offer a word of explanation. While among the brethren in Tully, a few weeks since, we were solicited to say where an evangelist could be found, and we spoke favourably of obtaining the esteemed brother who writes the following. Shortly after, we despatched a letter to head quarters to propitiate matters as far as possible with our brother who here responds:—

*Canfield, O., April 16th, 1849.*

DEAR BROTHER OLIPHANT:—I received a letter from you dated the 6th, and one from brother Chase, of Tully, dated the 7th of April, and this is intended as an answer to both. Since you last heard from me I have located in this place, and am engaged to labor the ensuing year for the congregation here, and at Green, and consequently am not at liberty to reciprocate the kind invitation of the brethren in Tully.

The above, perhaps, would be a sufficient answer to yours and that of brother Chase, but it does not satisfy me. New York is my own, my native state—and an invitation of this kind, coming as it does not far from the scenes of my childhood, where many years were spent in childish innocence and youthful delights, wakes up remembrances of those sunny days, to the joys of which I have no desire to be a stranger, and begets in me a wish that I was prepared to respond in the affirmative. It is with feelings of the deepest interest that I have watched the slow and steady progress of the reformation in the old Empire State, and for years I have promised myself a visit to the dear brethren there, and have often thought I would like to labor in that part of the Lord's great harvest; but as yet these promises and desires have not been realized.

But here I am reminded that I am living among, and laboring with brethren, the evidences of whose attachment to the Lord are many and great, and whose kindness to me binds me to them with cords of love not easily sundered, even were I free. The Lord willing I may promise the brethren in Tully this much—they may expect to see me at their annual meeting the coming autumn. Will they intimate the time? It is doubtful whether brother Green accompanies me, as he writes me that “he has not spoken a clear loud word for two months,” and adds, “I suspect I never shall. Be faithful. Warn sinners—comfort saints.” This will be melancholy intelligence; but we may be permitted to hope for the best.

You have many warm friends here, many of whom wish to be affectionately remembered to you, among whom are our dearly beloved brother and sister Pow, brother Flick, and others. We are anxious to know when we may expect to see you face to face, and hear words from your mouth. Please signify in your next *Witness* when this may be. My warmest love to the dear brethren in Oshawa.

Yours in hope of eternal life,

W. LANPHEAR.

#### OBITUARY.

DEAR BROTHER OLIPHANT:—Please to record in the *Witness* the following brief memorial of the dead. On Lordsday the 15th instant as the Sun went down, our venerable and beloved Father Stewart, in the 70th year of his age and 50th of his christian pilgrimage fell asleep in the Lord.

His memory will long be cherished by his christian friends on both sides of the Atlantic as a man who walked in the fear of the Lord and kept himself in the love of God; as a christian reformer who revered the Bible and rejoiced in every fresh discovery of its truth; as a christian brother whose religious sympathies awoke into manly exercise and christian devotion; as a husband, father, friend, and neighbor, whose social character was governed and ennobled by the principles of christian virtue. Father Stewart was a native of the parish of Moulin and county of Perth, Scotland. The development of the transcendent love and glory of the Son of God he received through the preaching of Mr. Stewart, the parish minister, the trophies of whose eminent piety and zeal have lived and flourished in various climes. Having embraced the Saviour, he desired to be conformed to his sacred will and soon discovering a higher degree of conformity to the laws of Christ in a dissenting church, he attached himself to it—a congregation of Independents. His attention was soon afterwards directed to the subject of baptism, and after being baptized united with a baptist congregation. Here also, though no dogmatist, he was a reformer and carried some useful reformatory measures. Remaining under the baptist banner upwards of a quarter of a century, he emigrated with his family to Canada, and planting his stakes where congenial religious privileges existed, continued in their enjoyment till his death. The *Millennial Harbinger* having fallen into his hands shortly after his arrival here, he carefully read its pages and soon joyfully hailed in them an advance



in religious reformation, which he aided forward by the weight of his character. Our venerable and deceased brother Daniel Stewart was a disciple

“ Who hailed with joy the morn that roll'd the Lordsday round  
And in the court of worship was ever to be found.”

Nor was it in the courts of the Lord only he enjoyed the sweets of social worship; at his family altar morning and evening, he worshipped God. He has gone we fully trust into his presence

“ Where the saints of all ages in harmony meet,  
Their Saviour and brethern transported to greet,  
While the anthems of rapture unceasingly roll,  
And the smile of the Lord is the feast of the soul.”

JAMES BLACK.

*Eramosa, April, 1849.*

### GRIEF—HOPE—JOY.

Lines prepared for the occasion, and sung at the funeral of WILSON MURTON, only child of CAROLINE and ABRAM FAREWELL, aged fifteen months.

Why throbs the heart with fruitless woe?  
Why should these tears of sorrow flow?  
Check the fond wish, and cease the sigh,  
Why should we call him from the sky?

Unfetter'd from the flesh, refin'd,  
There peaceful roves his raptur'd mind,  
Of heav'nly spirits joins the choir,  
And warmly breathes their pure desire.

There rills of sacred pleasure roll;  
All perfect beauty charms the soul,  
And splendors from th' eternal throne  
Pour their full tide of glory down.

Now freed from vanities and cares,  
Escap'd a thousand ills and snares,  
Rejoic'd to find life's voyage o'er,  
Perfect his bliss—what wish we more?

Adieu! thou short-lived charm, adieu!  
Just shown and ravish'd from our view;  
A thousand hopes, thy parents' pride,  
And fondest wishes with thee died.

In pity Heav'n thy mortal race  
Contracted to a narrow space,  
Snatch'd from the world's delusive stage,  
Where grief still waits on rip'ning age.

In circling joys and sportive play  
Thy pleasant moments passed away:  
For care, or sorrow's rankling dart  
Had never reach'd thy harmless heart.

Come resignation from the sky!  
'Tis thine to raise the down-cast eye,  
Come thou! with cheerful faith descend,  
For thou art always sorrow's friend.