

THE
PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY
AND
PRINCETON REVIEW.

EDITORS:

LYMAN H. ATWATER: HENRY B. SMITH.

NEW SERIES.—VOLUME II.

1873.

NEW YORK:

Published by J. M. SHERWOOD,
38 JOHN STREET.

PRINCETON: MCGINNESS & RUNYAN.

PHILADELPHIA: PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION,
1334 Chestnut Street.

AMERICAN NEWS CO., NEW YORK NEWS CO., *General Agents.*

Press of ROGERS & SHERWOOD, 94 & 96 Nassau Street. New York.

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NEW SERIES, No. 5.—JANUARY, 1873.

ART. I.—BERKELEY'S PHILOSOPHY.*

BY REV. JAMES MCCOSH, D.D., LL.D., President of Princeton College.

THIS work has been a labor of love on the part of the editor. He has evidently spent years upon it, and we are reaping the benefit. He has taken immense pains in collating the published works of Berkeley, in searching for manuscripts, and in collecting all that can be known of the man. Much of the new matter is of no great value, as for example the letters, chiefly on business, to Mr. Prior, and his Sermons and Notes of Sermons, which are common-place enough. Others are of inestimable worth, such as his Common-Place Book, in which, as in a glass, we see the rise of his speculations. I have read it with as much interest as I felt years ago on inspecting in Dresden the first sketches which Raphael drew of his great master-pieces. The edition is already the standard one and will never be superseded. The notes of the editor, which are numerous, are sometimes simple enough, and mere repetitions of each other, but are commonly of great utility as connecting the scattered statements of his author on a particular subject. The editor's prefaces constitute a valuable introduction to the treatises. They are always anxiously thoughtful, but they do not clear up the subject. He writes as if he could, if he chose, say something decisive; but as he never chooses, one begins to doubt whether he has anything to say fitted to dispel the mystery. Prof. Fraser does not profess to be an adherent of Berkeley's philosophy, but it is evident that he is strongly prepossessed in its favor. He tells us that Berkeley

* The Works of George Berkeley, by Alexander Campbell Fraser, A M., Professor of Logic and Metaphysic, in the University of Edinburgh, in four vols.

to the ear and break it to the hope" by proclaiming salvation by Christ alone, while insisting that the soul in its extreme need can identify him, reach him, and become partaker of his salvation, only through a prior and indispensable faith in other mediation. If this precedent faith, though not called saving faith, must be exercised before I can exercise any that shall reach Christ, who is my Saviour? the Son of God, or the hierarchy of Rome?

ART. VI.—WHY ARE NOT MORE PERSONS CONVERTED UNDER OUR MINISTRY?

By THOS. H. SKINNER, D.D., Cincinnati, Ohio.

THE QUESTION which we have placed at the head of this article is one that is often asked by thoughtful, anxious ministers; and the fact which it indicates, serves often to depress the spirits and weaken the hands of those who are toiling in the Master's vineyard. In what we shall say, we aim to present an aspect of the subject very needful, we think, to be carefully examined by all who are called upon to preach the gospel. The suggestions we offer were prepared for an association of ministers, who during several meetings had the matter under earnest consideration.

In answer to the inquiry, Why are not more persons converted under our ministry? we first remark, that any answer which, in its elements, legitimately tends to abate the fidelity of the ministry is a wrong answer. Such a tendency would be a signal and sure test of its error and worthlessness.

The peculiar form in which the question is put suggests these two inquiries: (1) Is not success in converting souls made, by implication at least, a criterion of fidelity? and (2) Is not the relation of the stated pastor to the church somewhat overshadowed by the prominence given to his relation to the world?

Now, fidelity, fidelity to God, to God's truth and to souls, is the one paramount, ever-present and ever-pressing duty of the minister. The *discharge of duty*, honestly, earnestly, scripturally, should be our one great concern, our supreme anxiety. And this duty consists chiefly in two things: 1st, Preaching the

Word ; and, 2d, Prayer ; according to that declaration of the apostles when they freed themselves from certain other church work, " We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word ; and illustrated by the prophet Ezekiel preaching to the dry bones of the valley, and then crying, " Come O breath from the four winds, and breathe upon these slain that they may live." God commands us to preach the gospel to every creature ; to do this faithfully ; so to do it as to quit ourselves of responsibility, " to deliver our souls." Our business is to declare " the testimony of God," to be his mouth to our hearers ; to preach the word, to be instant in season and out of season ; to reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine ; and then to leave the hearer and God together. But does God require us to *expect*, in answer to our preaching and our prayers, that every creature who hears us will be renewed by the Holy Ghost and come to Christ ? Does he require us to expect that any particular person will be thus the subject of His effectual call, and does he blame us if that person is not converted ? Was this the manner and spirit of Christ's preaching ? Did he expect the conversion of those to whom he spake, and was his expectation disappointed because they were not converted ? The same inquiry may be made respecting the preaching of Peter and of Paul. Did they evince the more anxiety as to the *results* or the manner of their preaching ? The discharge of their duty as the messengers, the ambassadors of God, was not this the one, the supreme thing in their ministry.

Fidelity must be measured by some standard. Unquestionably, a want of success in leading souls to Christ may and should awaken the inquiry, Am I faithful ? and should stimulate self examination ; but success cannot be the standard of duty. Duty, as God's ambassadors, is to be tested by the faithfulness ; i. e., the truthfulness of the delivery of our message, to which nothing of human opinion may be added ; from which nothing may be subtracted. Duty, as the shepherds of souls, is to be tested by the care and watchfulness and prayerfulness used in its discharge. Duty, as Christians engaged in seeking the salvation of our fellow men, is to be tested by the zeal and love manifested in the sacred pursuit. Success, or the want of it, is not the gauge or criterion by which to estimate our fidelity.

And is there not danger in making success in winning souls

a chief direct subject of thought and contemplation? May there not be a subtle pride in constituting tangible sensible usefulness a direct motive of action? May not an unlawful egotism insinuate itself into our souls, as we think of *our own* usefulness, *our own* success? especially as we will be likely to compare that success with the want of it in others. Verily it is wisdom, "to think as little and talk as little as possible about ourselves."

That there is a lack of fidelity in the ministry, no one doubts, but that that lack is of such a nature as to account for the non-conversion of many souls, is by no means a self-evident proposition. It may be so, and it may not be so. Fidelity is always a matter of degrees, and were we tenfold more faithful than we are, our consciousness of shortcoming would be far more vivid and painful than it now is; only we are inclined to think, the question of happy results, of success in converting souls, would not disturb and depress us as much as it does in our ordinary state and work. God is not tied to a certain fixed standard or measure of fidelity in advancing his kingdom. The instruments he uses are often very surprising to us; "weak things," and "despised things," and "things that are not;" "dust and ashes;" "earthen vessels," "ignorant and unlearned men," and even sinful men like Balaam and Judas and Demas, and those who "preached Christ of envy and strife, of contention and not sincerely."

That we individually are not as faithful as we should be is frankly, sorrowfully confessed. Our duty is plain and imperative to preach the gospel to every creature who comes under our influence; to labor and be in travail for souls; to seek their salvation unhampered by any views of Divine decrees, predestination, reprobation, election or effectual calling; by any views of original sin, depravity, or inability. The Bible truth on these subjects is no more in our way, than is God himself who commands us to offer his mercy to the guilty and the lost, who is not willing that any should perish, and who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. Our duty is as plain in this matter as if we knew each and all were chosen unto life in Jesus Christ. In this aspect of our work election, decrees have nothing to do; they play no part, they serve no purpose. But when we stretch out our hands all the day, all the year long, to a disobedient and gainsaying people; when

we seem to labor in vain, and to spend our strength for naught, then we are permitted to fall back on God's eternal purposes, and rest on the bosom of the all-wise, omnipotent, and self-restraining God. This is the great solace of our missionaries, who often toil for years without visible results. We preach and pray, and pray and preach, and the issues are all with God, who dispenses or withholds his spirit as he pleases, with whom alone is the increase, and whose exclusively is the glory.

If the question before us had been put somewhat differently ; if it were, Why are any persons, why is a single person in a year, converted under our ministry ? the answer would be, not because we are faithful or skillful or prayerful, but because of God's rich and free grace. If twenty persons a year were converted, the answer would be the same. If a hundred were brought to Christ, the answer would still be the same. Three thousand were converted on the day of Pentecost. Why ? Because Peter was so consecrated and holy and faithful ? No ! but because Christ, according to his promise, sent the Holy Spirit from heaven. "Tarry ye in Jerusalem till ye be endued with power from on high ;" and this endowment, while preceded by ten days of prayer, was of sovereign goodness.

Now, with a somewhat increased degree of faithfulness, would we be sure of greater results than we at present attain ? Generally, we would say, yes ; because the grace that makes us more faithful, may often be supposed to have this in view. Still there are considerations and facts that require us to qualify this conclusion. The spirit of increased fidelity may be given for other ends ; ends personal to ourselves, judicial to sinners, sifting and sanctifying to the Church. The Bible and history and observation show that extreme fidelity often has failed of success in saving souls, while the almost utter want of it has sometimes been attended with large ingatherings. Noah seems not to have converted one soul in one hundred and twenty years. Moses sadly failed with Pharaoh and his court, and often with the children of Israel. Elijah gave up in utter despair. Jonah brought a vast city of pagans to repentance, against his wishes and against his prayers. Jeremiah's whole ministry was a failure so far as success in his preaching was concerned. We have the following remarkable record about Ezekiel ; "Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words

unto them. For thou art not sent to a people of a strange speech and of an hard language. . . Surely had I sent thee to them they would have hearkened unto thee. But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee, for they will not hearken unto me." Our Lord says, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed ?

His was a ministry with a great number of backsliders and apostates ; a ministry which, while it would have saved Sodom and Gomorrah, Tyre and Sidon, failed in Chorazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum. Peter's first sermon, after denying Christ with oaths and curses, resulted in three thousand conversions ; while Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, wrought great wonders and miracles among the people ; and many (Acts vi. 9) instead of being won to Christ disputed with him, and were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake ; and they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council and set up false witnesses against him. And his sermon before the council cut them to the heart and they gnashed upon him with their teeth ; and they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and ran upon him, and stoned him to death.* The fidelity of the Apostle Paul was unsurpassed. His heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel was that they might be saved. He had great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart and could wish that himself were accursed from Christ, for his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh ; and yet, while sometimes successful, at Antioch he and Barnabas shook off the dust of their feet against them, and said : " It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you ; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." At Iconium, such was the opposition that he fled to Lystra and Derby and other places. At Athens the results of his labors were very meagre. At Corinth, where he was specially earnest and " was pressed in the spirit," when the Jews opposed themselves and blasphemed, he shook his raiment and said unto them : " Your blood be upon your own heads ; I am clean : from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles." And at Rome, " he departed, after speaking this word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias

* Acts, 6th and 7th chapters.

the prophet unto our fathers, saying, go unto this people and say: Hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see and not perceive; for the heart of this people is waxed gross and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart, and should be converted and I should heal them. Be it known unto you, therefore, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it." These and such like facts, in which post-apostolic history abounds, are facts bearing not so much on the question of fidelity, but of success, and they tell their own story. The principles indulging them we will speak of presently: the facts themselves are very instructive.

Fidelity in darkness and in difficulty, when the Church is cold and apathetic, and God's Spirit is withheld; fidelity when a whole nation seems apostate and there are but seven thousand of the Lord's hidden ones; fidelity, like that of Athanasius, when the word became proverbial, "*Athanasius contra mundum, mundus contra Athanasium*;" such fidelity, compared with the richest harvest ingathering, marks ministerial heroism of the highest order. Such heroes were John Howe and John Owen in the days of Charles the Second. Such heroes, to-day, preside over multitudes of churches in our own land.

If we depend on God for success—and on him alone should we depend—and success does not come, then we may not, just on that account, blame either God or ourselves. Ministers "are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish." Our Lord says, "He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, one soweth and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor; other men labored and ye are entered into their labors." The reaper is scarcely accounted a laborer, so light and easy is his harvest work: but he is permitted to rejoice in the harvest home, with the hard-working, watching, waiting, praying sower. "Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient." "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly

wait for the salvation of God." The time is set to favor Zion. Though the blessing tarry, wait for it.

Doubtless, the chief end of a minister's work may be lost sight of in the thought of subordinate ends. Important as it is to build up God's church in their most holy faith; important as it is to secure the renewing power of the Holy Spirit in the unrenewed, and so secure their conversion; important as are Christian reformatory movements in society; important as are the institutions of the church at large, and of the local church; important as are one's usefulness and success; the highest, most healthful inspiration of the minister is his supreme, all-embracing end, the glory of God; the glory, not of one or of two, but of all the attributes of his nature, of his justice and wisdom and holiness and truth, as well as of his mercy and grace. A calm and candid consideration of this view of the question: "Wherefore do the wicked live?" will result in some other answer than that they may all be born again and brought to Christ. To be in profound sympathy with the Most High God, to be his willing instruments for his sovereign pleasure, ready either for hard work or still harder endurance, for success or for seeming defeat; to live for God's great glory, this is the chief end of the ministry, as it is of all men who live aright.

In regard to the other inquiry: Is not the relation of the Pastor to the church somewhat overshadowed, in the question before us, by the prominence given to his relation to the world? a few words only are requisite. The stated pastor is specially appointed and set apart to feed the flock of God over which the Holy Ghost has made him overseer. To edify the church with God's word; to instruct and comfort and guide and counsel and reprove the people of God who are committed to his keeping—this is his peculiar calling, his first duty. On this he spends his strength, in study, in prayer, in preaching, in visiting. He is not chiefly an evangelist, a preacher at large to the world, but more a teacher and bishop of souls professing Christ. He is in solemn covenant with them to serve, to spend and be spent for them. And as the *children of the church* form an integral part of the body of Christ, as they are of, and with, and in the church, they necessarily engage no small share of his thought and labor and prayer. With the younger of them his influence is mainly exerted through their parents, whom he is to instruct and coun-

sel in their duties, according to his best ability. With those that are older his influence should be more direct and positive. Feed my sheep, feed my lambs, says the Master. A study of Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus indicate the great work of the pastor, who endures all things for the elect's sake that they may obtain eternal salvation. These epistles are the thesaurus of subjects for charges to ministers, and we think abundantly vindicate the justice of our statements. Unquestionably, we have relations and duties to those outside of the pale of the church; but we are of the opinion, that whatever shortcomings our ministry may be guilty of in respect to the church, they are eminently faithful in their preaching to the unconverted members of their congregations. A large proportion of their sermons is directed to them. And there is no doubt that a church, rightly trained and educated by the pastor, will become efficient agents in bringing souls to Christ out of the world. A wide field here opens before us, but these hints must suffice on this topic.

We pass now to consider briefly some of the great underlying principles of the minister's work, especially in relation to unregenerate persons coming under his preaching and influence.

There is, then, (1) God's unchangeable complete plan, covering all time and embracing the end from the beginning, infallibly sure and unfailing. Every sheep and lamb belonging to the Great Shepherd, every individual soul constituting the Bride of the eternal Son of God, every living stone selected for the Temple of glory, every person given to Christ in the covenant of redemption, every mortal chosen in him before the foundation of the world, will be saved. Not one grain of this precious wheat shall fall to the ground when God sifts the world in his judgment sieve. No fidelity can by any means save the chaff, can save any but the wheat. And the ministry are God's appointed agency by which the wheat is formed and ripened; they are his instruments for taking out of the world a people for his name. As many as are ordained to eternal life will believe in Christ mainly through their preaching. It has pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

And then (2) there is the condition of those to whom we preach. They are spiritually dead; dead in trespasses and sin; dead in law, condemned to eternal death, dead to God and goodness. We are not Pelagians, we are not semi-pelagians or

Synergists; we are no Arminians. We believe, in accordance with our Confession of Faith, that every man is by nature indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil. That he hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation . . . and is not able by his own strength to convert himself or to prepare himself thereunto; that in his effectual calling or renewal, he is altogether passive therein, until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it. As Christ in His body was dead and buried, was raised from the sepulchre by the exceeding greatness of God's power, so the sinner is dead and buried in the grave of sin, and his resurrection therefrom is by that very same power exerted in him.

And then (3) there is the secret, by us uncontrollable, and invincible agency and operation of the Holy Ghost. In nothing is Divine Sovereignty more manifest than in this. The Holy Spirit acts his free pleasure according to the counsels of eternal wisdom, and not according to our wishes; dispensing or withholding his grace as to the subject, the time, the manner, and the measure in his own most blessed goodness. None can say unto him, what doest thou? "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God who sheweth mercy." "Who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the man, but of God." King Manassah, the dying thief, Saul of Tarsus, for whom few prayed, with whom few labored, none so far as we know, were the ready subjects of his call; while Judas and Simon Magus, Alexander the coppersmith and Hermogenes, embosomed in church influences, perished.

We talk much of *conversion*, if we talked more of *Regeneration*, would we not do better? Regeneration is first and in order to conversion. A man may be converted many times, he can never be born again twice. If our minds were more distinctly fixed upon the regeneration of our hearers who are born in sin and depravity, not to speak of the spirit and character of *prayer* under this condition, would not our *preaching* be more with a view to supply the Holy Spirit with suitable channels of grace? Regeneration is the work of the Spirit through the word. Conversion is the act of the sinner's own mind. With the former vividly in our thoughts, our preaching would have a certain

cast and tendency Godwards. With the latter vividly before us, our preaching would aim more specially at moving, persuading, convincing the sinner. The idea of regeneration directs us to God. The idea of conversion turns us to men. Both styles of preaching are scriptural; but do we not often use them out of their due proportion.

God's plan respecting communities and individuals are unknown. Revivals are not constant, but occasional things. We think that President Edwards has demonstrated that the world is to be largely brought to Christ by means of them; and many things are necessary to prepare the way for them. We might name numerous illustrations of this; let us refer to one or two. The preparations for the advent of Christ and the work of Pentecost were manifold, and protracted through ages, and involved the captivity of the Jews, the overthrow of three imperial nations, and the establishment of the Roman Empire. Preaching during these movements of Providence, and preaching after them, were very different things; and this not in respect to the fidelity of the ministry, but in respect to the immediate results of their preaching. The reaping time came and the harvest was gathered. The preparations for the Reformation in Europe were signal and peculiar and protracted. The Reformation was a second Pentecost, sermons and preachers seemed magnetic with the Holy Spirit. This principle of the divine administration applies, with more or less force of application, to towns and churches and individuals in our day; just as it did to the apostle Paul, who, though he was separated from his mother's womb for his renewal and mission, was not brought to Christ until the prime of life, when in that "nick of time," it pleased God to call him by His grace and furnish and ordain him for his great work. He that believeth maketh not haste. Time with God is not as it is with us. A human life of three-score years and ten is as the passage of a weaver's shuttle. A thousand years are as one day. According to this standard, not quite two days have elapsed since the dispensation of the spirit began.

God, for reasons more or less concealed from us—and no minister, in fancied or real humility, should imagine them to relate mainly to himself—withdraws His spirit from communities, as he did from Capernaum, and Bethsaida, and Jerusalem, and also from nations whom he gives up to blindness of mind and a

reprobate heart. His Holy Spirit is not at human command or bidding. His love for the souls of men, surpasses that of all churches, of all ministers; but he has seasons of judicial visitation, temporal and spiritual; and He shakes nations that the church, which cannot be shaken, may be settled more firmly and permanently. He is King in Zion, and it does not become us to sit in judgment upon the Almighty, because of his delay in his merciful visitations. Careful, constant fidelity is our great duty. We are often tempted to say, "I have labored in vain, and I have spent my strength for nought and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with the Lord and my work is with my God, and now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength."

This is a great subject, and we have presented what some may call, the Divine side of it. There are other aspects in which it may be viewed, but this one we deem of great importance at the present time. The intelligent adoption of the principles we have presented, would impart boldness, courage, and fidelity to the ministry; would give dignity and strength to our office as ambassadors of Christ; would make us and make others think more of God and God's glory; would solve many problems, illustrate many historic providences, interpret many parts of Scripture, and give consistency and completeness to the ideal of the Christian church and ministry.