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-

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THE
Reformed Presbyterian
AND
Covenanter.

FEBRUARY, - - - 1887.

J. W. SPROULL,

D. B. WILLSON,

EDITORS AND PROPRIETORS.

EDITORS' ADDRESS,

-

ALLEGHENY, PA.

"Whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."
Phil. 3: 16.

"Ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."
Jude 3.

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HUGH O'NEILL, of the 4th New York congregation, has given a fourth \$1,000 to the Tarsus mission. COLLECTION, February, 1st Sabbath, for church erection. Amount, \$2,000. Treasurer, William Neely, 108 Duane St., New York.

REV. R. J. MOREL, the successor of Rev. Dr. Houston in the Knockbracken, Ireland, charge has joined the Presbyterian church.

KANSAS Presbytery, Olathe, Rev. S. J. Crowe, February and March,

D. McKEE, *Ch. Com. of Supplies.*

MR. JAMES PATTON, licentiate, has been appointed by the Central Board of Missions to labor at Quinter, Gove county, Kansas, and Mr. Henry W. Temple, licentiate, to labor at Alexandria, Minnesota, after the close of the Theological Seminary.

THE Board of Trustees of Geneva College ask that a collection be taken up by the congregations, to tide them over the present year, as the interest on a considerable portion of the Endowment Fund does not become due for some months yet. Remit to James R. McKee, No. 36 Sixth Street, Pittsburgh, Pa.

THE Board of Foreign Missions issues a Special Call for laborers. Rev. H. Easson is the only Arabic speaking minister in Latakiah. Dr. Metheny is the only Arabic speaking minister in the Tarsus field. Will not some one respond? A call is also made for a medical missionary. Address Rev. R. M. Sommersville, 312 W. 46th street, New York City.

MCKEESPORT, PA., a growing city of over 18,000 inhabitants, is situated on the Monongahela river, about fifteen miles southeast of Pittsburgh, with which it is connected by three lines of railroad. It has, developed rapidly in the last ten years. The principal industries are the National Tube Works, employing over 3,000 men, and the Woods Rolling Mill employing some 700 or 800. Labor is in constant demand and those wishing good locations for work are not likely to find a better manufacturing place than McKeesport. Like other Western Pennsylvania towns it rejoices in the new fuel, the cheapest and best of all, natural gas. There is a growing congregation of Covenanters in the city. The prospects for the future are very encouraging. The church building has lately been put in excellent condition, and now presents as pleasing and attractive an appearance as could be desired. Rev. J. H. Wylie is the pastor and will gladly give any information he can that may be desired.

ON THE 29th of November last, the Liverpool congregation had a sad congregational meeting. The pastor, Rev. W. J. Maxwell, bade them farewell, saying (in part) "My views (on certain questions) are not in accord with the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. I do not wish to disturb the belief of any one, or to weaken your attachment to the Covenanting church. We must henceforth take separate ways. I do not wish to exhibit or excite emotion, but I say, with unfeigned sincerity and tenderness, the Lord bless you all." Mr. Maxwell then retired, and Mr. Rippard took the chair. He said, (in part) "I am bound to believe Mr. Maxwell when he states that his convictions will not allow him to remain in our communion. With this change, I and mine have lost a very dear friend. I am persuaded, brethren, we are verily guilty respecting our brother. We have not pleaded for him at the throne of grace as we should. In saying farewell to him in his official capacity as our pastor let me express the conviction that he will never rest satisfied outside that church which gives Christ his full titles and prerogatives." Mr. McClay said, (in part), "Looking back now we can truly say that Mr. Maxwell had very bravely borne the burden and heat of the day. He travelled thousands of miles for us and collected altogether about £1,200." Other references were made to his work and the ties of twelve year's ministry were broken.

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ORIGINAL.

EXPOSITION OF THE PSALMS.*

The chief design of this part of pulpit service is to prepare the worshipper to sing the praise of God "with the spirit and with the understanding." He who has enjoined the duty of praise, and is himself the object of praise, has given very explicit directions with regard to the performance of this duty. Col. 3: 16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." The impropriety, not to say impiety, of calling songs of human composition "the word of Christ," is presumptive proof, that by this designation the inspired psalms are exclusively meant. They are the word of Christ and this word dwells richly in all wisdom in the devout worshipper who, contemplating Jesus Christ as the subject-matter of the psalms, sings them with his heart lifted up to him in adoration and praise. To assist the people of God to render acceptable worship in this service is the end of expounding the psalms.

I would recommend to you, when settled as pastors, to explain the psalms consecutively. In congregations in the country where there are two or more places of preaching, a very good plan is to divide the psalter into as many sections as there are places of worship, and take up one of these sections in each place. Read the psalm carefully and critically in the Hebrew, and do this early in the week. Employ your skill in evolving its meaning. Apply the rules of interpretation with strictness and judgment. Remember, however, that this is not to test the accuracy of the translation, but to acquire for yourselves an acquaintance with the rich sources from which the translators drew their stores of biblical knowledge.

I do not advise you to adopt an artificial mode of expounding the psalms. The order of the words in the psalm is the order in

*Read to the students of the R. P. Theological Seminary, in the course of Pastoral Theology, December 3, 1886.

T S.

which they are to be sung, and this seems to be the proper order of meditating on them. In this way you will follow the line of thought of the inspired writer, and the people in singing will be helped to catch the spirit of their songs of praise. In former times this exercise was designated as paraphrasing the psalm. The ideas contained in the song were simplified and brought down to the capacity of the worshippers. This is done by taking up the words as they stand in the psalm, explaining what is obscure and dwelling on what is of special importance. Thus labor to excite through the understanding the gracious affections of the soul.

The quantity of the psalm to be explained at one time depends on the connection. As a general rule it should not exceed three stanzas. To avoid interrupting the line of thought, it may be either less or more. Six verses are enough for a congregation to sing at once; more makes the service languid. The length of time to be spent in the exposition must depend on circumstances. From twenty to thirty minutes is long enough for this exercise. That time spent in addressing the heart through the understanding should prepare the worshippers for singing to their spiritual comfort and advantage.

Having said this much about the manner of performing this part of your work, I proceed to consider the spiritual part,—the exposition of the psalm as a means of producing in the worshipper holy affections.

It should be taken as a rule in explaining the psalms, that they exhibit the covenant of grace dispensed by the Lord Jesus Christ, the King and Head of the church. He is the subject-matter of the whole of divine revelation; but in a special manner of the psalms. This appears from his own declaration, just before his ascension: Luke 24: 44, "All things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets and in the psalms concerning me." They are called "the word of Christ," Col. 3: 16. And in order that it may dwell in us richly in all wisdom in singing these sacred songs, we must see Christ in them. This is to be brought out in their exposition.

In Psalm 22: 22, we have further confirmation of this point: "In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee." Jesus Christ is in the midst of his people when singing his praise and participates in the service. He presides over the devotions of the sanctuary. In Heb. 2; 12 these words of the psalm are ascribed to him, and they are adduced to show the oneness between him and his people. "Both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one," verse 11. Can it be a theme less important than the salvation which he has secured to his people, in which he takes so deep an interest?

The numerous quotations from the Psalms and references to them in the New Testament, clearly shows that the Psalms were designed and suited to celebrate the kingdom and glory of the Mediator. Of

the former there are about seventy, and of the latter, thirty. In all these the application is more or less directly to Christ. And these are not exhaustive. They are merely specimens of what the Psalms are throughout. Christ is in the Psalms, or rather the Psalms are full of Christ, and it is the business of the expounder to bring forth these good things out of this abundant storehouse.

Christ appears in the Psalms sometimes as the speaker, sometimes as addressed, and elsewhere as spoken of. When he is the speaker he addresses either his Father, his people or his enemies. In Psalms 22 and 69 he addresses his Father. These have reference to his condition while on earth, and especially when suffering on the cross. The 22d begins with the exclamation, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" and it is not an improbable conjecture that the remaining part of the psalm was the subject of his thoughts during the crucifixion. The verse already quoted, (22d) is introductory to the song of praise with which he celebrates his victory. While, however, this psalm describes the sufferings and deliverance of the divine Head, it includes the trials and deliverance of his people, for they have fellowship with him in his sufferings and in his triumphs. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him," II. Tim. 2: 12. How animating the thought when singing this wonderful psalm, that we are praising God in the very words of the Redeemer, knowing that he joins with us in this interesting and ennobling exercise.

In the didactic psalms he addresses his people in the execution of his prophetic office. The 1st and 37th are of this class. In singing these songs we receive instruction in divine things. Christ teaches in them by example. In the 1st Psalm he is eminently the man pronounced blessed. In the description of character there given he is the perfect model, to which it should be our aim to be conformed.

In the psalms in which he is addressed, the Father is sometimes the speaker as in part of the 2d and 45th Psalms. In singing these we are taken into the council chamber of heaven and allowed to hear and sing the words of the divine persons in their sacred colloquy. The matter presented for our meditation is that which occupied the mind of the Eternal before ever the earth was. How well suited to stir up gracious affections, to sing the promises of the Father to the Son, in relation to the vast and wondrous work of our salvation.

In other instances Christ is addressed directly by the worshipper in singing. This is the case in the 2d, 3d and 4th verses of the 45th Psalm. In all places where he leads us in our prayers and praise, we should include him as the object of worship for "all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father."

The 72d Psalm is an eminent instance of Christ being the subject-matter of praise; the person spoken of. To apply it exclusively to David or to Solomon would contradict the facts of history and

be little short of impiety. An infinitely greater than David or Solomon is here. While the petition with which the Psalm begins can apply to them both, in a far higher sense it applies to him who is both David's Son and Lord. In this song the Old Testament worshipper prayed for the establishment and perpetuity of the kingdom of the Messiah before he came into the world. We in singing it and other Messianic songs celebrate the greatness of the kingdom and the glory of the King.

There are two other classes of psalms that require notice as presenting apparent difficulty in explaining them as applying to Christ. These are the penitential and the imprecatory psalms. Of the first class Psalms 38, 51 and 88 are instances, and of the latter, Psalms 69 and 109. The inquiry with regard to the first class: psalms containing confession of sin, prayer and complaint is, how can they be applied to Christ? Let it be taken into the account that in all cases Christ is in the Psalms as the Head of the church, as Christ mystical, and many things can be predicated of him in that relation that do not belong to him simply as the Son of God. In communing with him in singing the penitential psalm, he comes down to us, enters into our feelings and quickens our devotions. We sing our confession of sin to his praise who is afflicted in all our afflictions. He joins with us in our expressions of sorrow. He sympathises with us, for he is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

In the imprecatory psalms, we are raised to his throne to join with him in his denunciations of wrath on his enemies. Private resentment is not to be allowed a place in singing these songs. That would be to offer strange fire on God's altar, and instead of being acceptable service would expose to his displeasure. The general import of these psalms is substantially as in the second and third petitions of the Lord's prayer. "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." As taught in the Shorter Catechism in the petition: "Thy kingdom come," we pray that "Satan's kingdom may be destroyed." This must take place before the kingdom of Christ can be established; and in singing those imprecatory petitions we magnify his grace in these displays of his power by which this glorious result is to be accomplished.

There are three historical psalms: the 78th, 105th and 106. They celebrate chiefly the deliverance of God's covenant people from the bondage of Egypt and their settlement in the land of Caanan. In them is presented, conspicuously to view, God's providential care of them in the fulfillment of his promise to Abraham. But a far greater deliverance is meant, and to this the attention of hearers should be directed in expounding these songs. The bondage of Egypt is a fit representation of the bondage of sin under which all men are by nature. Moses is a type of Christ as king leading his people through the wilderness of this world, and conducting them to the heavenly Caanan. These points brought out will enable the

Christian worshipper to sing these songs to the glory of God and to their own spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.

In some of the psalms there are lofty flights of poetic imagery. In the 18th Psalm, verse 7th and onward we find phenomena that our imagination labors in vain to comprehend. The sublime descriptions of God's interposition in beha'f of his people in times of great trials, are designed and suited to raise our hearts to adore him, whose ways are above our ways as the heavens are higher than the earth. And we are taught by them that he has agents to do his work, ever ready to perform his will.

The figure prosopopœa is frequently used in the Psalms. A striking instance of this is in the 96th and 98th Psalms. The coming of the mediatorial King to take possession of his kingdom is the occasion for calling on all the subjects of that kingdom to hail his approach as the era of their deliverance. They are invested with personality possessing a consciousness of the mighty change to be wrought in their condition. They are called on to sing and shout: "Before the Lord because he comes to judge the earth; he will judge the world with righteousness and his people with his truth."

You must be careful not to attempt to explain those parts of the psalms in the metrical version that in some instances are interpolated for the sake of metre or rhyme. There are numerous cases of this. Take, for instance, the 54th Psalm, in the words of the 4th verse, "The Lord, my God, my helper is," is added, "Lo, therefore I am bold," for which there is nothing in the original; and the interjection "Lo," or behold, is transferred from its proper place to the spurious supplement. In attempting to explain this you would have to say that the singer is calling attention to his bravery: "See how bold I am," in place of pointing to God as the help of his people. This would be a perversion of the meaning of the psalm, and tend to exalt the worshipper in place of glorifying the object of worship. In the next verse the line, "And sweep them clean away," is added to the line, "O, for thy truth's sake cut them off." This, while it cannot be said to be a perversion of the meaning, is redundant.

There are many like sentences of addition to the words of the Psalms purely for the sake of rhyme. It was found to be a task too difficult to give a metrical version without additions.

I had hoped that the new version of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland would have avoided these blemishes. This is not the case, however. The 54th Psalm is given just as it is in the authorized version except that they leave the interjection "Lo" in its proper place: "Lo God an helper is to me. In the United Presbyterian version the spurious lines are given as in our version, and in the short metre verses 4 and 5 are crowded into four lines at the disadvantage of obscuring the meaning.

I have give you such direction as I hope will be useful to you in performing this part of your official work. And I wish to say that

no one will be more benefited than yourselves if you bring to your preparation a spiritual and humble mind. The more you evolve the meaning of these sacred songs, seeing Christ in them, the more you will taste of their sweetness, and appreciate their excellence. It is a sad evidence of a religious decline when the exposition of the Psalms is discontinued. And the omission is not only the result of a decline, but it tends to hasten on its progress. That quickening power that the singing of those divine songs with the understanding is suited to give is not enjoyed, and the service becomes more and more formal, gratifying, it may be, the æsthetical taste, but failing to reach the heart.

THE SAVING WORK OF CHRIST.

MESSRS. EDITORS:—The following is a copy of a letter in reply to one received from the evangelist to whom reference is made in my letter to the secretary of the Central Board. In his letter he holds that all Christ's sufferings prior to the cross were only as a righteous man, as Paul, Peter or Renwick suffered; that they were not for us and had nothing to do with our salvation; that only on the cross, and then only during the three hours of darkness when he was forsaken of God, did he suffer for our sins. His teaching in the families of our people, as well as to others, had really become dangerous. But our people are now convinced of their danger and his errors. When I wrote the letter I had no thought of having it published; but before mailing it it occurred to me to send it to you. I think it would be helpful to our people here to have it in permanent form, and may not be altogether without interest to your readers elsewhere. It will give them some idea of one phase of a minister's work on the frontiers, opposition from "false teachers."

Any inaccuracies attribute to the fact that the original was written without a view to publication.

Fraternally,
J. R. HILL.

DEAR BROTHER:—Your kind favor of recent date was duly received. First let me thank you for the very kind and courteous tone of your letter. It deserves a more extended reply than I have time to give it. Mr. Matthews is still alive, and night and day I am required to be with him more or less. Again, I have many other duties to take up my time; besides I am a very slow writer—the mechanical part to me is a drudgery. I can indite or compose much faster than I can commit to paper. To answer your letter in detail and thoroughly would take me, perhaps, two or three days. Perhaps we may meet again, and if so, I will cheerfully converse with you several hours on the subjects of controversy between us. Meanwhile I will briefly suggest a few thoughts, or lay down a few principles. But first let me say in all kindness and brotherly love that I am fully persuaded that you are in error and my prayer to God is that he would be pleased to make known to you "the truth as it is in Jesus," and qualify you by his Holy Spirit to be safe guide and instructor of others, so that you may not only be saved yourself, but be wise to win souls.

If we would understand the Bible we must study it as a whole. To take isolated passages, almost any error may be taught from the Scriptures. There are certain general truths, or doctrines, that run through the Bible, and individual passages, that if taken alone and apart from the general trend or current of