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Communications.

From the Episcopal Methodist.

The Editors: In your paper of January the 5th, appeared an article headed "Pagan Christianity and Christ's Christianity," signed "Dr. Deems," on which I have to make a few remarks. In what I have to say, I trust, I am prompted by no mere spirit of opposition, which is always deserving rebuke and reprobation, but a friendly desire to induce a reconsideration of opinions and expressions perhaps too hastily adopted.

In the first place, the expression "Pagan Christianity" has the semblance at least of a thoroughbred Irish bull. Paganism and Christianity are in such entire opposition, indeed I may say antagonism, as to preclude all propriety in attaching the epithet Pagan to Christianity. They mutually exclude each other. Paganized Christianity, signifying a corruption of Christianity by an infusion of Pagan elements, would have been something better, but even that would be decidedly exceptional, as such a corruption could not be Christianity, no matter how many Christian elements might enter into the mixture.

In the second place, the expression "Pagan Christianity" is not only questionably strange and suggestive of one knows not what that is unacceptable, but it is either tautologous or implies more than one Christianity. If there be two Christs, one of them must be Christ's, but pray whose are the others, and must it not be by some trick of the deceiver that they have come to be named after the name of Christ? That some have professed to hold to Christianity, and at the same time have held to errors inconsistent with it, and even more or less intensive of it, and yet further, that it may be a question how far any of us may be free from this reproach, I freely admit. If this be meant, and nothing else, by the heading of the article under consideration, the thought I allow as correct, but I cannot agree that it is proper to call any such unfortunate mixture of truth and error a Christianity, whether Pagan or not, in contradistinction from a Christ's Christianity.

In the third place, the article before us in making out Christ's Christianity as opposed to this Pagan Christianity, has some statements I approve, and some I cannot distinguish from Universalism. To the latter only would I now call attention, and among these is but one, namely, "that God is reconciled to the world." The reader, if he will consult the connexion in which this expression stands, will not fail to see this phrase must mean either the whole world of men in the largest possible sense, or the world as usually distinguished from the followers of Christ. In either case I deny the truth of the assertion, and proceed to establish this negation, though evidently the *onus probandi* rests with the affirmant.

One other preliminary, however, must be allowed before we take up the refutation of this assertion. The expression "God is reconciled" contained in the assertion to be refuted, is, as it stands in that assertion, a most absolute and unqualified affirmation, so far as this world is concerned, and, therefore, necessarily implies the completed and most unconditioned reconciliation on the part of God to the world. No matter what the world is, or what it does, or what it does not, "God is reconciled to the world." Moreover, after a careful inspection of the preceding and succeeding context, I can find nothing to limit the meaning of this expression "God is reconciled," but much which goes to show that its author intended it to bear the most unqualified breadth of meaning. Let the reader examine its context for himself, and see whether or not I at all misrepresent the case.

Now, then, if God be reconciled as the article under consideration affirms, the whole world of mankind, infants and adults, the righteous and the wicked, the obedient and the disobedient, the penitent and the impenitent, the believing and unbelieving and disbelieving, all without exception, must be in the same relation of reconciliation on the part of God. He is reconciled to each class, and to each individual in

every class of men, and equally reconciled to each class and each individual. They are all equally in favor with God, as reconciliation must mean nothing if it does not bring them into favor, and as the reconciliation is without limitation, into equal favor. For I have already shown that the word "reconciled" is here used in its most absolute and unqualified sense, in its most extensive import, and, therefore, there is no distinction to be made as to different degrees of favor, the different classes of men may have in this reconciliation. The most wicked and disobedient see as much in favor with God as the most righteous and obedient, and, therefore, it must follow that God must be profoundly indifferent as to the distinction of moral character between the righteous and the wicked, viewing each with equal complacency. Is this reasonable? Is it just? Is it scriptural? I leave it to the reader to decide these questions. But, says some one, this was surely never intended. I reply that it is very probable, but our business now is not with what was intended, but with what is said.—I heretofore hope it was not intended, and only wish to show the necessity of a better way of expressing what was intended.

The expression "God is reconciled," necessarily implies two things, namely, that God was offended but is now satisfied. Now, whatever it may have been that has turned away His anger and satisfied Him, He can have no more to require. If He require any thing more, then He is not satisfied, and something more is necessary to reconcile Him. But in the scripture, it is as plain as any thing there written, that God requires of the whole world of sinners repentance, faith and obedience, and if those be not rendered by them, He is, therefore, still offended, and not reconciled, with them. Those, then, who refuse to render these to the requirement of God, cannot be in His favor. If they be not in His favor, He is not satisfied with them, and if He be not satisfied with them He is not reconciled to them, but must be offended with them, as there can be no middle ground, between being offended and reconciled.

No one can be reconciled to those whom he threatens, and, one must be offended when he threatens. Still more must he be offended, and not reconciled, when he executes his threats in the punishment of those he has threatened. But God's word teaches that He does both threaten and punish sinners who rebel against His authority in the violation of His law, and, therefore, He is offended with them, and not reconciled to them. For both His threats and punishments are manifestations of His displeasure, His offended concern in behalf of what is right and orderly in His government and against those who do wrong in conducting themselves disorderly to the breach and dishonor of His government. It is a vain and childish endeavor, in this point of view, to draw the distinction between the offender and the offender, and to say, He is offended with the offender, and not the offender, angry with the sin and not with the sinner. For, in such a way of looking at the matter, it would be necessary to draw another distinction, and say He threatens and punishes the offense and not the offender, the sin and not the sinner; which must at once be seen to be most ridiculously absurd, as while the sin is being punished and not the sinner, not the less does the sinner suffer than if he himself was being punished, and not his sin. How would it do when reading or proclaiming the threats of God's word to tell him he is not threatened, but only his sin, and when these threats shall be executed he will not be punished, but only his sin? Would not every sense of common sense, consider this as nonsense, and an insult to his understanding? Nor will it do to say, that God punishes the sinner "in sorrow, not in anger," and merely for his correction and amendment. For this is true, in the sense of the whole truth, only when said of God's people, as it is written,—"If ye endure chastening, God dealth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not

sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." But whosoever adopts this or an hypothesis covering the whole ground from the punishment of the best of Christians, to that of the worst of sinners, must necessarily let the doctrine of eternal punishment drop out of his creed. For it must be the shallowest of conceits, without the shadow of a reason to sustain it, that God punishes a sinner eternally for his correction and amendment, when eternal punishment necessarily either precludes the possibility of correction and amendment, or supposes the continuance of the punishment after the correction and amendment have taken place. And surely God must be offended indeed, and not at all reconciled to a sinner, whether he be a *quidam* angel damned out of heaven to be a devil in hell without a hope of redemption, or a man damned from the earth to be a lost spirit forever, when He thus punishes him eternally.

There is quite a number of most startling facts stated in the Bible to be heard done by God, or by His authority, which do not seem to me to harmonize with, much less to sustain, but positively to refute, the assertion that "God is reconciled to the world," as well as the whole tenor and spirit of the article in which it occurs: such as the utter destruction of the post-diluvian world of persistently rebellious sinners, by water, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and all the people in them by fire, the destruction of the first-borne of Egypt in one night, the destruction of Pharaoh and his immense host in the red sea, the destruction of the three thousand Israelites for worshipping the golden calf, the destruction of Nadab and Abihu for offering strange fire before the Lord, the destruction of the Canaanites by the Israelites at the command of God, &c., &c., &c. Did God send these fearful destructions upon these people in the midst of their fearful wickedness "in sorrow, not in anger?" Was their punishment by destruction the most completely intended in "the overflow of His transcendent lovingness" for their correction and amendment, terrific and even horrible as these destructive overflows seem, when the fierce swiftness of the punishment gave no opportunity for their correction and amendment? How can one answer in the affirmative without stultifying himself?

I know no such an expression in the Scriptures as the assertion "God is reconciled to the world," nor one that can be tortured by criticism into equivalecy with it. The only passage I now can remember that can be supposed to bear the slightest plausible accordance with it, is the following:—"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." Now in this passage two things are distinctly stated, namely, that God had reconciled the Christians of that day unto himself, and was reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing its sins to the world as, and only as it yielded, and became reconciled unto him; but it is no where in this passage either stated or implied that he was before the yielding and becoming reconciled on the part of the world already reconciled to the world in open rebellion and enmity to Him, as is implied in the proposition I am answering. Perhaps a careless reader might hastily imagine, rather than properly infer, that because God was reconciling the world unto himself, He therefore, was reconciled to the world. But God's reconciling and being reconciled so far from being the same or implying each other, the first excludes and denies the second. For, as I have already shown, if God be reconciled to the world He must be satisfied with it, and nothing more now is to be done; but if He institutes and carries on measures in reconciling the world

he cannot be satisfied with it, and, therefore, cannot be reconciled to it. This very fact, then, that God is reconciling the world unto himself, is proof positive, that He is not reconciled to the world, and that He cannot be reconciled to the world until the world becomes reconciled to Him. The fact that He is reconciling the world unto himself, so far from implying that He is reconciled, and not now offended with the world, shows only that though still justly offended He is willing and even desirous to be reconciled, provided the world can be brought to be reconciled to Him on His terms. But without compliance with His terms, He will not be reconciled; for He can make no compromise with the wicked remaining in their wickedness. No, God cannot be reconciled to the world while the world continues what it is, and while His nature continues what it is. The greatest and most horrible of all conceivable impossibilities, God's loss of His holiness, must take place before He can be reconciled to the world, to the whole world, even to the very worst in it sunk to the deepest abyss of the world's ever deepening pollutions.

The passages of scripture, which pointedly contradict the assertion, "God is reconciled to the world," are very numerous. I will quote but a few, which must suffice for the present as specimens of a most extensive class. Some of these are from the Old, and some from the New Testament, showing that the two concur in their representations of this aspect of the Divine character. "God is angry with the wicked every day." "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." "And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts." This is related of our Saviour. "How oft is the candle of the wicked put out? And how oft do their destructions upon them? God distributeth sorrows in his anger. They are as stubbles before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carrieth away. God layeth up his iniquity for his children; he rewardeth him, and he shall know it. His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." "Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." Now it is well known that the Universalists and the Unitarians, attempt to explain away these and kindred Scriptures of fearful import into mere notions, less substantial than banks of clouds, thus making them utterly insignificant of any thing real and to be feared in the Scriptural character of God, flattering themselves that they hereby protect, if not prove, their fondly sentimental ideal of Deity. But I must here presume that the followers of Wesley and Watson, will not be guilty of the weakness of such folly; but are ready to admit that the terrific in these passages, must have a correspondent reality in the character of Him by whose inspiration they were formed.

Finally, as I have not time to notice all the objectionable points in the article under consideration; the character drawn of God in Dr. Deems's Pagan Christianity is all darkness, and His character drawn in Dr. Deems's Christ's Christianity is all brightness and romantic tenderness, which are characteristic of that school of divines that acknowledge Dr. Channing for its master; and both are, whether intended or not through the awkward incompetency of the artist, caricatures of God bearing but a faint resemblance to what He reveals of Himself in His word. The truth is the Bible represents the Holy One with both a dark and a bright side, like the pillar of fire which led the Israelites by night, shedding darkness and dismay upon His enemies; and brightness and cheer upon His friends; so that it depends very much upon what man morally is how he will understand His character. If he be a bad man with an evil

conscience, which fills his soul with the gloom of impenitent guilt, he will apprehend it as intolerably terrific; if he be a kind hearted man full of sentimental benevolence but unconscious of his inborn depravity, it will seem like a bright summer day teeming with life and cheerfulness, in which no frowning cloud darkens the sky, no thunder peals, and no lightnings glare; but if he be one moved by that fear which is the beginning of wisdom, God will be seen to be awfully just, and becoming soundly converted, awfully good and wholly to be trusted. For we have to do with a stern but loving God, who has said "without shedding of blood is no remission," whose justice required the blood and death of the Son of God himself before He could ever parley with sinners; and whose holiness now declares that "without faith it is impossible to please him," and will break every nerve with agony vibrating to the verge of grief forever, before He will be reconciled to impenitent and unrepentant guilt and rebellion. McCosh has justly said, "An acute thinker of the present day speaks of 'the dark shadow of the Hebrew God,' and the phrase is significant of the feelings cherished by multitudes who breathe and live in the light literature of the age."

And now, reader, I am free to confess, that it is much easier to criticize than to originate, and that, in my judgement critics are very much like certain women whose very existence is dependent on that of much nobler creatures. Both the critic and the reader, with therefore, pardon me in stopping to such degradation, and be assured while you ponder the lines of Burns—
"Ye' where ye gane, ye ewalds teler,
Ye' impudence profess ye aulday,
I' faith ye say, but ye strain rarely
To see ye gane and hae."

Selections.

Parity of Character.

Over the beauty of the plum and the quiet there grows a bloom and beauty more exquisite than the fruit itself—a soft, delicate, blush that overspreads its blushing cheek. Now, if you strike your hand over that, and it is once gone forever, for it never grows but once. The flower that hangs in the morning, imperiled with dew, arrayed as no queenly woman ever was arrayed with jewels, once shake it so that the beads roll off, and you may sprinkle water over it as you please, yet it can never be made again what was when the dew fell silently on it from heaven. On a frosty morning you may see the panes of glass covered with landscapes—mountains, lakes and trees blended in a beautiful, fantastic picture. Now, by your hand upon the glass, and by a scratch of your finger, or by the warmth of your palm, all the delicate tracery will be obliterated. So there is in youth a beauty and purity of character, which when once touched and defiled can never be restored, a fringe more delicate than frost-work and which, when torn and broken, will never be re-embroidered. He who has spotted and soiled his garments in youth, though he may seek to whiten them again, can never wholly do it, even were he to wash them with his tears. When a young man leaves his father's house with the blessing of a mother's tears still wet upon his brow, if he once lose that early purity of character it is a loss that he can never make whole again. Such is the consequence of crime. Its effect cannot be eradicated; it can only be forgiven.

The Bible must be the invention of good men or angels, or bad men or devils; or of God. It could not be the invention of good men or angels. For they neither would or could make a book, and tell lies all the time they were writing it, saying, "Thus saith the Lord," when it was their own invention. It could not be the invention of bad men or devils; for they could not make a book which commands all duty, forbids all sin, and condemns themselves to all eternity. Therefore draw this conclusion; the Bible must be given by inspiration of God.—Stimpson.

A Christian should never plead spirituality for being a sinner. If he be a shoe-cleaner, he should be the best in the parish. . . . Christ is the bright and Morning Star in the day-dawn of the soul, and in the noon of grace the Sun of Righteousness.

God is Love.

God is love; all his perfections and procedures are but so many modifications of his love. What is his omnipotence but the medium through which he contemplates the objects of his love? What his wisdom but the theme of his love? What are the offers of the Gospel but the imitations of his love? What the threatenings of law, but the warnings of his love?—They are the hoarse voice of his love. "Do thyself no harm," oh man! They are a fence thrown around the pit of perdition to prevent rash and thoughtless sinners from rushing into ruin.—What was the incarnation of the Saviour but the richest illustration of his love? What were the miracles of Christ but the condescensions of his love? What were the signs of Christ but the breath of his love? What were the prayers of Christ but the pleadings of his love? What were the tears of Christ but the dew-drops of his love? What is the earth but the theatre for the display of his love?—What to heaven but the Alps of his mercy, from whose summits his blessings, flowing down in a thousand streams, descend to water and refresh his Church situated at its base.

R. W.

Preaching for and Preaching to.

The "Monthly Religious Magazine" has an article which says that very much of the difficulty of keeping pastors in one place at the present, originated in the prevailing error that a minister is to preach for a people, and not to them. Preaching for a people, it is thought he must always preach to please them. Were it understood that he is to preach to a people, the idea that he must gratify all their whims would soon die away. He would then seek only to proclaim to them faithfully the truths of the religion of the Saviour. We think it would be a grand idea could we once get rid of the phraseology of preaching for societies, and have it understood that we are to preach to them.

The Dead of 1867.

Among the thousands of Christians removed from the earth in 1867, we have the names of many who have left memorials of their lives, by which they will be remembered for an age to come. Such were the following:—
"Lord William Ross, the astronomer; Professor M. Farraday, the distinguished chemist; Dr. Veipeau, Paris, whose books are standards in our Medical Colleges; Professor Bachu, United States Coast Survey; Professor Anthon; President Jeremiah Day, of Yale College; Lewis Desire Vernon, an eminent French Publicist; Professor Chester Dewey; Archibald Alison, the historian; among names well in literature—Miss Catherine Sedgwick; N. P. Willis, Fitz Greene Halleck; among our prominent statesmen and politicians—Justice Wayne, U. S. Supreme Court; Ex-Chancellor Walworth; Rufus W. King; Washington Hunt; Ex-Governor Andrew.

Random Readings.

The following interesting fact relating to early conversions was brought out in response to a suggestion by Dr. R. S. Foster, at the New York Preachers' Meeting, held in the chapel of the Book Room on Monday last. Of the seventy-six preachers present there were converted—
Under 14 years 20
14 and under 16 22
16 " " 18 14
18 " " 21 13
21 and over, only 7
A single fact like the above speaks volumes in favor of early conversion and early religious training. Let the Church care for the children, and in due time they will care for her.

REVERIES OF PRAYER.—George Muller, the renowned founder of the orphan establishment at Bristol, England, has received and expended \$2,750,000, every penny of which was sent voluntarily, and without solicitation. He has twelve hundred orphan children under his charge, occupying five large stone houses, each distinct from the other.

We do a thing which you of us has not?—not because "everybody does it," but because we like it, and our acquiescence, alas! proves not that everybody is right, but that we and the rest of the world are poor creatures alike.—Chatterbox.

A poor toper, as a last resort for more drink, took his Bible to pawn for liquor, but the landlady refused to take it. "Well," said he, "if she won't take my word or God's Word, it's time to give it up." And he went and signed the pledge, and kept it faithfully.