

OUR PRINCIPLES: 1. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only Head of the Church. 2. The name Christian, to the exclusion of all party or sectarian names. 3. The Holy Bible, or the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, a sufficient rule of faith and practice. 4. A Christian character, as vital piety, the only test of fellowship or membership. 5. The right of private judgment and the liberty of conscience, the privilege and duty of all.

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THE CONTROVERSY WHICH LED TO THE REFORMATION.

In the sixth century of the Christian Era, the Roman Church was in a state of corruption and decay. The popes had become worldly and ambitious, and the clergy were generally ignorant and dissipated. The people were oppressed by the heavy burden of papal taxes and the sale of indulgences. The doctrine of the Pope's infallibility was being asserted, and the rights of the laity were being trampled upon. This state of affairs led to the Reformation, which was initiated by Martin Luther in 1517. Luther, a German monk, was troubled by the doctrine of indulgences and the sale of pardons. He believed that salvation should be based on faith alone, and that the Pope's power was a human invention. He posted his 95 theses on the door of the church in Wittenberg, and this act led to a great controversy between Luther and the Pope. Luther's teachings were widely accepted, and he became a leader of the Protestant Reformation. The Reformation led to the establishment of many new churches and the decline of the power of the Roman Catholic Church. Luther's teachings emphasized the importance of the Bible and the role of the individual in their own salvation. He also emphasized the importance of good works and the love of God and neighbor. Luther's teachings were a great blessing to the people, and they led to the development of many other Protestant churches. The Reformation was a great turning point in the history of the Christian Church, and it led to the development of modern Christianity.

God, Luther boldly declared that no money could remit penalties of this character—that Christ—not the Pope—had power to forgive sin—that His merit—not money—could gain for us forgiveness—peace with God. Salvation through Christ was thus asserted—it was wrested from the merits of Jesus Christ and assumed by faith in a money basis. A great issue was presented—an issue which became the foundation of the greatest controversy of the Christian Era. Had Luther not been a bold and unyielding defender of the Truth—had he not entered into this controversy, and had no other like ability and courage, have done so, then indeed, might this flood of Error swept on down the centuries, till to-day those who otherwise enjoy a lively hope in Christ, might have been wading in the deep waters of ignorance, superstition and sin under the dictation of the Pope and his miserable lieutenants. Luther's boldness must have been inspired. Often, single-handed and alone, he fought for the Truth against Popes and Kings. When on his way to Worms he was told that the Cardinals and Bishops would burn his body to ashes, he answered: "Although they should make a fire that should reach from Worms to Wittenburg and that should flame up to Heaven, in the Lord's name I would pass through it; I would appear before them; I would enter between the jaws of this Behemoth; I would break his teeth, and would confess the Lord Jesus Christ." Again his friend Spalatin sent a messenger to urge him not to enter Worms. Looking at the messenger in astonishment he replied: "Go tell your master, that even although there were as many devils at Worms as there are tiles upon the roofs of the houses; I would enter it." Again being told that Duke George would certainly arrest him, he replied: "If it rain Duke Georges for nine days together I will go." Thus boldness linked to a faith unflinching and true, in the Lord Jesus Christ, was necessary to the defense of the Truth. What was true in the days of Martin Luther in this respect is true to-day. There is a conflict between Truth and Error, and as such as it is to be deprecated, controversy is a necessity in the maintenance of Truth. We need men full of the Holy Ghost, full of humility, courage, an unyielding purpose to stand by the Truth in all its trials and conflicts with sin. This tendency to shun a battle for the Truth is not worthy of a Christian—it is weak and shows the absence of the bold soldier of the Cross. For the Truth of Luther more hereafter.

disconcerted with diffidence, and was too timid to be at ease with children. Webster and Clay both testify to life-long embarrassment. With the great and good Cooper the very thought of standing up as a clerk to read parliamentary notices in the House of Lords threw him into an agony of apprehension. If, therefore, any brother minister, any brother or sister who feels it a duty to speak for Christ in the fellowship meeting—if any reader of what I have above written, feels embarrassed in speaking for Christ, let him not be deterred from the undertaking, Christ himself will help. Moreover, what you say in weakness, and yet in His strength, will do others more good than if you spoke in boldness, feeling that you were going to talk glibly and say great things. Be humble, and thus be exalted; be weak, and thus strong. H. Y. R. A GOSPEL SERMON. BY E. EGLANTINE. A VOICE FROM THE PEW. "Was it a gospel sermon?" queried my friend, in response to a remark about the excellent discourse our pastor had given us that morning. "I suppose so," was the reply; "what do you call a gospel sermon?" "I do not consider any sermon a gospel sermon," rejoined my friend, "unless a person present who had never heard the way of salvation could learn it from that sermon." According to this test, the pastor referred to had, that morning, undoubtedly, given his people a gospel sermon; for, from beginning to end, it was a plain exhibition of God's plan of redemption for poor, fallen men. After this conversation, it became a custom with some of us to test the sermons we heard by the rule my friend had laid down. Not always do the sermons we hear from Christian ministers bear this test. I listened for the first time to a popular divine who had attracted a large audience. He held up the apostle Paul as a model of exalted manhood, of all that was brave, pure, noble, unselfish, honorable, etc. Christ was also set forth, in much the same way, as a pattern for imitation. Young men especially were exhorted to reach upward toward these high models of noble excellence, and strive at least to touch them. But, of the great atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ, there was not a word. Was this a gospel sermon? Can poor, fallen human nature attain such a standard of morality without the cleansing blood? An Unitarian or Universalist might have preached that sermon. A gentleman—not a professor of religion—accompanied a lady who was present at the above conversation to hear a strange minister. As they walked homeward he asked, "How did you like the sermon?" "Well, it had not gospel enough in it to suit me," she replied. "I think he mentioned the name of Jesus Christ twice," was the rejoinder, "and then it seemed a slip of the tongue." Was this a gospel sermon? It could not have been like the preaching of the apostle Paul when he was determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified. Some years ago I heard a sermon preached to children. A number of parents and friends were also present who probably did not often hear the Gospel. Here, thought I, is a fine opportunity to give it to them in its simplicity and fullness. The sermon was very plain and very interesting. Christ the babe of Bethlehem, was held up in a very pleasing way, as a model for young children, and they were told to love and imitate him, and always to think of Christ as a child. Next, Jesus, the boy, was attractively pictured visiting Jerusalem, questioning with the doctors of the law, and receiving their instructions, submissively going home with Joseph and Mary, continuing subject to them and helping them in their daily toil. This Jesus the boys were told to make their model and always to think of Christ as a boy. Lastly, Jesus, the young man, was placed as a pattern for imitation by the older scholars. Christ crucified was not reached, and if any of those present were ignorant of the way of salvation, they did not learn it from that discourse. Was it a gospel sermon? Fathers and brethren of the ministry, will you permit the pew to suggest that you try for yourselves the test given above and see if your sermons are all worthy the name of gospel sermons? The Gospel in its plainest, most direct and simple form is what the people need; and when a non-professor misses the name of our Savior from a sermon, does it not seem that this Gospel is also what they want? Such a sermon will attract larger congregations than any elaborate and learned discourse on morality.

Our Exchanges. A WEEKLY CHAT WITH BROTHAS EDITOR. Here is a suggestion for thoughtful people: In his speech at the recent Washington Conference, President McCosh, of Princeton, said: "I remember that when I began to preach I had about twenty carefully prepared sermons. But some fifteen of them I would not preach; they were not fitted to move men and women, and I burned them. I never learned to preach till I visited among my people; they encouraged the young man with sturdy countenance, and they opened their hearts to me." And here is another quite as good: Richard Baxter used to study the texts of his sermons on his knees. For the sake of defining to his own mind more clearly the precise object of his prayer, he would place his finger on the word of which he wanted a clearer notion, or a deeper sense, and would pray, "Lord, reveal even this to me; show Thy meaning." Is it any wonder that the old church of Kildermanster was shaken by these sermons as by mighty wind?—Austin Phelps. Many a real conception of a fact is beclouded by prejudice against God in one shape or another. A distinguished writer has recently said: The Bible, in recording things that are natural and those that are supernatural, makes no distinction between them considered in their relation to God. He is alike present in both and alike acts in both being as really the God of the natural as he is of the supernatural. It is a sad thing to fail to do the work before us, but to hinder others from doing the work is a most serious matter: "Let us should hinder the gospel of Christ. (1 Cor. ix, 12.) Many an active and willing helper in the church is too often an unconscious hinderer of the gospel. Let us each try to find out how we may have hindered, that we may do so no more. A vexation arises, and our expression of impatience hinders others from taking it patiently. Disappointment, ailment, or even weaker depresses us; and our look or tone of depression hinders others from maintaining a cheerful and thankful spirit. We let out a fearing or discouraged remark, and another's hope or real is wet-blanketed. "What man is there that is fearful and faint-hearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart." (Deut. xx 8; Judges vii, 3).—Frances R. Havergal. That sterling paper, the Sunday School Times, always thoughtful and pointed, speaks wisely in the following: Reading is generally a harmless occupation, but reading in itself is of no special benefit to a man. The persons who are the greatest readers are not likely to be the closest thinkers, nor yet to be the best informed persons. If one reads for a purpose, with a desire for knowledge in a specified line, for an hour a day, he will, as a rule, gain more from his reading than the person who reads miscellaneous in the latest magazine and the newest books, and in literature generally, five times as much as that. If you read, see to it beforehand that you know why you read, in order that you may know afterward what gain you have from your reading. You may do harm unthoughtfully, but it is none the less a harm for which the perpetrator is responsible. In no field should the worker be more careful than in the training of youth. The S. N. Times says: There is more danger of being discourteous to an inferior than to a superior. The master is more likely to offend a servant, than a servant is to offend the master. In proportion to one's inferiority in age, rank, or attainments, one is likely to be slighted, misunderstood, and depreciated. Most easy of all, then, is it to be discourteous to a little child. Persons who would not be thought impolite to an adult in any station, will thoughtlessly offend, or even insult, a child. A little boy who was standing innocently by his mother while she was entertaining a visitor, was asked by that visitor whether he went to Sunday-school. Being assured that he did, she added: "And what do you learn in Sunday-school—to read?" "No, ma'am," replied the child, "I learn to read." The spirit of that question was one which the questioner herself or any one of her peers would rightly resent as an unjust and insolent, if applied to any but an innocent and helpless child. It is an unjust and a harmful thing to presume that a child is disobedient and rebellious simply because it is a child. It is pitiable that a child should be allowed to infer that the most natural

and rational way for its elders to address it, is in words which imply that it cannot be supposed to have any right instincts, or right thoughts, or right feelings, or to be ready to do right deeds. "Take heed that ye offend not one of these little ones"—in any such way. All men, as such, are equal in the grave. The N. Y. Independent in writing of the death of Emperor William I. says some sensible things. We quote it: Last week the dead Emperor of Germany, and the oldest sovereign in Europe, was buried with great pomp and honor. He died, when living, over the most powerful nation in Europe, and had largely contributed to make it such. Death, however, did not forget to knock at his princely mansion. Old age did not exempt him from the law of decay. Disease did not spare him. His soul has gone to the bar of God, there to be judged according to "the deeds done in the body." The honors which men have in this world are but the temporary incidents of a brief existence, and are no criterion of the honors which they will have in the next world. They are, after all, simply men in the great elements of their being, and live and act and die as subjects of the government of God, having no advantage over other men by reason of their birth or high earthly station, and needing the great salvation through Christ as really as the poorest man on the globe. The rich and the poor, the great and the small, the high and the low, are in this respect, just equal. It is infinitely better to be a Christian than to be an Emperor. Dr. Young was not mistaken when he said: "The Christian is the highest type of man." All men must die—hence the good and useful go to the grave just as the bad and worthless do—all must die. Few have been the men of sufficient moral greatness to interest themselves in the welfare of the brute creation. Mr. Henry Bergh, the foremost friend of the brutes died recently. Of him and his work the N. Y. Independent says: The death of Mr. Henry Bergh, last week in this city, closes the earthly career of one whose name will long be remembered and will always be mentioned in terms of respect and admiration. The last twenty-two years of his life were chiefly devoted to the single object of rescuing dumb brutes from the cruelty and outrages so often perpetrated upon them by men. This was his one dominant idea, and he pursued the noble work with a persistent enthusiasm and dauntless courage that made him pre-eminently the friend of the brute creation. He did not labor in vain. Forty four societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, of which thirty-three are in the United States, have been organized as the result of his efforts. The last crowning act of his life was the establishment of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, which already "has its duplicate in every state and territory in the Union." The marks of respect paid to his memory at his funeral show that his labors were highly appreciated by his fellow citizens. Could brute animals understand his efforts in their behalf, they would be sincere mourners over his death. They have in that death lost the most glorious friend they ever had in this world. We do not know where in the whole history of mankind the parallel of Mr. Bergh in this respect can be found. Pet animals are usually very tenderly cared for by their owners; but where is the man, other than Mr. Bergh, who has made it the business of his life to reform society in respect to the treatment of animals? Let his name be honored. A monument erected to his memory would not be out of place. The impression which he leaves behind him will long survive him. The world will be the better because he has lived in it. DO CHRISTIANS GO AT ONCE TO HEAVEN WHEN THEY DIE? We are all interested in the question either on our own account or on account of others. Who among us has not had some friend to die in the faith of Christ? And there is an irresistible curiosity to know whether they are to sleep in the grave until the day of judgment or whether they have already entered into "the joy of their Lord." We shall cite two or three Scriptures to show that the righteous enter immediately into rest when they die. (2 Cor. 5:8-9): "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (for we walk by faith, not by sight): We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

It would require marvellous ingenuity to extort from the language just quoted any other meaning than that of the Christian, "death is the gate to endless joy." If "to be absent from the body" does not refer to the article of death, in which we have been taught to believe that the soul forsakes the body, to what can it refer? And mark with what vehemence the Apostle asserts his convictions: "We are confident, I say," (for he is reiterating what he had already said, as if in anticipation of the modern notion that the saints are to sleep until the judgment) "and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." The only "absence from the body" of which we have any intimation is that which occurs when the soul takes its flight from its tenement of clay, in the hour of dissolution. And who would not be "willing," as was the Apostle, "to be absent from the body" in order "to be present with the Lord." We can conceive how one might be ever so "willing" to this, who would yet shrink from the grave's cold embrace of a long oblivion. But hear the same Apostle on another occasion (Phil. 1:21): "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. . . . For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." But what is the "gain" of which he speaks? It is "to be with Christ," as seen in the "desire" afterwards. And this most positively affirms the belief of the Apostle to be that death at once introduces the saint to his Savior. And now let us hear the exiled seer of Patmos (Rev. 14:13): "And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, unto me, write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." It is required by the laws of language that the "henceforth" in the passage just cited should be dated from the very instant that death takes place. We shall quote but one other Scripture (1 Thess. 4:14): "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." But how shall bring them with him unless they are there to bring? His bringing them with him agrees with what Paul told us awhile ago about their being "absent from the body and present with the Lord." And thus it is demonstrated beyond the peradventure of a doubt that the righteous enter immediately into their rest when they die. This doctrine is brimful of comfort to the dying saint. It is a joy reserved for the dying pilgrim to sing as he crosses the Jordan of death: "Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood, Stand dressed in living green: So to the Jews old Canaan stood, While Jordan rolled between. There everlasting spring abides, And never fading flowers: Death, like a narrow sea, divides That heavenly land from ours."—Biblical Recorder. THREE DELUSIONS. A friend with whom I was conversing in one of our inquiry meetings lately said to me: "I know that I ought to become a Christian; I fully intend to become one. But I don't know how to do it. I said to her: 'My friend, suppose you came into a dining-room very hungry, and when you were invited to sit down to a loaded table would you say, "I feel lousy, starved, but I wish I was well through with this business of eating this dinner?"—The Lord Jesus has spread for you the amplest provisions of His grace and says, "Come, all things are now ready." Another delusion which rocks thousands in a perilous slumber is that they will yet have abundant chances to secure heaven. "I need be in no hurry, time enough yet." This is the will-o'-the-wisp which is leading multitudes on farther and deeper into the morass of impatience. Not only in this world will be chances for repentance and securing heaven, but even beyond the grave God's mercy will give them an other opportunity. This delusion is in the air to a degree never known before. The mighty bell which God rings over our heads sounds out the signal "Now" is the day of salvation; and against God's imperative "Now" thousands close their ears and allow the devil to whisper into them his delusive "To-morrow." Another delusion is, "I am trying to do the best I can," and these very words come from those who refuse to do any thing for Christ or let Him do any thing for them. Still another pretext is, "I do not feel, and how can I be saved without feeling?" If by this word "feel" he means thinking, he is right; for thought is indispensable; but if he means acute distress, he is denying Christ point-blank, for the Saviour never said that feeling is the essential thing. To accept and obey Christ is vital, but these are acts of the conscience and the will, and not matters of emotion. Renew your subscription.

Pithy Points. Be silent, or say something bold, but not silence. It is easier to suppress the first desire than to satisfy it that follow it—Franklin. Seize the moment of excited curiosity on any subject to solve your doubts.—Wirt. Absence destroys trifling intimacies, but it invigorates strong ones.—Rochefoucauld. The best materials for political prophecy are the unforced opinions of young men.—Baum. When you have learned to listen you have already learned the rudiments of good education. Those who really enjoy the communion of saints never run after the communion of sinners in forbidden or doubtful places. A living, lovable Christian is the best reply to infidelity—the most powerful argument for the gospel.—Rev. David Harvey. Beware of being witty at the expense of reverence, sarcastic at the expense of charity, and entertaining at the expense of truth. I don't see why a politician may not be one of the saints of God, if only anchored to a conscience, not to an office.—Frances Willard. How many labor for God without God; not without his permission, nor without his support, but without his inspiration.—Dr. Joseph Parker. Faith, though weak, is still faith, a glimmering taper if not a torch; but the taper may give light as true as the torch, though not so bright.—H. Muller. Diotrophes got the pre-eminence he coveted—but he put himself into the pillory, not upon a pedestal. His sort are making the same mistake now. Waters may rise as high as they fall. Whatsoever action hath God for its author hath God for its center. A circular line makes its ending where it had its beginning. The fortune of a Christian consists in patience, not enterprises which the poet calls heroic, and which are commonly the effects of interest, pride and worldly honor. There is a sort of economy in the ways of Providence—that one shall excel where another is defective, in order to make men useful to each other and mix them in society.—Addison. To take the Scriptures for our directory is to walk upon a path which, either rugged or smooth, overshadowed or illuminated, shall bring us at length to immortality and joy.—Bickerseth. It may be too late, quite too late, to set aright mischief once done, to avert consequences, to stop the working of the evil that we have set in motion. But it is not too late, it is never too late to come back to God.—Bishop Temple. The Lord overlooks the failure which arise out of the weakness and imperfections, and considers the nature of our intentions. Our work will not be tested by what we have done, but what we have honestly tried to do.—Interior. There is no more use in praying without practicing than there is in practicing without praying. You cannot learn to walk without walking, no more than you can learn to do good without trying to do good.—Charles Kingsley. The world breaks the hearts of its best benefactors, and then, after many days builds them sepulchres. If you would raise the age in which you live you must live above it, and to live above it is to be misunderstood, perhaps persecuted. O foolish mourner! Would you not have your friend at home; at his home and yours; with his Father and your Father, his God and your God. Can you miss him so much for a day, when you have the prospect of living with him for eternity?—Richard Baxter. Two laborers were trying to place a stone in position on the foundation wall of a new building. A crowd was standing around looking on, and each one offering his criticism and counsel freely and loudly, but not one lifting so much as a finger to help. "That reminds me of church work," said a passer by to another, "Why?" "Because," was the reply, "two men are doing the work and twenty are doing the talking." 'Tis sad that virtue dwells on high, Mid rocky steeps, that seek the sky, Where o'er a hollow'd realm she holds her sway. No mortal eye her form hath met, Save his, from whose heart gallings sweat Breaks out, and wins to manhood's top the way.—Simonds, B. C., 664.