

By Ed. Crowley.

THE TEACHING
OF THE SO-CALLED
PLYMOUTH BRETHREN;
SHOULD IT TO BE TOLERATED?

Read and judge what one said before many witnesses.

- 1st.—About Believers *knowing* their sins washed away.
- 2nd.—About The way of salvation.
- 3rd.—About The Believer's *present* death and resurrection.
- 4th.—About Their mode of worship.

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THE

TEACHING OF THE SO-CALLED PLYMOUTH BRETHREN ;

OUGHT IT TO BE TOLERATED ?

ONE of these so-called Plymouth Brethren has been to this place preaching and disturbing people's minds and turning the place upside down. Some of the Christians having been cautioned not to go to hear him, I have felt it might be useful to put out a short statement of some of their doctrines and mode of worship. Thus Christians will be able to judge for themselves as to their scripturalness, which I doubt not will be easily decided by the simplest minds.

These people have been causing no end of trouble of late years, and therefore it is well that all Christians should be made acquainted with what they teach. Happily for me some 250 persons were present when this said Plymouth brother preached, and they can therefore bear witness to the correctness of the following account of what he stated to the meeting.

In the first place, the preacher said that all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ *ought to know* that their sins are washed away. He even went so far as to say that God Himself had said so too. He told his audience that it was the will of God that His children should always be happy. He quoted in proof thereof from Philippians, "Rejoice in the Lord *always*;" "Rejoice evermore." And he was kind enough to tell his hearers that the word "always" did not mean sometimes, but that it did mean what it said, "always." And then he

quoted a passage from 1 John v. 13. "These things have I written unto you that believe in the name of the Son of God, that *ye may know* that *ye have* eternal life." He explained that the words "ye may know" did not mean that ye may have doubts and fears about salvation, but that God had written these things that "ye may know (not doubt) that ye have (not *shall* have bye and bye, but that *ye have*) even now as a *present* portion eternal life." "He that believeth on the Son of God *hath* everlasting life." (John iii. 36.) This was another text quoted by the preacher to show that the believer is saved now.

The next thing was to show—

HOW SALVATION IS TO BE OBTAINED.

This Plymouth Brother first stated that the condition in which man is by nature, is a condition of death. He is "*dead* in trespasses and sins" (Eph. ii. 1); one upon whom the wrath of God abode (John iii. 36), and who owed to God, on account of sin, a great debt—even death and the wrath to come. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." "The wages of sin is death." He is a "child of wrath." (Eph. ii. 3.) He went on to show that the sinner, being thus dead in sin, could do nothing to save himself—that all his righteousness, however good in his own eyes, were but as filthy rags in the sight of God. (Isaiah lxiv. 6.) In spite, however, of all this, God loved the sinner, while He hated his sin. He was rich in mercy towards him for the great love wherewith He loved him (Eph. ii. 4), but at the same time He was a Holy and Righteous God, and, therefore, as God had said "The soul that sinneth it should die," He cannot alter the thing which has gone out of His mouth. The demands of His justice must be met and satisfied before He could declare His love and grace in pardoning the sinner. God, said the preacher, must be consistent with Himself as a holy God. It is impossible for God to act contrary to His own nature. The wages that

He demands on account of sin, which is death, must be paid. And, therefore, to meet the claims of His justice, God has declared that He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to suffer for sins, the just one for the unjust. (John iii. 16, and 1 Peter iii. 18.) On the cross Jesus died for our sins. (1 Cor. xv. 3.) There He was made sin, for us, who knew no sin. (2 Cor. v. 21.) He drank the cup of God's wrath to the very dregs, leaving nothing of it for the believer to drink; but, said the preacher, He has filled the cup to the full with blessing, for His own to drink. Jesus by His death then paid the wages of sin—He satisfied the demands of God's justice, and in virtue of that death God can and does pour forth His love and grace without measure. He is now just in forgiving and justifying all the ungodly ones who believe in Jesus. (Rom. iii. 24—26.) Therefore, said the preacher, God has nothing against the believer now, but all for him. "There is now *no condemnation* to them that are in Christ" (Rom. viii. 1); and God is for us. (Rom. viii. 31.) God's Son has borne all the condemnation for the believer in Jesus, all that was against him once. And all that God had at one time against him, He has now taken out of the way and nailed it to the Cross. (Col. ii. 14.) He went on to say further, that God would be unjust to demand of the believer in Jesus the wages of his sin, seeing His Son had fully paid them to the entire satisfaction of His righteousness.

After this the Plymouth Brother proceeded to speak about what he called the

BELIEVER'S PRESENT DEATH AND RESURRECTION WITH CHRIST.

Having shewn, he said, that God in His grace had put away the sin of His people and the wrath due to sin, let us now see what God has done with the *old nature* of man, which is dead in trespasses and sins. He said that a dead thing was no use in heaven, that there it was all Christ and life

and joy, and therefore for one to enjoy Christ and heaven he *must* be born again (John iii.), and made a *new* creature in Christ. (2 Cor. v. 19.) If any man be in Christ he is a *new* creature ; not, said the preacher, the old nature reformed—made better or patched up, but a *new* thing altogether. Moreover, he was kind enough to spell the word for his hearers, and said N E W spelt “new,” and that it meant “new,” and not an old dead nature patched up. But what has God done with this old vile thing ! Why, said this Plymouth brother, He has crucified it with Christ ; and he quoted Rom. vi. 6 to prove it, “knowing (not doubting) this that our old man is crucified with Christ, that the *body* of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”

Having thus shewn how God had dealt with this old nature, he went on to shew how the new nature was obtained.” He said that the believer was quickened together with Christ, who is the Life. (Eph. ii. 5, John xiv. 6.) The believer is made alive then with Christ. He is God’s workmanship *created in Christ* unto good works, &c. (Eph. ii. 10.) Thus, he who is truly a believer in Jesus can say with the Apostle, “I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live ; yet not I (not the old I, but another I), but Christ liveth in me.” (Gal. ii. 20.) But more than this, said the preacher, the child of God is not only dead and alive with Christ, but he is risen with Him, and more still, he is made to sit together in Christ in the heavenly places. (Eph. ii. 6.) So that the conclusion come to was this, that if the believer in Jesus desired to look at his own self, he was to look at the cross and reckon himself dead with Christ (Rom. vi. 2) ; if he desired to see his new nature, he was to look up to heaven and see himself in Christ at God’s right hand, for he has been made to sit together *in Christ* in the heavenly places. (Eph. ii. 6.) So much then for the doctrine of salvation as preached by this so-called Plymouth brother.

It cannot but be noticed what a mass of Scripture is contained and referred to in the above, but as an ordained minister once said, "These Brethren they always resort to the Scriptures."

Now I would call attention for a few moments to the mode of worship adopted by these Brethren. This the preacher said nothing about, and therefore I gather the following from their own tracts, &c.

THEIR MODE OF WORSHIP.

The Plymouth Brethren say they will worship in no place except where the Holy Ghost has full liberty and authority. The Holy Ghost is Sovereign, and He divides His gifts when and to whom *He will*. (1 Cor. xii. 11.) They say God is a Spirit, and that He will be worshipped only in spirit and in truth (John iv. 24), and therefore where the Holy Ghost is hindered there cannot be spiritual worship. Then they further say that the table where they break bread is the *Lord's* table (1 Cor. x. 21); and that as no man can say that Jesus is *the Lord* except by the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. xii. 3), He (the Holy Spirit) must therefore have full and unhindered liberty at the table, otherwise the Lordship of Jesus cannot be owned and it cannot be at the table of the *Lord*. Where there is then a humanly ordained man appointed and paid to take the whole service, the Holy Ghost is grieved, because He (the Holy Ghost) is not permitted to use any one else in the congregation but the said one man. Should, however, any other person give out a hymn, or pray, or speak a word to the comfort or edification of the people, he would be taken before the magistrates and punished for brawling. Thus they consider that the Holy Ghost is bound by certain rules of man in the various denominations, whereas He should have unhindered liberty and authority to use whom HE would. If Paul were on earth now, or even the Lord Jesus Himself, they could not use their gifts in consequence of the arrangements of men.

They would be obliged to ask the leave of the ministers and deacons to speak a word to edification, &c. It seems to these Brethren that as Israel set aside God's rule and would have a human ruler over them, and just as they set aside Jesus when He came on earth, so the people, the religious people, of this day set aside the Holy Ghost by *human* regulations, for the Holy Ghost cannot use whom He *will* to pray or speak. And yet the Word of God says, "Ye may *all* prophesy *one by one*, that all may learn, and that all may be comforted." (1 Cor. xiv. 31.) "Let him that is spiritual acknowledge (urges the Apostle) that these things which I write unto you are the *commandments* of the Lord." (1 Cor. xiv. 37.) To prophesy means speaking to comfort, edification, or exhortation. (1 Cor. xiv. 3.) All believers are priests unto God (1 Peter ii. 5), and therefore all have the privilege of entrance into the Holy of holies to worship God in spirit and in truth, without any *humanly* ordained priest or minister. (Heb. x. 19—22.)

The Plymouth Brethren (so-called) further say that they do not now need consecrated places of worship, because God has pitched the true tabernacle in heaven, and not man (Heb. viii. 1); and that on earth where two or three are gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, there He is in the midst of them. The veil of the temple has been rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the holiest of all is open to all believers, and they may enter in with all boldness. (Heb. x. 19.)

A DEPENDENT.

Chippenham.