

**DEBATE ON THE POINTS OF DIFFERENCE IN
FAITH AND PRACTICE BETWEEN THE TWO
RELIGIOUS BODIES KNOWN AS THE
DISCIPLES OF CHRIST AND THE REGULAR
BAPTISTS EMBRACING THE SUBJECT OF
CALVINISM AND THE DESIGN OF BAPTISM**

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Debate on the Points of Difference in Faith and Practice Between the Two Religious Bodies
Known as the Disciples of Christ and the Regular Baptists Embracing the Subject of Calvinism
and the Design of Baptism by John Crawford & John S. Sweeney

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JOHN CRAWFORD & JOHN S. SWEENEY

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DEBATE

ON THE

Points of Difference in Faith and Practice

BETWEEN THE TWO RELIGIOUS BODIES KNOWN AS THE

DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

AND

THE REGULAR BAPTISTS;

EMBRACING

THE SUBJECT OF CALVINISM AND THE DESIGN OF BAPTISM.

HELD IN THE VILLAGE OF SPRINGFIELD, IN THE COUNTY OF
ELGIN, ONTARIO, FROM THE 10TH TO THE
12TH SEPTEMBER, 1874,

BETWEEN

PROF. CRAWFORD, WOODSTOCK, ONT.,

AND

ELDER JOHN S. SWEENEY, PARIS, KENTUCKY, U.S.

W. E. MURRAY, ESQ., AYLMER, PRESIDENT.

Reported by Mr. GEO. EYSEL, of the "Journal," St. Thomas.

TORONTO:
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1875.

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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE.

It is right that the readers of this debate should know the reasons why it is not published jointly by the two religious bodies represented in the controversy.

It was mutually agreed upon before the discussion commenced that the services of a reporter should be obtained, and that one-half of the expenses incurred for the stenographic report should be paid by each party, and that in the event of either afterwards declining to proceed with the publication, the report should be handed over to the other party.

At the close of the debate, before the audience dispersed, the writer, on behalf of the Disciples, publicly stated that it was the desire of his brethren that the addresses should be printed. Mr. Holmes, of Aylmer, as the representative of the Baptists, also publicly announced that they desired the publication of the debate.

Two or three days after the discussion closed, the following note was addressed to Mr. Holmes, which was copied and attested by Bro. T. C. Scott, of Toronto :

KINGSMILL, 15th Sept., 1874.

Dear Sir,—Since you have stated that your brethren are willing to publish the debate recently held in Springfield, I write to ascertain whether you will find responsible persons to pledge themselves to meet one-half the expenses of reporting and preparing the said debate for the press.

The expense of reporting, already incurred, is twenty-four dollars;* the reporter's charge for writing out and

*This amount was afterwards reduced to eighteen dollars.

fitting for publication will be about one hundred dollars more.

I further wish to find out whether you will agree to the appointment of a committee of five persons whose business shall be to make all necessary arrangements connected with its publication: the committee to consist of two Baptists, two Disciples, and a fifth party chosen by these four. If there are any other and better arrangements that you can suggest, please to do so.

You will oblige by answering by first mail.

Yours truly,

E. SHEPPARD."

This note was *never answered*, and as we indirectly learned that the Baptists had abandoned all thought of publication, our brethren appointed a committee of ten who directed the reporter to proceed with his work.

As the expenses incurred were quite heavy, an appeal for pecuniary aid, was made to some of our churches in the Provinces, which appeal was so nobly and generously responded to, that the writer felt safe in complying with the request of the committee, and taking the whole responsibility of the publication into his own hands. From Mr. Holmes' letter which is quoted in Mr. Sweeny's first speech, it will be seen that all the arrangements for the debate were *ex parte*. The Disciples were not allowed to have a voice in the matter. The positions for debate were all definitely and unchangeably arranged by Mr. Crawford,—this will account for frequent references to those positions in the course of the discussion.

The debate will speak for itself. Some of the issues are of vital importance and call for a careful consideration.

The writer concludes by calling the attention of every reader to the following noble thoughts of Archbishop Whately, on the subject of "The Love of Truth in Religious Enquiry."

“As any one may bring himself to believe almost anything that he is inclined to believe, it makes all the difference whether we *begin or end* with the enquiry, ‘What is truth?’

There should be an endeavor to preserve the indifference of the *judgment*, even in cases where the *will* cannot, and should not, be indifferent.

The judgment is like a pair of scales, and evidences like the weights; but the will holds the balances in its hand, and even a slight jerk will be sufficient, in many cases, to make the lighter scale appear the heavier.

Men are too apt to ask as the first question, not how far each doctrine is agreeable to *Scripture*, but to *themselves*; not whether it is conformable to God's will, but to their own.

When comparing opinions or practices with the standard of God's Word, we must beware, lest we suffer these opinions or practices to *bend the rule* by which they are to be measured.

Some persons follow the dictates of their conscience, only in the same sense in which a coachman may be said to follow the horses he is driving.

It makes all the difference, whether we pursue a certain course *because we judge* it right; or judge it to be right *because we pursue* it; and to the still nobler words of a higher authority: “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

EDMUND SHEPPARD.

January 21st, 1875.

PROF. CRAWFORD'S PREFACE.*

According to agreement I have the privilege of prefixing a brief preface to this controversy ; but as neither party is at liberty to insert any debatable matter, I feel it to be unnecessary to write more than a few words.

In revising my addresses I observed some portions which I would have liked to enlarge and improve were this admissible ; but, as both parties are to abide by the reporter's copy, unless with such slight revision as he may sanction, it must go to the press just as delivered, according to his impartial verdict.

I do not make this remark by way of apology ; as I do not wish to see any alteration made in the arguments which I employed in debate, as I believe them to be held in strict harmony with the Word of God, whatever they may lack in finish, owing to their being necessarily delivered extempore.

I would observe that in my last address, being anxious to introduce another important topic before the termination of the debate, viz : the nature of saving faith, I was obliged to leave some of Mr. Sweeny's arguments, which he delivered in his preceding address, unanswered ; but no argument I think of any importance. As he was, according to arrangement,

*NOTE.—When Prof. Crawford learned that the debate was to be published he asked the privilege of writing a preface for insertion in the work, which privilege was granted, and though it will exceed the space asked for, it is given *entire*. E. S.