

# Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

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## Poetry.

### I long to be there.

I have read of a world of beauty,  
Where there is no gloomy night,  
Where love is the mainspring of duty,  
And God the fountain of light;  
And I long to be there!

I have read of its flowing river,  
That bursts from beneath the throne,  
And the beautiful trees that ever  
Are found on its bank alone;  
And I long to be there!

I have read of the myriad choir,  
Of the angels harping there;  
Of their holy love that burns like fire,  
And the shining robes they wear;  
And I long to be there!

I have read of the sanctified throng  
That passed from earth to heaven,  
And now unite in the loudest song  
Of praise for their sins forgiven;  
And I long to be there!

I have read of their freedom from sin,  
And suffering, and sorrow, too;  
And the holy joy they feel within,  
As their risen Lord they view;  
And I long to be there!

I long to rise to that world of light,  
And to breathe its balmy air;  
I long to walk with the Lamb in white,  
And to shout with the angels there;  
O I long to be there!

### Angry Words.

Poison drops of care and sorrow,  
Bitter poison drops are they;  
Weaving for the coming morrow  
Sad memorials of to-day.

Angry words! Oh let them never  
From the tongue forbidden slip;  
May the heart's best impulse ever  
Check them ere they soil the lip.

## Baptist History.

For the Christian Messenger.

### A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A YOUNG CHRISTIAN.

LETTER XVIII.

#### The Revival Period.

From A. D. 1073 to A. D. 1516.  
Continued.

#### MY YOUNG FRIEND,

The references to heretics in the proceedings of councils during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are comparatively few in number and very general in their character. The particular opinions held are not specified, but directions are given to exercise constant vigilance lest heresies should creep in unawares, and magistrates are specially charged to apprehend all suspected persons, and to put in execution the laws against them, if convicted. There was no lack of zeal in that respect. The civil powers were completely under the control of the clergy, who, while they indulged their own savage propensities, and sought by such means to perpetrate the reign of ignorance and delusion, continued to evade the responsibility. They did not torture and burn the heretics! How could it be supposed that ministers of mercy would have any thing to do with deeds of blood? Oh no! They only delivered them up to the secular power! The base hypocrites would have hurled the thunders of excommunication against the secular power if the heretics had been spared. They did not burn them—but they delivered them up for the purpose of being burned! Were they not more than accessories to the murders?

Many of the reformers of this period inculcated truths, the legitimate consequences of which involved all, or nearly all for which we now contend. When they argued that a christian church should be a society of the pious, and that christian ordinances belonged only to believers, they had but another step to take in order to appear as full Baptists. Take Dr. Vaughan's statement of John de Wycliffe's views:—  
On baptism his expressions are at times

obscure; but, according to his general language, the value of a sacrament must depend wholly on the mind of the recipient, not at all on the external act performed by the priest; and, contrary to the received doctrine, he would not allow that infant salvation was dependent on infant baptism." Connect with this the charge brought against him by the Council of London, in 1391, as contained in one of the "articles" extracted from his "Trialogus," and which was to this effect,—that those who held that infants dying without baptism could not be saved were "presumptuous and foolish." Now, if Wycliffe believed that the ordinances of christianity require faith in those who observe them he would necessarily see the futility of infant baptism, and the expression of even a doubt respecting the connection between infant baptism and salvation would be regarded in that age as equivalent to a denial of the divine authority of the rite. That great man, however, lived and died a priest of the Roman Catholic church. But, as I before hinted, the light he had received would have guided him into Baptist paths had he followed it fully. Probably, if he had lived in France or Germany he would have been at the head of one of the seceding parties. His writings perpetuated the beneficial influence exerted in his life-time. It may be safely concluded that many of his immediate followers and others who obtained possession of those writings were induced thereby to extend their religious inquiries, and thus became more completely New Testament christians than he was himself. That they laboured incessantly in propagating the truth is manifest from the decrees of a Council held at Oxford in the year 1408, by which the clergy were strictly enjoined not to allow any persons to preach in their churches without episcopal license, and to be prompt in denouncing to the proper authorities all who were chargeable with heresy. The parties so denounced were to clear themselves of the charge, or be reconciled to the church, or, in default of such clearance or reconciliation, be committed to the civil power, in order to be "burned in a conspicuous place," for a terror to all others. Notwithstanding such perils, the servants of God persevered in their efforts. They scattered abroad religious tracts, they taught the young in schools, and they preached in private houses when the churches were shut against them. Thus the English mind was prepared for the Reformation. You will find a very full and interesting account of their proceedings in "The Lollards," one of the volumes published by the Religious Tract Society.

Some of them, perhaps the majority, opposed infant baptism. Indeed, it is expressly affirmed by several historians that they refused to baptize their new-born children, and that they were charged before the ecclesiastical authorities with maintaining that infants who died unbaptized would be saved. This was an unpardonable sin in the eyes of the Paptists, and the Lollards suffered grievously for it.

I stated in a former letter that in the twelfth century Peter Waldo and many of his adherents retired to Bohemia to escape the fury of the persecution. Others followed them in succeeding centuries. There they served God according to their consciences. Diversities of opinion existed among them. All held that "in articles of faith the authority of Holy Scripture is the highest," but while some retained infant baptism others rejected it, and among them the practice of believer's baptism prevailed (Jones's History of the Waldenses, ii. 44-46, 201.) "Authentic records in France" says, Mr. Robinson "assure us that a people of a certain description were driven from thence in the twelfth century. Bohemian records of equal authenticity inform us that some of the same description arrived in Bohemia at the same time, and settled near a hundred miles from Prague, at Satz and Laun on the river Eger, just on the borders of the kingdom. Almost two hundred years after, another undoubted record of the same country mentions a people of the same de-

scription, some as burnt at Prague, and others as inhabiting the borders of the Kingdom, and a hundred and fifty years after that we find a people of the same description settled, by connivance, in the metropolis, and in several other parts of the kingdom. About one hundred and twenty years lower we find a people in the same country living under the protection of law on the estate of Prince Lichtenstein, exactly like all the former, and about thirty or forty thousand in number. The religious character of this people is so very different from that of all others that the likeness is not easily mistaken. They had no priests, but taught one another. They had no private property, for they held all things jointly. They executed no offices, and neither exacted nor took oaths. They bore no arms, and rather chose to suffer than resist wrong. They held every thing called religion in the church of Rome in abhorrence, and worshipped God only by adoring his perfections and endeavouring to imitate his goodness. They thought christianity wanted no comment, and they professed their belief of that by being baptized, and their love to Christ and one another by receiving the Lord's Supper" (Ecclesiastical Researches, p. 527.)

There has been much dispute respecting the Waldenses. Some have represented them as being originally all Baptists. Others, on the contrary, persist in affirming that they were all Pædobaptists. Neither statement is correct. In the first place, we must inquire who are meant by the appellation "Waldenses." The old writers were extremely careless in the use and application of epithets. After the rise of the Manicheans, as I have observed in a former letter, it became the fashion to stigmatise all dissidents from the established order by that title, whether they harmonised with the Manicheans in profession and practice or not. So in the twelfth and subsequent centuries, when Peter Waldo's success had issued in the formation of a new party, bearing his name, that was the common appellation. Many treatises were written "against the Waldenses," the authors of which evidently intended their remarks to apply to the reformers of those times, generally. It is obvious, then, that the statements which I have had occasion to make respecting those reformers are equally applicable to the Waldenses. There was no uniformity among them. A number of them, particularly in the early part of their history, judged that baptism should be administered to believers only, and practised accordingly; others entirely rejected the ordinance, as well as the Lord's Supper; a third class held pædobaptism. If the question relate to the Waldenses in the strict and modern sense of the term, that is, to the inhabitants of the valleys of Piedmont, there is reason to believe that originally the majority of them were Baptists, although there were varieties of opinion among them, as well as among other seceders from the Romish church.

But the language of some of their Confessions cannot be fairly interpreted except on Baptist principles. One of them, ascribed to the twelfth century, contains the following articles:—"We consider the sacraments as the signs of holy things, or as the visible emblems of invisible blessings. We regard it as proper and even necessary that believers use these symbols or visible forms when it can be done. Notwithstanding which, we maintain that believers may be saved without these signs, when they have neither place nor opportunity of observing them." Here, you see, the use of the sacraments is limited to believers; and they add, in another article, "We acknowledge no sacraments (as of divine appointment) but baptism and the Lord's Supper." Again; in a Confession, presented to the King of France in 1543, they say, "We believe that in the ordinance of baptism the water is the visible and external sign, which represents to us that which by virtue of God's invisible operation, is within us—namely, the renovation of our minds, and the mortification of our members through the faith of Jesus Christ. And by this ordinance we are received in-

to the holy congregation of God's people, previously professing and declaring our faith and change of life" (Jones's History of the Waldenses, ii. 45, 50.) It must be very difficult, I think, to twist this into a Pædobaptist sense. How the Waldenses were led to change their practice I shall not now inquire; it is sufficiently manifest that their views harmonised with ours in the early stages of their history.

I have said nothing about church order and government. The reason is, but little is known on those points. It is not safe to rely on the statements of adverse writers, who neither understood nor appreciated apostolic descriptions and precedents. Their own ecclesiastical affairs being managed without any reference to the New Testament, which was an unknown book to most of the Romish clergy, they were not in a position to form a correct judgment respecting Baptist societies, and were perpetually falling into mistakes. We may gather, however, from occasional hints and references, that Peter of Bruis and his successors formed the baptized into churches, after the apostolic pattern;—that the churches were presided over by pastors, regularly chosen and ordained, as far as circumstances would allow, by whom the ordinances were administered;—that all the brethren were encouraged to exercise their gifts, by preaching or teaching;—and that brotherly love was practically manifested, by generous contributions in aid of the poor and afflicted, extensive hospitality, and spiritual sympathy in its manifold forms. The communion of saints, with them, was not a theory, but a habit.

I must now bring the account of this period to a close. It has been shown that there was a continuous protest against infant baptism from the eleventh to the sixteenth century; and that even those who did not substitute believer's baptism for it, or rather, restore the ordinance to its primitive form, but who were driven into the other extreme, rejecting the sacraments, grounded their opposition to infant baptism on the necessary absence, in the case of infants, of christian faith. All confessed the indissoluble connection between faith and baptism. All maintained the sole authority of scripture, in matters of religious belief and practice. All disavowed human traditions. All held that the churches of Christ should consist of truly pious men and women. All demanded and exercised the right of private judgment. Every one was at liberty to think, believe, profess and worship, as he pleased without the interference of priests, kings, councils, popes, or any other earthly power. In a word, they taught that man is responsible, in religion, not to his fellow-man, but to God. So have all Baptists taught, in all ages.

Yours truly,  
MENNO.

From my Study,  
May 2, 1857.

WHAT THERE IS ON THE SURFACE OF THE MOON.—Though negative in their results, the observations already made by Lord Rosse with his great new telescope are interesting. His lordship assures us that every object on the surface of the moon 100 feet in height is now distinctly visible, and under favourable circumstances even objects sixty feet in height. Rocks and stones innumerable are seen, but no architecture, no building, although such a single structure as Somerset-house for instance ought to be distinctly visible, far less a street, a village, or a town. Not a vestige of green fields or of water appears, although even a small reservoir or not a very large flower-plot would be recognisable. All seems desolate. There is something awful in such a desert solitude. But the earth, too, has its desert wastes. Can it be that what we do see of the lunar surface is but its desert districts;—while what we do not see is not unlike the face of our own planet elsewhere than in its solitary districts?—  
Builder.