

For the Christian Messenger.

Sprinkling versus Dipping.

Messrs Editors,—

The Presbyterian Witness' remarks of the 12th inst., in reply to mine and others of the 9th, fell under my eye too late to be noticed in your last. Will you indulge me the favor of a few lines in the forthcoming?

I am glad the bro. has come to feel so sensibly that his offence is "really too bad"—and that he now so frankly concedes "that the Baptists of the present day are by no means to be identified with the Anarchical Anabaptists, who brought disgrace upon the Protestant Reformation"—"that no two classes of people could be more thoroughly different—except in the one article of dipping." This is all we ask. Such honor and fairness mutually become us.—May they not be wanting. If as Christians and churches, we cannot "be all of one mind" in all things, can we not nevertheless, God's grace helping us, "love as brethren." and "be courteous" in our denominational differences, discussions, intercourse, &c.? Let the truth be told of us, and by us, and the whole truth, on all suitable occasions, and it should be deemed no breach of Christian charity or courtesy—should not offend, and I pledge myself it shall not, so far as I am concerned. But the unfounded connection between Baptists and the offensive Anabaptists of the Reformation period, is so often, and so significantly suggested, when not in bold terms asserted, that to me, I confess, it has become quite distasteful. I am happy, however, to be able to lay by the above testimony of the Witness on the point, with those already at hand.

As to the connection of Baptists with "the great Reformers" of the same period, I still have no anxiety to vindicate them. It was no part of my aim before.—Suffice it to repeat, if their great cardinal principle which they are so severe to observe, "The Bible, the Bible only" does not connect them with all great Reformers, then let their birthright be taken away.

To the Witness' remark—"We do not know that any country can be pointed to where Baptists had any very prominent share, in breaking the shackles of Popery, or in securing civil and religious freedom,"—I will only add, for his information, the statement of Mr. Bancroft, the Historian of the United States, where "Shackles" had to be "broken," it seems, and "civil and religious freedom secured," as well as in Germany, England, &c.

"With greater consistency than Luther they (the Baptists) applied the doctrines of the Reformation to the social positions of life, and threatened an end to priestcraft and kingcraft, spiritual domination, titles, and vassalage." "Freedom of conscience, unlimited freedom of conscience, was from the first, the trophy of the Baptists."—His. U. S., vol. 2, pp. 66 and 459.

Also, that of JUDGE STORY.—"In the code of laws established by them (the Baptists) in Rhode Island, we read for the first time since Christianity ascended the throne of the Caesars, the declaration that CONSCIENCE SHOULD BE FREE."—New Am. Enc. Art. "Baptists."

But I should, probably, not have taken up my pen, for the present, but for the necessity of putting the Witness to rights on the following language:—

"A correspondent of the Messenger, who signs himself Hoi, makes the following statement—'Sprinkling * * * was not sanctioned in England till the middle of the seventeenth century, when the Westminster Assembly, unable, doubtless, longer to withstand the bold innovator, decided that dipping of the person in water is not necessary, but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person'—the decision being carried by a majority of one—there being twenty-five for it and twenty-four against it."

"It is affirmed, then, that the Westminster Assembly was almost equally divided on the question of dipping," &c.

Not so bro. Witness—"it is grossly erroneous," we are agreed, and perhaps "it may be fairly taken as an instance of the * * * manner in which certain controversialists try to prop up a feeble cause." The subject of the sentence on which you see fit to make your own "affirmation," is "sprinkling"—as you have correctly quoted it—and as all must see—which puts quite another "cooking" upon the "FACTS" in question. It was sprinkling, not dipping, that was "the question on which they had the close decision." Not "whether dipping should be placed on an equal footing with pouring or sprinkling" in the Canons of the English Church. It required no such "placing." It was already there, "singly and alone,"—the originally adopted—time-honored, and as yet the only legally authorized mode of Christian baptism known to that Church; although it is confessed, that, for years in those "disorderly times," in which, as Macaulay observes, "the ecclesiastical polity of the realm was in inextricable confusion," the former had been crowding

hard upon the latter, 'tis true, and without sanction, had well nigh usurped its place practically, "when the Westminster Assembly * * * decided * * * by a majority of one * * * that the persistent youth should indeed have the place of the veteran, by a lawful title—or as Dr. Wall perhaps more literally states it, "REFORMED the font into a basin."

In England, the original rite was retained longer, and relinquished less exclusively at length, than in France, Germany, or Scotland, whence, without doubt, the invading one first crept in. Hence the Rubric even to the present, enjoins that "he (the clergyman) shall dip in the water discreetly and warily," except "if they shall certify that the child is weak, it shall suffice to pour water upon it." And in the Catechism, "water wherein the person is baptized," is the language used.

The Episcopal clergy in General Convention, assembled Feb. 9th, 1706, ordered—"that the thanks of this house be given to Mr. Wall, Vicar of Shoreham, in Kent, for the learned and excellent book he has lately written concerning Infant Baptism." This "book" was his "History of Infant Baptism," in the preparing of which he is said to have "explored all the voluminous writers of antiquity." A "Defence" of the same was called out. The testimony of this author already given, upon the "facts" above stated, is worthy of being repeated and extended. Says

DR. WALL—"As for sprinkling, properly called, it seems it was at 1645 just then beginning and used by very few. It must have begun in the disorderly times after '41. They (the Westminster divines) reformed the font into a basin. This learned assembly could not remember that fonts to baptize in had been always used by the primitive Christians, long before the beginning of Popery, and ever since churches were built; but that sprinkling for the common use of baptizing was really introduced, in France first, and then in other Popish countries, in times of Popery."—His. Infant Bap. Part 2, Chap. ix.

Again—"The way that is now ordinarily used," (sprinkling) "we cannot deny to have been a novelty, brought into this church by those that have learned it in Germany or at Geneva. And they were not contented to follow the example of pouring a quantity of water (which had then been introduced instead of immersion,) but improved it, if I may so abuse that word, from pouring to sprinkling, that it might have as little resemblance of the ancient way of baptizing as possible."—Def. of His. Infant Bap. p. 403.

Dr. Wall did not mean, of course, to oppose Infant baptism, but contended for dipping or immersion as the proper mode. Hence the remark of his,—"As for sprinkling, I say as Mr. Blake, at its first coming up in England, 'Let them defend it who use it.'"—Def. of His. Infant Bap., p. 140.

Pardon the length of this article, as well as the other, Messrs. Editors; and permit me to address one more authority for my "facts." It shall be that of the

EDINBURG ENCYCLOPEDIA, (Edited by Sir David Brewster.) Article, "Baptism."—"It was not till the year 1311 that the Legislature, in a council held at Ravenna, declared immersion or sprinkling to be indifferent. In this country (Scotland,) however, sprinkling was never practiced in ordinary cases, till after the Reformation; and in England even in the reign of Edward VI. immersion was commonly observed. But during the persecution of Mary, many persons, most of whom were Scotchmen, fled from England to Geneva, and there greedily imbibed the opinions of that church. In 1556, a book was published at that place containing the form of prayers and ministration of sacraments, approved by the famous and Godly learned man, John Calvin, in which the administrator is enjoined to take water in his hand and lay it on the child's forehead.—These Scottish exiles who had renounced the authority of the Pope, implicitly acknowledged the authority of Calvin; and returning to their own country with John Knox at their head, in 1559 established sprinkling in Scotland. From Scotland this practice made its way into England in the reign of Elizabeth, but was not authorized by the established church."

The "unanswerable Scriptural argument" that "the meaning of baptizo" is "not necessarily dipping, or plunging, or immersion," may be noticed hereafter. For the present I will only hand over the "arguer" to

PROF. CAMPBELL.—"I have heard a disputant, in defiance of etymology and use, maintain that the word rendered in the New Testament 'baptizo' means more properly to sprinkle than to plunge, and in defiance of all authority, that the former was the earliest and—the most general practice in baptizing. One who argues in this manner never fails, with persons of knowledge, to betray the cause he would defend; and though with respect to the vulgar, bold assertions generally succeed as well as argument, and sometimes better, yet a candid mind will always disdain to take the help of falsehood, even in the support of truth."—Lectures on Pulpit Eloquence, Lect. x. p. 304.

Yours in love of the truth,
Horr.

March 17, 1859.

For the Christian Messenger.

Obituary Notices.

MR. JAMES FANNING.

Died, at Canso, on the 5th of January last, Mr. James Fanning, a native of Shelburne, N. S., in the 66th year of his age. For several years his health was feeble, and repeatedly in that time he had violent attacks of the disease that finally proved fatal.

Mr. Fanning experienced religion under Methodist preaching. At the time of his conversion, he was living at one of the harbours west of Canso; and the Rev. Dr. McLeod, now of Baltimore, was then on the Guysborough circuit. Eighteen years since, he united with the Baptist denomination.

Since he made a profession of religion, his conduct was strongly marked with consistency. He was not one of those professors whose religion comes and goes periodically: his religion was founded on principle, and uniform in its development,—like "the path of the just, resembling the morning light, which shines more and more unto the perfect day." He took a lively interest in the affairs of the Baptist Church at Canso. He opened his house for prayer-meetings, and took an active part in them. His last illness was of short duration; and while his bodily affliction was great, his mind was in peace. He had no doubt of his interest in the merits of Jesus, and he believed, that "when the earthly house of his tabernacle were dissolved," he would have an house, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Like many Christians at the close of life, he regretted that he had not enjoyed religion more, and served God with more zeal and energy. He has left a widow and one daughter to feel and lament their loss.—Communicated by Rev. John Miller.

MRS. MARTHA SHARP.

Wife of John Sharp, of Nappan, departed this life January 1st, 1859, deeply lamented by all.

Our much esteemed friend and sister received her first religious impressions in the days of her youth, and always entertained the warmest regard for the religion of the Lord Jesus and for Christian people. She often mourned over the low state of religion, and for this reason she did not publicly make known her attachment to Christ until the year 1844, when she was baptized by Elder D. Harris, and united with the Baptist Church at Maccan. From the hour that she professed faith in the Son of God until she was taken to herself, it was her aim to serve God, and was influenced by a strong sense of duty. Whilst suffering from a distressing disease, which in most instances depresses the natural spirits and awakens a morbid view of one's own position, she had grace sufficient to her day. For several months before her death she was unable to converse with her friends, she was evidently conscious of what was transpiring around her. On New-Year's day, at 10 o'clock in the evening, her Heavenly Father sent his angel—death—to unlock the clay tabernacle, and her ransomed soul took its flight to fold its pinions before the throne of the Infinite.

A smile divine illumed her face,
And threw a radiance round her bed;
She triumphed in the strength of grace,
And softly sank among the dead.

—Communicated.

MRS. MARTHA WOODBERRY.

Wife of Captain Isaac Woodberry, of Clements, died on the 26th of January last, aged 60 years. Mrs. W. was the youngest daughter of the late Capt. Benjamin and Mrs. Martha Clute. She became a subject of grace in the year 1822. About 29 years before her decease she was baptized by Rev. H. Saunders.

Our departed sister is said to have led a truly Christian life; and to have been greatly beloved in the circle of her acquaintance. During a protracted and distressing illness, she was enabled to evince exemplary patience and submission. She was sustained and happy in death.

Sister W. has left a husband and one son to lament their loss, which is undoubtedly her gain. A sermon was preached at the time of her burial, by Rev. Obed Parker, from Rev. xiv. 13.—"And I heard a voice," &c.—Communicated by Rev. C. Trupper.

Religious Intelligence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Pleasant Valley, Cornwallis.

DEAR BROTHER,

Since I wrote you last, the work of God has still marvellously progressed here, and its divine influence has spread to a considerable extent in the Valley. In the last revival there were, I think, but four heads of families—now there has been quite a number, in several instances, both male or female, a large number of young men and women, and several youths, and some children as young as nine or ten years old,—in six or more families there has been three children in each. Some of these converts referred to the saving works of the Divine Spirit on their hearts twenty years ago, others three years, and some cases more recently.

The work has been characterized with no undue excitement, indeed, there has been as little of this as I have ever known in any revival of religion. Circumstances have greatly changed from former years, yet no one can doubt but this revival is the work of the Divine Spirit. We fondly hope that all who have professed religion are the subjects of renewing grace, and that very many more have received the saving grace of God in their hearts who may yet make it manifest. In my last communication I stated

to you that 40 had been baptized on the profession of their faith on three succeeding Sabbaths. Since then I am happy to state that on the following Sabbaths there were 17, 10, and 10 more, making in six succeeding Sabbaths seventy-seven baptized. There are several more received who are not yet baptized, and quite a number who have obtained hope in Christ. The probability is that there will be many more soon gathered into this church.

I might name one circumstance that occurred here. A wife was received as a candidate for baptism, and while she delayed, waiting for her husband, (who had indulged for some years in a secret hope,) he became so distressed in reference to his salvation, on a Saturday night, that he was brought to see his duty plain, and with his wife came to the place of baptism, and then and there related his Christian experience, and in about six hours was received, baptized, received the right hand of fellowship into the church, and sat with his brethren and sisters at the Lord's table.

I am rejoiced to hear that the blessed work of the Lord is extending gloriously in Upper Aylesford, Lower Aylesford, Wilnot, Nictaux, &c., &c., in the several churches there—and that nearly every scholar in Mr. Handley Fitch's Female Boarding School, Clarence, Wilnot, have entertained hope in Jesus Christ. "The Lord reigneth, let the people rejoice." O that the glorious work may extend until the earth is filled with his glory and praise, and that the prophesy of Malachi may be fulfilled, when "He will pour out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it;" and when the principles and practices of the Apostolic churches may be more universally embraced and practiced, and all error looked out of countenance. Faithfully yours in the love of the truth.

W. CHIPMAN.

SOUTH YARMOUTH.—A most deeply interesting state of religious feeling is prevailing in South Yarmouth Church. The Lord is evidently working by his spirit. Improving signs some four months ago took place in the lower section of the Church, which is extending through the community. An aged man, upwards of seventy years old, besides a number of young people, profess to have found pardon of sin. Last Saturday in Central Chebogue, in conference, a powerful impression was realized, and two young people gave themselves to Christ, whom I baptized yesterday.

Brother J. A. Davidson spent the Sabbath with me, preaching three times the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ in much power, and with blessed effect.

He lectured twice in Chebogue last week. May God attend his labors with signal success. Amen.

J. V. TABOR.

March 14th, 1859.

Provincial Parliament.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, March 15, 1859.

Dr. Brown presented a petition from the Rev. Dr. Cramp and others, of Horton, in favor of a Prohibitory Liquor Law.

The house in committee of supply. Mr. Chipman in the chair.

Several of the usual grants passed. Some discussion occurred on the packet grants for carrying the mails. The grant for the Windsor and Parrsborough packet was negatived. Other grants passed. The usual grants for ferries passed.

The house resolved itself into committee on bills. Mr. Ryder in the chair. A number of private and local bills were read and passed.

The house resumed. Hon. Mr. Young asked leave to introduce an act to amend the act relating to Trusts and Trustees.

The house again in committee of supply. Hon. Finl. Secretary moved that the sum of £25,000 be granted for the road and bridge services for the present year,—which passed.

WEDNESDAY, March 16.

Dr. Brown presented a petition from the inhabitants of Lower Horton, praying for an act of incorporation for Brooklyn meeting-house.

Hon. Atty. General asked leave to introduce a bill, the object of which was to give the same force to declarations made in England, as is given to affidavits in this country. Also, introduced an act to amend chapter 118 Revised Statutes, of the sale of lands to satisfy execution debts.

The house in committee on ways and means. Mr. Chipman in the chair.

Hon. Finl. Secretary moved that in future the Colonial Revenues be collected in currency instead of sterling money,—which passed.

The Tariff was then taken up. A long debate ensued, as to the propriety of reducing the duty on rum, which is fixed by the tariff at 2s. 3d. per gallon, after which hon. Mr. Howe moved that the duty be reduced to 1s. 3d. per gallon.

On division, there appeared, for the resolution, 19; against it, 19. The chairman gave his casting vote in favor of the resolution, according to the rule of the house, which required the chairman to vote for the reduced duty.

The hon. Provl. Secretary moved to reconsider the vote. The motion passed.

THURSDAY, March 17.

Mr. Wade from the committee on Private Bills reported several without amendments. Then the house adjourned to enable the Law committee to meet.