

speak for himself. The following is his "Epitome of the Abrahamic Covenant:—

"The covenant was made with Abraham, and with him alone: though his seed were through him, or for his sake, enjoying the benefits of it. The covenant was one, and only one: two covenants were not made with Abraham. The covenant had a plain, carnal, literal, typical, temporal meaning; which represents the aspect it bore to the carnal covenant seed; which was true, and accomplished to them, and to them only; and which was abolished, when that seed ceased to exist, as a covenant nation. The covenant at Sinai, which was made with the carnal, literal, typical, temporally covenanted seed, was the evolution, explanation, and so far accomplishment, of the Abrahamic covenant, in its plain, carnal, &c. meaning. The Abrahamic covenant had a veiled, spiritual, figurative, typified or real, eternal, meaning; which represents the aspect it bears to the spiritual covenant seed, which is true, and accomplishing to them, and to them only; and which, as it is eternal, shall be, through eternity, accomplishing. The new covenant, which has been made with the spiritual, figurative, typified or real, eternally covenanted seed, is the evolution, explanation, and so far accomplishment, of the Abrahamic covenant, in its veiled spiritual, &c. meaning. So, the Sinai covenant is an enlarged edition of the literal meaning, and the new covenant is an enlarged edition of the figurative meaning, of the one covenant with Abraham. The Jewish community, nation, or church, was founded upon Abraham their father, and upon the carnal meaning of the covenant made with him; and regulated by the enlarged edition of that meaning; and the righteous community, nation or church, of which the Jewish was typical, is founded on Abraham their father, and upon the spiritual meaning of the covenant made with him; and regulated by the enlarged edition of that meaning. So the Jewish church, and the righteous church, are as different from each other, as the carnal and spiritual meanings of the Abrahamic covenant, or as the Sinai, and the new covenants."

The winter of 1826-7 was a very trying one in Cornwallis. It was a remarkably sickly season. Day after day Mr. Manning records in his journal visits to the sick, the dying, and the bereaved, and attendance at funerals. In one week, in January, 1827, he preached, five funeral sermons. At the same time his own health was in a shattered state, and Mr. Manning appeared to be gradually sinking into the grave. But the solemn feelings which were thus induced were mingled with steady confidence in God, and he laboured on with earnestness quickened by the joyful hope. The light that seemed to be so near termination was spared for many years more.

Yours truly, MENNO.

Aug. 12, 1861.

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, AUGUST 21, 1861.

About the Convention.

In coming up to our Anniversaries from year to year to attend to the routine or special business of the denomination, and to combine our efforts in behalf of Zion, we too often forget that the institutions and interests we seek to promote, are not our own, but that they belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, that they stand as monuments of his supremacy and merciful designs towards ourselves and our fellow-men. Those at present connected with these movements may soon be removed from this stage of activity, but those institutions will long remain behind, as we trust, to bless the world for many generations. We are apt but very imperfectly to realize that whilst we may be forming plans and devising means, Christ himself is at the helm of the affairs of his kingdom, and can so use our instrumentality as to bring about our intentions and desires as he pleases. He can also, if necessary frustrate our plans and disappoint our expectations.

The knowledge of these things however should not discourage us, or prevent our employing all the faculties and opportunities given us, in devising wise and prudent measures and aiming to make them as efficient as possible. The consciousness of human weakness is one of the best preparations we can have for securing aid from the arm of Omnipotence. We must act as if the work rested wholly upon ourselves, and pray for God's blessing on our work under the consciousness that we can of ourselves do nothing.

We would venture to commend this feeling of human insufficiency to the brethren who will assemble in Convention at Nictaux, on Saturday next. In reviewing "the State of the Denomination" we apprehend that they will not have to rejoice over so large additions to the Churches as during some previous years: the addition of large numbers however is not always a sign of progress. The Educational interests of the body will, we trust, be found in a condition somewhat more satisfactory than hitherto, but requiring the united wisdom of the brethren to render them

efficient, and meet the demands arising from past successful operations.

In the Foreign Mission field, although our labours have not been without some fruits, yet these will probably be found not so abundant as we might desire. These facts will doubtless result in suitable enquiries and consultation as to what measures under the circumstances should be adopted. Brethren will be found we trust like "the children of Issachar which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do." The assembling together of the ministers and members of the Churches from the three Provinces, should be deemed an opportunity not to be lightly estimated, for encouraging a greater measure of devotion to the work entrusted to their hands. We hope to hear of its being the commencement of a day of visitation and manifestation of Divine power, which shall, before another year has expired, result in large accessions of wise and good men to the ranks of Immanuel.

Christian Baptism.

EPISCOPAL SPONSORSHIP—PRESBYTERIAN INFANTS' SLEEPING FAITH.

Christian Baptism, its proper subjects, its design, and its results, as well as the true mode of its administration was perhaps never so much a matter of public consideration as of late. A question of so much moment as to be, by our Lord and Saviour, connected with faith and salvation, can scarcely be too much canvassed by those who profess to be his followers. Their enquiries should not cease until they arrive at a clear view of what His word teaches, and ascertain their duty with regard to the Divine ordinance.

We rejoice in the increase of attention to this matter, especially when it leads to examination of the Word of God and submission to its dictates. Light is spreading. The errors connected with Infant Baptism, so called, have of late been growing more and more obnoxious to the enlightened judgment of Christians. Its own advocates—many of them pious, godly men—have been so at variance, respecting the true value to be attached to it, that even those forming any one christian community cannot agree amongst themselves as to what the administration of the rite accomplishes for the unconscious babe,—whether it is by this means really regenerated and made a member of Christ, the child of God and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, or whether it is only entitled thereby to a place in the visible church, without having any important bearing on its salvation. What the place given to the child, by its baptism, is another matter on which scarcely two of those who perform the service for the little innocents can be found to agree. It is only necessary to hear the objections made, by some who rejoice in applying the baptismal waters to the infant brow, against the construction put upon the act by others—who on other grounds defend it, taking what they suppose, more solid argument,—to confute every position by which it has been upheld. One point after another has been given up by its champions, until it may almost be said to be conceded,—that the Scriptures afford no countenance to infant baptism. The reasons given at one time, too, and when these fail, the refuge to which the same parties fly at another, are enough to show how futile it is for Protestants to cling to this relic of Popery. Like other Popish dogmas this of infant baptism rests simply on the Tradition which that church has added to Scripture as its rule of faith and practice.

There is less attention paid to this rite than formerly. So difficult has it become in the English Church establishment to induce the people to conform to the canons in respect to infant baptism, that a grave Convocation of Archbishops and Bishops of that Church has lately been in solemn conclave, debating as to whether the parents of a child should be allowed, or not, to stand sponsors—god-parents—to their own children at their baptism. Great difficulty appears to have existed in the minds of these spiritual Lords also, as to the meaning of the canon which forbids children standing as sponsors,—a practice common in the Church of Rome but forbidden by the Church of England. The Church Record for the past few weeks has been giving its readers the speeches of their Lordships the Bishops on this matter. In its issue of the 7th inst. our contemporary contains an editorial article summing up that discussion, which if not written by the highest dignitary of that Church in this province, is evidently published with his sanction. As we wish to keep our readers advised on what is transpiring in other religious bodies, as well as our own, we copy from our contemporary what is said on this subject:

"Our readers will have seen that the two principal objects which have come under discussion in both Houses of Convocation, are the con-

demnation of the Essays and Reviews, and the alteration of the 29th Canon."

"In the alteration of the ecclesiastical canon we are all of necessity closely concerned,—it touches us in our home feelings, and while it wounds our ancient prejudice, it emancipates us from present difficulties, and causes us to view the proposed change with mingled emotions of gladness and regret. We are glad to be relieved from the impediments which have brought about the change, but we mourn over the spirit of the age in which these impediments have been conceived and born;—the spirit which has turned a wise appointment into an evil, and rendered it expedient to abandon that which has been ordained for our health, lest it should become an occasion of falling.

The 29th Canon, as it stood ever since and long before the Reformation, is a positive prohibition to the sponsorship of parents; in the canon which is to be substituted, there is a negative permission for them to assume the whole and undivided responsibility of bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The most earnest and intelligent Churchmen need no arguments to convince them that the appointment of god-fathers and god-mothers is a pious institution, and for themselves will neither desire the change nor avail themselves of it: if they are of the number of those who consent to its necessity, it is in the hope that it may remove a stumbling-block out of the way of others in bringing their children to Holy Baptism.

It is infinitely better that we should have a new rule of action given to us by competent authority than retain the old, only to be constantly violated and made a snare, and besides this we may, by God's blessing, obtain a solid and permanent advantage in its tendency to restore the blessed sacrament of Baptism to its proper place and dignity in the Church, and to awaken in the minds of our people a truer estimate of its value and responsibility. In our Book of Common Prayer the time and place of this ordinance are distinctly specified—it is to be on the Lord's day or a Festival, when the greatest number are assembled together publicly in the church, and immediately after the second lesson; and the reason assigned for this appointment commends itself to our judgment at once for its piety and its charity,—that the infant may obtain the benefit of many fervent and effectual prayers, and that all who are present may be reminded of their own solemn obligations. Instead of this, it is now too often the custom to reduce the sacred ordinance to a parlor ceremony, to be celebrated amidst scenes of feasting and merriment, which, if they do not lessen its efficiency must serve to disparage its worth and lessen in our minds the blessings and responsibilities which belong to it.

We know that one excuse for this decadence of piety is the difficulty of obtaining the sponsors willing and able to make the open and unabashed profession required in the Baptismal service; by the proposed alteration in the Canon this difficulty will in some measure be removed, and we may hope that the ancient usage of the Church will be fully restored, and that we shall live to witness the more general administration of public Baptism. If this be the effect of the decree of Convocation, we shall perhaps have gained even more than we have lost, in the constant remembrance, that we, through the free mercy of Jesus Christ, have been "regenerated and made the children of God by adoption and grace."

If so small a part of the baptismal question—whether parents or others are the proper persons to "promise and vow" on behalf of their own children,—is worthy of such grave consideration, surely the subject itself is of paramount importance; and the enquiry Who are the proper subjects of baptism? deserves more attention than is commonly given to it. If we do occasionally devote a column to its elucidation—far more space is given to it by our pedobaptist contemporaries—we must not be thought making it too prominent.

The Presbyterian Witness of the 10th inst. contained an article from the April No. of the Biblical Repository, in which some attempt is made to meet the views entertained by Baptists.

The writer says:

"There is one plausible objection against the doctrine of infant baptism, which is very persistently urged by our Baptist brethren, and which, doubtless influences their own minds to the rejection of this doctrine, more than any other argument or consideration, which we wish to notice, both for their sakes and for the sake of those who may be exposed to their peculiar logic. The objection is founded on the assumption that infants are destitute and incapable of faith. Faith, say they, is the condition of baptism; but children cannot believe, therefore children ought not to be baptized."

In attempting to meet this, the writer proceeds:

"Our first remark is, that there is here manifest confusion of thought and language. Faith is confounded with believing; that is, a principle is confounded with an act. A principle may be in existence, and not be in action. The habit of the mind determines the character of the activities of the faculties of the mind, when these faculties are brought into action; but the existence of this habit of soul precedes the exercise of the faculties, is distinct from them, and is not to be confounded with their acts. Of this we have a beautiful exemplification in the spouse in the Song of Solomon: "I sleep, but my heart waketh." The principle of love to her beloved was still in her bosom, though it had not been in exercise."

He then takes up what has been a thousand times refuted and very clumsily tries to shew that infant salvation is incompatible with infant unfitness for church membership. Although he is willing to administer baptism to infants on account of their having this latent faith, yet he seems hardly willing to admit that they can be saved by it.

"We should be sorry to be driven to the sleeping faith principle to account for infant salvation. The writer brings no "Biblical" texts to sustain his theory.

"2. We observe, in the second place," he remarks, "that our Baptist brethren do not go through with the principle on which their argument is based. If, as they allege, the lack of ability in an infant to believe, ought to prevent, its baptism, why not hold, in conformity with this principle, that the same disability ought to prevent its salvation? How is it possible to avoid this conclusion, if their principle be valid? They profess to have found out from the Word of God, that none but believers ought to be baptized. They will of course, admit that the Word of God expressly teaches that none but believers can be saved. Believing, therefore, is as clearly a condition of salvation as it is of baptism; and he who is incapable of it, is as manifestly excluded from the former as he is from the latter. The tremendous and righteous sentence, "He that believeth not shall be damned," must, on the Baptist principle, shut out from salvation all who have died in infancy."

"Our third remark," he proceeds "is, that they who are fit subjects of the thing signified, are fit subjects of the sign. In baptism, the sign is the natural element, water, and the thing signified is the water of life. Now if, as Baptists hold, those dying in infancy drink of the river of the water of life, clear as crystal, as it proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb, how can they withhold from them, on the ground of their unfitness, the sign by which that water is symbolized? Here are the great benefits of the covenant of grace confessedly, Baptists themselves being the confessors, bestowed upon those who, if the Baptist doctrine is correct, are destitute of what the Scriptures declare is indispensable to salvation, viz: the ability to believe. How can these things be harmonized? How can the condition be dispensed with in the one case, and not in the other? How comes it that an infant is welcomed to the living fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, and yet debarred from the font of baptism, which is but the emblem of that cleansing flood? How is it, that the arms of the Redeemer, are opened, to embrace the little ones, and press them to the bosom of his everlasting love, while his officious attendants would interpose to hinder their access, and debar them from even the symbol of his grace? If the Saviour were present, would he not reiterate that rebuke whereby he brushed aside such intervention in the days of his flesh, and say now, as he said then "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

It is lamentable to see such exhibitions of error; and yet it is well that the darkness should be ventilated and the light brought to it. Men do not at this day need to be told that the injunction of our Saviour "Suffer little children &c." has no more reference to baptism, than it has to an interpretation recently given to it by a child, who had been taught that those three words meant that they were to endure personal physical suffering, without complaint.

The writer of the article referred to above exhorts his readers to "Hold fast the precious doctrine that believers and their seed are in covenant with God." This is what the Bishop of Oxford in his speech before Convocation terms "the dreadful evil of supposing that God's grace passes from the holy parent down to the child." "The danger in these times" he says "is the idea of limiting the grace of baptism to children, who have believing sponsors instead of the old error of believing parents; and therefore to require parents to provide, beside themselves, three godly sponsors, has a tendency which is precisely parallel to that of the old Calvinistic view with regard to parents, and we are, in fact, guarding against the exhibition of the same error by doing away with the prohibition, and allowing parents to act as sponsors, the Church being the channel through which God's grace and mercy flow."

The High Church doctrine of baptismal regeneration and the new Presbyterian doctrine of sleeping faith here seem to amount, in substance, to about the same thing, and we are willing to leave them to contend with each other as to which of the two is the most desirable error.

We believe that the same demand should be made of the applicant for christian baptism, whether infant or adult, now, as was made in the apostolic days "If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest," and if unable to make a similar reply to the one then made, they should be told as John the Baptist said to those who came to his baptism—"Bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and think not to say within yourselves we have Abraham (or Christians) to our father." "Whoever believeth and is baptized shall be saved," is the law given by our Lord; and by it we are well satisfied to abide.