

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

"Impudence" once more.

Dear Brother Selden,—

I fully intend that this shall be my finishing communication upon the "momentous discussion," referred to in my last. I don't consider myself bound to correct all the mistakes of others. Thanks to a kind and sovereign Providence, I was not born to be Pope of Rome. He, poor man, is, from his position, bound to be free from all error himself, in Religion, if not in Science, and to cause every body else, so far as in him lies, to be so too. This assumption of infallibility, is, in my opinion, the main pillar of the Romish heresy. And, with all deference, I conceive that the spirit of it pervades, to a greater or less extent, all denominations of christians, Baptists and Covenanters, not excepted. Hence "the spirit of intolerance," as you lately very justly remarked, "is not dead among the Independents,"* nor, you could have added, had you deemed it "judicious," among ourselves either. You have hit the nail smack on the head, in your sharpshooting upon my last lucubration. You say, "we more readily perceive in others the infirmities of which we are ourselves the subjects, and as they are more prominent in us, our condemnation of them in others, is often the more severe." Yes! indeed! that is it exactly!—"Let him that is without sin among you, cast the first stone." "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." "With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged."—Will "Mr. Messenger" and "Mr. Witness," endeavor to profit by the caution, as well as "Impudence," and "Modesty," *et hoc genus omne?*

How easy it is to perceive the arrogance of the man who sets himself up as infallible, and condemns and anathematizes all who differ from him. He may grant me the right of private judgment. He may tell me, and tell me truly, as Mr. Sommerville does, that I am, with the Bible, in my hands, constituted the judge of the doctrines and precepts propounded by my religious teachers, for my acceptance. But suppose I judge them to be erroneous? what then? My minister, for instance, tells me, as a worthy minister of the "Free Church," lately actually told me myself, (and very good naturedly too) that Infant Baptism is clearly taught in the Scriptures; that I am committing a heinous sin in not getting my children baptized, and that they, as a consequence, are *heathen!* Suppose I search my Bible from end to end for the inspired teachings to this effect and "can't find none," as the children say, what then? am I to be denounced, excommunicated, imprisoned, fined, or even insulted and "bespattered," and all manner of evil said of me, publicly and privately, as a means of "restraining" me, or of bringing me to repentance? Shall my minister or my "church," the moment they find that I come to a different conclusion from themselves, that I cannot on every point acquiesce in their arguments and conclusions, *revoke* that right of private judgment, granted me just before with so much solemnity? Am I only to be "judge" of the doctrines propounded so long as I follow implicitly my leaders? Why, the Pope himself would not greatly object to as much liberty as this! Certainly no one could ever get into the Inquisition, nor out of "Babylon," by the exercise of it. And I must say I can see no middle ground between a universal denial or a universal permission, of the "right of private judgment," as to what the Scriptures really teach. I believe that "God alone is Lord of Conscience."

That the different conclusions at which men, equally learned, diligent, and pious, arrive, in their investigations of the Word of God, imply a want of explicitness in that Word, on all the great points of christian doctrine and duty, I cannot for a moment admit. That it *does* imply moral and mental infirmity on the part of the investigators, I readily acknowledge. That my conclusions would be perfectly correct, were I perfectly free from sin and mental infirmity, I believe; but I do not believe that they would necessarily in that case, exactly accord with the conclusions of Rev. Mr. Sommerville, Rev. Dr. Tupper, or any other human being, unless they were absolutely free from all error of heart and head at the same time. To say that I believe every man wrong who differs in opinion from what I firmly believe is right, is certainly a "truism" of the flattest kind. But that is not to the point. Do I know that they are wrong?

* [This remark was made not by us but by the Australian correspondent of the London Freeman.—Ed. C. M.]

Is it *proof positive* that they are wrong, that they differ from me? And, farther still, is it proof positive of moral turpitude on their part, that they differ from me, and MY CHURCH! "Certainly it is," Mr. Sommerville would say, (unless I have grievously misunderstood him,) "if your church is the true church—if its doctrines &c., are all based upon the word of God." And many a Baptist minister will say "Amen" to that, and none shall shout it louder than your humble correspondent. Yes, indeed; but then *teat little if!* that terrible *if!* The Church of Rome boldly undertakes to remove it. There are no *ifs* in her teachings. Are not some Baptists as well as "Covenanters," equally "rigid?" Might not others be added? We admit no *ifs* into our creeds. All must be absolute certainty. We seem to imagine that there is no middle ground between infallible assurance and absolute scepticism; and that this must extend to all the ramifications of the creed, as well as to the great cardinal points. Hence the spirit of dogmatism, intolerance, and persecution so rife among us. But this is Popery; and where the right of private judgment is in theory granted and claimed, it is worse than popery. Popish persecution is at least consistent. Protestant, and above all Baptist, persecution is inconsistent and absurd. Upon what principle of equity can I, as a Baptist, punish or denounce a fellow creature for dissenting from me in his views of a passage of Scripture? or for disbelieving some doctrine of "my church?" more especially if I admit that his error is not inconsistent with eminent piety and usefulness. But the infliction of pain of any kind for a real or supposed offence, is punishment, whether the pain be physical, mental or moral. This brings me to the point. It is well known that Baptist Churches will exclude, excommunicate, and almost anathematize a member, for simply turning Methodist, or Pedobaptist!! And though there are plenty—I hope not very plenty—of baptists, who will hardly admit that any body but a Baptist can go to heaven; yet we in general freely grant that there are eminently pious Methodists and Presbyterians. When the late Rev. W. Elder told the church of which he was pastor, that he had become a pedobaptist in sentiment, and could no longer continue as their pastor in the capacity of a Baptist preacher, they called a council for advice. Mr. Elder requested to be treated as "Dr. Chapin" had been treated by the Congregationalists when he turned Baptist. They had granted him a regular dismissal, and a recommendation to their Baptist brethren. But Mr. Elder was gravely informed that the two cases were by no means parallel. For Dr. Chapin in turning Baptist had done right, and had turned from error to truth. Whereas he, Mr. Elder, had done wrong, and had turned from truth to error; which was a clear demonstration of guilt and naughtiness of heart. Now the principle here laid down, and the rule adduced, is, if I understand him, just that for which Mr. Sommerville contends. It is clearly popish, however. A *d* were the subject not almost too serious for levity, I would say that the fact that the "rule works both ways" so beautifully, must be an admirable confirmation of its correctness! And so—"Menno" will please pardon the encroachment upon his field,) the church at Bridgetown proceeded, by and with the advice of the Council, to depose and excommunicate!! their pastor; and the Association, assembled the same year at Anherst, by a unanimous vote, approved the act!!! This was not quite all. At the time of his exclusion, and in his presence, the worthy Chairman of the Council, *nen com* opened battery upon him, in his prayers; raining a storm of fire and brimstone about his ears; and if he did not exactly "order" the Lord to send him to hell, he *informed* him that "William Elder" was under a "nefarious and diabolical influence," and at the same time, informed the *people* very clearly where, in his opinion, the guilty culprit ought to be sent, unless he should repent in sackcloth and ashes, and come back to the true church!!! And, to cap the climax, my Baptist brethren generally, so far as I can learn, to this day, *approve the deed!* I trust the reader will infer that I do not.

Talk of "toleration" after that: of Baptists believing and practicing the right of private judgment!! Yes, my brother, you are right again. I am "experiencing some slight feeling of compunction" and shame; and am sorry I am in "so good company." I have certainly no wish to leave the "company," but I do wish, desire, and earnestly pray, that "good" as it is, it may become "better" right away.

I think we may all profitably meditate upon Romans ii. 1, and I beg to refer your readers to the interesting address of Mr. Landell's, in the Messenger of the 31st ult., for a more particular

"application of the subject;" especially that part of the address which treats of Baptist intolerance.

Thanking you for the equanimity with which you have borne my remarks in my capacity of "Censor General," (not assumed, however, but given unto me by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, see 2 Tim. iv. 1 2.) I beg to subscribe myself,

Yours in Christian fellowship,
S. T. RAND.
Indian Camp, Wilmot Mountain,
August 7th. 1861.

ERRATUM.—In my last letter, page 246, line 51, for "istas," read *stas*. S. T. R.

[The information given above by Mr. Rand, will be new to many of our readers, as it was to ourselves. We have taken the trouble to look back to the Minutes of the Association (1834) that refer to "the deed" he so graphically enlarges upon. We find there the following resolution:

Resolved.—A Council consisting of Elders E. Manning, T. S. Harding, W. Chipman, R. McLearn, R. Cunningham, E. Marsters, T. H. Porter, E. Stronah, and other brethren, having been requested by the Church at Annapolis and Upper Granville, to investigate certain circumstances affecting the standing of a minister in this denomination, (Mr. William Elder, late Pastor of the said Church,) the said Council attended accordingly, and on a careful inquiry, having come to the conclusion, that Mr. Elder had departed from several important articles held by our Churches, and is no longer qualified to continue in connection with the said Church, or with this Association; the Church accordingly excluded Mr. Elder from fellowship with them, which decision is now adopted by the Association, and Mr. Elder is therefore no longer regarded as a Minister in connection with us.

The anathema, however, is not recorded. Although Mr. R. may "trust the reader will infer that he does not approve the deed," yet we find, both from his own statement, and from the record, that it was approved by a unanimous vote. Now, as he was himself present on the occasion, and, we presume, one of those who gave the unanimous vote, and of course that he then *did* "approve the deed," we suppose he, since then, has altered his mind, and as in a former communication, has "feelings of compunction" for his part in the matter; and takes this mode of confessing them. What say you Brother Rand, "Guilty" or "Not guilty"?—Ed. C. M.]

For the Christian Messenger.

Hints to young Christians.

Do not imagine that having been buried with Christ in baptism, and united with his people, that your work is done; consider it rather as the commencement of that course which is to end only with your life. However limited your means, whatever your situation, however small your talent, there is something for you to do. There need be no idler in the Church of God. Though believers should be ready to every good work, there are few persons who are not better fitted for some spheres of usefulness than others. Endeavour, therefore, to ascertain where you would be likely to do most good, and at once enter that field of labour.

Be regular in your attendance at prayer and conference meetings. Speak or pray whenever requested to do so. Be brief. Under ordinary circumstances no prayer or exhortation should occupy more than three minutes. Remember that publicly confessing Christ is but a small part of the cross which you must take up, in order to be his disciples. It is much easier to talk in the social meeting than to be habitually honest, truthful, forgiving, temperate, meek and conciliating; and those who do not exemplify these virtues injure the cause of religion by their public exercises. It is the every day life which is powerful for good or evil. All feel the force of a uniform christian deportment.

Neglect no opportunity for mental improvement, especially neglect not the study of the bible. Let it be your constant companion. Give to that sacred book the energies of your mind. It is absurd to talk of obeying its precepts while ignorant of those precepts; of being sound in the faith if unacquainted with its doctrines; or of loving God's holy law when you know not its requirements. Ignorance of the Scriptures is the chief cause of the spasmodic piety so prevalent at the present day. If you would grow in grace, "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly."

Be much in prayer. Morning and evening kneel at the mercy seat. Tell your Father in heaven all your trials of whatever nature they may be, and ask for his counsel in every thing in which you engage. Expect his guidance. Endeavour to feel your dependence on the in-

fluences of the Holy Spirit to teach you to pray aright, to understand the word of truth, is acceptably to serve God.

Choose your associates from among the pious. It is presumptuous to expect to increase in holiness, if you mingle unnecessarily in the company of the irreligious.

Set apart some portion of income for religious and benevolent purposes. Let this be as large a share as can possibly be spared, remembering "he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."

Be watchful. Watch not only against sinful acts but sinful words and thoughts. Be especially on your guard against evil speaking. "A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit."

Finally be not satisfied with your attainments in piety till you are "able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God."

SIOL.

For the Christian Messenger.

Women speaking.

MR. EDITOR,—

I am both surprised and pained that "Impudence" should say, (as in your issue of the 17th ult.) that Baptists enjoy what the word of God expressly forbids. Yet if the passages to which he evidently refers—1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35,—are not to be understood in a comparative sense, all must acknowledge that silence is imperative on woman; that, however deep her feelings, however strong her emotion, no word should be suffered to escape her. It is vain to talk of what may be deemed her rights and privileges. Christ is our lawgiver. It is ours but to obey. I class these passages, however, with others in the Scriptures containing as positive prohibitions, which it is plain are to be understood in a comparative sense,—as Matt. vi. 34, "Take no thought for the morrow: John vi. 27, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth." &c.

Is it not probable that the meaning of the inspired writer is, that woman should not be forward to obtrude her opinions; but that she should, in the church as well as everywhere else, be in subordination to man! I am the more inclined to think so from the circumstance that silence is spoken of always in connection with her duty of submission. "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak: but to be under obedience." "Let your women learn in silence in all subjection." "I suffer not a woman to teach or to usurp authority."

Can it be that the scripture rule is violated when a woman speaks in compliance with the wishes of her pastor and brethren in the church?

SIOL.

For the Christian Messenger.

An Enigma.

By looking ancient records through,
We bring great mysteries to view;
They speak of one who formed by God,
But with the wicked never trod.

He never did transgress God's law,
And yet God's Word he never saw;
When God required he quickly went,
On Mercy's errand he was sent.

And with a wondrous power and skill,
He did make known Jehovah's Will;
By manifesting mighty power,
He saved in the distressing hour.

For sin he never did repent,
Yet to a sinner he was sent;
To turn his course another way,
That he might go no more astray.

He never was to evil bent,
And with transgressors never went;
Yet holiness he did not love,
Nor can he ever reign above.

And now, my friends, as you admire
Your Bible; you may there enquire,
Respecting this great one of fame,
Tell where he lived, and what's his name.

We hope an answer in the Messenger,
August 5, 1861.

For the Christian Messenger.

Obituary Notices.

LAVINIA ALICE MORTON.

Dear Brother,—
How mysterious are the ways of God. "Clouds and darkness are round about him." Although we cannot understand the design of all his dealings toward us, yet from his word we may learn