

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.
VOL. VII. No. 18.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30, 1862.

WHOLE SERIES.
VOL. XXVI. No. 18.

Poetry.

An Invocation to Spring.

COME quickly, O thou Spring!
Write love's fair alphabet upon the sod
In many-colored flowers—to preach of God,
Our everlasting King!

Come from the rosy South,
In chariot of incense and of light.
Dissolve the lingering snows that glisten white
Beneath thy fragrant mouth.

Walk softly o'er the earth,
Thou blessed spirit of the Eden-time;
Thy breath is like an incense-laden clime,
Clasping rich bowers of mirth.

Thy virgin herald's here—
The snow-drop bares her bosom to the gale,
While down her cheek, so delicately pale,
Trickles a crystal tear.

The lark now soars above,
As if he felt thy freedom on his wings.
While from his heaven-attuned throat there rings
A charming peal of love.

The yet unbarbed wheat
Now timidly puts forth its tender leaf
To drink sweet dews, for Winter, ancient chief,
Crawls off with tottering feet.

Your sorrows now inter,
Ye dwellers in dark cities; Spring is nigh;
She bathes her garments in a sunset sky,
And treads the halls of Myrrh.

To God, an anthem sing,
When forth ye hurry to the fields of bloom;
He lights the flowers and lifts us from the tomb,
To everlasting Spring!

—Chambers' Journal.

Religious.

Humility conducive to Honour.

BY MR. JOHN FREEMAN.

When, on Sunday the 24th of August, 1662, the Act of Uniformity became the law of England, pride said in reference to the authors of that Act, just what it sometimes says now in our streets, "Give them as good as they send." But the two thousand ejected ministers had not so learned Christ. If we look at their farewell sermons, preached on Sunday the 17th of August, we shall see a pattern of humility. Yea, so far from those sermons comprising invectives against men, the ejected ministers imitated Michael, the archangel, in not bringing "a railing accusation" even against the arch-fiend himself.

Next to the loss of life is the loss of the *sinews* of life, or the means of subsistence; and this loss for themselves and families, was what the ejected ministers had to encounter. But "chill penny" with Providence at the right hand, and the spirit of prayer in the heart, is an array of circumstances that will prepare us to pass through the gloomiest vale, even when we have to meet Apollyon there.

There are many instances on record in which we may admire the wonders of Providence as it affected the Ejected Ministers; one of these was the Rev. Peter Ince, who was called "Praying Ince," when known only as the shepherd of Mr. Grove, the "Squire" mentioned in the following anecdote. It was written by the Rev. John Ryland, A. M., in the year 1792, in his *Select Essays*, the last efforts of a great mind, by "a hand trembling under the grasp of death." The following is from a correct copy of some of these essays, as found at the British Museum, in the *Evangelical Museum; or, Christian's Pocket Book* for 1793.

SURPRISING GRACE OF CHRIST TO THE PEOPLE AT BIRD'S-BUSH, IN WILTSHIRE.

After Black Bartholomew-day, August 24th, 1662, the people who had been instructed by a Gospel minister, then turned out, were forced to attend upon one of a very different sort, put in. In the course of Providence the lady of the richest man in the parish fell ill: her conscience being enlightened by former preaching, was alarmed with the thoughts of death. She wished to have the minister of the parish to come and pray with her, and made known the desire to her husband, who sent one of his footmen to the par-

son of the parish, with a desire that he would come and pray with his lady, who was very ill. The parson had his boots and spurs on, and his horse brought out for him to go a hunting, when the man made known his message. "Honest fellow," replied the parson, "I'm this moment going a hunting: if I delay I shall miss the cry of the dogs and not overtake them all day. I must, therefore, put off coming to pray with your mistress till the afternoon." The man returned to his master. "Sir," said he, "the parson is going a hunting, and he says if he loses the cry of the dogs and the huntsmen he shall not overtake them all day. He will come and pray with your lady in the afternoon or evening." This roused the gentleman's resentment, and he appeared filled with anger and contempt at the parson, to think that he preferred a pack of dogs above an immortal soul. The servants were very much distressed to see their master in such a toss of passion, and they laid their heads together to consult what was best to be done. At last says one, "I wish my master would ask our shepherd to pray with my lady; you know he prays sweetly with us down in the underground kitchen every night." Upon this, one of the most discreet servants ventured to go to his master. "Sir, we find that the parson is gone a hunting, and can't come to pray with my lady; we wish you would permit our shepherd to go to prayer, for indeed he prays sweetly with us." Accordingly the squire stepped upstairs to his lady. "My dear," said he, "the parson is gone a hunting, and can't come to pray with you till the evening but my servants tell me that our shepherd has a sweet gift in prayer; will you permit him to come and pray with you?" "Yes," said she, "with all my heart." Accordingly the shepherd was sent for out of the field. When he came to his master, "Do you pray?" said "Yes, sir, God forbid that I should live one day without prayer!" "Will you pray with my lady who is very ill?" "Yes, sir, with all my heart." He was taken up into the chamber: two cushions were placed by the bed-side; the squire and the shepherd kneeled down to prayer. He began and went on with such wisdom of thought, such seriousness of soul, such propriety of language, and such pertinency to the case, that surprised both the gentleman and his wife. As soon as they rose from their knees the master addressed him thus: "Who are you—and where did you come from? You are no common man; and I must know your whole character." The shepherd was exceedingly backward to make a discovery of himself; but the master's commands were positive and must be obeyed. "Sir," said the shepherd, "I had much rather remain in obscurity; but, since I must make the discovery, know then, sir, that I am one of the two thousand ministers that were turned out on Black Bartholomew day. I had no method of getting my bread, nor any place where to exercise my ministry. I considered that the employment of a shepherd would afford me time for contemplation and devotion. I therefore put on that character, and as such entered into your service." His master looked at him with a mixture of approbation and delight. "You a shepherd! I am resolved you shall be my shepherd." He built a place of worship for him immediately, and left the parson to go a hunting by himself.

Note.—This was the beginning of the dissenting interest at Bird's Bush, and may be seen in their church book to this day.

Believers' Baptism.

An address delivered in the Baptist Chapel, Bridgnorth, Dec. 29, 1861, by Mr. Joseph Barlow, previous to his being baptized:—

Dear Friends,—Having been requested to state my views upon the ordinance which is now about to be administered, and my reason for embracing the Baptist principles, I will now endeavour to do so.

I have from an early age been connected with the Independents, and for about five years have been united with that denomination in church fellowship. It is now almost three years since I was first led to give my attention to the subject of baptism, from a conversation I had with a Baptist friend upon the subject, at which time my friend brought

forward so many arguments from Scripture in favour of believers' baptism only, that I felt it to be my duty to give the subject a thorough and prayerful consideration; at the same time sincerely hoping that I might be able to find proof in favour of infant sprinkling; for from the fact that I had been connected with the Independents so long, and having been brought to a knowledge of the truth amongst them, most of my friends also belonging to that denomination, I felt a strong prejudice in their favour.

Accordingly, with earnest prayer for the guidance of God, I recommenced the study; but the more I read—the Bible and compared the different accounts, and the more I read the works of men upon the subject, the more I became convinced, against my inclination, that infant baptism was unscriptural, and that it was the duty of believers, and believers only, to be baptized.

The first mention we have of the subject in the New Testament is the account of John's baptizing in the River Jordan, mentioned by Matthew, 3rd chapter, and by Mark in the 1st chapter. In those accounts we find that the state of mind required in those who came to be baptized by John was repentance, that repentance which produced good fruit in their after lives; and faith in Christ who was about to appear. Paul, speaking of this baptism (Acts xix. 4.), says, "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. In these accounts we have not the least mention of children being brought to be baptized, nor any command to that effect to the parents because they themselves were believers; and I think the fact that John required repentance and faith, which infants are incapable of exercising, is a clear proof that he did not baptize them.

As regards the manner of baptizing practised by John, we are plainly told that he baptized in the river Jordan. The apostle (John iii. 23) says the place was *Ænon* near to Salem, because there was much water there. And in the account of our Lord's baptism, recorded by Matthew, iii. 16, we read that when he was baptized he went up straightway out of the water. Now if baptism had been administered by sprinkling or even pouring, as some suppose, what occasion was there for so much water, or why should they go into the river to administer the ordinance? I therefore draw the conclusion that it was by immersion.

Passages I have often heard quoted in favour of infant baptism, you will find in Matthew xix. 13, 14, compared with Mark x. 13, and Luke xviii. 15, where Christ calls little children to him and blesses them; but I cannot see that they have any bearing upon the subject at all; at least if they have I think they are against rather than in favour of the practice, for we find that the disciples rebuked those who brought them, and we cannot for a moment think they would have done this, if either Christ or they themselves had been in the habit of receiving them for baptism. And if our Lord intended then to institute the ordinance why did he not baptize them, or command his disciples to do so? but there is not a word upon the subject.

In the 16th chapter of Mark, we have the commission of our Lord to his disciples, before his ascension, as follows, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature: he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned," &c. We see here that the apostles were commanded to preach the Gospel and to baptize those who believed, and in their labours and teaching afterwards we see how well they understood their duty; for instance, in the 2nd chapter of Acts we have an account of Peter preaching a sermon through which three thousand were pricked in their hearts, and cried out to him and to the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ," &c.; and we read further that they who gladly received his word were baptized.

The 39th verse of this same chapter has often been brought forward in proof of infant baptism; the verse reads thus, "For the promise is unto you and to your children and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the

Lord our God shall call." *Children* here does not mean *infants* but *descendants*; we find the word thus used in a number of instances in the Bible, thus in Deut. ix. 2. "Who can stand before the children of Anak?" And again, when our Lord was accused of casting out devils by Beelzebub, he asked, "By whom do your children cast them out?" Matt. xii. 27. The last clause of the verse, "Even to as many as the Lord our God shall call," I understand to mean those who should be led to see their lost and ruined condition, and, through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ, should be justified; then they would be entitled to the promise.

In the 8th chapter of Acts we have an account of Philip preaching in Samaria, and we read that when they believed, "they were baptized, both men and women." Here again there is no mention of children.

The doctrine of believers' baptism, and the manner of baptizing practised in the apostles' time, is clearly illustrated in the case of the Eunuch recorded in the same chapter. In that narrative Philip is represented as preaching Jesus to him, and having arrived at a certain water on their journey the Eunuch desires to be baptized. Philip, before granting his request, demands a confession of his faith. The Eunuch, satisfies him, and having commanded the chariot to stand still, they both go down into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and when he was baptized they both came up out of the water.

I would ask our Pædo-baptist friends how they reconcile this account with infant sprinkling? I cannot.

The fact that the apostles baptized several whole households has often been brought forward as a plea for infant baptism, but before we can admit such a plea our friends must prove that there were infants in those households, which cannot be done without other evidence than that which Scripture supplies; take, for instance, the case of Cornelius recorded in Acts x. It is said of him, "He was a devout man, and feared God with all his house." I take it for granted that as both he himself and all his house feared God, that there were no infants, but that all had grown up at least to years of discretion.

Some contend that infant baptism has taken the place of circumcision, and that, as infants were circumcised under the Mosaic law, so they are to be baptized under the Gospel dispensation; but I cannot find any command in Scripture to that effect. I look upon circumcision as a duty enjoined by God to Abraham, and to be observed by his descendants, in order to keep the Jews a separate people, because from them the Lord Jesus Christ was to come according to the flesh; but after he had come it was no longer required, and consequently done away with.

But if baptism may be considered as an antitype of circumcision, it applies much more strongly to believers than to infant baptism; for as circumcision, was intended to keep the Jews a separate people, so baptism is intended to separate the people of God from the world.

We find baptism mentioned several times in Paul's epistles, as representing a death and burial to sin, and a rising again to a life of righteousness. Thus in Romans vi. 3, 4: "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life;" and again, Colossians ii. 12: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."

By "the faith of the operation of God," and other similar passages, I understand the converting and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit in the heart. And "buried with Christ in baptism," I understand being immersed, as that appears much more symbolical of Christ's burial and resurrection, than merely sprinkling or pouring.

These then are a few of the reasons which have led me to embrace Baptist principles; many more might be brought forward, did time permit, but I think these are sufficient to convince any candid thinker that believers' baptism, by immersion, is the only one authorized by the Word of God. And when we consider the evils which have resulted from infant baptism, the true servants of God can-