

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

THE BAPTISMAL QUESTION.

No. VII.

THE TENDENCIES OF PEDOBAPTISM.

Part 4.

Church and State.

I remark, farther, in pointing out the tendencies of infant baptism, that it prepares the way for state-churchism—the union between church and state. Its tendency to this result is remarkably exemplified in the reasonings of Dr. Williams. The doctor, as a Congregationalist, was a member of a body which, for the most part, has still maintained a steady protest against state-religion. In one of his works, indeed, he says, "Christ is a King, and his church is a kingdom, but not of this world.—The gospel church is a select body of people, of which Christ is the Head.—The world and the churches of Christ are dangerously intermixed. May He whose fan is in his hand, by his Word and Spirit in his churches, separate the chaff from the wheat?" When, however, he comes to the advocacy of infant baptism, he casts overboard all these Scriptural views. He then maintains, according to Booth, that as Jehovah, under the former dispensation, was the God of unconverted Jews, so now "he may be a God to any," whether they ever be born again, or not. He tells his readers, the Lord may declare he will be a God to me and mine, without warranting me to conclude, "that I am possessed of grace, or a person actually justified. He is my God, that I may believe.—The Lord proclaims himself our God, and gives us his covenant, and the seal of it, that we might be induced to become his people.—The ordinance [of baptism] is a seal of the first promise, or a confirming token of initiation into that state wherein we may say, The Lord is our God, and we are his people." All this should seem to flow naturally from the doctor's views in regard to what he calls "relative holiness;" in harmony with which he insists that in a very general sense, every man, whether Jew or Gentile, is deemed holy; that is, in virtue of the gospel grant of mercy, and the means of grace, to the Gentiles as well as the Jews." Nay, he represents "an avowed infidel or idolater," who is "an avowed enemy to the Head of the church," as possessing "relative sanctification, or holiness." After this it is not astonishing that he should proceed one step farther. "It [will not] follow," he says, "that because believers and penitents are represented as suitable subjects of the Redeemer's kingdom, therefore no other part of the human race are to be so reckoned." Again he says, "It appears [from ancient prophecies], that the Messiah's kingdom, in its external aspect, should have kings and their subjects, or whole nations, as such, included in it; [and] that in some future period this should be universally the desirable case.—That [the conversion of Egypt and Assyria] would be national, and not confined to adults only." Upon this basis he argues as follows:—"If the above prophecies refer to national conversions, does not that lead to national churches? And what then becomes, [it may be asked,] of the Dissenting and Congregational plan? I reply, that a national establishment, it well ordered, appears more agreeable to the prophetic passages we have been considering than the Antipædobaptist plan; nay, more agreeable to the general tenor of revelation. I say, well ordered; for, in the present case, the question is not, how they are, but how they may be established. Nor does there appear any irreconcilable difference between a NATIONAL establishment and Congregational discipline.

§ The theory of Church and State applied.

The Puritan founders of Massachusetts actually attempted to realize this idea of a Congregational State Church; and it was not until the year 1828 that the last fragment of their system was swept away. With Presbyterian and Episcopal Church establishment, as well as Romish ones, as yet existing, all are familiar. And what is involved in such establishments? In their administration of infant baptism they forestall the inalienable right of every human being to choose his own religion. They proceed to impose taxes upon all the members of a state for the support of the state-religion, whether they conform to it or not. By a natural consequence, civil and military force comes to be employed in the collection of these taxes. The Puritan and Pilgrim fathers of New England fled across the Atlantic to escape the impositions of British Episcopacy. Roger Williams, again, fled from Massachusetts,

to escape the persecutions of New England Puritanism. Great Britain, at this moment, from end to end, is agitated by the growing contest between the advocates and opponents of state-churchism. Thus it is that Christ's fundamental announcement, "My kingdom is not of this world," has been set at nought; and the heavenly dominion has been degraded to the level of the earthly.

§ Consequences.

Lavish expenditure, pomp, and show, and dazzling display; the baten, and the, bayout the dungeon, and the scaffold, "the battle of the warrior, confused noise," the "garments rolled in blood;" the strife of parties, the horrors of civil conflict, the dashing of nation against nation; revolutions under which earth has reeled, and the very heavens have seemed to be moved out of their place;—such have been the instrumentalities employed about the things of God, or what claimed to be such; and in this way it has become impossible to distinguish between what was from above, and what was from beneath. Meanwhile the power of the Gospel has been neutralized, and men have done the work of Satan in the name of Christ! All which could not have been but for the presence of the worldly element introduced into the church, and kept there by the practice of infant baptism, and the theories by which it is upheld. So that whatever in these things is unscriptural, or bitter, or wicked, or soul-destroying, it is all to be traced to infant baptism as its minute but dimly fruitful seed.

§ The pillar and ground of the Papacy.

It is not too much to say, that in infant baptism we find one of the grand supports of the great Papal apostacy. Once start men in a wrong direction in matters of religion, and God only knows how far they will go. Thus we have already found the doctrine of baptismal regeneration leading to the practice of infant baptism. From these united there springs a notion of priestly efficacy. This notion is farther nursed by the doctrine of transubstantiation. And so there is raised up an order of men, clothed with powers akin to those of the King of heaven. They can do more than create worlds; they can renew souls. They can do more than reform men; they can redeem them. Nay, out of a poor wafer they create the Creator himself, and bear about with them Him to whom men and angels are subject. Thus every Romanish priest "opposeth and exalted himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped." And high over all these towers are, their great and awful high priest, "the man of sin the son of perdition" by emphasis—a very god upon earth, who holds under his sway these lesser gods themselves, and rules over those who rule over all beside.

See now whether this dogma of infant baptism has borne us. In its most modest and least hurtful form, as propounded, for instance by H. W. Beecher, it lays a foundation for all the results here indicated. For if one may practise infant baptism, not because he has found it in Scripture, but because "experience shews it to be good," then another, though he find not a word for these things in the Book of God, but because his "experience shews them to be good, may rest his soul upon the lie of baptismal regeneration, and bow down to the priestly power of Rome, and admit all its blasphemous and injurious pretensions. And then when we pass hence to the semi-ritualism of a Williams, and the full blown Puseyism of Oxford, and the impudent daring of Rome, where do we find ourselves but at the feet of the great Antichrist? lifting his brazen brow to heaven, and affronting the Lord of the universe, while with his iron hoof he crushes the Lopes of men, and thrusts them down to the pit of doom. Such are the dire consummation of infant baptism. What good man, with his eyes open to the things like these, would desire to be identified with them, or with the anti-scriptural rite—out of which they spring? Well might such a one say, indeed, "O my soul! come not thou into their secret! Unto their assembly, mine honour! be not thou united!"

§ Conclusion.

It appears, from the preceding statements, that infant baptism is a far more serious evil than it is generally supposed to be, even by its opponents. It were to be desired that those opponents should look more closely into this evil. Thus will they be the better prepared for the conflict in regard to it now gathering and thickening around us. Thus, too, will they learn to be compassionate, at once more intelligently and more profoundly, the victims of the errors here exposed, while they take a more decided stand in regard to those errors. And let them not fail to look to the God of truth, for those enlighten-

ing and holy influences which shall one day purge away these errors, and bless the world with a Christianity really restored and reformed;—a result which may not be expected until their last remnant has ceased to infest the church, and curse the world.

Meanwhile, if the statements here put forth can be disproved, by all means let them be disproved. But let it be remembered, that neither assumption, nor declamation, nor abuse, can drive them from the field. And if opponents have nothing better to offer, I shall not waste time in replying to them. The Lord lead all his people into all truth! and endow them with grace honestly to follow their convictions, whithersoever they may conduct them!

An attempt to point out the harmony between the baptism of believers, and the gospel dispensation, will bring this series of papers to a close.

J. DAVIS.

Charlottetown, P. E. I.

For the Christian Messenger.

GOOD TEMPLARS.

DEAR SIR,

As the official representative in this Province of the Independent Order of Good Templars of North America. I feel it to be my duty to address you with a view of correcting an impression which might be made by your reference in the Messenger of Nov. 30th, to an organization of quite a different character, though having a somewhat similar name. I am unwilling that the readers of your valuable paper, and the ministers and members of the church you represent, who are generally true temperance men, should have their minds prejudiced against an Order which although almost unknown in this Province, occupies a prominent position in the temperance movement in North America, and as it has been in successful operation for about thirteen years, I do not think it should be classed among the new and untried organizations engaged in this important work.

The I. O. of G. T., is an organization complete in itself unbiased and uncontrolled by creed, politics or nationality. Political and sectarian discussions are inadmissible into our Temples. We make no distinction of the benevolence of our order to those of one nation more than another. We know no religious sect—no political party—all classes of society—male and female are cordially welcomed, but as we do not recognise the right of any man to continue in a business in the prosecution of which he cannot or dare not invoke the blessing and favor of the Almighty, we prescribe from membership but one class of the human family—they being such as do not believe in the existence of a Supreme Being—believing that those who have no God to appeal to for assistance and support, cannot be of any service in carrying on this great moral work.

We have no desire to supplant or undermine the Sons of Temperance,—it is more in accord with our teachings to uphold and support that noble Order, and if Divisions in New Brunswick have surrendered their Charters to take hold of another Order, the loss to the "Sons" of such Divisions cannot be very great, and the gain to the Order receiving them must be of doubtful importance.

I am aware your remarks referred particularly to a society called the British American Order of Good Templars, therefore I wish it to be distinctly understood the I. O. of G. T., is in no wise connected with this loyal institution. Like the Sons of Temperance the I. O. of G. T., recognises as the head of the Order, a Convention of delegates from all parts of this continent, wherever the order exists. When that Convention meets in the United States I suppose these loyal temperance men, would call it Yankee, when it meets in the Provinces, British; at which time no doubt aprons might be worn with propriety.

As an additional motive to make this explanation, I might say I received by mail to-day a letter from a friend informing me he "was pleased to learn the Good Templars had a temperance lecturer in this Province, but that he highly disapproved of the course he was adopting. Endeavoring to bring reproach upon the 'Sons.'" Now Sir, I wish the public and particularly the Sons of Temperance, to understand that the I. O. of G. T., have no authorized lecturers in this field, and if there be those in that capacity calling themselves Good Templars, they must be in the interests of that new Order known as the B. A. O. of G. T., which it is said is not only calculated to extend the blessings of Temperance, but to revive the loyalty of our people and especially the Sons of Temperance. Truly the prospect of a Federation is disturbing the equilibrium of Nova Scotians, when Canadians of

state egg notoriety are called upon to instruct us in loyalty and patriotism. New Zealanders will in probability be the next to force themselves upon us in a similar capacity. Temperance men in Nova Scotia can have no objection to political organizations making temperance a prerequisite to membership, but if I mistake not they would have serious objections to temperance organizations connecting politics with the movement. It has been the boast of all temperance societies, heretofore established in this Province, that men of all nations, creeds, and politics could meet on a common platform, and labor together; without compromising themselves in any respect; and the idea of a great moral reform being circumscribed by natural boundaries, is an absurdity that "deserves to be noticed only that it may be treated with contempt" the opinions of pseudo-loyal reformers and insinuating aspiring mountebanks to the contrary notwithstanding.

Yours sincerely,

J. WILLARD CRANE,

Prov. D. G. W. C. T., I. O. of G. T.

Economy, Dec. 6th, 1864.

Early Recollections on Colonial Union.

To the Editor of the Christian Messenger:

SIR,—On looking over my Diary which I have kept for a period of half a century or more, I find the following memoranda, and as the subject relates to the one which now agitates, not only the Imperial Legislature, but, the whole of the North American Colonies, a transcript of it into your columns may not be unacceptable at the present moment.

It was in the Winter of 1823, that H. M. B. Sparrowhawk, Commander, Edward Boxer, was taking the Mails from Halifax to Bermuda—she sailed from Halifax on the 14th of November, and arrived at Bermuda on the 18th, making the passage in a little over three days—Nov. 16th, cold—cloudy—clouds high, sometimes thin and vapory, but driving very fast in their course through the Heavens. Noon—fine—dry and clear—wind about North—not very steady, veering a point either way occasionally, and blowing almost a hurricane, with an awfully heavy sea following. Close reefed fore topsail and fore storm staysail—furl the main topsail. Hove the log, running twelve knots, which with the swell were equal to fourteen. Talbat, (the present Earl of Shrewsbury and Talbat) Dundas and I dined in the cabin—Boxer was quite delighted, having refused to flog a man for drunkenness. There's a lurch—said he—take care of your plates, gentlemen—mind the soup, mind the tablecloth—hold on—plague take the fellow, he should not have made soup such a day as this—eh—Dundas—what do you think? He deserves a dozen—don't he? Really, sir, I—another lurch, "Bow's under—carried away the jibboom, sir," said the officer of the watch, popping his head inside the cabin door. Wine glasses if you please gentlemen, finish your wine and turn them up inside the brackets—Steward-boy—off soup. After some desultory conversation, Boxer said,—"Dundas, how do you like the station now?" He asked the question merely for the sake of talking, as he had asked it often before—"eh—how do you like it?" "I really like it very well, sir, I am quite delighted with Halifax." Ah—yes—eh—you'll like it better when you command the brig, won't you? Most certainly, sir, should I have the good fortune. No doubt—no doubt, you know I am only a stepping stone—by and bye—by and bye—all in good time—eh—Nova Scotia's a fine, a very fine province—ain't it? Pity its so cold, and the winter so long. Fine climate to-morrow, sir, said, Dundas. Oh yes, we must have made a good deal of southing, for we have had a rattling run since we left Halifax, I dare say we will get in very soon now. Yes said I, fine, no doubt, but these sudden changes make the constitution smack again. 'Tis a pity that we cannot winter it out at Bermuda. Bad as it is, what would the young ladies of Halifax say to that—eh—what would become of all their balls and parties? eh—tell me that, wanting the Hawks. Yes, sir, and the Sparrows too, said I.—eh—indeed. Well gentlemen make up your minds as fast as you can, and you, sir, nodding to me. You, I hear, have got a rof e round your neck, a silken one I mean, if all tales be true—but—let me tell you that this is our last cruise. Back to Halifax, and then—I say. Talbat smiled, but said nothing, his powers of conversation were rather limited, and that looked rather strange for the son of a Peer. But, I say, don't tell anybody; I expect to leave about the latter end of this month—make arrangements. Indeed, sir, he replied, all at once—I should like, sir, to be left behind, I like the station so much. Eh—yes—ah—I suppose so. I dare say