

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL & GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

Christian Longings.

O weary years, can ye not urge your flight,
And set a weary earthbound captive free?
Thou unseen world of love and life and light,
When shall I break these chains and soar to thee?
O weary round of toil, of heart and hand!
O sinful heart, and still more sinful world,
"The kingdom come," I pray, and every land
Displays the banner of the foe unfurled!
O Lord, my heart is faint—thy grace is free,
And Heaven is large, O might I come to thee!

Alas that I should thus unfaithful be,
And my remaining duties wish to shun,
When He who wrought that wondrous work for me
Ascended not until that work was done!
Who draws the sword, when war's rude blast is
blown?

Who reaps the field before the grain is grown?
Who sees unbidden to the wedding feast?
So I must strive, and wait, and humble be
Till all is done, and Jesus sends for me.

O why impatient? "Lo I quickly come,"
A truth which Heaven and Nature join to preach.
How know I but an unseen hand has hung
The golden harp almost within my reach?
How know I but my Saviour's gracious hand
Is setting the last jewel in the crown
That I shall wear; and shortly I may stand
With that bright host who lay their honors down
Low at his feet, and in divinest lays
Ascribe Him all the glory, all the praise!

Kentville, 1865.

S. S.

Religious.

The Bishop of London and the Ritualists.

The Bishop of London recently went to Shoreditch to consecrate the new church of St. Michael and All Angels, Mark-street, opposite Waterlow's Model Lodging-houses. It is built, and was decorated with flowers, &c., for the occasion, after the Traotarian model. *The Star* report of the proceedings states:—

The Bishop, accompanied by Dr. Travers Twiss and John Shephard, Esq., Registrar of the diocese of London, entered the church precisely at twelve o'clock, and proceeded at once to the vestry, where he was met by the clergymen of the locality. Almost the first words spoken by the Bishop were addressed to the Rev. Mr. Lyford, the incumbent of the new church.

The Bishop: What is the meaning of those large bunches of flowers over the communion-table? Before the consecration is proceeded with this must be removed.

The Rev. C. Lyford, the incumbent, promised that the flowers should be removed, and sent for the churchwarden to see that the objectionable nosegays were removed from their place above the communion table and conveyed into the vestry.

The Bishop then surveyed the clergy assembled, most of whom were habited in surplices, with richly embroidered stoles, and other "High Church" insignia. His lordship then said, quietly, but sternly, "The clergy here of my diocese must appear in the ceremonial of to-day in the simple dress of clergymen of the Church of England!" At this the clergy looked at one another very innocently, as though they were at a loss to comprehend his lordship's meaning. A somewhat awkward pause ensued, during which no one stirred. Again turning to the clergy, amongst whom were the Rev. Charles Lyford, incumbent of the district; the Rev. W. R. Scott; the Rev. Charles Soanes; the Rev. G. Hervey, incumbent, and the Rev. E. H. Statham, curate of St. Augustine, Haggerstone; the Rev. W. Sharp, of St. Chad, Haggerstone; the Rev. T. Elmore; the Rev. O. Bellman, Curate of St. Mary, Haggerstone; the Rev. W. Robinson; the Rev. S. Magin, of St. Columba, Haggerstone, and the Rev. T. S. Lynde, his lordship said, somewhat peremptorily, "I must ask you to take off those ribbons, gentlemen." The Rev. Charles Lyford bowed, and at once removed his stole (a white silk one, with rich crimson and gold embroidery), and his example was followed by the other clergymen present. His lordship then noticed

a small cross in polished oak, about two feet high, decorated with a wreath of everlasting flowers, which had been placed on the top of the wardrobe. He asked what it meant, and being answered, "Nothing," ordered it to be taken down and put into the cupboard, observing that it was a great pity the arrangements were not completed at the time of the inspection, so that no objections might have been raised, and all unpleasantness on the day of consecration avoided. The clergy then formed a procession and proceeded to the west door of the church, where they were met by the choirs chanting; the clergy, also chanting, followed by the Bishop, walked down the centre aisle, and passed to the communion-table. So far the large congregation, numbering pretty near 1,000 persons, were in the dark as to any hitch having occurred, the scene above detailed having taken place in the vestry; but now an open breach took place. On the stone over the communion-table there was a rough sketch in charcoal of the Crucifixion with a Madonna on either side. This seemed to give great offence to his lordship, and he sought an explanation of its meaning from the incumbent. The explanation did not appear to be satisfactory to his lordship, and he expressed a wish that it should be at once effaced. It would seem that none of the officials relished the job of effacing the sketch in the presence of the whole assemblage, the Bishop meanwhile resolutely refusing to proceed with the service until some understanding was come to respecting it. At length his lordship said, "If you will give an undertaking to efface that cartoon, I will proceed." Assent being given, the Bishop instructed Dr. Twiss to draw up an undertaking to that effect, saying that the Registrar could read the petition whilst it was being done.

Dr. T. Twiss then went into the vestry and drew up the following memorandum:—

"We hereby undertake to remove to-morrow the unfinished cartoon on the east end of the chancel wall of the church of St. Michael and All Angels.

"Aug. 24, 1865."

Dr. Twiss then returned to the chancel, and the document was signed, in presence of the congregation by the Rev. Charles Lyford, incumbent; Mr. James Tractor, churchwarden; and Mr. James Brooks, architect.

The Bishop then said, "I have no objection to consecrate this church in accordance with the prayer of that petition."

The consecration was then proceed with in the usual manner.

The Times passes by the ceremony in the church, but notices the speeches, &c., at the subsequent *dejeuner*, over which, we are told, "a pleasant afternoon was passed in the harmless hilarity usual in an assemblage among whom the clergy are largely interspersed, and the company separated before a fashionable dinner hour."

Baptist Doctrine of Communion.

The views of Baptists on the subject of the Lord's Supper are very easily stated, and are very much the same as those of other evangelical Christians. If we are peculiar at all in this respect, we are so chiefly in this way, that we hold more tenaciously, and carry out in practice more persistently, the common doctrine which all evangelical Protestants profess. We believe that the same qualifications which are required for baptism, are also required for the communion, with the addition of no others except baptism itself. That baptism is a prerequisite to communion has been the common belief and profession of the Christian world in all ages. This is asserted or implied, with more or less distinctness, in all the creeds and confessions, ancient and modern, which we have ever seen. At least we do not remember that the contrary doctrine has ever been incorporated into any Christian creed, or been one of the watch-words of any Christian sect. Individual Christians may be found, in various communions, who express their doubts upon this point; and particularly are such doubts often expressed by those, both within our denominational pale and without, who think our Baptist practice on this point to strict. Such very often say, that they find no clear proof in Scripture, that it is unlawful for an unbaptized person to come to the communion table.

Well, what do they find in Scripture? Do they find any *example* of the communion of unbaptized persons? Do they find any uncertainty as to the *position* of baptism, at the threshold of the Christian life? Do they find any instance of *communion immediately following conversion*? Do they find any *want* of instances of baptism immediately after conversion? The state of the Scriptural argument is just this. There is no very copious, or very explicit evidence, that baptism ought always to precede communion. But all the evidence there is points in this one direction. It is all consistent and harmonious with our doctrine, and not consistent and harmonious with the opposite doctrine. Is not this enough? If not, we appeal to the very nature of the two ordinances. Baptism is the initial and initiatory act, in the Christian's life of obedience to and confession of his Divine Master. This is its normal, Scriptural place. "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, for the remission of sins." The communion is a continued, repeated rite. Baptism is to be received once for all. The communion is to be received from time to time. Plainly the *one baptism* should have some fixed relation to the *many communions*; it should belong somewhere, before them, after them, after them, or among them—first, last, or midst. After them, or among them, last or midst, it is manifestly *out of place*. Before them, first, it is just as manifestly *in place*.

In fine, all Scripture teaching and all Scripture precedents; all ancient testimonies; all creeds and confessions; the practice of all Christian sects; all these give one accordant testimony in favor of the precedence of baptism to communion. All our "close communion" consists in acting according to this uncontradicted and unvarying testimony.

Now, all that has been said above goes to show that the communion is a *church* privilege. And this is another position of Baptists, which we hold in common with others; but which we carry out more strictly and consistently than others. Baptism is for all believers; the communion is for all church members: these are our plain positions. And this last position, as we have said, is confirmed by what was adduced under the former head. For what constitutes a church member? Is not baptism the regular door of entrance into the church? Do the Scriptures recognize any other? I know persons are sometime baptized without being made thereby members of any particular church. But is not this generally disapproved, as an irregularity? Ought such a practice to be approved? It must be so, to be sure, in the *beginnings* of Christianity in any place; and this illustrates an important point—that *beginnings* must, in the nature of things, be more or less abnormal, and exceptional, unlike the subsequent regular sequence. But if the rule is, that baptism must precede communion; and if the *rule* is, that baptism makes the person receiving it a member of a church; then it follows of course that the communion is a *church* ordinance, a *church* rite, a *church* privilege. This is the position which we strenuously maintain as Baptists. And we are not alone in maintaining it, for none others, so far as we are aware, dispute or disavow it; yet while we maintain it, with *emphasis*, and *reject* whatever is *inconsistent* with it, most other evangelical sects have some usages which are not consistent with it; such as withholding the communion from a large proportion of those whom they receive into their churches by baptism; and giving the communion privately to individuals, without the presence and participation of the church as a body; and also engaging in a sort of *promiscuous* communion, at great public gatherings, in which multitudes of persons of various denominations, and of different countries, are huddled together at the table of the Lord, without much regard to orthodoxy of belief, evidence of regeneration, or purity of life.

Another important principle resulting from our last position is, that the qualification for the communion is to be judged of by the *church*, and not by the individual communicant alone. This is a plain dictate of common sense, and is acted upon by all churches and societies in dispensing their privileges. But some of our Christian brethren take it very unkindly in us Baptists that we insist on ap-

plying this just rule, though they would be very unwilling to apply any other themselves. We often hear the case argued after this sort: Those whom we refuse to receive, have in their own consciences obeyed the command to be baptized; they are, *in their own view*, baptized persons, and therefore we ought charitably to receive them as such, taking the will for the deed in regard to their baptism. What is this but to say that they, and not the church, are to judge of their right to church privileges? And if the judgment of the individual is to take precedence of the judgment of the church in this matter, why not also in the whole matter of their qualification for church membership? If they, and not the church, are the proper judges of their formal and ceremonial title to church privileges, then why not also of their moral and spiritual fitness for membership? If they, and the church, are the suitable judges of the validity of their baptism, then why not also of the genuineness of their conversion? If those who use this argument in regard to the communion are intelligently consistent, they will not object to receive every one to membership in their churches who comes to them saying, "I am fully persuaded in my own conscience that I am a Christian." The principle is the same. It is easy to see what our churches would soon come to, if such a principle were to be carried out. Yet nothing less than this is the unreasonable demand commonly made upon us in regard to the communion.

I have room for only one point more. We regard it as our unquestionable duty to make a *practical* as well as a *verbal* protest against the perversion of the rite of baptism. If any tell us that we ought to be content with only a *verbal* protest, they tell us that we ought to be content with inconsistency and self-contradiction. Without the practical protest, the verbal is of no avail—is of no value—can hardly be sincere. If we deny *in word* the validity of sprinkling and infant baptism, and then admit their validity *in act*, by receiving those who practice them to a privilege which we believe and declare to belong only to the scripturally baptized, we contradict ourselves, and prove unfaithful in our witness to the Lord's truth, and in our guardianship of the Lord's trust. We can do nothing but simply administer and execute them, as He gives us grace to understand them. We are under law to Him, and have no liberty to prefer our own feelings or those of our brethren to His laws and commands.

These are the principal grounds of our practice in regard to the communion. We believe that baptism is a prerequisite to communion; that the communion is a church privilege; that the church, and not the individual alone, is the proper judge of the qualification for receiving it; and that our denominational *acts* should be consistent with our denominational *principles*. The carrying out of these plain and commonly-received principles, in connection with our views of baptism, brings upon us a great deal of odium. We are sorry for it, and heartily wish it were otherwise. But we see no remedy: we can do no better till God gives us more light; and we can expect to fare no better till God gives more light and grace to others. Our case is painful, but not intolerable; for we believe we have the Lord's approval, and shall in due time have the approval of all His people. So we must go on in the old way, "sorrowful, yet always rejoicing."—*Examiner*.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.—From how many hundreds of thousands of lips this prayer goes up every day! Parents and children repeat it. In homes in the crowded city and in the quiet country, in every land, and from many a ship upon the sea, and in almost every language that is spoken on the earth, this beautiful prayer is offered; and "Our Father in heaven" hears, and for Christ's sake answers that prayer when it comes from a humble and believing heart, by whomsoever it may be uttered.

Which thyself by thine own balances, and trust not the voice of wild opinion; observe thyself as thy greatest enemy—so shalt thou become thy greatest friend.