

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

LETTERS FROM GREAT BRITAIN.

No. 3.

CITY OF CORK, IRELAND, Aug. 1st. 1870.

Dear Editor,—

In this land of saints it seems a very proper thing that a certain St. Finn Barr, the island-hermit of wild Gougane Barra, founded here Gill Abbey, about the beginning of the 7th century, on the ruins of a pagan temple. Huts sprang up around the Abbey, and the fame of its Seminary drew together many hundreds of scholars from all parts. An abbey of the Canons Regular, called afterwards the Red Abbey, was also founded in the same century. Some of its remains still exist.

Early in the 9th century the roving (Sea-kings) came over, and pillaged and burned the town. New huts rose on the ashes of former ones, and in the 10th century these Scandinavian rovers ascending the Lee in their vulture-beaked galleys, again and again attacked the town, settled here, engaged in trade, and laid the foundations of the present city. It was surrendered to the Anglo-Normans, by the Prince of Desmond, in 1172. A Grey or Franciscan Friary was founded in 1214 at Shandon, on the north side of the city; and the Dominicans set up a Friary some 15 years later. Near the middle of the 12th century the monastery of Gill-Eda was founded near the site of the present Queen's College. Other priories and nunneries early existed here, and at time of the Reformation, the city seems to have abounded in religious confraternities. There is said to be a valuable collection of theological and historical works in the present Cathedral of St. Finn Barr, but it is sealed to the inhabitants of Cork.

Perhaps St. Patrick was not a Baptist; it is certain that St. Finn Barr was not; nevertheless a few of that ancient stock have worshipped God in this land. The time was when a Baptist church trimmed its lamp, that its light might shine in this city. Shortly after my arrival here, I sought information respecting its history and present condition.

After some enquiry, I gained access, through the kindness Mr. Thomas Howard, land steward to Smith Barry, Esq., M. P., Foly Island, to the records of the Baptist Church. From a short examination of them I learned that Edward Riggs, Esq., came to Ireland about two hundred years ago as commissioner appointed by Parliament to sell forfeited estates. He settled about seven miles from Cork at Riggsdale which evidently was indebted to him for its name. For many years he was member of Parliament for the Borough of Bandon. He invited the people of his neighbourhood on Sundays to his house and preached the gospel to them. He was esteemed as a man of talent and piety. After a little he was assisted by a Mr. Woods who settled on his estate "in the quality of a school master, and took the children of Major Edward Riggs under his tuition, and instructed them in classical learning." His labors for non-conformists in and out of Parliament are highly spoken of in the records. One of his daughters was married to Thomas Delaune, who went to London. There he became very intimate with Benjamin Kench; and assisted him in compiling his "*Philologia Sarraor, key to open Scripture Metaphors.*" Delaune was persecuted in London, and after much suffering died in 1685. "He behaved with greatness of mind in the bitterest extremities." A son of Mr. Woods was deacon of the Baptist Church which was established in this city, chiefly through the efforts of the widow of Major Riggs. There are records of the devotion and labors of widows to keep the church alive, when its visibility was in serious peril. The little flock contended at times for equal privileges of public worship and burial of their dead which had been denied them. Mrs. Riggs presented the church with land for a burial ground which it holds to this day. Rev. Mr. Coleman was pastor in 1675, and Rev. Joseph Pettit in 1729. At this time the membership of the church was forty-seven. During the pastorate of Rev. Mr. Gibbon, Wesleyan preachers appeared in the city, and gained for themselves no flattering notice on these old records.

There is a record of two Associations. One was held in Waterford, June 17th. 1758. Revs. James North, Wm. Bolton, Morgan Edwards and Phillips composed this body. The other Association was held in Dublin, June 17, 1759. Present Revs. Daniel Mun, Wm. Bolton, Saml.

Edwards, James North, — Phillips and Morgan Edwards.

These is reference to the Records of a Baptist Church in Monmouthshire, Wales, which gives ten churches in Ireland in 1663:—One in each of the following places: Dublin, Waterford, Clonmel, Kilkenny, Cork, Limerick, Galway, Wexford, Carrigfergus and Kerry.

The Baptist Church in Cork owns a stone chapel in Marlboro' street capable of accommodating about one hundred and twenty-five people, and has a yearly income from lands and buildings of upwards of seventy pounds. It is at present without a pastor and cannot be said to be in a prosperous state. In the absence of a settled ministry I was informed, that Plymouth brethrenism has been introduced into the church and embraced by a majority of the members. The Plymouth Brethren here are divided into two sections, one called Newtonites and the other Darbyites. They have been rent asunder by diverse views of doctrine and church order. One party meets in Queen Street and the other in Tucky Street.

The Quakers still have an existence in this city, a congregation assembling stately for worship. It was among the Quakers of Cork that William Penn, about 1649 heard a sermon which was blessed to his conversion. The Independents have a congregation of about 300, the Methodists, Primitive and Wesleyan about 500, the Presbyterians about 1000, and the Episcopalians 1800.

The rest of the city (which numbers about 100,000 souls) regard themselves as the religious descendants of St. Finn Barr, and his successors; and acknowledge both the supremacy and infallibility of an Italian bishop, his Holiness Pope Pius IX.

Yours truly,
EDWARD MANNING.

For the Christian Messenger.

Mr. Davis' 3rd. Protest is against what he calls my views of christian experience, I am glad he quoted so largely from my letter on this subject as I am particularly anxious to have it understood. In that letter I endeavored to show how a man may be honestly mistaken in thinking he is pardoned by taking his happy feeling instead of the sure word of the Saviour as the proof. A man who is convinced of sin and sees no way of escape will feel in deep trouble. But as soon as he hears and believes that God is willing and waiting to save him through the death of His Son, and sees what God will have him to do in order to come to his death, and fully resolves to do will feel relieved. He has now the settled purpose of coming to Jesus, and his mind is in a measure at rest. Now this rest can be taken and doubtless is taken by many as a proof, that they are pardoned instead of the hope that they will be pardoned when they comply with the Lord's conditions of pardon.

On the day of Pentecost Peter's hearers were fully convinced of their sins, but did not know what to do. They were pierced to the heart. When Peter told them to repent and be baptized in the NAME of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. They gladly received his word and were baptized and they were glad as soon as they heard his word, not because they had the gift of the Holy Spirit then, or were saved then, but they felt fully persuaded that they would be saved just as soon as they complied with the terms. They had the joy of anticipation when they heard how they could be saved—they had the joy of possession when they came to Jesus in his appointed way. Jesus' law said "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," and just as soon as that could be affirmed of them, Jesus told them they were saved. Let the reader who trembles at the word of God, look into Christ's law of pardon for "all the world's every creature" (Mark xvi. 15, 16), and see its first working under the direction of the Holy Spirit (Acts ii. 37, 38), and say before the searcher of hearts at what point is that law is salvation—the gift of the Holy Spirit promised? Mr. Davis says he puts it before baptism, I put it after. Now I ask which holds by the law of Christ? But to prevent the possibility of mistake, let the reader look at the cases of conversion under the unerring direction of the Holy Spirit, such as that of the Eunuch, Saul of Tarsus, the Jailor and his household, &c. &c., and say at what point did each of these rejoice in the assurance that their sins were forgiven? Was it before or after they had obeyed?

My remarks on the Pentecostal converts and exposition of Romans viii. 17, seem rather too plain, and pointed for Mr. Davis to question and he tries the force of ridicule. While in

this mood the word "EASILY" strikes him as quite suitable for the purpose. While he gambals around "EASILY" he scatters from both distributive missiles so varied, and vast as to convince himself that he will either strike "Campbellism" or give it a mighty bad scare. Let us take up these missiles one by one, and look at them as we pass.

1st. I had said that Peter's hearers felt glad when he told them how easily they could come to the name of Jesus and be saved. He adds "And whence so easily? Simply by being baptized." Again he charges me with teaching that a man can give no other reason of the hope that is in him than "the fact that he was baptized." And he again exclaims "Oh the amazing virtue of this baptismal rite." That Mr. Davis is "honest" in sending these things out into the world I shall neither affirm or deny because I do not know. This is known to him and to Another. One thing I do know that when Peter told these convicted Jews how easily they could come to the name of Jesus, he did not tell them it was "simply by being baptized." I also know that I have repeatedly in these letters, as elsewhere declared that I did not believe any person a fit subject for baptism until he had believed with all his heart on the Son of God, and determined with all his heart to turn from his sins to the service of God. That unless a man is so thoroughly changed by the Holy Spirit as to love God, and serve him his baptism in water is a sham.

2nd. Mr. Davis seems to compare this easy method with that which declares that the sprinkling of water on a person that has neither faith, repentance nor knowledge makes him "a member of Christ, the child of God and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." This, however, is the written creed of a large portion of "evangelical christendom" of the purity of whose faith he boasts so much. O, consistency what a jewel thou art.

3rd. He next points us to the Romish Church and their EASY terms. But as I will not acknowledge their yoke to be easier than that of Christ nor their burden lighter than Christ's, his platitude is useless.

4th. But Mr. Davis comes at last to his favorite theme, and holds it up for admiration. He gives it a new name and adds "Simple" and "heartly" to it as pleasing articles of dress, the thing itself he calls "Exclusive faith." "Faith alone" is its common name and "dead faith," its scriptural name. "Exclusive faith" is faith that is alone will not associate with repentance or obedience of any kind. James denounces it as a mere sham, as dead as a corpse.

Mr. Davis alludes to John i. 12, when we learn that to as many as received Christ, believing in his name he gave power to become the sons of God. Those who did not believe in Jesus had not the power or privilege to become the sons of God. Those who did receive him he allowed to take the steps necessary, to the new birth or to become to sons of God. Jesus tells Nicodemus in the 3rd of John what these steps were, which agree exactly with the commission

Now I ask was it those who had "exclusive faith" .e. those who did nothing but believe that became sons of God? or those who had inclusive faith. Let us see. In John viii. 30, we read that many Jews believed in Jesus. He spoke approvingly to them, told them if they continued in his word they would be his disciples indeed, and in other words they would become the sons of God. But theirs was "exclusive faith." They would not take a step in the right direction and were told (v. 44.) that they were of their father the devil.

In John xii. 42, is another case of "exclusive faith." Many rulers believed on Jesus, but would do no more than believe. They would not confess him. Which must be done before they could become the sons of God. "For with the heart, man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. x. 10.)

Now we might look through the Acts of the Apostles and there we find numerous cases of inclusive faith. They were not satisfied when they believed with all their heart in Jesus, but instantly inquired "What shall we do?" "What will thou have me to do?" &c., and immediately confessed Jesus, and obeyed him in his positive appointment. Hence the difference between "exclusive faith" and a "faith that works by love and purifies the heart."

His "Campbellite dogma of the reception of baptism" we will touch briefly. The Bible says nothing about the reception of baptism. It describes baptism as a positive command of Jesus Christ, to be obeyed by his followers, but never describes it as a gift or quest to be received by any one. Hence we leave Mr. Davis to deal with the Campbellite dogma as it deserves.

5th. When Paul told the Corinthians to prove themselves, he did not express a doubt of their past salvation, but asks them if they did not know one of two things—either that Christ was in them at the time, or they were reprobates. Every branch in Christ that bears not fruit God takes away (Jno. xv. 1.) These Corinthians had heard, believed and were baptized, and at the time Paul wrote to them they were either in Christ bearing fruit, or out off as reprobates. So Mr. Davis brings evidence in their case for and not against Jesus' law of pardon.

6th. But last of all come the "converted thief" and "Simon Magus." Why will Mr. Davis bring up these two? I can see no other reason than to have them stand against the law that Jesus made, and sent "into all the world" because that law has baptism in it. He reasons thus—The thief was saved without baptism; Simon was baptized and not saved, hence baptism is not connected with salvation. But what of the law of Christ? Now Mr. Davis will not come square out and meet the law, but some how or other I interpret it wrong or there must be some thing astray. Here are the thief and

Simon standing out against it. Very well. Where was the thief when Jesus made the law and sent it "into all the world"? Does Mr. Davis know that he was not in the world at all and never would be in the world again? Then this law was never sent to the thief he was not under it, and his case had nothing to do with it. So he gives no testimony against the terms of the commission. Again—Does Simon's case prove that baptism is not a condition of pardon? Then it also proves that belief is not a condition. Because it is just as true that he believed as that he was baptized. But says one "Simon had the wrong kind of faith." If so he had the wrong kind of baptism. Because there are just as many baptisms as faiths. So if Simon's case proves that a man is saved without baptism, it proves that he is saved without faith and not only one part, but the whole of the commission is contradicted.

But who said that Simon was not saved? The inspired historian did not. Luke records the facts in his conversion as minutely as those of the others, and not a word or hint of disapproval till some time after, when he sinned in seeking to purchase a power in which he had neither lot nor part—a power that belonged only to the apostles. The apostle told him where he was astray, and urged him to repent of that wickedness, and pray God if perhaps that thought of his heart might be forgiven him. Hence Mr. Davis' failure here is as complete as in the past. Others as well as Simon can do wrong after they are saved, and all should watch and pray to be sustained by a power divine. But though heaven and earth pass away not a promise of Christ's shall fail.

Mr. Davis it seems is troubled about the EASY way of coming to Christ. This is to be regretted. It was a great work to provide salvation for a lost world—a work which enlisted the infinite energies of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. But when God bestows on man that salvation so costly and so grand in itself, he requires man to receive it as a child receives a gift. Except he receives the kingdom of heaven as a little child he cannot enter therein. Thus we find that when the great and wise and mighty of the earth rejected the simple terms of salvation, the poor and teachable accepted them. Men tumble at what is below them not at what is beyond their reach, and Christ is invariably represented as a stumbling-stone because they look for great things. His yoke is too easy and his burden too light. Two great purposes in God's infinite wisdom are answered by the simple and easy terms on which he bestows salvation on the seeking sinner. 1st. These terms meet the condition of the masses. 2nd. They show that the merit is not in themselves nor in him who is saved, but altogether in the death of the Saviour. Mr. Davis wants something harder, darker and more mysterious for anxious sinners, and hence his furious and prolonged attacks on what he styles "RELIGION MADE EASY."

This confirms what I said of ministers keeping men in their sins—teaching them to look for something great in themselves instead of submitting with the willingness of children to be saved by Jesus.

I know whereof I speak I could not learn from preachers how to become a Christian though I sought it for years. Though they said much that was good and true, yet when it came to the steps, I was to take to be a christian all was as dark as midnight. Before I gave up all hope I tried to find in the New Testament from the Saviour's own teaching if it was possible for me to be saved. There I found the way of salvation so plain and easy that I could scarcely believe it true. But the more I read and prayed the deeper was the conviction that I had been altogether wrong, looking for a great work in myself instead of looking to Jesus. I did with all my heart what he told me to do, trusting to nothing but his precious blood to save me, and I do not remember the moment from that day till the present, that I had a doubt of the Saviour's pardoning mercy unworthy though I am.

That ministers are in the dark when sinners enquire how to come to Christ, I fully believe. But Mr. Davis is of a different mind, and speaks of the soundness of "evangelical christendom on this point." Do the different denominations propose, the same steps for anxious enquirers? When one party receives accessions do the others rejoice, and assist them in the work? How many of these sects would proclaim to anxious sinners what Peter told those who asked "what shall we do? or what Ananias told Saul when he asked, What shall I do Lord? Have not anxious souls and many such schemes been invented as substitutes for Christ's arrangements? What one evangelial party glories in another detests. And yet Mr. Davis thinks these conflicting parties are far sounder on these points, than those who are determined to hold the easy way of the apostles. Let us hear the testimony of a very celebrated evangelical preacher.

"There are scores and hundreds, of persons who would say with moistened eyes when asked yes we would rather be Christians than have any other gift in the world. Now when I look at the fact that during our Master's own times and during the times of the Apostles' personal administration upon earth it did not take persons weeks or month to become Christians nor days nor even hours; and when I remember that under one sermon thousands of men began to be Christians I am satisfied that our method is different from that of Christ and the Apostles and that there is some where or other a mistake either in them or us." Henry Ward Beecher.

Such is the testimony of one who felt the influence of a departure from Apostolic Christianity in preaching the gospel to sinners, and one who had the independence to acknowledge it.

Yours fraternally,
D. CRAWFORD.
New Glasgow, August 4th, 1870.