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Poetry.

AFTER THE STORM.

BY ALICE A. NOLD CRAWFORD.

After the storm, a calm;
After the bruise, a balm;
For the ill brings good, in the Lord's own time,
And the sigh becomes the psalm.
After the drought, the dew;
After the cloud, the blue;
For the sky will smile in sun's good time
And the earth grow glad and new.
Bloom is the heir of blight,
Dawn is the child of night;
And the rolling change of the busy world
Bids the Wrong yield back the Right.
Under the fount of ill
Many a cup doth fill,
And the patient lip, tho' I drinketh oft,
Finds only the bitter, still.
Truth seemeth oft, to sleep,
Blessings so slow to reap,
Till the hours of waiting are weary to bear,
And the courage is hard to keep.
Nevertheless, I know,
Out of the dark must grow,
Sooner or later, whatever is fair,
Since the Heavens have willed it so.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

THOUGHTS FOR THE TIMES.

No. XIV.

BIGOTRY—BAPTIST AND PÆDO-BAPTIST.

It has been common for many years past for Pædobaptist controversialists to stigmatize the Baptist practice of strict communion as "bigotry." It is not enough to regard us as mistaken men—as errorists. Nothing but a term of reproach will satisfy them. The Baptists, however learned, or pious, or active in the diffusion or defence of our common Christianity, must be denounced as bigots. I am sorry to be compelled to add that some among ourselves are chargeable with the same offence. Open communionists are sometimes uncharitably disposed towards their strict communion brethren. One of the last specimens of Pædobaptist uncharitableness is now before me. It is taken from the *Christian World*:

"Neither the Baptists nor the Independents of America have advanced so far in liberal ideas on certain matters as have the churches of their order in England. In respect of freedom of communion, the Baptists of the States are just a century behind the Baptists of England. A hundred years ago it was held by Baptists to be scandalous for a person who had been immersed to sit down at the Lord's Supper with one who had only been sprinkled; and that is just the state of things prevailing on the other side of the Atlantic to-day. Nearly every English Baptist professing any sort of education, is now ashamed of this species of bigotry; and it may be hoped that the leaven of common sense and Christian charity, which certain brethren seek to put into the American churches, will have its wholesome effect in our time."

Now, this is worse than bigotry. It is insolence. Who is this audacious scribbler, who is evidently as ignorant as he is impudent, that he should dare to impute to more than a million of Christian people on this continent a want of "common sense and Christian charity?"

This libeller ought to know that the Baptist practice is founded on the belief that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are to be observed in due order. When Jesus gave the great commission he commanded his servants to baptize those who should receive the gospel, and then "to teach them all things," and train them to obedience. The history of the church, as given in the New Testament, informs us how the apostles understood the commission. When Peter preached his memorable sermon on the day of Pentecost, "they that gladly received his word were

baptized." So it was everywhere. Preaching—believing—baptism—union with the church, was the uniform order. So well understood was this that Justin Martyr (A. D. 165) expressly declares that "no one was allowed to partake" of the Lord's Supper who had not been baptized. This rule was constantly observed over all Christendom. It is the rule to this day. The Christian profession is divided into various denominations; but in regard to the priority of baptism to the Lord's Supper, and the necessity of baptism to union with the church, there is no difference of opinion. Roman Catholics and Protestants, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists make the same profession. An unbaptized person would not be admitted to the communion by any of them. They might acknowledge his piety, and account him, in all other respects, worthy of admission to the Lord's table; but he could not join the church in the holy feast if he had not been baptized.

This is exactly our case. We proclaim the gospel. God blesses the word. Souls are converted. The converted are baptized—and then they unite with a church. If any of the converts should say, "We object to baptism, because we do not think it was intended to be perpetual," or, "we have been already baptized, as we have been informed, in our infancy, and we are satisfied with it"—the answer is ready. We can only say, we have no power to change the order of the ordinances, or to omit any of them. We must obey the Commission. The order is, faith, baptism, fellowship. If the first is wanting, the second is of no avail. If the second is wanting, the third is without warrant. This is not our arrangement. It is Christ's, and we cannot alter it.

I have observed that this was the universal way of the churches. When, after the Reformation, separate communities sprang up, they observed the same course, as might be proved by quotations from the Baptist "Confessions" of 1611, 1646, 1656, 1660, 1678.

John Bunyan propounded very free sentiments on baptism, and here and there an individual agreed with him. But it was not till 1689 that any notice of a divergency of practice appeared. In the "Appendix" to the Confession of 1688 the following observations are found:—"The known principle and state of the consciences of divers of us that have agreed in this Confession is such, that we cannot hold church communion with any other than baptized believers, and churches constituted of such; yet others of us have a greater liberty and freedom in our spirits that way" (Baptist Confessions, p. 244). This seems to have been the entering wedge. The Denomination generally held to the old Confessions and the Catechism; but "some others" thought themselves at liberty to relax the rule in the cases of those who agreed with them as to the order of the ordinances, but claimed that as they had been baptized in infancy the validity of that baptism should be acknowledged.

But we cannot acknowledge it. We believe that baptism is the immersion of a person in water on profession of his or her faith. If we treat a person as baptized who was sprinkled or poured upon, and that not on profession of faith, but long before faith was possible, we run counter to the law of the gospel. We assume a dispensing power. We do what Peter and Paul and John would not have done. We change the purpose of Christian institutions.

This is no trifle. It is not a dispute about little or much water—about mere matters of ceremony, which may be regarded or neglected at will. Positive institutions are precise under all dispensations. In Christianity they are very few in number, but still they are positive institutions, and must be observed in the prescribed manner and order. It is useless to refer to the 14th chapter of the Romans, and then

to argue that as the moral and spiritual are of far greater importance than the ceremonial, these differences on baptism are to be ranked among "doubtful disputations," and "e'en the dip'd and sprinkled live in peace." They may live in peace, and they ought to live in peace. "Love the truth and peace," says the prophet (Zech. viii. 9.) First the truth—then the peace; but not the peace at the expense of the truth. If the Lord Jesus has commanded (as we maintain that he has) that faith shall precede baptism, and faith and baptism precede union with the church, our bounden duty is to obey him. The order is natural, reasonable, and thoroughly in harmony with the spiritual design and tendency of the Christian system. Let it be unchangeably observed, whatever inconvenience or discomfort may result from the observance. The freedom pleaded for by the apostle Paul in Rom. xiv. is not freedom to dispense with positive institutions.

It must not be forgotten that we owe all the trouble and annoyance to the introduction of human inventions. We Baptists, for instance, believe that if infant baptism and sprinkling had not been introduced these discussions would have been unknown.

There are two inconsistencies which we should be glad to see removed. The first is, the non-admission of infants to the Lord's Supper. If they are entitled to baptism, they are equally entitled to communion. They were admitted to communion in the early history of infant baptism. The second is, the distinction made in many Baptist churches in England between communion at the Lord's table and membership in the church. Pædobaptists are admissible to the first, in those churches, but not to the second. We cannot but regard this as an inconsistency. There are about fifty "Union churches" in the list of churches published in the Baptist Manual. They are distinguished by the letter "U," which denotes that in those churches Baptists and Pædobaptists are united. This is the legitimate outcome of what is called free communion. But no such churches could have existed in the apostolic age.

Our Pædobaptist brethren should not charge us with bigotry. They ought to give us credit for sincerity and conscientiousness. We would admit them to fellowship if we thought ourselves allowed to do so. But as the Christian law is, we must "dwell among our own people." "Why dost thou judge thy brother? or, why dost thou set at naught thy brother? For we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." (Rom. xiv. 10)

At the same time, let it not be forgotten that there are various modes of union and co-operation. Fellowship at the Lord's table is not the only kind of fellowship. Baptists and Pædobaptists can unite in spreading Christian knowledge and in sustaining useful institutions. They cannot unite in agencies tending to conversion, because the question of church order and government will be sure to come up when progress is achieved, and dissatisfaction, perhaps discussion, will follow. But they can hold spiritual conference, and stir up each other to love and good works. They can agree in promoting the manifold inventions and appliances of benevolent zeal which distinguish these times. While so engaged, they are "of one heart and one soul."

But entire agreement in regard to religious truths and practices is not to be hoped for; and therefore that visible union for which some plead must be pronounced utterly impracticable. "I neither expect nor desire," said the Rev. Dr. Allen, a Congregational minister, at the unveiling of the Bunyan statue, "that religious parties in England will ever all subscribe the same creed, or be gathered into one ecclesiastical body." Dr. Allen was right.

Oct. 22, 1874.

THE ENGLISH BAPTIST UNION.

has just held its semi-annual session at Newcastle-upon-Tyne. One of the many interesting features of that session was the reception of a deputation of ministers from the other denominations in that town. We make the following summary from the report as given in the *Freeman* of the 16th ult.:

A DEPUTATION FROM SISTER CHURCHES.

The President introduced the deputation from the Newcastle churches, the Rev. A. Reed, the Rev. J. Bush, the Rev. J. Thompson, and others.

The Rev. Alexander Reed, senior Congregational minister of Newcastle, said:—Mr. President, I appear before you as one of a deputation from the Nonconformist ministers of this town. Our object in coming here is to join with your more immediate brethren in giving you a cordial welcome to this northern town. We beg to express towards you our fraternal love and sympathy, as those who along with us are endeavouring to work to promote the best interests of religion in our country. The duty which devolves upon myself is a very simple one. It is merely to introduce my brethren, two of whom, with your permission, will address you, and give more full expression than I can do to our sentiments and feelings. Perhaps, however, I may be allowed to say that the ministers of the Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, and Independent denominations have been associated together in this town for more than forty years. (Applause.) We have met from time to time for prayer and conference, and for the purpose of promoting objects common to us all, and objects especially bearing on the spiritual welfare of the town and neighbourhood. It may be interesting to you to know that the first secretary of our Union was one no doubt well known to yourself, sir, and to many present, the late Mr. Pengelly. We know that as a denomination you have had an existence in this town for more than two centuries. We have witnessed within the last few years your rapid increase, and we take it as a type of your advancement throughout the country, at which we rejoice, bidding you God speed in the name of the Lord. (Applause.) We have had in this town conferences and synods, and it was quite fitting that you, as a Baptist Union, should meet here, and we trust that your meeting will greatly conduce to your own spiritual comfort and welfare, and to the advancement of religion in the town at large.

The Rev. John Thompson (United Presbyterian minister) said:—Mr. President and fathers,—I have been requested and appointed by the union of local brethren here to read the following address, meant in its very simplest form to express our cordial word of welcome to you in your visit to this town of ours:—

TO THE BAPTIST UNION OR GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND, MEETING IN NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE, OCTOBER, 1874.

Beloved Brethren,—We, a company of Methodist, Independent, and Presbyterian ministers, appear in your midst this moment to wish you every blessing from our heavenly Master. It gives us the highest pleasure to have an opportunity afforded, by your meeting in Newcastle, of expressing our fraternal regards for the Baptist churches represented in this assembly. We look with honest admiration to the extensive learning, sound judgement, pulpit eloquence, true piety, and Christian zeal, by which your denomination is distinguished. You have done your part most nobly in preaching the Gospel at home and abroad. Your churches at home are centres of good to all around. Your missions abroad are a praise in the earth; and, recognising in these things the grace of God bestowed upon you in your labours, we recognize your claim to a high place in the respect and love of every Christian. We do not conceal that we differ among ourselves, and differ from you conscientiously on some minor points of Christian faith and practice, but we think it of prime importance that the essential oneness of our churches on the major points of divine truth, should be continually manifested. Our motto is, Unity underlying diversity.

The different denominations represented here are not more diversified than the different schools of thought in the one Church of England or the one Church of Rome. Accordingly we are here to-day for the purpose of testifying that the Evangelical Nonconformists of England are a Catholic community, animated by one spirit of love to Christ, accepting the Word of God in the Holy Bible as the only infallible standard of our religion, "striving together for the faith of the Gospel," and partakers through divine mercy of the common salvation. This is a circle of true Catholicism from which we exclude no sincere Christian of any church, and from which we refuse to be excluded by any dogma of priestly arrogance. Being fully agreed on the vital doctrines of Christianity, we are persuaded that our times are calling upon us for united action against our common enemies. On the one hand, we have, in learned lectures, from the lips of distinguished scientists, a variety of crude speculations about the origin of life and the existence of God, which are fitted to generate, especially in youthful minds, the worst forms of infidelity. Such speculations are neither science nor philosophy. On the other hand, we have among Anglican divines a revival of Romish sacerdotalism, commonly called Ritualism, which is crippling the exercise of free judgment, and trying to snap the foundations of our English Protestantism. It is a conflict between unbelief in all its phases of broad thinking, from a firm denial of our Lord's atonement to a feeble doubt of all divinity and superstition; in all its phases of narrow thought, from the adoration of a wafer to its last weakness in a puerile pilgrimage for devotion at the grave of an archbishop. In this conflict you and we have a distinct place to occupy on the Lord's side, there to contend with one arm and one soul against all the forces of unreasoning superstition and unbelieving philosophy. Here the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. We fight with the Gospel of peace, and hope to overcome by the blood of the Lamb. Our attention has been widely called in recent months to the revival of Christian life in all our churches, and the demands for evangelistic labour among the masses of our country. In these works we require and have the promise of God's Spirit. And here we express our desire to unite with you more fully than ever in earnest prayer for the Spirit's quickening power, and in constant efforts to attain the highest ends of our sacred ministry in the conversion of sinners and the revival of saints. In another sentence, beloved brethren we ask you to accept our hearty word of welcome to this northern town, our sincere congratulations on all your prosperity, and our fervent desire that you may be honoured to defend and diffuse more and more widely the saving truths of our Christian religion. Now the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God even our Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

The Rev. Joseph Bush (Wesleyan Methodist): Mr. President, honoured sirs,—By the appointment of my ministerial brethren, it is my honour to speak to you in support of the address which has just been read by Mr. Thompson. I know that your time is very precious, and perhaps this business is an unlooked-for addition to your programme; but I pray you of your clemency that you will bear me. We represent the non-episcopal churches of this town; but you will be glad to know, and we are glad to testify, that in aggressive action against all forms of evil around us, and in daily prayer and supplication and thanksgiving, there is no rigid line drawn between members of the episcopalian and other denominations. Brethren of the Establishment, using their liberty and acknowledging our equality, show forth a spirit of true fraternity, and some of them mingle with us daily as members of the common household of faith; and in this we rejoice, and I am sure you will rejoice also. We, and those whom we represent, are Nonconformists, and we gladly greet you in this town as representing a church which is striving earnestly to compass that which is the end of all churches and the purpose of all church organization—namely, the spreading abroad everywhere the savour of the knowledge of Christ. (Hear, hear.) We appreciate thoroughly the hard and true and honest work that you are doing in this land. We rejoice very much in the success with which God has been pleased to crown your labours, and we

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