

Piers likes it better than Pope's pardons, for he says that, though the Pope has power to bind and to unbind it is safer to keep the Ten Commandments than to trust to absolution.

This is the spirit of all the visions. If the author displays any particular animus, it is against the friars, who swarmed over England, and whom Chaucer so much enjoys making the butt of his sarcasm. Hermits are great lubbers, loth to work. Guile and Liar are friars, and so are Envy and Wrath. In one place the author stops to remark that king's soldiers are numbered; that the inhabitants of heaven are numbered; in short, that every creature and every class, except only friars and the dwellers in hell, are numbered.

By such remarks as this, which the people most thoroughly appreciated, and by making a plain ploughman the hero of verse, as well as by identifying him with the Saviour, he made his allegory the most popular contemporary production before the "Canterbury Tales." It is published before Wielik's busiest days, twenty years before his version of the Bible, and it was often transcribed.

It differs from "Pilgrim's Progress" in this, that its purpose was temporary in its nature. The friars it satirized have passed away, the English it addressed became Protestants, and the danger to be apprehended from papal bulls is slight. The Bible is illustrated and made familiar to the people, is in every man's hands, and the plan of salvation by faith is proclaimed in thousands of ways.

With the work of Bunyan the case is different. The Slough of Despond lies still in every man's road and Vanity Fair is not yet closed. The Hill Difficulty is always before us, and we are in danger of going to the house of Mr. Legality for help. The wisdom of man has not yet been able to put a bridge over the River of Death, though the "shining ones" who appeared to Christian and Hopeful still "stand on the other side" to minister to those who shall be the heirs of salvation.

The archaic dialect of "Piers Plowman" has been toned down to a sweet and delicate flavour of moderate antiquity in the "Pilgrim's Progress." The stern and scathing sarcasm of the earlier allegory loses none of its uncompromising character in Bunyan, but it takes no more of the loveliness and beauty of the gospel. The author of the one vision was obliged, not only to make his poem, but to create his audience; while the later writer had the advantages of a richer literature and a more intelligent age and of an eager and sympathizing public.

The author of "Piers Plowman," with no precedent and little ground to hope for support, made a bold dash into a new style of writing and a new topic, and he has left a work that is permanent and will always charm those who take the pains to master it and have the power of throwing themselves into the remote past.

This does not detract from the glory of John Bunyan, who will not be deposed from his place as prince of allegorists.—New York Independent.

HISTORICAL INQUIRIES.

To the Editor of the Christian Messenger.

DEAR SIR,—

A Committee was appointed at the last meeting of the Convention to make arrangements for the collection of information respecting the Early History of our Denomination in these Provinces and for the preservation of documents relating to the same. If any of our friends possess copies of old Association Minutes, Sermons, or other pamphlets, or Manuscript records of Churches, or Memoirs of Ministers, they are particularly requested to forward them to either of the undersigned, by whom they will be preserved, and an account rendered at the next meeting of the Convention.

J. M. CRAMP, Wolfville, N. S.  
W. P. EVERETT, St. John, N. B.

The Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, N. S., OCTOBER 20, 1875.

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GRATEFULLY REMEMBERED

by us. Others there are—and that quite a large number—who have not paid for the present year, and others for a longer period. To them we addressed a few words not long ago. From some we have since heard, and we presume others are purposing to send on the money very soon. To them and to all who have not paid we respectfully request that

THEY WILL NOT DELAY,

but if possible send next week. It may to them seem a small sum they owe, but to us it is in the aggregate an amount of very serious importance. "A word to the wise is sufficient."

Many of our friends, believing that the religious newspaper is an efficient means of

PREACHING THE GOSPEL

as well as of giving valuable information, which EVERY FAMILY OUGHT TO HAVE, seek for it a wider circulation by recommending it to their neighbours and friends, who do not now receive it.

To all such persons we would offer our very respectful compliments, and would cordially invite their co-operation in spreading the principles of christian truth, by getting New Subscribers to the CHRISTIAN MESSENGER, or by helping them to send on for themselves their name and address, with the amount of subscription for a year.

AS A BONUS TO NEW SUBSCRIBERS

we offer to send the CHRISTIAN MESSENGER from the date in which we receive their names with one year's subscription to the end of next year 1876. If all our present subscribers will kindly tell two or three of their friends of this offer, and induce them to become regular subscribers, our list may be soon

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All that need be said in a letter is,

Send the Christian Messenger to (here insert the name and address in full.) Enclosed find \$2.00 (or a Post Office order for \$2.00) to Pay to Dec 31st, 1876.

Address the letter

S. SELDEN,  
CHRISTIAN MESSENGER OFFICE,  
Halifax, N. S.

It is not often that we get so frank an admission of what our Wesleyan brethren mean by their frequent expressions of love to their Baptist brethren as we have lately had in the Wesleyan. Somehow Brother Nicholson, the editor—and by the way President of the N. S. Conference and therefore perhaps speaking ex cathedra—has a way of telling a little more of what is in his heart than is quite convenient for some of his friends. It may be that he will try and take back what he has so indiscreetly said, as he had to do on another occasion recently. It would seem that the desire which he and some of his brethren have to participate in communion with Baptist Churches is not without an ulterior design which becomes apparent in his recent utterances.

The anxiety that he, in common with other Pedobaptists, so often express that Baptists should become open communions finds its complement in his expression, "Let baptizo be disposed of, and the entire ecclesiastical structure might as well resolve into its original elements"—that is to say, as he chooses to put it, be swallowed up by "Congregationalism, Presbyterianism and Methodism."

Is this then the meaning of all the expressions of desire for union which are so fashionable? Perhaps our brother, who says he indulges in the habit of making "playful remarks," intended his remark as a pleasant satire on the labors of the Rev. Mr. Somerville, and, wishing to lead him on in his bold attack on Baptizo, held up to him the

brilliant results of his Quixotic attempt if he should but succeed. "Let baptizo be disposed of" says Mr. Nicholson. "Let the question of Baptism be settled"—"let it be seen beyond a peradventure that they are contending for a myth and the whole fabric falls to pieces" well knowing that this is "an old and hopeless conflict," as he says in the beginning of his article.

No doubt our brother would wish to make it appear that our distinctive principles are but "a myth" and have but little significance to ourselves or to the church. That they have little to do with the bringing of the world into submission to our Lord and Saviour. To Baptists, however it is far otherwise. Their principles and practices they regard as significant of all that constitutes the Church a body of believers in Christ—those who have made a personal profession of faith in Him, before his people, by submitting to His commands and receiving his ordinances.

Our kind and generous contemporary will see that we do not take the views we hold of baptizo as mere matters of opinion, but as those in which are involved our highest interests and have claims with which we dare not trifle.

It may be true—for so the President of Conference affirms—that "Methodism has lived to introduce new doctrines," and it may still develop newer doctrines and yet newer ideas, but Baptists are not ambitious of going beyond the truths of the Old and New Testament. "The Bible, the Bible alone" as Chillingworth said, is enough to satisfy their desires. If they can get from its teachings what our Lord intends us to know and feel and do we are quite willing that Methodism should revel in "new doctrines."

In its issue of the 2nd inst., the Wesleyan states:—

"For what is the actual corner stone of that (Baptist) body? In the spiritual sense, Christ of course; but in the doctrinal—immersion. They have not another distinctive idea or principle on which to hang an idea. Let the question of Baptism be settled—let it be seen beyond a peradventure that they are contending for a myth—and the whole fabric falls to pieces. In doctrine and discipline—save as to one or two matters of importance—the Baptist Church is a combination of Congregationalism, Presbyterianism and Methodism. Let baptizo be disposed of and the entire ecclesiastical structure might as well resolve into its original elements."

The above has several characteristics that merit admiration, but its laughable arrogance and good natured recklessness may be passed over, while we point out to the editor of the Wesleyan the two huge mistakes he has committed. It is not often we see blunders so radical and ugly as the two which protrude themselves from this deliverance of our contemporary.

MISTAKE FIRST.

"Immersion is the doctrinal corner stone of the Baptists!" "They have not another distinctive idea or principle on which to hang an idea!"

Be it known to the Wesleyan that immersion is not the doctrinal corner stone of the Baptists. They do aver, and constantly aver that immersion is the only form of New Testament baptism, but it is not the chief of their distinctive principles; it is a branch of their distinguishing doctrines, but it is not the trunk; it is not the root. The Wesleyan, may be so ignorant of Baptist principles and Baptist history, as to be able to make the bold statements that he has made; but in this day, and in this part of the world, such ignorance would seek long for an apologist or a justifier. When the entire Church of England practised immersion, did that bring this body and the Baptists into harmony on the doctrine of baptism? Are the millions of the Greek Church, who practise immersion exclusively, and the Baptists agreed on the matter of Baptism? The Wesleyan ought to know, that essentially there was no drawing together in the case of the Episcopalians and the Baptists, because of agreement on the form of Baptism; neither does the immersion of her candidates make the Greek Church acceptable to Baptists.

Perhaps even the Editor of the Wesleyan will be able to see that the Baptists have yet "another idea" on which to hang an idea. We shall do our best to point out, at least one "idea," in addition to immersion, on which an indefinite number of ideas can be hung.

Let the Wesleyans and Presbyterians abandon sprinkling, and let the Episcopalians return to their first practice, so that all the sects, like the Baptists and Greek Church, shall be wholly immersionists, and the Editor of the Wesleyan may hereby know, through,

for him, 'an unfortunate exponent' of the Baptists, that these bodies have not, by adopting immersion, settled down upon the "doctrinal cornerstone" of the Baptists. This may prepare the way for our contemporary to learn, if he will learn at this late day, that believers' baptism is the great difference between evangelical Pedobaptists and Baptists. If Pedobaptists should embrace every other principle and practice of the Baptists, they would still be Pedobaptists—infant-baptizers—and the Baptists would still be Baptists—baptizers of believers.

The baptism of an unconscious infant is an error; the sprinkling of a believer is also an error. As errors they stand side by side, because neither the one nor the other is sustained by precept, example, or plain and lawful inference from the Word of God. Why then, it might be asked by the objector, do Baptists represent the baptism of an infant a more dangerous departure from God's Word than the sprinkling of a believer? They find their grounds for this conclusion in the plain outcome of the two errors, as seen in their history. The baptism of unconscious infants provides for the great "mystery of iniquity" a well defined foundation on which to rest. Take from the papal church the baptism of infants—the baptism of unbelievers—and the corner-stone is removed, and the arch-deceiver himself might be at a loss to provide a substitute. Here it is plain that the church of Rome, rests, as a structure, on infant baptism.

Trace the half christian, half heathen practices of the ritualists in the Episcopal church to their origin, and out of what are they found to grow? Out of infant baptism! In baptism the child is made "regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's church," (Prayer Book), and here the foundation is laid for all the mummeries, follies and delusions of ritualism.

How came the church of Scotland to fall away from the piety of the great Knox, and the princely saints of his day, so as to leave its unprotected body, exposed to the lashes and lampoons, received at the hands of Burns, when this great Scottish Bard directed his humorous ire against the flocks of Scotland, their shepherds and their flocks? Here the baptism of the infant comes to the front as the chief Jeroboam, the Son of Nebat, that made Israel to sin. The Rev. G. M. Grant said humorously, in a lecture on Burns, that the Christians of that day in Scotland were "half respectable heathen and half respectable pharisees." The same evil genius has been at work in corrupting the protestants of Germany and France; and it still works after the spirit of him in whom it finds its origin and inspiration. We abominate infant baptism because it lends itself to Ritualism and Romanism, answering all the demands of these gigantic frauds; because it has ever been busy, and too often successful in corrupting the churches of Luther, Knox and Calvin. We rejoice that Presbyterianism, Congregationalism, and Methodism are as free as they are from its baneful tendencies and possible results, yet no thanks are due to the error itself, but to the Word and grace of God which are so extensively magnified in spite of this great deceiver and destroyer.

There are encouraging signs that the great protestant bodies of Britain and America will be enabled to rid themselves of this their great clog and their most dangerous enemy. Immersion is not the "doctrinal cornerstone" of the Baptists in the sense intended by the Wesleyan: the Baptists have another "idea or principle upon which to hang an idea."

MISTAKE SECOND.

"The Baptist Church is a combination of Congregationalism, Presbyterianism and Methodism" \* \* \* \* and (it) might as well resolve into its original elements."

The Wesleyan, in giving advice to Mr. Gladstone, might suggest to him that England was a "combination" of the governments of the United States and Brazil, and "might as well resolve itself into its original elements." Mr. Gladstone might however, humbly suggest, that in case he was Premier of England, it would be his duty to inform his advisor, that a consultation with the time table of history might put him right in the important question of chronology. It would be a strange thing to tell a tree that it was a "combination" of the shoots that had sprung up around it. A little thought will convince the Wesleyan, that the tree grows before the sprouts; that England lived before Brazil and

the United States. The Wesleyan must get John Knox and John Wesley set back into the twelfth century at which time many thousands of Baptists lived in the South of France as well as elsewhere, organized into churches, holding up primitive doctrines and following primitive practices, as their predecessors had done, before he begins to talk of Baptist doctrines being a "combination" of the tenets held by the followers of these great men. Even Wall, in his "History of Infant Baptism," admits the existence of Baptist churches in the South of France in the twelfth century. Should the Wesleyan by any jugglery in figures antedate these French Baptist churches with Presbyterianism, Congregationalism and Wesleyanism, then we shall hand him over to the Historian (Pedobaptist) Moshien and others, who will tell him that 'the origin of the Baptists is hidden in remote antiquity;' but better still, and that is the somewhat sounder and shorter way, and the method specially approved by Mr. Somerville, to whom he would render aid, we shall refer him again to the New Testament, where he will find a Baptist Church at Jerusalem, at Ephesus, at Philippi, at Corinth, and more than one in Galatia. Then, should he like a little exercise in history, there will be no trouble in pointing out to him unmistakable evidence of people holding Baptist, distinctive principles in every century and contending for them in the face of fines, imprisonment, and death. Before the first Presbyterian vein was opened for Christ, rivers of Baptist blood had been shed; and long ere the heather was stained with the blood of Scotch Reformers, thousands of Baptists had given up their lives just as heroically for a good conscience towards God. These churches, with such a history, Brother Nicholson, of the Wesleyan, thinks might do well to resolve themselves into their original elements—Presbyterianism, Congregationalism and Methodism!

We were sorry to learn a few days since from one of our ministerial brethren that our brother REV. DAVID MCKEEN is on a bed of suffering. He has lost the use of his right arm from inflammatory rheumatism and suffers much from nervous prostration. Notwithstanding this sickness, which has prevented his attending to his appointments, a work of grace has gone forward in some of the churches to which he ministered in the summer, but because of his affliction he has been unable to send us an account of them. The brother was unable to stay or would have given us some account of the work in the several places. He believes that although Brother McKean is wounded yet he will recover.

Rev. D. A. W. Smith in an article on Missions in the Watchman & Reflector of the 30th ult., says:

"Tavoy.—By the departure of the missionaries of the Nova Scotia Board, to cooperate with the Canadian Board in their mission to the Telougous in Coanada, Tavoy is left again without a missionary incumbent. Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong, who had acquired the Karen language, performed a noble work in Tavoy among both the Burmese and Karens, and they will be greatly missed. Indeed, it cannot be without sincere regret that the missions in Burmah part finally with this noble band of Christian workers. The call to Coanada is however loud and importunate, and they do well, no doubt, to give heed to it."

Two communications on our sixth page will be perused with very much interest by many of our readers. The formation of a church in New Glasgow of the Baptist brethren and sisters living in that locality is an event of some significance. It is pleasing to observe the orderly manner in which the brethren there have proceeded. We shall hope to hear of them soon becoming a fruitful branch of the true vine, whose clusters will multiply and increase, and give joy and blessing to all around.

The ordination of our young brother A. J. Stevens, had some remarkable circumstances connected with it. The graphic picture, given by the writer, of the aged father standing up before the stalwart son, and delivering to him the solemn charge and injunctions, is one that might well employ the artist's pencil and will doubtless be long cherished in the memory of the large company present to participate in the solemn services. There was also the aged and infirm pastor of the church, just ready, like the candidate's father to put off the armor, adding his testimony to the appreciation of the youthful servant of Christ, who was putting on his armor ready to go wholly into the field in the service of the Great Captain of Salvation.