

CORRESPONDENCE.

For the Christian Messenger.

"Keeping it."

Mr. Editor,—While the discussion on Baptism was going on in the Witness, some one who perhaps anticipated a failure in the part of "A Representative Man" (as a certain paper flatteringly styled him) to establish the doctrine of Infant Sprinkling sent me a pamphlet bearing on that subject. The title of it is:—"Church Membership of Children," by Rev. John Munro of Wallace; and professes to be "published at the request of several who feel the want of a brief selection of passages of Scripture relating to the privileges of children in the Church of God." The first argument is that "As children have a place assigned them in families and nations, so God has assigned to them a place in His Church." He then quotes in proof thereof, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday and to-day and forever" "Built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." "This is he that was with the church in the Wilderness," and then the Abrahamic covenant as found in Gen. 17. 7. Then follow seven statements, and a string of texts of equal force with those quoted. Time and space alone prevent their separate notice.

Argument second: "In the New Testament the Church with its privileges is extended to all nations." Matt. 28. 19. "It is contained in the commission. "Go teach all nations." Children form an essential part of every nation."

Does Mr. Munro mean that because children are a part of every nation, therefore they are in the church? The words will bear no other interpretation, and the logical sequence is (if I am not dreaming) that "all nations" are in the Church.

There follow here again seven statements with a good array of texts to prove them. I give a specimen.

"1. Children are regenerated and sanctified—John the Baptist was 'filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb.' Luke 1. 15. Of Timothy it is said, 'From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures 2. Tim. 3. 15.'" I conclude from this that the whole world is regenerated and sanctified, and that preaching the gospel, holding special services, appeals to the unsaved &c., are all egregious mistakes, the millennium has come, and we didn't know it. According to Mr. Munro the whole world are "heirs of salvation."

Argument number three "That children are entitled to the privileges of the Church, because of their relation to their parents, is recognized throughout the Bible."

I suppose Mr. M. means believing parents. As it stands it is "Because children belong to their parents, they belong to the church." But will he accept as belonging to the church all the children of believers? Does grace then really run in blood?

Under the same head appears to come out what the writer of the tract has evidently been aiming at viz., Infant Sprinkling. "When parents believed and where baptized their children were baptized with them," says Mr. M. "Lydia was baptized and her household." Mr. M. admits then that belief came before baptism in Apostolic times. I ask then what right he has to reverse the Divine order, and put his baptism, which is no baptism, first? And who told Mr. Munro that Lydia was married, or if married that she had children, or if she had children that any of them were infants, or if they were infants that he, or she, or they, were with her, she being hundreds of miles from home? "The Jailor was baptized, he and all his." Acts 16. 33. If Mr. M. had read the 34th verse he would have found that the Jailor "rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." He then refers to other households, and says "In these households there must have been infants, who with their parents received baptism, the seal of the covenant." The "must have been" implies that it is impossible but that there are infants in every family. Does not Mr. M. know of many families where there are no infants? Whole believing and baptized households may be found. I suppose in two thirds at least of the Baptist Churches

in Nova Scotia. Why then to prove Infant Sprinkling scriptural, does Mr. M. resort to such fallacious reasoning? And as to Infant Sprinkling being a seal, it is a seal of nothing but the indifference to the plain command of Christ on the part of those who practise it. Let any person (not wearing colored spectacles) read the accounts of the baptized households and they will come to the very opposite conclusion to what Mr. Munro has. See Acts 16. 13-15, 40. Acts 16. 32-33. Acts 18. 8; 1 Cor. 1. 13-15, 1 Cor. 1. 16. 17; xvi. 15.

Another argument is founded on feeling. "Baptisms," says Mr. M. have been times of refreshing in Scotland even like the Lord's Supper. One who was present when Rev. Mr. Hogg, of Kiltarn, baptized a child records that, "the power and presence of the Lord was so signal and observable that many were made to say they never felt more of the authority of the Lord in any ordinance," &c. Now it is possible for a man to feel he is serving God when he is not. Paul says, Acts xxvi. 9, "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus, of Nazareth," and when he succeeded in committing men and women to prison and death it is likely he had "times of refreshing," thinking that he was "doing God service," but the Lord shewed him his mistake, as I trust he will those who are trying to put to prison and death the true baptism and substituting a false, thinking they are serving God.

Mr. M. again argues, "I believe that the commission of Christ included the children of believers, and that the apostles baptized such." I bless thee for saving me from falling into the cold and forbidding doctrines of Antipedobaptism. O give me grace to improve this ordinance."

The "I believe" argument is as cogent as most Pedobaptist arguments are. If a thing is true because "I believe" it, then there is a man in the moon, and there is not a man in the moon; the earth is round, and the earth is not round; a whale swallowed Jonah, and a whale did not swallow Jonah, &c. I heard a good Congregational brother say in a lecture the other day that "there is no such thing in the world as pure, unmixed nonsense." I am of a very different opinion, for this production of Mr. M.'s is well laden therewith.

Mr. M. need not express gratitude that he has been enabled to disobey the command of Christ, "and teach men," and substitute a command or doctrine of man in its place, and as to asking "grace to improve this ordinance," all I can say is that the ordinance of Baptism does not need 'improving,' the Saviour himself gave all needful directions; it is this trying to 'improve' the ordinance (though not exactly in Mr. M.'s sense) that has harassed the church of Christ for hundreds of years, and been the chief cause of all the disunion, strife and discord that is witnessed at the present day. The responsibility of all this must rest upon those who invented and those who teach and practice Infant Sprinkling. Had men not departed from the simplicity of the ordinance as laid down by the Saviour, the state of the church would have been very different from what it is. We may talk and sing of union, and play at union as long as we like, but it is my firm conviction that no union worth the name will be realised so long as this "evil spirit" is allowed to exist and exert its baleful influence. "Grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," be our motto ever, but we must labour to uproot this widespread error, though it be held by many we love.

Mr. M. prays that the Lord might regenerate his "little Catherine." If a previous argument be sound, little Catherine is regenerate, why pray for what has already taken place?

"Justyn Martyr, who wrote 40 years after the apostolic age," is quoted in defence of Infant Sprinkling. If Mr. M. will look into the New Testament he will see what men who 'wrote' 40 years before Justyn Martyr, said about baptism. I would as soon take their word as Justyn Martyr's. Pelagius is also quoted, "I never heard of any, not even the most impious heretic, who denied baptism to infants." Does Mr. M. adopt the sentiment I have italicised? I

should hope he does not and if not, why quote it? It sounds like a blast from the North Mountain. If Pelagius lived nowadays he would hear of many such heretics, and if he should wake up in a hundred years to come, he might possibly change the order of his words.

Engravings and inscriptions upon ancient tombstones are called in to give evidence. If such arguments are valid viz., the testimony of "ancient engravings, etc.," all sorts of foolish things can be proved. We may bring in old coins and prove that Julius Caesar and many others were like Johnny Noddy of nursery fame, "All head and no body." Mr. M. means "in ancient engravings He (Christ) is represented standing in the Jordan while John poured water on His head." Mr. M. forgot to mention the shell. "Ancient engravings" represent angels as infants floating on clouds, and composed of a head and two wings. It would be a very interesting chapter to chronicle all that might be proved from "ancient engravings."

Our brethren lay great stress on antiquity to justify their practice, on the same principle stealing fruit may be justified. Our rule of faith and practice should not be 'ancient tombstones engravings, inscriptions,' but the "Word of the Lord." We are told that the Mennonites have given up immersion because of the difficulties attending it. The more to their disgrace then. How would it be with us if "because of the difficulties attending it" the Saviour had "given up" the terrible task of redeeming us from the curse of the law?

There are not a few who give it up for the same reason as the Mennonites, and who like them too do not deny the Scripturalness of it, they suit their own taste and convenience in the matter. I have given a few arguments for Infant Sprinkling according to Mr. Munro. He uses several others but they are not worth the time to notice them. Towards the end of the tract he says:—"Throughout the New Testament there is not one example, or even a word, to countenance baptism, as practised by immersionists." The only reply needed to this is that Mr. Munro is fit to be placed by the side of the following from the Wesleyan of March 25th. "... six of the converts were baptized (not immersed) in the church last Sabbath," and again "... twenty-two of those who have professed to find peace have been baptized, 'by our own mode of course' I omit names and places. These reports are interesting. One says really "were baptized (not baptized)" and the other, that sprinkling is "our own mode, of course." Quite so, your own indeed!

Before I drop this subject of baptism I want to write a few plain words. Jesus Christ commands all to repent and believe, and all who believe to be baptized, which word means immersed and NOTHING ELSE, and every one who believes in Christ and is not baptized is living in disobedience, and all such might be reminded that it was one single act of disobedience that brought sin and all its woes into the world. Herein is a double error, the omission of the true baptism and the substitution of the false, pedobaptists themselves being judges that baptize means immerse, or see communication of "W. H. R." in Christian Visitor, March 22nd, giving a list of 45 authenticated witnesses, to which might be added very many more not only to the same effect that immersion is the only baptism recognized by the New Testament.

We may be thought fanatical on this question of Baptism, be it so, we contend for a grand and glorious truth and against a gigantic and inglorious error.

Yours, J. BROWN.

For the Christian Messenger.

Ontario Correspondence.

THE ICE FAMILIE. THE NEW LICENCE LAW. THE COLLEGE QUESTION IN ONTARIO. Within the last few days we have had in Ontario the heaviest snow storm and the best sleighing of the season. The snow is now rapidly passing away under the rays of the March sun, and those having sleighing and sledding to do, as

has everybody who owns a horse or a mule and a good many who have neither, is improving the vanishing opportunity. A phenomenon of the winter has been the scarcity of ice. Toronto has had to import from a considerable distance and I have just noticed a proposal in a local paper to try and get up a trade with Russia in the article. That however was a few weeks ago. The state of affairs has improved since and I fancy most of those who have used due diligence have managed to get their ice houses stocked by home production. I have not heard, either, of any clamor as yet for "protection" on the part of the producers, or any outcry against the free trade doctrines as the cause of the temporary scarcity.

Probably the best product of recent local legislation in Ontario is the New Temperance, or rather Licence, bill. A good many of the more sanguine, I had almost said, impracticable, advocates of prohibition were at first grievously disappointed with the answer to their petitions. The well known and pronounced temperance views of a majority of the members of our local legislature had given rise to rather extravagant expectations, on the part of those who believe in the righteousness and wisdom of immediate, and absolute prohibition. I believe, however, that the more judicious promoters of this great and much needed reform are becoming pretty well satisfied that the measure is, in the main, a wise and progressive first step. The principal features of the measure are the removing of the licensing power from the Municipal Councils and placing it in the hands of the Government and the limiting of the number of tavern licences to one for every two hundred and fifty inhabitants in places having a population of less than one thousand and one for every four hundred in places more populous. The maximum of licences is still large enough in all conscience, but then it is in the power of municipalities to make the number much smaller and to increase the amount charged for licences accordingly. And as a matter of fact many have done both these things, thereby reducing very largely the number of taverns and securing better accommodations for man and beast in the remainder. The assumption of the licensing power by the Government is open to some plausible objections, especially as the Government, as a matter of course, now appoints the Inspectors of Licences and other officials to enforce the provisions of the Act. The power of patronage is certainly increased. But those who know anything of the manner in which the regulations governing the issue of licences have been evaded, or over-ridden by the City and Town councils will rather rejoice that the power is to be henceforth wielded by those who have neither a pecuniary interest in the increase of fees for licences, nor are subject to the various influences and pressures which the Publicans know so well how to apply to their fellow townsmen. There seems some ground to hope that it will be not so often possible now, for an applicant for publican's license to have his claim recommended and granted on the strength of accommodations for travellers, when it is well known to the initiated that said accommodations have been improvised for the occasion of the Inspector's visit, by borrowing beds and sometimes bedrooms from obliging fellow tenants or next door neighbors. I suppose your town officials by the sea-side never wink at such smartnesses, but strange things happen in these inland cities and towns.

Two things earnestly desired by friends of temperance our Legislators did not see their way to grant: viz., the prohibition of grocery and saloon licences, they did the next best thing by putting it in the power of the localities to refuse these. And we are glad to know that in some instances, at least this has been done. Saloon or "Eating-house" licenses have been refused and no permits to sell liquors in the same shop with any other goods have been granted. If this course is generally and honestly followed, there can be no doubt that two of the most prolific sources of intemperance and crime will be dried up. On the whole I have little doubt that a more decided advance has been made in the right direction than would have resulted from a stringent Prohibitory Law, before public opinion is ready to see it enforced. We believe the measure an educational one.

Many of us in Ontario have watched with interest the progress of the struggle over the College Question in Nova Scotia.

The Gordian knot was cut by our Legislature years ago and I do not think any Protestant body of Christians now regrets it. The chief cause for regret is that the grants had not been withdrawn before they were given—if the bill may be pardoned,—or before denominational Colleges had obtained University Powers. We should in that event probably have been able to see the excellency of our scheme, manifested in practical working. The trouble now is that so many denominational Colleges have University powers, that there are none left to affiliate practically with Toronto University except Univ. College, Toronto and our own Institute at Woodstock. Whether a change will come or no it is hard to say. Many well qualified to form an opinion think the chartered Colleges will never voluntarily resign the power of granting degrees and affiliate with the one University. For my own part I am not without hope that they will yet see it to their interest to do so. The comparative worthlessness of the degrees granted by the best of the denominational Colleges in Ontario is a motive which will probably increase rather than diminish in strength. This worthlessness is to a considerable degree independent of the real value of the education the degree represents. It is largely a prejudice if you please. Yet it is a fact, and facts are stubborn things. And it is a fact which has had so much foundation to rest upon in the past, whatever may be the case in the future, that it will be hard to overturn it. I have no manner of doubt from my own observation as well as from reliable testimony of others, that there are to day in Ontario numerous holders of B. A., and even M. A. degrees, from Denominational Colleges both in Ontario and the United States, who if they should present themselves for the Junior Metriculation examination in Toronto University would be tolerably sure to come out "plucked." While I say this I am a firm believer in Denominational Colleges. As teaching Colleges they are in my estimation the very best kind of institution which our civilization can furnish, and I hope they may long live and flourish in every province of the Dominion. The question is whether the power of conferring degrees is not a source of weakness and of embarrassment rather than the opposite,—whether they could not do their work more thoroughly and efficiently without it. I have dwelt more fully on this point than I intended because of one or two references to the Baptist Institute at Woodstock, which I have observed in the Messenger. From those it might be inferred that the Baptists of Ontario were desirous of obtaining University powers for their College as soon as they have raised it to the proper height of efficiency. I do not think this is so. My impression is that the more intelligent and influential Baptists do not desire this, what they desire is to do full College work and to secure a proper carrying out of the University Scheme, by having University Examinations conducted at the Institute, simultaneously with those in Toronto and at other affiliated Colleges, as such may be formed. Fogysm has obstructed this somewhat. Some think it will continue to do so. If so we may be driven in self defence to demand University powers. But I believe progress is being made. The Senate of the University is becoming liberalized. The Convocation of graduates has now the election of a considerable number of the members as well as of the Chancellor. And a considerable and increasing sprinkling of Baptists is to be found amongst those graduates who will be sure to make their influence felt in Convocation in favor of that fair play of which we Baptists are so fond. When the original design of the University is thus fully carried out, there will be no longer a motive for desiring University powers for the Institute except on the part of those who wish an easier highway to a degree than that offered by the rigid University examinations, while on the other hand those having control of the work in Woodstock will gladly keep themselves free from the annoyances and perplexities to which they would be sure to be subjected were it once known to be in their power to confer degrees on easier terms.

J. E. W.