

Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister.

The vexed question of marriage with a deceased wife's sister has had an additional difficulty attached to it by its legislation by nearly all the Australian Legislatures. It is well known that these marriages are illegal in Britain. The Queen, after considerable hesitation on the part of her advisers, has recently given her sanction, and has thus made the marriages in question perfectly legal.

This Australian legislation introduces a new element. What will be the result? A lady born, say, in Britain goes out to Australia, and is there legally married to her deceased sister's husband. The law under the authority of which she contracts this marriage is good "English" law. She has all the rights of an English-woman as if still living in Yorkshire, has done nothing not sanctioned by the Queen and by all the authorities in the Empire, for if the Provincial Act were incompetent it was for Her Majesty to veto it. She lives in Australia an honoured wife, and her children are legitimate. But should it come round that her husband, having secured a competency or fallen heir to an estate at home, returns to Britain, this lady, who was married under royal sanction and according to English law, finds herself no wife at all, and her children are declared illegitimate and unable to succeed to their father's property unless it be such as he can give them by will. This is a very serious state of things.

The Australian law is not a foreign statute, but has all the binding authority in Australia which any law of the Home Parliament has over the untravelling Englishman. The Australians are therefore now asking that a law should be passed by the Imperial Parliament legalizing all such marriages celebrated with the sanction and authority of the Colonial law in the colonies specified. Mr. Lowe however and others are afraid that if this should be done, some adventurous and determined couples would make an ante-nuptial voyage to Australia in order to evade the English law, and then return assuredly and legally married even according to home statute. But supposing that such should be the case, would it be so very awful a thing as Mr. Lowe imagines? To be sure it would complicate matters still more, for it would legalize, in certain cases, marriages which are declared by their opponents to be incestuous, though a very large number of the most moral and intelligent people of the present day can see very little wrong in them, and nothing involving either disgrace or sin. It will be curious to watch how the Imperial Parliament acts in the circumstances. If no relief is given, as craved, the Queen ought to have vetoed the law. If relief is given, the Imperial Parliament will declare that what is wrong in England is quite right in Australia; nay, that the children of a marriage celebrated in Australia are legitimate though they may be born in England, while the children of a couple in exactly the same relation to each other are bastards if the marriage ceremony has been celebrated in England, though these children were born in Australia, where such marriages are not forbidden.—Toronto Globe.

We shall rise again.

An otherwise well-skilled naturalist we are told, who had never seen a butterfly, from a bare examination of a mere structure of a caterpillar, and finding there the rudiments of another and higher organization, traces of an apparatus as yet unused, from watching its habits and instincts, would have been able to infer that it was not always to occupy that grovelling tenement within which it crawls along. Not surely without some like internal tokens of some great resurrection yet awaiting it, is that whole creation which groans and travails in birth, waiting for the adoption, that is the redemption of the body.—Wm. Hanna.

Using time well.

Two young ministers roomed together. One of them generally slept till about six. The other rose at four or five, and yawned around the room for two or three hours, priding himself considerably on his habit of early rising. The man who rose at six complained that his friend and companion annoyed him. The reply was, "Why Mr. Wesley always rose at four." "Yes said the complainant, "but Mr. Wesley always did something worth doing when he rose."

CORRESPONDENCE.

For the Christian Messenger.

From Rev. John Brown.

NOTES ON BAPTISM.

Dear Editor,—

I awaited with interest the 'Notes on the Scripture Lessons' in the *Witness* and *Westeyan* on "The Early Christian Church" to see how the subject of Baptism would be treated.

With the former the most rigid Baptist could find no fault. It says, "... were baptized, as Peter directed and Jesus commanded; same day; Peter's sermon began about 9 A. M.; at its close the three thousand were baptized and united with the church." This is all it says, with the exception of a question "Is baptism important to salvation? Mark 16. 16. John 3. 5."

Now we will turn attention to the 'Notes' in the *Westeyan*:

1. "BE BAPTIZED" ... "In an open confession of faith in Him as Saviour, and consecration to His service as Lord." ... Unwillingness to the open confession in baptism would shut the door to forgiveness. Luke 14. 26. 27. 33. Baptism does not wash away sin: it only pictures it." With this we have not much fault to find, but beg to commend it, with the previous note, to the careful perusal of those who sprinkle infants. The recognized order here is Belief in Christ—Baptism—Union with the Church; and, risking the charge of blowing our own trumpet, we say that the Baptists are the only people we know of that observe this Primitive, Scriptural, and Divine order.

2. "For the promise is unto you and to your children." "A Jew hearing Peter would certainly understand him as meaning the little ones of his own home, and not merely his posterity in general."

If by "little ones" here the writer (whom for brevity I shall call "W") means such as are capable of repentance and faith, we have no more to say, but what follows shows that not such are intended. Now it will be well to find, if we can, what Peter meant, and this may be done by finding what Joel said, which was:—"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions." Joel 2. 28. Now although Peter does not quote word for word, he would take care that his words would convey the meaning of what he quoted, and being a common-sense man and talking to common-sense people, he evidently saw no need of explaining what was all plain to unprejudiced eyes.

W. says "He (the Holy Ghost) had already convicted them of sin, and the promise is that he will renew their hearts, and make them children of God," and the sequel shows that the promise in Joel was fulfilled in part that day, for "They that (gladly) received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." The passage in Joel had no reference whatever to little ones, Peter and Joel were of the same mind, being directed by the same Spirit, and therefore meant the same thing. The words in Joel (LXX) for sons and daughters are *uioi* and *thugateres*, and the word used by Peter is *teknois* (Dative of *tekna*) and is the same word as is found in John 1. 12. *tekna theou* 'children of God,' and also in Eph. 2. 3. *tekna orges*, 'children of wrath'; hence it is clear that the word means such as were capable of repentance and faith. If Peter had meant little ones or infants, he would have used a word to convey that meaning, such as *brepbos* which means very young children, and is the word translated 'infants' in Luke 18. 15. So when Peter said "your children" (*teknois umoon*) they understood right well what he meant.

Barnes, who will let no verse escape in which he can find a particle of argument for Infant Sprinkling, says on this verse, (Acts 2. 39.) "It does not refer to children as children, and should not be adduced to establish the propriety of Infant Baptism, or as applicable particularly to infants," and Carson says "Nothing but perverseness, and an obstinate attachment to a system, could make our opponents rely on an argument founded on the indefinite phrase, *your children*. Might it not be as plausibly argued from this, that the Spirit

must be given to every individual of the human race, as that children here must mean either all children or infant children?" Just so Dr. Carson, and this is just what W. teaches, also J. M. of Wallace, and is the natural conclusion of their arguments.

The *Westeyan* proceeds:—"They are redeemed by the blood of Christ, and are His from their birth; why should they not grow up with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, as did John the Baptist?" If children have the gift of the Holy Spirit from birth like John the Baptist, and if "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom 11, 29.) then there is not an unredeemed soul on earth. "For the promise is unto you, and to your children and to ALL THAT ARE AFAR OFF." W. says a little further on:—"O! when shall this call be published throughout the world!" "What need W. What need? Why seek to save the saved? Have not the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of His Christ? According to W. the qualification for the gift of the Spirit and Eternal Life;—tell it in Gath, publish it in the streets of Askelon, let all the nations know to earth's remotest bound, is this:—TO BE BORN!! The words of the Lord Jesus "Ye must be born again," to the contrary notwithstanding.

Those who deny baptism to infants are said to "assume a grave responsibility." It will be a good day for those who teach and practise it, and for the church at large when they assume the grave responsibility, and spend their energy in uprooting this Romish error, opposed alike to Scripture and common sense; instead of maintaining it in the face of both, without the shade of a shadow of a ghost of argument to support it. I do not profess to be skilled in controversy, but I will here say, be it egotistic or not, that I will undertake to answer any argument that may be brought in favor of Infant Baptism, only let them be drawn from the Law and the Testimony. The mode and subjects of Baptism are so clear "that wayfaring men though fools shall not err therein," unless they want to.

3. The old argument of baptism in the place of circumcision is again resurrected after it has been repeatedly buried. For the present let us accept it as such, and what do we find? To use the words of Dr. Bannister in 'Temples of the Hebrews'; "If it (circumcision) is to be regarded as the model of baptism, then every person should be a Christian before he is baptized: none but Jews were circumcised, and therefore none but Christians should be baptized; and, as circumcision merely designated and distinguished him who was a Jew before, so baptism is but the public and formal recognition of the fact that the individual was antecedently a Christian, and as such entitled to covenant blessings. . . . Is not the law of Baptism as plain and complete in itself as the law of circumcision? May we not as well go to the Passover for instructions and arguments about the Supper, as to circumcision for instructions and arguments about Baptism? But we will go to the 'law and to the testimony.'" Paul says in Gal. 3. 7, 29. "Know ye therefore that they who are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." When will our friends give this argument up and let it 'Requiescat in pace?' Why try to put breath into a corpse? All the arguments for Infant Sprinkling to be obtained from circumcision and all other Bible sources, our friends of Infant Sprinkling will find written on the thumb nail of their right hand.

4. W. says further, "They (those who received the word) at once put on the badge of discipleship, being baptized &c." They thus entered the open doors of the church. The mode of this baptism is very clear. "So it is, very clear, as clear as anyone could wish, but W. at once sets about mistifying it, by saying, "It was the visible symbol of the heavenly baptism in the falling of the renewing Spirit upon their souls and must have corresponded in its mode." This is a piece of pure sophistry, and would never be resorted to if the writer had any argument worth the name. Whatever Baptism is the symbol of it means dipping, immersion, and NOTHING ELSE. The mighty wind, "whatever it was, FILLED the place where they are sitting:" they

were surrounded by it; in a state of immersion.

I once heard a Presbyterian minister on this side of the Atlantic, pray thus: "O Lord we pray thee that as we hate humbug in everything else, help us to hate humbug in religion too," and a sensible prayer it was, to which I add AMEN and AMEN, for there is a terrible amount of it practised in trying to prop up the human invention of Infant Sprinkling. J. Wesley declared immersion to be the Primitive mode. His followers have run away from him in that matter.

W. proceeds:—"The Spirit and fire descending upon the person, had that day shown how Christ baptizes and also how He meant His ministers to baptize." This is an entirely gratuitous assumption. Here is the simple account of the descent of the Spirit twisted and turned to prove a mere religious farce. The Spirit has very clearly shown a host of places in the N. T. both the mode and subjects, as well as the meaning of baptism, and to conclude from the Spirit's descent and the 'tongues like as of fire' that sprinkling is the mode of baptism, betrays very obtuse moral perception, and shews what even good and (I suppose) learned men will not scruple at doing when hard driven for argument. When will they cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? If I thought such things were really believed, I would write more mildly.

5. Under Lesson 1. W. says what mighty results would follow if all church-members and Sunday School teachers were filled with the Spirit of Pentecost. 2. Let us be glad that the promise of the Holy Spirit is to our CHILDREN. Not one in our Sunday Schools or our families is left out." Here is a darkening of counsel by words without knowledge. Why, the writer has already taught that all children have the Holy Spirit and so here again; and then evidently doubts his own teaching by saying, "What mighty results would follow if it were so. But there's worse coming. "Some of them were baptized children, and Jesus claims them. May they every one to-day receive His grace. Lesson 3. Then if any dislike this view, there is the duty to REPENT and CALL ON the NAME OF THE LORD JESUS for His mercy. Let the teacher not yield this point." If the other be true why yield that? The natural inference, as I see it, is this; that there are two ways to be saved, by *Baptism*, or by *Repentance &c*. The teacher is to inform the children that they belong to Jesus because they were baptized. W. evidently supposes there might be some one in the class wiser than the teacher who might question, or be dissatisfied with that view; in such a case the teacher is supposed to yield to the point, and insist on Repentance &c. It is devoutly to be hoped that in all schools where the "Berean Notes" of the *Westeyan* of April 15 found their way, the scholars were wise enough to resist the Popish idea of salvation by water. Peter said, "REPENT AND BE BAPTIZED EVERY ONE OF YOU, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost:" the *Westeyan* seems to say, "Quite so Peter, you are a very sensible sort of man no doubt, but you don't know everything, you belong to the OLD SCHOOL; we of the 19th century have found out a more excellent way, we live in an age of progress: repentance is very well in its place Peter, but we should like you to know that from three to six drops of water daintly dripped from the tip of an ecclesiastical finger will do the work equally well." But Peter, who is so blind that he cannot see through it, rings out in measured tones the inspired message:—"REPENT AND BE BAPTIZED EVERY ONE OF YOU."

J. BROWN.

For the Christian Messenger.

Mr. Editor,—

As a reader of your much valued paper, and one who prizes its weekly visits very much, and who is a real Baptist (if not a good one) I would just say, that I was much pleased in reading some time ago, "Thoughts for thinkers." By G. S. Baily D. D. And I was led to reflect on reading:

"Ought not you to keep all the commands of Christ as faithfully as any of the New Testament Christians." I say, I was led to reflect upon our Churches, and many of our church members of the present day, and I was led to ask myself the question,

Do we live as consistent now, as professors, and Baptist Church members did in New Testament times?—And if it is not presuming too much, I would like to ask a few questions, for my own benefit, and that of my family.

Did the members of the "New Testament" Baptist Churches dance and play cards? And if it was not admissible then, is it now? I should like very much to have a candid answer to these questions, because if it is admissible now, I shall send my children to dancing school, and also to learn to play cards. Surely if they are not fitted for society without these accomplishments, and it is right, they ought to have them.

I subscribe myself,
AN ENQUIRER.

For the Christian Messenger.

About Pronouns.

Dear Editor,—

In the *Messenger* for April 19th, "A constant Reader" complained of one of your correspondents using the Pronoun "I" so frequently. His meaning probably was that the frequent use of the first person singular smacked of a want of modesty. Dr. Day suggests that by following his example the evil complained of might be avoided. He says: "I use the 'royal' pronoun 'we.'" This may be to Dr. D's taste, but it is questionable if that mends the matter much. Is there not an appearance at least of affectation in the employment of the first person plural—"the royal, we,"—instead of the singular, I. It seems to me Mr. Editor, that in newspaper writing it is the privilege of an editor alone to use the plural, and then only in his representative capacity. The idea of any individual person using "we," and then signing his article by his own singular proper name, or that of any other individual personality, must produce confusion in the mind of the reader, and is therefore at least very undesirable. The use of "I," and "me," seems far less objectionable than "we," and "us," for correspondents in newspaper discussion.

ANOTHER CONSTANT READER.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Non-denominational College.

To the Editor of the *Christian Messenger*.

DEAR SIR,—Many men speak and write as if it were as easy to have a college that shall be free from any preference for one system of Religion over others, as it is to have a non-sectarian bank or railway company. We are told that mathematical studies cannot be made denominational,—that Christian and infidel can unite in the study of classical literature,—that Logic must be the same for Presbyterian and Methodist. These statements are reiterated with many impertinent commonplaces and a few witticisms, and the subject is dismissed with the air of men who are confident that their argument should satisfy all intelligent minds. And it does satisfy many sensible persons, because they are not familiar with the entire subject. Whatever may be said of the nature and tendency of particular studies, it is almost a necessity that a College, or the Arts Department of a university, should exhibit some religious preferences, and exert some denominational influence. Such an organization will have a character derived from the spirit, beliefs and purposes of the men who control it; and this must be one of the most important elements of its power in education. Different institutions will be marked by a difference in this respect, as wide as that between the conditions of life in the tropical and the arctic zone. Whoever discusses university education without a distinct recognition of this fact, either possesses so little intelligence that his opinion on this matter should have no weight, or his zeal for some favorite project is so great that he forgets to be just.

But besides the character of a college, that must be determined by the character of the men at the head of its various departments, there are certain collegiate studies of such a nature that whoever gives instruction in them must, almost of necessity, declare himself on one side or the other of some important questions which are most intimately connected with Religion. For example, how can Protestant and Catholic agree in interpreting the facts of History?