

# The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.  
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WHOLE SERIES.  
Vol. XXI., No. 4.

## Poetry.

### Remembered Days.

I remember a morn behind the mill,  
When blackbirds sang,  
And sheep-bells rang,  
Far off, and all things else were still,  
But the rising beam  
In the pictured stream,  
And the noise of water about the mill.  
I remember a maid in her sweet youth,  
Whose gentle ways  
In village ways  
Were passed in simple works of truth;  
The summer's day  
Sped fast away  
In a dream of love, in the time of youth.  
I remember the spring in garb of green,  
The light heart glee  
That came to me  
With the smile of my love at seventeen;  
Her laugh that went  
Like woodland scent  
To my soul, that time on the daisied green.  
And though I know the days are spent,  
That love was lost  
When came the frost  
At summer's close of my content,  
Yet some joy stays  
In winter days,  
And brings its joyous complement.

Chambers' Journal.

## ASSOCIATIONAL SERMON.

### Christian Ardor.

THE INTRODUCTORY SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, ON MONDAY, JULY 17, 1876, BY THE REV. A. CHIPMAN, AND PUBLISHED BY SPECIAL REQUEST OF THE ASSOCIATION.

"For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause."—2 COR. V. 13.

(Continued.)

### BAPTISTS MOST CONSISTENT.

In regard to at least two of the doctrines enumerated, namely, total depravity and justification by faith, we maintain, without boasting, that Baptists of all Christian denominations are most consistent in their practices, if not most Scriptural in their views.

This, we think, may be easily shown, and should excite at once our gratitude to God and our zealous fidelity in promulgating our distinctive principles.

Our assertion can best be made good in connection with an explanation of our preceptive teachings and practices.

What are our distinctive tenets? We have thought it might not be unprofitable on this occasion to restate them.

Again and again the assertion is trumpeted that the *thin medium of water* is all that constitutes Baptists a separate sect and keeps them alive as such; that the comparative or relative quantity of water is our battle-cry, and forms the great middle wall of partition between us and other Christians at the Lord's Table!

It is a reproach, either on the intelligence or the Christianity of the present day to advance, or to harbor such a misrepresentation of a large and worthy body of Christians. Were a greater depth of water the only, or the real, peculiarity that distinguishes Baptists, they would soon clasp hands with all other Christians at the water's edge, and cease to be known by their present name and as the "sect every where spoken against." But the differences between Baptists and other religious denominations are deeper, higher, broader than any river or sea in nature; the separating barriers do not consist of water, but are constructed of and built upon *fundamental principles*.

Our distinctive tenets might be expressed in one word, *obedience*, or in one short, but magnetic phrase,

### LOYALTY TO CHRIST.

But we may perhaps better designate them under two heads, *Direct personal responsibility to God, and a regenerated church-membership*.

The first of these, namely, direct responsibility to God, includes the supremacy and sufficiency of the Bible, and an unswerving allegiance to it

against all human tradition, ancient or modern; involves unreserved loyalty to Jesus as King in opposition to the prevalent ideas and teachings of non-essentialism, sinceritism, unionism, or a false charity; also, perfect liberty or entire freedom of conscience for all men, young or old, in all relations—parental, conjugal, civil, social. In other words, we maintain that un-deviating obedience, or genuine personal loyalty to Christ's revealed will, as ascertained through an untrammelled study of His inspired Word, and through earnest prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is a Scriptural requirement and a distinguishing Baptist principle.

As Baptist Christians, we contend that no human being has a right to interfere between the soul and God; that no man—clergyman, parent, guardian, husband—can believe for another; or perform the religious duties of another; that the parent or guardian, while truly responsible for the moral training of those in their care, and while under scriptural obligation to nourish them with correct religious instruction and the potent influence of good example, has yet no right compulsorily or unconsciously to commit a child to any course of Christian obligation or action,—each soul occupying an independent position before the Almighty, and being responsible for its own baptism and its own faith. Such passages as these, "He came to his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become sons of God, to them that believe on his name; who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," John i. 11, 12, 13. "Children, obey your parents, in the Lord; for this is right" Ephes. vi. 1. "The liberty given to Christians to marry only in the Lord," 1 Cor. i. 39. And the words, "For one is your Master," Matt. xxiii. 8; together with the exemplary and oral injunction of the Apostles, "We ought to obey God rather than men," Acts v. 29—these passages amply suffice to inculcate the duty of direct responsibility to God, as also the consequent duty of strict non-interference with this accountability.

### INFANT BAPTISM A WRONG.

It readily follows from this unassailable scriptural position that the administration of *infant sprinkling* or *infant immersion* binds the conscience of the child, that it greatly hampers, if it does not take away, the child's free agency, that it places him under obligations he never assumed, and is an unwarrantable interference with the soul's relation to God.

We also maintain that infant immersion, as practised by the Greek Catholic Church, and infant and adult sprinkling, as practised by large bodies of Romanists and Protestants, rest not upon the Bible, but solely upon *human tradition*. We, therefore, reject all such practice and teaching.

On the admitted authority of the church of Rome, by the candid concessions of the best Protestant Pædo-baptist scholars, and as a result of our own earnest unbiassed study, it becomes evident that neither precept, nor example, nor valid inference for infant immersion, nor for infant and adult sprinkling as Christian baptism, can be drawn from the pages of God's Sacred Book.

This combined and impregnable testimony is corroborated by a similar conclusion which has attended an impartial examination of the Lexicons and of Church History.

Ecclesiastical history for thirteen hundred years is very conclusive as to the *mode* of baptism, being well-nigh uniform in its practice. And so long as church history was of any value, that is until it became corrupted by egregious errors in theory and practice, its testimony is unmistakably in favor of the New Testament doctrine, that *believers are the only proper subjects for baptism and church membership*.

Furthermore, in regard to the *mode* or act of baptism, the most extreme Pædo-baptist controversialists of to-day,

Dr. Dale for example, agree almost literally with our worthy representative, Dr. Conant, as to the *lexical meaning and classical use* of baptizo, namely that its secular signification is *immerse*; and their only attempt at a scriptural defence of sprinkling as baptism is their labored yet baseless fabrication that the word baptizo has quite a different signification in the New Testament!—to wit, *pouring or sprinkling*. And yet the New Testament is chiefly a book of plain *history and laws*, in the statement of which words *must* be used and understood in their primary and ordinary senses. Baptists, therefore, are compelled to take issue with the advocates of infant and adult sprinkling, and to remind those brethren, in the immortal words of Chalmers, that the Bible, the Bible only, is "the great Statute Book and Directory" for all Christians, and should be, in fact, a transparent and complete representation of their views and practices.

As to the prevailing ideas that certain commands and institutions of Christ, particularly the mode of baptism, and the terms of admission to the Lord's Supper, are *non-essential*, Baptists have to reply that no command or institution of the Divine Master is non-essential. It is not for the subject to decide which laws are of the most importance; fealty to the Heavenly Lawgiver views them all and each as sacredly binding; and that is a false and sinful charity which subordinates Christ's requirements to unsanctified human sympathies or temporal circumstances.

### BAPTISTS' FRIENDS OF FREEDOM.

Moreover, we have seen that direct responsibility to God is a scriptural injunction binding on all; and that this includes *perfect freedom of the individual conscience*. Now, this involves not alone the right of private judgment, but the duty of personal conviction or persuasion, and corresponding action. It includes the liberty and solemn duty of every one to examine impartially and thoroughly the whole inspired will of God; it includes liberty of conclusion as to the teachings of the Word of God and of judgment or conviction as to one's own duty, liberty of speech, and universal untrammelled freedom of action—that freedom circumscribed alone by the authority of Christ, and inspired by a Spirit of supreme loyalty to Him as King of kings.

We will conclude our remarks on this head by observing that, on the testimony of unprejudiced ecclesiastical and civil historians, it is admitted that "freedom of conscience, unlimited freedom of mind," has from the first been a peculiar trophy of the Baptists. To quote here the noble words of our historian, "It is the proud boast of this denomination, that on its garments rests no drop of martyr blood; that its records are unstained by the atrocities of any persecution, and that from first to last it has been the unflinching advocate of freedom of conscience. Through a long line of ages it has contended against all union of Church and State, and claimed for all men the right to worship God unmolested. It has never asked aid from civil government to support its worship or propagate its doctrines. Its appeal has always been to God, and its means of support the voluntary offerings of the worshippers." Other Protestant denominations and even the Roman church are now resting under the protective shadow of this boon, this trophy of the Baptists, liberty of conscience.

Many portions of the world, in their trade, commerce and social relations, are also to-day deriving great benefit from this blood-bought principle of the Baptists; yet they are often unconscious, or willingly forgetful of the source of their indebtedness for such privileges and advantages.

But we hasten to the SECOND distinguishing mark of the Baptist denomination—

### A REGENERATED CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.

Nothing can be plainer than that

this is a scriptural tenet and requirement. It underlies and frequently rises above the surface of the entire Old Testament, while in the New Testament it becomes transparent.

We here admit that other denominations may in theory claim this position and in practice approximate to it; but Baptists alone consistently maintain that none but regenerated persons are qualified for church-membership or for the ordinances of the Christian church.

Fondly as Baptist parents are attached to their children—and we think we are not behind others in natural affection—we nevertheless believe the clear teaching of God's Word, confirmed as it is by our own practical and painful observation, that infants and adults are not by nature lambs entitled to a place in the fold of Christ's sheep, but that up to the moment when a man undergoes the process of "the new birth," he belongs morally—however young—to the genus of goats; in other words, he is a child of wrath and an heir of perdition. Neither the faith of a parent, nor a few drops, nor oceans of water, can wash away his sins; nothing but the application by the Holy Spirit of the blood and grace of Jesus Christ, which, in the case of those dying in infancy, we believe the Bible authorizes us to conclude is invariably made and thus Heaven attained by such. But baptism or church-membership, without conversion or saving faith in Christ on the part of the candidate himself, whether young or old, makes the Saviour's divine commission read backwards, reverses also the practice of the inspired Apostles, and is opposed to the entire genius or spirit of the New Testament dispensation.

Unregenerated grafting upon Christ's church is, therefore, an untenable theory and a contradictory practice, and immersion of sprinkling without conversion is an unmeaning ceremony, a formal mockery, though, we admit, it is not so intended.

On this account we are jealous also of that phase of Baptist ritualism which appears to some extent at the present day among a people who reject both infant and adult sprinkling, but who place so much stress on what they call Scriptural Baptism as to make it an antecedent condition of pardon and regeneration, rather than a ready result of peace with God, a spontaneous outflow, a willing expression of pardon and conversion. Such teaching and practice we cannot but regard as erroneous, inserting, as it does, the ordinance and efficacy of baptism in the scale with the Holy Spirit's work and Christ's death in saving the soul. While we hold that believers' baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament sacredly binding where possible, on all followers of Christ, and while we believe that a willing submission to baptism according to Christ's example and appointment, certainly affords better evidence of salvation—a more approving conscience, sweeter joy, peace and rest of soul than can be obtained without it, we nevertheless hold tenaciously the grand doctrine of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and of the Lutheran Reformation, that of the soul's justification before God and Christ through faith alone—that faith not by any means a dead faith, but a living, trusting, loving, obedient faith, nevertheless the same faith which justified Abraham before—not after—his remarkable acts of obedience to God.

While, dear brethren, we believe most heartily in loyal obedience to Christ our King in all things, and while we regard a New Testament church as the proper fold for all true Christians, we also maintain as a denomination that a radical change of disposition, or regeneration by the Holy Spirit leading the sinner in genuine penitence and submission to the Cross of Christ for Divine acceptance is the scriptural prerequisite to baptism and to membership in Christ's church on earth.

On this ground also we are compelled to reject infant sprinkling, believing, as the Bible certainly authorizes us,

that Christian baptism is not only a willing profession of faith in Christ and allegiance to Him, or of personal union with and dedication to Christ, but that it is also the door of entrance for regenerated believers into the visible or Christian church; while infant sprinkling, or indeed infant immersion, introduces unconverted material into the Christian church (so called), and therefore mixes the world with Christians and produces just so far a spurious membership.

True, there is a sort of half-way covenant adopted theoretically in some pædo-baptist churches and practically in all of them. But that theory or arrangement neither meets the requirements of scripture nor ends the difficulties in the case. The logical step from infant baptism to church-membership and sacramental communion is a short and inevitable one; the step from infant church-membership by birth to baptismal regeneration is also a short one, and indeed the history of the origin of both infant and adult sprinkling proves conclusively that the rites grew up in the course of the third century out of the doctrine and the fear of infant damnation! Various heresies began to prevail, and among them the opinion that "no one could be saved without baptism, and for that reason the custom arose of baptizing (immersing) infants."

The names of eminent church-historians could be cited to show that that is the true historic origin of the change of the subjects of baptism, and that essentially the same heresy accounts for the first alteration, in the cases of both infants and adults, of the mode or act of baptism from a total immersion to a few drops of water. Thus, the so called visible Christian church became burdened with unconverted material, until at length the unregenerated portion altogether outnumbered the converted, and corrupted the entire body.

Notable exceptions in the line of the true apostolical succession continued to exist and oppose, by precept and example those perversions of Christ's ordinances and corruptions of his church.

### INFANT BAPTISM FAVORS BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.

It is also freely admitted that to-day many sects in Protestant Christendom professedly discard the dogma of baptismal regeneration, both infant and adult. Yet in christening children and in sprinkling adults upon the supposed approach of death—the very article of death—a custom still practically and clerically illustrated—where is the dividing line between the sprinkling and the regeneration? Echo asks Where? And in introducing through the ordinance of sprinkling, unconverted children—whether of believing or unbelieving parents—into a professedly Christian church, where is the definable space, where the perceptible point, between the introductory rite and its regenerating efficacy? Echo again inquires Where?

Is it, then, dear brethren, a real cause of wonder or matter of deserved reproach that we, whose principles and practices are evidently contained and taught in the New Testament, are zealous in witnessing for vital truth against insidious and deadly error; zealous in maintaining in violation Christ's laws, and in advocating the purity of his churches on earth? No, we should be recreant to our high trust, were we lukewarm or time serving.

Other bodies of Christians and the world are to-day largely indebted under God to the existence and fidelity of the Baptist denomination. The Bible stands higher in human regard, liberty of conscience—though not yet perfect, as occasional instances of oppression in our own land even to disinherence still show—yet liberty of conscience is vastly greater to-day, and Christ's Church purer than would have been the case had there been no Baptists in Christendom.

And so long as we seek faithfully to preserve a healthful discipline in our own