

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger. Open Letters on Baptism.

NO. X.

Rev. D. D. CURRIE:— My Dear Sir,— It is my purpose now to call your attention to certain inaccurate statements found in your Catechism with reference to the Bible. I may also in passing along notice some in connexion with other matters. This is not intended as a review of your book; that would take more time and patience than I have at command; but simply an attempt to expose a few of the many and grievous errors found therein.

On page 6 we find the following question and answer:—

“Did the Mosaic ritual require that the priests should be washed with water? Yes. And that ritual also shows that God’s method of cleansing or washing the person is by the visible mode of sprinkling.” Turning to the ritual as found in Exodus xxix. 1-7, which you partly quote to prove your statement, we do not find the word sprinkle once mentioned; but this we do find, “And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water.” You also refer to Ex. xl. 12-15, where also sprinkle is not found, but the words as just quoted. The Hebrew word is *rachats*, which you want to turn into sprinkle, but you cannot do it. It means to wash or cleanse the surface of any object, and when used as a noun it means a bath, or a bathing or washing, in which form it is found in the 30th verse of Ex. xl. In the English Bible it is in the verb form “to wash,” but a noun in Hebrew, which might be translated “a bathing,” or “a washing.” The word in noun form is also found twice in 2 Chron. iv. 6 (and other places), “He made also ten lavers, and put five on the right hand, and five on the left, to wash (noun) in them; such things as they offered for the burnt offering they washed in them, but the sea was for the priests to wash in” (noun). Yet, in the face of such plain teaching you say that the washing was done by sprinkling, and mark, the very passages which you quote to prove that the ritual required sprinkling, do not even contain the word, nor can the word as it stands in the original be made to mean it.

Page 7. You say, “There is no passage of Scripture to show that any person was ever washed or cleansed by immersion, though the priests and all the people were baptized.” Here you most directly deny a plain statement of Scripture; for Naaman we are told “dipped himself seven times in Jordan . . . and he was clean,” 2 Kings v. 14. It will not do for you to say that dipping and immersion are not identical, for on page 16 (Catechism) you ask, “What is immersion?” and answer . . . “dipping, plunging, overwhelming,” and strange to say, on page 68, you say, “I was dipped into water;” and “I was immersed in water” express ideas essentially diverse. Wherein you see you contradict yourself as well as the Bible. Other passages could be brought to disprove your statement, but one is enough, and I am anxious to end this matter as soon as I can, but not till I have finished what I have undertaken.

P. 8. “The Scriptural washing of a person is always effected in connexion with the act of sprinkling.” It may suffice to shew the erroneousness of this statement by again referring you to Naaman, also to Leviticus xiv. 8, 9, “And he that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean, &c.” See also Mark vii. 4, John xiii. 10; also Concordance under “Wash.”

Same page. “By what passages of Scripture is it proved that the heart and flesh are made clean or purified by the act of sprinkling?” Let me ask you before I give you answer, Where did you get the Romish idea which teaches that the heart is cleansed by the sprinkling of water? Your reply to your question is Ezekiel xxxvi. 25, “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean.” You seem to conclude from that verse that regeneration or the cleansing of the heart by God is effected in connexion with sprinkling. I can put no other

construction on your words. But we will follow out the passage, “from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.” Answer me this question, my brother, Are the blessings here promised the result or consequence of sprinkling with water? Did the Lord mean that these blessings were dependent upon the sprinkling with water? And do those who have been sprinkled with water shew by their life that they have experienced the above named blessings, any more than those who have not?

The Church of England teaches that when children are baptized (so-called) they are “made members of Christ, children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven.” The Rev. S. A. Walker, of Bristol, G. B., a clergyman of that church, whom I well know, says, “It is notorious that the great majority of the baptized members of the Church of England are ‘enemies of the cross of Christ,’ many of them not having ‘the form of godliness.’”

You and they (Episcopalians) teach, if your words mean anything, that the cleansing of the heart is connected with the outward act of sprinkling. Now let us see what the Scripture says:— . . . “according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” Titus iii. 5. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.” Eph. ii. 5, and other passages to the same effect. Am I not right in calling a book *dangerous* which teaches that the heart is cleansed by the sprinkling of water on the body? and that by the application of a few drops of water on the forehead the subject is introduced into the kingdom of Christ, and certain covenant blessings are sealed to him (which blessings I have never yet seen named) whereby those who believe and trust in it are in danger of falling into a most fatal snare.

Further, that passage in Ezekiel has no reference whatever to the Christian dispensation, but to the house of Israel, as any one may see who reads the chapter. After the quotations I have given above (Ezekiel xxxvi. 25-27) other blessings are named, such as the increase of corn, fruit, &c. Does the corn and fruit of Pedobaptists grow more luxuriously than that of Baptists? After naming these blessings the Lord says, “Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel.” So you see that whole passage refers to the house of Israel, and there is nothing whatever in it to justify your statement, or by which it may be made to apply to the Christian dispensation. Nor indeed is there anything to show that a literal sprinkling is meant.

P. 9. “Purge me with hyssop (as the law required, Lev. xiv., that is, take hyssop, and dip it in water, and sprinkle me), and I shall be clean. wash me (in this way) and I shall be (spiritually) whiter than snow.” Here you make David to ask God, whom as you know he is addressing, to take hyssop and dip it in water, and sprinkle him. Then you make David to say that if the Lord would wash him in that way, by sprinkling water on him, he should be spiritually whiter than snow. Why do you make David guilty of such utter folly? How can you dare to put words into his mouth in the way you do, and by your perversion of God’s word teach what is directly opposed to it, and doctrines that smell of Rome as strongly as burning sulphur does of brimstone?

On the same page you quote Heb. x. 22, thus, “Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed (that is, sprinkled) with pure water.” Here you plainly deny the plain statement of the passage, which says “washed,” and is in strict accordance with the original, yet you say, “that is, sprinkled.” If it is sprinkled, why do we not find it in the verse? We should at least expect to find in the original a word that means sprinkle, the word translated sprinkle in the first part of the verse is *errantismenoi*, from *rantizo*, to sprinkle; and if, as you say,

“washed” is sprinkled, we shall expect to find the same word in the original as is translated washed in our version; but instead of that we find *leloumenoi*, from *louo*, which according to Grove means “to wash, bathe,” and never anywhere does it mean sprinkle. Please take a note of that. On the same page you proceed further in your perversion of plain Scripture statements, and give the same verse another construction:— “Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies sprinkled (that is, baptized) with pure water.” Just before, you have it, “. . . our bodies washed, that is, sprinkled,” now it is “sprinkled, that is, baptized, &c.” Can perversion of Scripture be more complete?

P. 13. “The lexicons agree in giving wash as the most prominent meaning of baptizo.” This, also, is a clear perversion of truth and falsification of lexicons again. (You seem to have a strong fancy for that sort of thing.) And of the ten you profess to quote from, not one of them does as you say. Seven give immerse as the most prominent meaning; and of the remaining three, the manufactured lexicographer Cole gives wash as a secondary meaning; Dwight, from the same factory, does not mention the word, and Gases gives it as a secondary meaning, and yet you say the lexicons give wash as the most prominent meaning.

P. 14. “There is no passage in the Bible where the obvious meaning of baptism is immersion, and may not be sprinkling or pouring.” In the Greek of 2 Kings v. 14 the verb *ebaptizato*, from *baptizo*, is found, and in the English the word is *dipped*, and to dip, according to your Catechism is to immerse, and yet in the very face of this you say “there is no passage in the Bible where the obvious meaning of baptism is immersion.”

Same page. “Is there any Scripture to show that to baptize necessarily means to sprinkle upon, and cannot possibly mean to immerse?” Then comes one of the feeblest attempts to prove the same as it was ever my lot to read. It is taken from Leviticus xiv. 4-6, where you say, “It is manifestly impossible that this baptism could have been by immersion.” Oh, very well. This is it then, the Bible says that the priest was to dip the bird, &c., in the blood of the dead bird, and you say, “No, it cannot be done, it is ‘manifestly impossible’ that such a thing can be done, the bird, &c., is to be sprinkled in the blood of the dead bird.” By the Bible we learn it was dipped, by you we learn it was something else, that is, sprinkle, for you maintain that *baptizo* in the Sept., translated dip in our version, does not mean dip, but sprinkle. And further, to shew your readers your skill in making the Bible to mean what you want it to mean, you misquote a part of the above passage. As it reads the priest is to dip the living bird, &c., in the blood of the dead bird, &c., you alter that and say, “He is then to baptize (it is dip in the English, but it is baptize in the Greek) the living bird, &c., with the blood of the dead bird.” Here, with a dexterity and sleight of hand peculiar to yourself you change ‘in’ into ‘with’; and having already changed dip into sprinkle, this verse, according to you should read, “He is then to sprinkle the living bird, &c., with the blood of the dead bird.” I have just as much right to say that the priest is to sprinkle the bird in the blood, &c., and dip it upon him that is to be cleansed, &c., as you have to say what you have.

From whence did you get a special indulgence giving you liberty thus to deal with the Word of Truth? You seem to treat the Bible as the potter does the clay, fashioning it according to your own taste. Why do you change what is written into what is not written? Instead of conforming your views to the Bible you seek to conform the Bible to your views.

P. 15. “Naaman went and baptized himself seven times—that is, he sprinkled himself seven times. He did not immerse himself.” The Bible says “he dipped himself;” you say, “No, he did not; he sprinkled himself.” You will never find in the whole round of Greek literature, sacred or profane, a solitary instance where baptize may be lawfully translated sprinkle. Nor one. If you or any one else can, let it be produced: Passor, in his Greek-Latin lexicon, Ed.

1650, translates the words (in 2 Kings v. 14) ‘*kai ebaptizato en too Jordane*,’ by ‘*et immersit se in Jordane*,’ which is a faithful Latin translation of the Greek, and in exact accord with the English. You are the first I have known who said that Naaman sprinkled himself, and I don’t doubt but you will be the last. Tell us some day when it was, and why, you put yourself into the power of some evil spirit of error, and allowed yourself to be charmed into the love of perverting truth and plainly denying what God in His word has plainly declared? Yours as usual, JOHN BROWN.

Paradise, Nov. 18th, 1878.

For the Christian Messenger. Golden Wedding in Truro.

Dear Brother,— The rarity of a golden wedding makes the event, when it does occur, worth chronicling, especially when such interest gathers about it as was associated with the one of which I am about to write.

Last Tuesday evening John King, Esq., of Truro, and wife celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of their marriage. Mr. and Mrs. King were married Nov. 18th, 1828.

PRESENTS. Mrs. King, for reasons of her own, requested the children to make no presents, but I presume the prohibition did not extend to her husband, as he made her the recipient on that occasion of an elegant gold watch and chain.

The children, however, united in the presentation of a large family album containing the portraits of father and mother and their children and the husbands and wives of those married, cabinet size, and the portraits of their grandchildren—*carte de visite* size. A silver plate on the cover contained the following inscription:— “1828—1878. JOHN & SARAH ANN KING. A tribute of filial affection. Nov. 18th, 1878.”

There have been fifteen children, eleven sons and four daughters, of whom eight sons and three daughters are now living. All were present but two sons, one of whom was detained at home by severe illness, the other, on his way, was stopped at Port Hawkesbury by a storm and sent a telegram to that effect. Twenty-three out of twenty-eight grandchildren are now living. Two of these were also present. EXERCISES OF THE EVENING. There was no formal programme. I was told there was a tea-dinner at 5½, P. M., at which the family only were present consisting of fifteen persons.

The guests, three in number, arrived at 8 o’clock, and as soon as they were seated with the family the venerable groom of fifty years ago addressed the company, giving reminiscences and incidents of the past 50 years. Mrs. King then followed in a tender touching address. Then the children in turn, beginning with the eldest. The addresses were full of interest. T. M. King, of Antigonish, read a poem which he had prepared for the occasion entitled, “The Jubilee.” Miss Annie King also read a beautiful original poem, entitled, “The Home.” An exhaustive paper prepared by E. D. King, of Halifax, was read by the author entitled the “Family Record.”

The writer, honored to be a guest, was called upon for an address and spoke briefly congratulating alike parents and children. The family and guests were now called to the dining room, where a grand jubilee supper awaited them, and, it being 1 o’clock, that part of the programme was by no means unappreciated.

The after supper toasts were as follows:— (1) “The bride and groom of fifty years ago.” Proposed by E. D. King, in a neat speech, and responded to heartily by the groom.

(2) “The absent members of the family.” Proposed by the groom and responded to in fitting terms by T. M. King.

(3) “The agricultural interests of the family.” Proposed by T. M. King and responded to by W. D. King.

(4) “The commercial interests of the family.” Proposed by W. D. King and responded to by Richard M. King, of Halifax.

(5) “The professional interests of the family.” Proposed by Richard M. King and responded to by E. D. King.

(6) “The engrafted members of the family.” Proposed by E. D. King and responded to by L. S. Payzant, of Halifax.

(7) “The bachelor and spinsters of the family.” Proposed by L. S. Payzant and responded to by W. P. King.

(8) “Our guests.” Proposed by W. P. King and responded to by the writer.

(9) “Our next jubilee.” Responded to by singing the “Sweet bye-and-bye.” The interesting meeting closed by prayer and the benediction by the writer.

SOME FACTS REFERRED TO BY SPEAKERS.

(1) The parents and all the children are members of the household of faith, active members of Baptist churches in the different localities where they reside.

(2) They are all total abstainers, and interested in the suppression of the liquor traffic. The father set the example 40 years ago.

(3) Another interesting fact was brought out in the remarks of one of the speakers, viz., there has never been any estrangement of any kind between members of the family. What silken bands must have been thrown around them to bind them together in their youth.

(4) They are all united on the great political questions of the day.

(5) Lastly, it was palpably brought to the surface in the addresses of both father and children that the family, under God, owe largely their present position and future prospects in this world and the world to come to the gentle guiding hand of their mother.

Mother made home so attractive when they were young, mingling in their innocent games and sports in the evening, originating new ones, culling from books interesting selections for them to read, that they had no desire to spend their evenings abroad and were thus saved from falling into bad company. And if at any time any one of them became refractory and the ordinary modes of discipline failed, then the mother would take that one into her room and both would kneel, and that maternal heart would be lifted in earnest prayer to God, a means which never failed. Will other mothers go and do likewise.

Yours very truly, J. E. GOUCHER. Truro, Nov. 23rd.

In Memoriam.

MRS. LYDIA PERRY,

wife of Bro. Alfred Perry, died at her residence in Maitland, Yarmouth Co., on the evening of the 1st inst.

Some ten years ago several Baptist ministers were passing through Beaver River on their way home from the Association. Among them was Rev. W. H. Porter. The brethren felt the need of ministerial assistance and prevailed upon Bro. Porter to tarry with them for a time and hold a series of meetings. The result was a glorious revival, in which, among others converted to God, were Bro. H. N. Perry, now pastor of the Baptist Church at Chegoggin, and his brother’s wife, our deceased sister.

Since that time Sister Perry has been a faithful working member of the church, always at her post in conference and prayer meetings and ready to do all in her power to help forward the cause of Christ.

Being one of the sweet singers she was always anxiously looked for and gladly welcomed to our social gatherings and as she “had a mind to work” she was regarded by her sisters as a leader. Her piety was known to all and her walk and conversation ever bore testimony that she “had been with Jesus.”

Our loss is felt deeply, and genuine sympathy is expressed for our dear brother and his two motherless little ones.

The funeral was attended by a very large number of friends of this and neighbouring communities, and no one who looked upon that large and deeply moved audience could fail to see the force of the truth that “the memory of the just is blessed.”

The occasion was improved by the pastor from the words 1 Peter i. 3, 4. We tender to our bereaved brother and relatives our heartfelt sympathies. Com. by G. B. T.