

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.
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Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, June 5, 1878.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XLII, No. 23.

Poetry.

Sabbath Evening Thoughts.

"Why will ye die?"
Has sounded on your careless ear,
But all in vain; be wise to-day;
'Tis crime to wait, death to delay;
For days are swiftly fleeting by:
"Why will ye die?"

"Why will ye die?" is asked again,
By Him who long has asked in vain;
This is the time, return, relent,
And your wayward life repent;
Your Father calls you from on High,
"Why will ye die."

"Why will ye die?" Heaven asks again,
While earth takes up the high refrain,
The wondering angels hear the song,
All nature's voice the notes prolong,
And earth and Heaven doth still reply,
"Why will ye die?"

Halifax, May 26, 1878.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.
Baptismal Controversy.

Dear Editor,—

A short time since I sent the following letter to Rev. D. D. Currie:—

PARADISE, ANnapolis Co. N. S.
April 19, 1878.

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER,—

Will you allow me to call your attention to an extract from the Toronto BIBLE INDEX in the CHRISTIAN VISITOR of Nov. 28th, 1877? It has reference to page 12 of your CATECHISM OF BAPTISM, where you quote from a number of Greek lexicons, and give (among others) sprinkle as one meaning of baptizo. This writer says that not one of them gives "SPRINKLE as a definition of it—ABSOLUTELY NOT ONE. He also says that "Cole and Dwight are not lexicographers at all." Now, brother, this is what I would like to know. If you would favour me with a reply, is there any ground for such a denial? If these lexicographers give sprinkle as one meaning of baptizo, I will, (this late) write to the VISITOR and deny what this writer affirms; and also to the BIBLE INDEX. There is evidently a misunderstanding somewhere. By replying to this you will bestow a favour on

Yours very truly,
JOHN BROWN,
Baptist Minister.

On May 11th I received a note from Mr. Currie acknowledging the receipt of my letter, and in reply thereto he says: "It has seemed to me advisable that I should answer your enquiries in a somewhat elaborate way, in a series of open letters in the Wesleyan of Halifax &c." On opening the Wesleyan of May 11th I found my letter to Mr. Currie published under the heading "OPEN LETTERS ON BAPTISM," with an attempt to answer it, in which among other things Mr. C. says, "In a few open letters addressed to you I will endeavour to shew some of the errors of the Baptist Creed &c." I sat down and wrote a reply to Mr. C. and sent it to the Wesleyan supposing that as these letters are to be addressed to me, I should of course have the privilege of replying in the same paper. The Editor however refused to publish it, which leads me to address, through the Messenger, with your permission Mr. Editor, the following:—

Open Letter to the Editor of the Wesleyan.

REV. SIR,—

When I sent you my reply to Mr. Currie's letter in the Wesleyan of May 11th, I hardly expected you to publish it; so according to my faith so it has been unto me. I do not forget when I was discussing the question of baptism with a venerable minister of the Presbyterian Church in the PRESBYTERIAN WITNESS, in which paper full liberty was given to us both, and from which paper I think, dear sir, you may learn the lesson of fair play; and when the Editor of that paper wished the controversy to be discontinued after a certain time, and the Presbyterian brother sent his communications to you: you very readily published them, but when I sent mine you refused them insertion. I felt at the time that you acted unjustly, I was therefore prepared for a second refusal; although this time it appeared to me even more reasonable that you should publish my replies to Mr. Currie, which you yourself admit as right, but make an excuse for not doing so, which is dreadfully thin. You say, "Ordinarily, any one addressed by name in the columns of a paper would be entitled to the privilege

of replying; but we inserted Mr. Currie's articles not as controversy but as the correspondence of a Methodist minister." You may insert it as "controversy" or "correspondence" which you please, and try to excuse yourself as best you can, but you will have some difficulty I fear to convince even the readers of the Wesleyan that you are acting justly in the matter. You say again "Mr. Brown would scarcely expect the Baptist papers to publish Mr. Currie's letters." Under the present circumstances I certainly should not, I feel it is quite as much as I can reasonably ask that the Messenger publish my replies, but I can assure you dear sir, that if Mr. Currie had addressed a private letter to me, and I had published that letter in the Messenger or VISITOR with a reply thereto, and especially one so highly unsatisfactory as Mr. C.'s to me, and a promise of a series of letters addressed to Mr. C., and he had thought fit to reply to such letters—that either of those papers would with all readiness have inserted such reply.

But, dear sir, you inadvertently and unintentionally give us the key to your refusal, in these words:—"It would never do to open our columns to the sinuosities of a discussion of BAPTIZO. Well from your standpoint, I am much of the same opinion, and so long as you fear to trust your readers with what can be said in defence of believers' baptism and against infant, or adult sprinkling, 'IT WOULD NEVER DO' no indeed good sir 'IT WOULD NEVER DO.' And I venture to say that whatever fears may possess you: the Messenger and VISITOR, did circumstances require, would have no fears whatever of allowing their readers to see all that may be said on both sides.

Error has always feared the truth, but sooner or later it will have to flee before it as the darkness before the rising sun. And as surely as infant baptism and sprinkling arose out of the darkness of error and superstition, so sure will it be overcome and borne down by the power of the Word of the Lord, and the light of the Sun of Righteousness. The time may be distant, but IT IS SURE TO COME. It needs no prophet to predict that.

Yours very truly,
J. BROWN.

The following is what was sent to the Wesleyan in reply to Mr. Currie. The insertion of which was refused:—
Open Letters on Baptism.

REPLY NO. 1.

Rev. D. D. Currie, Methodist Minister.

DEAR BROTHER.—It was with some surprise that I observed my letter to you of April 19th in the Wesleyan of May 11th, concerning page 12 of your Catechism. I have no objection to your thus publishing it, and hope you will give a speedy and satisfactory answer. I did hope that you would at once have refuted the charge made against you of falsifying the lexicons. One single word "Yes" or "No" would have answered my letter, and you speak of a comprehensive reply which will require the discussion of some points not directly raised therein; and in your private communication, you speak of answering my enquiries "in a somewhat elaborate way in a series of open letters in the Wesleyan of Halifax." I made no enquiries, but asked a very simple question, namely, if there is any ground for the denial made by the writer in the Bible Index? and one word would have answered the question. There was no necessity for anything elaborate, still I shall look with interest for your answer in whatever form or length you wish to give it. If you have falsified the lexicons, you should own up at once, and if you have been falsified you should with equal speed prove yourself innocent. A charge of this nature should not be neglected an hour, otherwise people will begin to suspect something is wrong.

Since writing to you I have obtained a copy of Groves' lexicons (one which you quote as giving *sprinkle* as one definition of *baptizo*), and for your sake I am sorry to say he does not give that word under *baptizo*, he does give it under *bapto*, but *baptizo* is the word in question, and is the word that is *always* used in the original in connection with the ordinance of baptism, and the word *bapto*, NEVER.

You ask in your Catechism, page 12 "How do you ascertain the classical meaning of the word *baptizo*?" and answer, "By the best lexicons of the Greek language." "What are some of its significations as given in the best Greek lexicons?" You then quote from ten of the best lexicons of the Greek language, of these eight give *sprinkle*; but according to the Bible Index not one of them does; that Suidas gives no definition of *baptizo*, and that

Cole and Dwight are not lexicographers at all. I have Groves' lexicon and your catechism now open before me, you say, page 13 "Groves defines it (*baptizo*) "To dip, plunge, immerse, wash, wet, moisten, stain, sprinkle, steep, imbue, dye, colour;" turning to the lexicon I find these definitions of *baptizo*: to dip, immerse, immerge, plunge; to wash, cleanse, purify; to baptize; to depress, humble, overwhelm," and in the middle voice, "to wash one's self, to bathe; to sink, faint, be dejected." Now we turn to the verb *bapto*, and what do we find? The *very words* are given as the meaning of *bapto* which you say Groves gives as the meaning of *baptizo*, the only difference is you have changed the order of the words.

Now brother Currie it seems to me that before you stand clear before your readers, you have to prove the following:—

1. That the ten you name are lexicographers.
2. That they give the definitions of *baptizo* which you say they do.
3. That Cole and Dwight are among the best Greek lexicographers.
4. That Suidas defines *baptizo*, and that one definition is *sprinkle*.

It will not do for you to defend yourself on the ground that *baptizo* comes from *bapto*, which is quite true, for the word in question is *baptizo* not *bapto*. With the latter word we have nothing now to do.

I would here ask the reader what is his impression of the meaning of the word *baptizo* from the definitions given by Groves? And if not one of those which Mr. Currie quotes as the best Greek lexicographers (provided the Bible Index be correct) gives *sprinkle* as one meaning of *baptizo*, but that they ALL give "IMMERSE" or some equivalent word as a definition of it." I ask, On which side does the argument turn? In favor of dipping, or sprinkling? I should be greatly obliged Bro. C. if some time in the course of your correspondence, you will be good enough to put these sentences into Greek: "I dip thee in water," I sprinkle thee with water," I wash thee with water," "I pour water upon thee," they are very simple sentences and as a Greek scholar you will find no difficulty. Should you require it you will find an English-Greek vocabulary at the end of Groves' lexicon. You say that your catechism has been repeatedly but unsuccessfully assailed." I was about to say that some people do not know when they are beaten, but that would savour of uncharitableness; I will say however, that I had begun an attack on it, but resolved to hold fire till this little skirmish is over, should I then think it necessary to continue, I feel that it will be very easy thing indeed to raise that citadel, and to shew that the fortification from foundation to parapet is of very inferior material indeed.

You quote seven representative Baptist writers, who, you say, give eight different definitions of the meaning of *baptizo*. I presume the words are these: dip, sink, plunge, immerse, imbathe, whirl, immerge, submerge." Now my good friend Currie, let me ask you how wide is the difference between their meanings? Do they not all mean what Baptists always mean, whatever term they use, when they speak of baptism, namely, to put under water? It is superfluous to mention the taking out again as every one knows this must be done of necessity, the very nature of the ordinance demands it as well as the laws of God and man.

You also say Dr. Conant in his work gives sixty-three quotations from Classic Greek authors, and translates the word in question, immerse ten times, whirl forty-five times; and overwhelm eight times, adding, "ten times it is immerse against fifty-three times not immerse." Well now really this is splitting hairs very finely indeed. Is not the same idea conveyed in the three cases, namely to cover or cause to be covered with water? You say Alexander Campbell gives twenty-four quotations in which the word *baptizo* occurs; but he renders it *sink* ten times, *overwhelm* ten

times, and *overflow* once, adding "Not in one instance does he render it *dip*." What of that? I ask, is not the same idea again conveyed, that of covering or causing to be covered with water? And even if there be some apparent difference in the definitions above given, they are not to be compared with the inconsistencies of our Pedobaptist brethren, who say it means to dip, and to pour, and to sprinkle, and to wash. Where appears the widest difference? gentle brother? And who are most united and consistent in their testimony? Does it not suggest Matt. vii. 4. "Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye, and behold a beam is in thine own eye?"

You ask, "May not a pen be dipped in ink a thousand times without being once immersed therein?" Yes, certainly, but dipping a pen in ink for the purpose of writing, and dipping a person in water for the purpose of baptizing him, are quite different matters; and your question as well as that about the ship plunging amid the waves is just a little playing with words. I pray you Bro. C. if you have any substantial arguments, bring them along, and use only such as you have confidence in the power of.

Let us, just for argument's sake, suppose that you and I are taking a walk along the Petocodiac river on a hot day and I say to you "Brother Currie let us take a dip in the river, it will refresh us," "Good for you," you reply," you Baptists are always suggesting something or other for our benefit." Well we go down and you are soon undressed and in the water, you take a good plunge, but on looking round to see where I am, you discover me on my hands and knees dipping my head into a little pool, or sprinkling a little on my forehead;—you shout out, "Brown what on earth are you up to? I thought you came down for a bath." "My dear fellow" I reply so I did, and am I not bathing, don't you see me dip myself in this pool, you don't suppose that dip means that nonsense that you are at do you? If I dip my head, or sprinkle my forehead it amounts to the same thing. When you dip a pen in ink you don't dip it all do you? and you know that in your book page 6 you teach that in the Mosaic ritual to bathe meant to *sprinkle*, and that *baptize* which means to dip, means *sprinkle* as well, so you see I am taking a bath sacerdotally and classically." What would you say brother C.? Why you would be disposed to say that I was either joking or did not know the meaning of the simplest words; when I should look you very straightly in the face and say what Nathan said unto David. But to be serious; if you are really in earnest in this pen and ink matter let me quote a few words from Dr. Gale:—"What should we say of the foreigner who should allege that the English word *dip* when applied in the expression "They dipped the man in the river" does not necessarily imply that they dipped him all over, because he finds from the expression "*dip a pen in ink*," it is applied when only a part is dipped "A writer must be perverse indeed who indulges himself in such quibbles, yet some of the gravest and most learned writers have urged this objection. . . . But granting to the authors of this objection all their demands, I hope we shall find them dipping at least a part of the body of the person baptized." Mark well the following from the same author. "It is strange to find Christians arguing that the word, though it signifies to immerse may be applied when only a part is dipped; yet in their own practice, dipping neither in whole nor in part, but substituting pouring or sprinkling in its place."

You say again Bro C. that if I visit you this season you will shew me a bathing tub wherein I may recline, and wherein water may be either sprinkled or poured upon me until I shall be thoroughly immersed therewith," and you add that "if I hold that immersion is baptism," I can there be immersed by sprinkling or pouring. And this will be an immersion without

either dipping or plunging. I would very much like to pay you a visit, as I hear you are a *real fine fellow*, but I fear I shall not be able but if you you should feel like coming to see me, I should be most happy to see you and to baptize you after the true apostolic model, in our beautiful river, you know of course what that was. But to return to the "tub." You say in one part of your letter "Special attention should be given to definitions in our search after truth." Keep that remark before you all the way, it will save a good deal of writing. If you look at the definition of *immerse*, you will find it means to put into water (or other liquid), which would not be the case if I should get into your empty "tub" and you sprinkle or pour water on me till I am covered with it. Is that the way you manage it Bro. C? Most people fill the "tub" and then get into it; to get in and sit or recline till there is enough water sprinkled or poured for you to bathe in is rather a slow process, and one which you do not adopt, I trow. Taking you upon your own ground I will say that if you sprinkle or pour water on children or adults to the extent that you promise to sprinkle or pour it upon me in the "tub," I should for one let the question lie on the shelf for a while, and try to come to some kind of compromise.

Looking "at some of the absurdities of Baptist definitions," as you call them, you come to the following conclusions:

1. Dipping, plunging, immersing, are not synonymous terms.
2. Each of those terms has a meaning distinct from the other.
3. Each of those terms has a meaning peculiar to itself."

The 3rd point is tautology, it means precisely the same as point 2.

You have stated that "dipping, plunging and immersing are not synonymous terms," and that each of those terms has a meaning distinct from the other, "let me call your attention to page 16 of your Catechism, question 43." What is immersion? The act of putting into a fluid below the surface, dipping, plunging, overwhelming." Which are we to believe Bro. C. your definition in the Wesleyan, or that in the Catechism? For you see they are totally different from each other? And how will your definition of immersion in the Catechism harmonise with the "tub" theory? I think if you open your eyes brother, you will find yourself under the "tub." I wonder how you will get out?

You ask "Why may we not have a definition of the meaning of *baptizo* at once comprehensive and logical? Such a definition is possible." I presume by this that you can see your way to give such a definition, and I hope you will soon give it us, if indeed you have not done so already in your Catechism. We say *baptizo* means to immerse, and you say immersion means "The act of putting into a fluid below the surface, dipping, plunging, overwhelming." You must beware Bro. C. or you will commit yourself, and your friends will begin to think you are a Pedobaptist without the Pedo. If however you have any fresh light as to the meaning of the word in question it will be welcomed by not a few, and by none more than

Yours truly,
J. BROWN.

Paradise, May 14, 1878.

For the Christian Messenger

Farewell Address.

THE LOCKPORT BAPTIST CHURCH
TO REV. EDWARD WHITMAN.

Dear Brother,—

There are some occasions in life in which words fail to express the feelings of the heart, and this hour marks one of them.

Six years ago you came among us and engaged in the work of the ministry and at this time we look back over that period and with deep feelings of gratitude to God, note the growth which this Church has enjoyed under