

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.
Vol. XXIII., No. 32.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, August 7, 1878.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XLII., No. 32.

Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger

"Lead me, My Saviour."

Lead me, my Saviour, lead me,
The way is dark and lone,
And thorns my feet are piercing;
I cannot walk alone.

I cannot bear my sorrows;
Oh, God I'm weak and faint,
My heart is dying 'neath its load,
Heal thou my soul's complaint.

I cannot live without Thee!
I would not, dare not, die
Without Thy tender mercy,
Thy loving presence nigh.

I would not cross death's river,
Without a Heavenly Guide;
I would not tread the gloomy vale
Unless by Jesus' side.

Then help me, oh, my Father,
To lay my burthens down
Beneath the cross of Jesus,
And win a starry crown.

Help me to work for Heaven,
Help me to love Thy Son,
Help me to 'Life immortal,'
When mortal life is done.

MRS. ADA HOLLOWAY.

Sherbrooke, Guysboro, Co. N. S. July,
22nd, 1878.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Open Letter to the Editor of the
Wesleyan.

My Dear Sir,

And now my good brother, you must not be frightened when I tell you that you, the Editor of the *Wesleyan* of Halifax, the representative of a large number of good, learned and influential people; occupying as you do, two of the most important positions a man can occupy, and who should therefore be fully abreast of the age: you sir, are about sixteen hundred and twenty-seven years behind the age! Your ideas of baptism appear to me to be precisely those held in the time of Novatian A. D., 251. You maintain that under no circumstances must baptism be put aside. The same idea prevailed then. You say to me "You emphasize the great Apostolic Commission, but you refuse to carry it out in all particulars." He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." You insist that this settles the question of adult believer's baptism. But there have been instances to my knowledge, in which you neither could nor would baptize believers on profession of their faith. I refer to sick and dying penitents. What provision have you for such cases? None at all! And yet the Commission stands, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

Now what does all this amount to but your belief that baptism is in some way connected with salvation, and must not under any circumstances be dispensed with. You are quite in keeping with the views of John Wesley & Rev. D. D. Currie, and many others. (I hope John Wesley will forgive me for placing his name so near the author of the famous Catechism.) To the sick and dying it must be administered somehow, if not in the Scriptural way, then in some other, but by no means must any person pass out of time unbaptized. You say we make no provision for such cases as sick and dying penitents. No, we do not, but God does, and if we cannot do what he commands, and in the way he commands, he does not expect us to. In his word I read "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not," 2 Cor. x. 12.

If a person when sick or dying believe in Christ and would be baptized if it were possible, yet cannot be, then the Lord will accept the will for the deed, even as he did in the case of David in the matter of building the temple. The Lord said to him "Whereas it

was in thine heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart," 1 Kings viii. 18. On the same principle where there is the willingness but not the opportunity to be baptized whether it be sickness, or climate, or any other circumstance, the same words with but slight alteration might be applied "Whereas it was thine heart to be baptized in my name, thou didst well it was in thine heart." I suppose if you Brother Nicolson had been in David's place, and not being able to build the temple, you would have made a little temple of clay or putty, on the principle which first gave rise to pouring and sprinkling as a substitute for baptism; namely, if we cannot do this as the Lord commanded we will get as near to it as we can. David did not make a toy temple as a substitute for the temple itself, but you sir, and your denomination with others have a toy substitute for God's command to immerse, forgetting, or not knowing that God's ordinances must be observed in his way or not at all; and that when or where they cannot be, he requires no human invention in their place, but will accept the will for the deed.

It is the belief in some secret efficacy Bro. N. that underlies your tenacious hold of what you call baptism. This appears more or less in all Methodist writings that I have read. It comes out in Rev. Mr. Currie's work, also in Mr. Lathern's, in your Methodist Catechisms, in Wesley's hymns; and your own letters. Take a sample from Wesley's hymns. Turn to No 740 "At the baptism of a child."

"God of eternal truth and love
Vouchsafe the promised aid we claim:
Thine own great ordinance approve,
The child baptized into thy name
Partaker of thy nature make,
And give him all thine image back."

Mark well the last three lines, fourth and fifth in particular. Mr. Currie says infants should be baptized "because they are saved." Wesley does not seem to think so.

Father, if such thy sovereign will,
If Jesus did the rite enjoin.

(That conditional "If" is well put in. Wesley may say "If," although just before he calls it God's own great ordinance.)

Annex thy hallowing Spirit's seal
And let the grace attend the sign;
The seed of endless life impart
Take for thine own this infant's heart.

Mark well the last four lines.
Take a verse or two from hymn 476.

4. "Jesus, with us thou always art,
Effectuate now the sacred sign;
The gift unspeakable impart,
And bless the ordinance divine.

5. Eternal Spirit! descend from high,
Baptizer of our spirits thou!
The sacramental seal apply
And witness with the water now."

And again in hymn 477 the same idea appears:—
See a sinful worm of earth!
Bless to him the cleansing flood!
Plunge him, by a second birth
Into the depths of God.

Mark the Word "Plunge" as well as the idea conveyed in the words,
"Let the promised inward grace
Accompany the sign;
On his new-born soul impress
The character divine."

Now what have you in these lines but re-generation connected with baptism? How true the Methodists of these days, judging from some of their teachers, hold to the doctrines of their great leader in this matter. And how directly opposed are both he and they to the plain, simple teachings of the New Testament on this subject. But I suppose you are waiting to know what I mean by saying you are so many hundreds of years behind the age. I will now try to show you and at the same time the origin of the practice of pouring and sprinkling.

I have already called your attention to your own views as to the indispensable necessity of baptism in some form or other, which are quite in keeping with those held in the third century, when we have the first historical account of pouring, and sprinkling for baptism, and I will give it to you in the

words of the learned Dr. George C. Knapp, Professor of Theology at Halle from 1775 to 1825 and a Pedobaptist. "Immersion is peculiarly agreeable to the institution of Christ, and to the practice of the Apostolic Church; and so even John baptized, and immersion remained common for a long time except that in the third century, or perhaps earlier, baptism of the sick was performed by sprinkling or affusion; still some would not acknowledge this to be baptism, and a controversy arose concerning it, so unheard of was it to baptize by simple affusion. Cyprian first defended baptism by sprinkling when necessity called for it; but cautiously and with much limitation. It would have been better to have adhered to the ancient practice, as even Luther and Calvin allowed." See Bailey on Baptism, pp. 305, 306.

The first recorded case of pouring was that of Novatian about the year 251, that is to say 1627 years ago; just the length of time you, the Editor of the *Wesleyan* is behind the present age!! Novatian had not been baptized, and falling dangerously ill, and not expected to recover, his friends believing that he could not be saved without baptism, and finding that it was impossible to immerse him, they had water poured on him, so as to come as near to immersion as possible. This was called *perfusion*, or in Greek *perichuthesis*. Here you see Bro. N. the root of the error beginning to grow, namely baptismal regeneration. Cyprian writing on the subject of Baptism declared that he considered pouring under such circumstances to be valid baptism, for when one *Magnus* wrote to him asking his opinion whether he thought such as were through sickness or infirmity only poured upon or sprinkled to be lawfully baptized, he said that "As far as he could conceive he could not see that the Divine benefits could in any wise be mutilated or weakened, nor that less of such benefits could be bestowed, where the Divine gifts are received with a sound and full faith both of giver and receiver; for in Baptism the spots of sin are otherwise washed away, more than the filth of the body in a secular and carnal bath is." Epistles 76, S.9, p. 249, 250.

Here then you have baptismal regeneration taught and believed, and that in connection with pouring or sprinkling. The error grew rapidly and when a council of sixty-six bishops was called (A. D. 254,) to consider and give their opinion as to when a child should be baptized, some difference of opinion existing on that subject, these grave bishops sat in solemn conclave and hatched this beautiful chicken along with some others: "Whereas you say that an infant for the first days after his birth is unclean, so that every one is afraid to kiss him, this can be no impediment to his obtaining of heavenly grace; for it is written, 'to the pure all things are pure,' and none of us should dread that which God hath made; for although an infant be newly born, yet he is not so, as that we should dread to kiss him. Infants ought the more readily to be received to the remission of sins, because not his own but others' sins are remitted to him. Wherefore dearly beloved, it is our opinion, that from baptism, and the grace of God, who is merciful, kind, and benign to all, none ought to be prohibited by us, which as it is to be observed and followed with respect to all, so especially; with respect to infants, and those that are just born, who deserve our help, and the divine mercy because at the first instant of their nativity, they beg it with their cries and tears." Apud Cyprian, Epistola 59. S. 2, 3, 4, pp. 163, 165.

There is a fine deliverance from sixty-six grave bishops! and this chicken hatched by them has been nursed, fed, and tended till the present day. There is one thing about those men however that differs from those who hold the doctrine of baptismal regeneration in these days; they were more consistent and merciful, for they held that the child should be baptized (so called) as

soon as it was born, and if baptismal regeneration be a true doctrine then why leave the sprinkling of the child till it is some weeks or months old. Why run such a fearful risk? I hope by this time Bro. N. you see where you stand, and how near your view of baptism accords with that of those in Novatian's time. Before quitting this subject I will give you a brief quotation from Dr. Green, England:—"Infant baptism came from the Doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration. The two arose in the Church side by side, and there is not a passage from any Christian writer of the first four centuries that can be alleged for Pedobaptism, which cannot be alleged for Baptismal Regeneration. See "Kind Questions," by A. M. Stalker, p. 67, London, Stock. From "The Act of Baptism" by Rev. Hugh Jones, D. D., President of Llangollen College, North Wales, I extract the following, which from a careful study of the subject, I most heartily endorse, being true to the very letter.

"From the whole it is evident,—(that is from the writings of the Fathers on this subject.)

1. That the belief that baptism was essential to salvation gave rise to sprinkling.

2. That pouring or sprinkling was not considered to be scriptural, but deemed to be defective, since those that were only perfused (or poured over) were objected to as candidates for the ministry on that account.

3. That sprinkling as a mode of baptism is, therefore, *from men*. It began in error; it is founded upon superstition; it is destitute of Divine authority. When the absolute supremacy of God's word in religious matters is restored, it must vanish away and disappear, like all the traditions of men. (Matthew xv. 13.)"

And now I have well nigh done with you for the present; whether I take you in hand again or not, will depend very much upon yourself.

In closing I want just to notice your very brief editorial in yesterday's paper, and that all readers of the *Messenger* may have another specimen of your weakness, I will quote it in full. "Rev. D. D. Currie wishes it to be understood that when Mr. Brown shall have answered his letters,—answered them! completed the task—Mr. Currie will briefly reply. The same intimation may also be accepted from the Editor of the *Wesleyan*. We promise our readers not to take up much space, however, with this controversy."

And this is the termination of the "tremendous bombardment" you threatened us with. And this is how you are going to get out of the mire in which you have both so deplorably sunk. To me sir it is almost too contemptibly mean to make any remarks upon. When did you concoct this neat little scheme? I will promise you and Mr. Currie this much, that if he will first answer my letter, I will answer every argument in his if he will but point them out. But I will not undertake to reply to Dr. Ditzler. Dr. Graves has done that already, and as to further answering yours, Bro. Nicolson, I have wasted too much ink on you already. From this little plan of yours, I mean Mr. C. and yourself, it comes too plainly to light that both you and he intend never to come to the question which I have laboured hard and long to get you to answer. And this idea about Mr. C. giving a brief reply to me "when I have answered his letters," only shews that he too has been cooking a certain fish to draw away the attention of the readers of the *Wesleyan* from the deplorable position in which he has placed himself. He is mighty careful not to say anything about the lexicons, nor to promise a "brief reply" to the first letter I sent him. What small conduct in great men. What tricks and subterfuges some of them can descend to to escape detection. By the way Brother N. before I forget, let me thank you for your kindness in getting me off the gridiron, which sometime since you expressed your anxiety to do. With my hand to my hat, I make as low a bow as possible without disturbing my equilibrium,

and say, "Thank you sir, thank you, I'm sure and as one good turn deserves another, is there anything in the world I can do to get you and your bro. Currie off? I am getting to feel a little sorry for you. And when you are off be advised and do not meddle with gridirons and red herrings any more."

I was not at all surprised to read that when at a recent Conference Mr. Currie failed to make a speech when called upon, although the flattering position he was placed in by his brethren should have rendered it both an easy and a pleasant duty. How could he, with the ghosts of those lexicographers surrounding him, frowning darkly because of the injustice he had done them by making them say what they never did say? The wonder was not so great that he did not make a speech, but that he could find his way to the place where his more honourable brethren were assembled. But since he did go, it seemed more heartless when by way of escape Mr. C. asked his brethren to sing "Hold the fort" Mr. Sprague thoughtlessly and cruelly suggested that they should begin with the second verse:

"See the mighty host advancing
Satan leading on," &c.

The brethren we are informed could not sing for laughing; well I appreciate a good laugh myself, but if those brethren had but only realized the seriousness of the position in which Mr. C. stood, as a man who had falsified dictionaries as he had, and stood by his dreadful work, falsified and perverted the Bible, which they all profess to love and made statements which were utterly and absolutely false, if, I say they had but realized this,—then if they had wept instead of laughed, it would have been more appropriate. There is "a time to laugh and a time to weep," and while a laugh was very excusable just then, most certainly was it also a time to weep when they must or might have known that one of their number had strayed so far away from the paths of truth and uprightness, as Mr. C.'s writings all too clearly shew he has.

In the face of all the exposures made, and the tenacity with which he clings to his false statements, and the support which you, an Editor and a minister give him in connection therewith—I do not wonder, as much as I once did, that there is such a thing as infidelity in the world, when such things become known. Did I judge of religion by some of its professed friends and defenders, I should consider it to be something that it would be just as well to be without. I write thus strongly because "I hate and abhor lying" and deceit with all the powers of my nature, and may the gracious Lord ever deliver me from both and mercifully forgive me if I am guilty of either.

I have now almost finished, but before doing so, I shall address a few faithful words to you both.

Bro. Currie: You are a minister of the Gospel, and as such you are under obligation as you state in the preface of your published letters to "minister the doctrines of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and to be ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word." And yet what have you been doing? You have told a long string of glaring falsehoods, and a lie sir is the blackest, ugliest foulest thing under Heaven. You have made statements about Greek dictionaries and the Bible that are as false as if you had said twice four are seventy; and you know, you know your statements are false. You have most wilfully and deliberately perverted and misrepresented the Word of God. You have said there are words and expressions there which neither you nor any other living man ever saw there.

Do you not know that among the seven things that are an abomination to the Lord "a lying tongue," and "a false witness that speaketh lies," are two? (Prov. vi. 16-19.)

And now Bro. Nicolson, a word or two to you. As a man occupying two of the most important positions a man can occupy, namely, minister and edi-