

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.
Vol. XXVI., No. 8.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, February 23, 1881.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XLV., No. 8.

Poetry.

The Stray Lamb.

One bright and sunny day,
Upon a grassy hill,
The little lambs were all at play,
Too happy to keep still.
They ran and frisked about
Within their shepherd's view,
Loving their merry games, no doubt,
As much as children do.

But by and by a lamb—
A wilful little trot—
Said to itself, "How tired I am
Of keeping in one spot;
I want some better fun,
Fresh places want to see,
So presently away I'll run,
And they may look for me."

Without a thought of care
He wandered where he would,
And fancied that the change of air
Already did him good.
"This grass is finer far
Than what I left behind;
And O, how pink these daisies are—
Exactly to my mind."
Thus charmed with all around,
The moments quickly fled,
Until, to his dismay, he found
The sun had gone to bed.
The air grew damp and chill,
The little birdsie slept,
And over every field and hill
The gloomy shadows crept.

Hungry and tired and cold,
Of unknown ills afraid,
He thought upon his happy fold,
And wished he had not strayed.
Fast poured the heavy rain,
The wind swept roughly by,
And as he sank upon the plain,
He felt he soon must die.

Just then a cheering voice
Fell on his listless ear,
And O, how did that lamb rejoice
To think relief was near!
His own dear Shepherd came
And clasped him in his arms,
Not uttering one harsh word of blame,
But soothing his alarms.

"My little lamb," he cried,
In soft, reproachful tone,
"Why did you leave your Shepherd's side,
And wander forth alone?"
And as he gently bore
The wanderer to his rest,
The lamb resolved it never more
Would think its own way best.

Religious.

Progress in a Hundred Years.

A SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE PASTORAL CONFERENCE OF THE SALEM ASSOCIATION, OCT. 12TH, 1880, BY REV. L. DRURY, OF DANVERS, MASS.

"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine."
"And the Lord added to the church, daily, such as should be saved."—Acts ii. 42, 47.

(Published by request.)

(CONCLUDED.)

This gradual change in sentiment is still further emphasized by a MARKED DECLINE IN THE PRACTICE OF INFANT BAPTISM.

A quarter of a century ago, there appeared in the Congregationalist records, a resolution "that a committee be appointed to inquire after the neglect of infant baptism." The New York Independent of about the same date says, "In some cases it is affirmed that this neglect has spread so widely, and has become so habitual in the absence of a pastor, or through his tacit consent to the omission, that the instances of baptism among the children of church members are the exception rather than the rule, and that the efforts to revive it meet with coolness or opposition." The Presbyterians are generally regarded as maintaining their church discipline with carefulness, and their records also are well preserved. A reference to these records may therefore be accepted as a fair illustration of the steady decline of infant baptism by these denominations who believe in its practice. From these records it appears

that fifty years ago one infant was baptized among every thirteen communicants. Seven years later, in 1837, the practice had declined so that the proportion was one to nineteen communicants. In 1854, it was one in twenty-two. In 1879, the proportion was one in thirty-one, a decline of more than one-half in the space of fifty years. The *Christian at Work*, edited by a Presbyterian, gave last winter very positive testimony upon this point. It says, "The number of infants baptized during the past year is 337 less than the number baptized six years ago, and this while the church in that time has grown from a membership of 495,000 to 574,000, a gain of sixteen per cent. And not only this; there is another matter which makes even a worse showing for infant baptism. The Presbyterian church contains nearly twice the membership that the Episcopal church does, yet the number of infant baptisms in the Episcopal church far exceeds those in the Presbyterian church. During the past six years the number of infant baptisms in the Presbyterian church has at no time reached 20,000; while the Episcopal church has baptized from 30,000 to 32,000 annually. This indicates that there are fully three times as many infants baptized in the Episcopal church in proportion as are baptized in the Presbyterian church. But one conclusion is deducible from these statistics; the adherence to infant baptism is not only practised by less than one half the Presbyterian church membership, but there is a decided falling off of the practice." This testimony is positive at least concerning the Presbyterians, and comes from those who regret the fact. The same paper in a previous issue had also presented similar testimony in regard to other denominations. When we remember that a century ago hardly any one, not a Baptist, would think of neglecting or refusing baptism for his child; while now, in some of the leading pedobaptist denominations only about one-third of the infants are thus presented to the church; it is very evident that the leaven of truth is working, and though the advance here indicated is not such as can appear upon our own records, it is nevertheless Baptist progress, and whether our protest against the practice has been chiefly instrumental in bringing about this result, or whether it is due principally to independent and candid scholarship, the advance has been made, and therein "we rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." In this connection we may notice the reform of an evil which came directly from the practice of infant baptism,—an unconverted church membership. We know so little of this now that we can hardly realize the condition of things a hundred years ago. Baptists then stood entirely alone, the only denomination that insisted upon repentance and faith as necessary to church membership. A little more than a hundred years ago, the Presbyterians established Princeton College for the training of their ministers. And at that time not only was conversion esteemed unnecessary to full communion, but it was even debated whether it should be required of candidates entering the ministry; and it was decided an unnecessary requirement. Incredible as it now seems to us, that was then the prevailing belief and practice among all except the Baptists. It requires no proof to show that a great change has taken place, for we all know it. All evangelical denominations are now practically with us upon this point, and have adopted what, a century ago, was stigmatized as a Baptist peculiarity. And while we should give God the praise for bringing about this great reformation, we can hardly doubt that He chose for His principal agency, the bold and fearless manner in which, by preaching and by practice, our fathers maintained the principle of believers' baptism. Indeed, Joseph Cook, three years ago, publicly thanked the Baptists for having compelled other denominations to recognize the necessity of a converted church membership.

ANOTHER VERY IMPORTANT CONCESSION

to Baptist ideas is the present generally accepted opinion in regard to immersion as the *only* primitive baptism. This was, indeed, admitted by many of the best scholars of England and Germany a century ago but with most pedobaptist writers there was an attempt to explain, if possible, all texts bearing upon the subject, as to show that the form *might* have been, and probably was, something else than immersion.

Probably the opinion still prevails quite generally among the members of other religious bodies, that immersion was not the *only* form of New Testament baptism, if indeed it was practised at all, but scholars of all denominations have now come to a substantial agreement with us, that immersion is the *only* baptism known in the New Testament; and for a long time afterwards. Thus Neander says, "Baptism was originally administered by immersion, and many of the comparisons of St. Paul allude to this form of its administration. The immersion is a symbol of death and of being buried with Christ; the coming forth from the water is a symbol of a resurrection with Christ; and both taken together represent the second birth, the death of the old man and a resurrection to a new life." Conybeare and Howson, in speaking of the words "buried with Christ in baptism," say, "This passage cannot be understood unless it be borne in mind that the primitive baptism was by immersion." There is not time to quote similar testimonies from a large number of scholars of the same high authority, belonging to denominations which do not practise immersion. I must, however, cite the testimony of Prof. Stuart, a high American authority, and for a long time professor in Andover Theological Seminary. In regard to the meaning of the word *baptizo*, he tells us that he has carefully examined the whole range of classic Greek literature, and that he has found no use whatever of that word, except in one of these two senses: 1, To dip, plunge, immerse anything in liquid; 2, To overwhelm, literally or figuratively. And again in another connection he says of immersion, "I know of no one usage of ancient times which seems to me more clearly made out; I cannot see how it is possible for any candid man who examines the subject to deny this."

I cannot forbear to quote also the testimony of two more eminent authorities which have been given quite recently, one of them within the past year. Prof. Paine (Professor of Church History in the Bangor Theological Seminary) three or four years ago, speaking of immersion as the *only* baptism of the early church, said, "The testimony is ample and conclusive. No matter if church history is clearer. The evidence is all one way, and all church historians of any repute agree in accepting it. . . . It is a point in which ancient mediæval and modern historians, alike Catholic and Protestant, Lutheran and Calvinist, have no controversy. And the simple reason for this unanimity is that the statements of the early fathers are so clear, and the light shed upon their statements from the early customs of the church is so conclusive, that no historian who cares for his reputation would dare to deny it, and no historian who is worthy of the name would wish to." Surely language like this is plain enough for the ordinary mind to comprehend, and coming from a scholar in his position, is entitled to respect. The other scholar whose testimony I wish to bring is Dean Stanley, who last year made a visit to this country. In an article upon this subject in the *Nineteenth Century* for October last, he says, "For the first thirteen centuries the almost universal practice of baptism was that of which we read in the New Testament, and which is the very meaning of the word *baptizo*—that those who were baptized were plunged, submerged, immersed into the water."

That practice is still, as we have seen, continued in the Eastern churches. It lasted long into the Middle Ages. In regard to its significance he mentions three particulars; First, it is a sign of the purity which belongs to the Christian character. Second, "The entire submersion in deep water" was a sign of a complete change of character, "the burial of the old former self and the rising up of the new self. Third, the immersion was a sign of the Christian profession," which was "to follow Christ and be like Him."

Such is the kind of testimony which comes to us now from the ablest scholars both in Europe and America, concerning a rite which a century ago was everywhere made a subject of scoffs and ridicule. It certainly is a very important concession which they make to our view of baptism, and though these other denominations still practise sprinkling in place of baptism, believing the form non-essential, we are glad they have so far ceased to pervert the plain meaning of the sacred word.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

A century ago Baptists were almost if not quite, alone in maintaining the principle of religious liberty. Everywhere outside of Rhode Island, Baptists were made to feel the rigor of the civil law. In Virginia they suffered severely at the hands of the civil authorities, and even here in freedom-loving Massachusetts, they were held under cruel restraints. They were taxed the same as others to support the churches of the standing order, and unless they complied with certain conditions, they were forced to pay the tax, and instances of extreme hardship and even of imprisonment have frequent mention in the annals of our people a century ago. But there has since been a complete revolution. There is not a body of Christians now in America who do not recognize the principle of religious liberty, and hold to it as tenaciously as Baptists ever did. And not only in this country has this revolution taken place, but the same movement is in rapid progress in the old world. The separation of Church and State is one of the leading subjects now agitating the public mind of Great Britain, and on the continent, the principle of soul-liberty is recognized and respected. Germany, where thirty years ago our brethren were fined and imprisoned has lately conceded all the rights they have claimed. In Sweden, where our missionaries encountered so much opposition, their rights are now respected; and even in Russia, where the cruel restraints of law made it a crime for neighbors even to meet in their own houses to read the Bible and converse on religious themes, the restrictions within the past two years have been removed. Italy, too, allows a free gospel, and even in Spain and Austria the extreme rigor of the law has been relaxed, and over in the dark borders of heathenism the king of Siam two years ago issued a decree guaranteeing complete religious liberty throughout his whole realm. While with sincere pleasure we view this world-wide adoption of one of our cherished principles, which so recently was held alone by us, it is also a pleasure to know that we have been chiefly instrumental in this wonderful progress. It was in answer to a Baptist petition that the first amendment to our constitution, guaranteeing perfect religious freedom, was submitted to Congress. The removal of civil restraints in Germany and Sweden was secured by the diplomacy of William L. Marcy, a Baptist Secretary of State, at the solicitation of Baptist brethren, and the recent concessions in Russia to the principles of religious liberty came in answer to a respectful petition by a committee of the International Alliance, written by Dr. Samson, the Baptist member of the committee. Let us not, however, be vainglorious, but to God be all the praise.

Brethren, we have surveyed in this hasty and imperfect way the progress of our principles through the last hundred years. We have seen our churches increase from 500 to 25,000, and our

brethren from 55,000 to two and a quarter millions. We have seen them advancing in social position and taking a high place of honor and of influence among the forces of the moral and religious world. We have seen our distinctive principles which our brethren of former times suffered, and even died, to uphold, admitted to be true by the common consent of the Christian world, while two of them, conversion as a requisite to church-membership and liberty of conscience, are rapidly receiving world-wide adoption. Certainly in the light of this century's record no Baptist need be ashamed of his principles, nor of the manner in which they have been maintained. Continuing steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and rejecting all traditions of men, the Lord has indeed blessed us and added daily to our number and strength. Let the lessons, the experiences and the achievements of the past, be our guide and inspiration for the future. The principles which our fathers cherished, and for which they were so signally blessed, we must maintain with equal zeal and fidelity. If we would see a continued and steady advancement of our principles, we must believe them thoroughly and support them heartily. One person with a *belief*, says John Stuart Mill, is a social power equal to ninety-nine that have only *interests*. Indifference to the exact and positive teachings of Scripture is an element of weakness, but if we have a firm conviction of the truth of our principles, and love them because of loyalty to Christ, we shall indeed be strong in the strength which He Himself will give us. Animated by the inspiring record of the past and with love for his truth which we believe He has committed to us, and moreover with fraternal love toward all who love our Lord, let us accept it as our mission to "earnestly contend for the faith," until the day comes when there shall again be, "one Lord, one faith, one baptism."

For the Christian Messenger. Outline of a Sermon.

BY REV. J. A. GORDON, MILTON, YARMOUTH.

"Having obtained eternal redemption for us."—Heb. ix. 12.

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, are two volumes, written by the same author on the *one* subject. "Redemption in its preparation," and "Redemption in its completion."

Hebrews is the key and Leviticus the lock.

One shows the shadow, the other the substance. *The redemption by Christ is that substance.*

I. REDEMPTION PRESUPPOSES LOSS OF PROPERTY OR LIBERTY—OR BOTH.

1. Notice man's original state, in the image of God, holy and immortal. Ample possessions, rich provision for his comfort and happiness, God's presence, communion and approval, conscious innocency all pivoted on his obedience to the *test* command. Gen. ii. 16, 17.

2. Through transgression this blessed inheritance was lost. Knowledge of good and evil was gained. *The good that was lost, and the evil that was gained.*

3. Spiritual death was at least a part of the sad consequences of the fall. Rom. v. 12-21. We learn that we are to gain in Christ what was lost in Adam. But in Christ we do not gain exemption from physical death, but we do from spiritual death.

4. Spiritual slavery was also the inseparable result of the disobedience of our first representative—Adam.

God's "righteous, holy, just and good" law, "Thou shalt love," &c., with a back ground which made it terrible, cursed is he that *continueth* not, &c., as well as Christ's interpretation of that law as extending to the *thoughts, desires* as well as to the actions of men, blot out all hope as far as *human effort* is concerned, clouds the past—darkens the present—eclipses the future, and leaves us surrounded by a hopeless