

The Christian Messenger.

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WHOLE SERIES.
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Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.
Heredity in Religion.

In a lecture lately delivered by a prominent minister of this city, on the doctrines of Presbyterianism, the statement was made that infant discipleship, or infant membership in the Church of Christ, finds its sole support in the continuity and essential identity of the Jewish and Christian Churches. On this slender thread hang the validity of infant baptism and the constitution of the Presbyterian Church.

The Baptist position is impregnable, we were told, if the Christian Church dates only from Pentecost, or, if the New Testament be taken by itself. Infant Baptism then finds its sole sanction in the covenant of circumcision, of whose distinguishing rite it is simply the continuation in another form; and as children were members of the Jewish Church, they, it inevitably follows, must be also of the Church of Christ.

No attempt was made to prove the position, or to trace any analogy between the churches and their ordinances, but their organic unity was tacitly assumed as a well-founded doctrine of Presbyterianism.

Let us hold the subject up to the light and see what the assumption is worth. The terms of the covenant of circumcision are these: "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession; and I will be thy God." And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.

Certainly the conditions of this covenant are plainly enough specified. It bore no reference to the future life at all, and its advantages were strictly limited to the descendants of Abraham. They were gained in no other way than by natural birth, and the observance of the rite of circumcision on the part of the parents. Now in what way does this correspond to the "new and better covenant"? and where is the similarity between the Jewish nation and the Church of Christ?

The Christian covenant, it is true, promises an inheritance as well as the Jewish, but it is one that is "incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

How is this inheritance gained? Here comes in the great and essential difference between Baptists and others bearing the Christian name:

The Roman Catholic Church, according to the recent utterances of a high authority, teaches,

"That the sacraments are the most powerful means of grace; that they are so many channels instituted by our Saviour, which, under outward and visible signs, confer the invisible grace of God. Thus, baptism, in which all Christians believe, is a sacrament. The pouring of water and the pronouncing of the words of the form of baptism, are outward and visible actions, but, through the will of Christ, whose ordinance they are, grace is applied. The stain of original sin (for we are all born 'children of wrath') is blotted out; the soul is regenerated and becomes a child of God, and an heir to His kingdom. No one pretends that water and the words of the form of baptism could, of themselves, produce such an effect but they produce it because Christ willed that these visible actions should be the means of conveying the grace of regeneration to souls. Why He did this it is not our purpose to enquire; that He did it all Christians agree."

It will be noticed that by the last sentence, we, Baptists, are left out in the cold entirely.

According to the Church of England, the effects of baptism are those just described, but the priest is the channel through which the regenerating grace flows; while the Presbyterian Church, according to her latest exponent, declares those views false, and holds the real channel is to be the "faith of the parent." By virtue of lineal descent, divine grace is received, and a claim to the unfading inheritance set up.

I am unable to perceive any essential difference between these theories. In each and all there comes between the soul of the unconscious infant and its Creator a "channel," as an earthly mediator, through which, or through whom supernatural grace flows, and in consequence the relation of the one to the other is changed. This is a tremendous change, clearly involving in its accomplishment, the use of miraculous powers, unless the theories themselves are nothing but devil's-dust, invented to blind the eyes of Christians.

The Baptist view has been well defined by perhaps the ablest writers on the subject thus: "For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God, not of works, that no man should glory." The same writer in another place says: "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus;" and our Lord himself has declared with the utmost emphasis, "Ye must be born anew;" and again, "whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." Are infants "born anew?" Can babies "deny themselves, take up their cross and follow him?"

Clearly the difference between the principle last stated and those preceding is radical. If faith is the sole channel of regenerating grace, all others must be false, else the word should read: "For it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, together with his family." "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but with his family, have eternal life;" and: "He that believeth in the Son hath eternal life, together with his family."

Four passages from the New Testament were quoted in support of the position I have defined as "Heredity in Religion." The first included the words of the Saviour: "Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." The speaker declared his inability to understand how any Christian could fail to see in these words a warrant for bringing, if not an injunction to bring his children to Christ and into the fold of the church, by baptism.

To this it need only be said, that in this incident, as in so many others in the life of our Lord, his commands are to be obeyed, his example followed, and the conduct which he approved imitated as closely as possible. He commended those who brought their little children to him, listened to their prayers, took the little children in his arms and blessed them. We are to imitate them and carry our little children to Him in the arms of faith, the only way of approach He has given us. He neglected to baptize them, or to direct them to be baptized, then or subsequently, and in this respect we cannot do better than follow his example. In truth, with this record before us, we cannot refrain from asking those who perform this ceremony upon their infants, "Who hath required this at your hands?" In departing from his example, have you not exceeded your mandate? and do you not "make void the word of God because of your tradition?" The second passage quoted was the well known sentence occurring at the close of Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost: "For to you is the promise

and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him."

The "promise" referred to is, of course the effusion of the Holy Spirit described in the preceding verses from the 17th to the 21st inclusive, and from that day to this it has been abundantly verified. The believing parents of every succeeding generation have seen with joy and gratitude the conversion of those of their children on whom the Holy Spirit has fallen, who have been God's elect; but how often too have their hearts been torn with agony when their children have proved wayward, when the son of high hopes and many prayers has lived perhaps a drunkard's life, and filled a drunkard's grave. In that severe trial of their faith they can only say: "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight."

It is not surprising to find Presbyterians, when they quote this passage in support of the "birthright" theory of grace, invariably omitting the limiting clause, "Even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him." They who pretend that Peter meant to teach that theory on this occasion, must prove the election of every member of the family of every believer. A single instance of failure destroys the theory, since the efficacy of parental faith must necessarily extend to every member of the family, and I would suggest, the family of Isaac as an illustrative case. Certainly no question of legitimacy can arise between Isaac and Jacob.

PETER.
For the Christian Messenger.
P. E. Island Baptist Sabbath School Convention.

The seventh annual session of the above Convention was held at North River, Dec. 26th and 27th, 1883. The following officers were appointed for the ensuing year:

President—Jacob Bain, North River.
Vice-President—Alexander Scott, East Point.
Secretary—J. B. Leard, Tryon.
Treasurer—Francis Bain, North River.
2nd Session—Fifteen schools reported, viz.—
Albany, Alexandria, Belmont, Belfast, Charlottetown, Clyde River, C. Vendish, East Point Kingson, Montague, North River, Summerside, Tryon, Uigg and Westmoreland, eleven of which were represented by delegates.

The reports from several of the Schools were very encouraging, many of those attending having during the past year accepted Christ as their Saviour, and become members of His church, showing that faithful effort put forth in the training of the young will bring its reward.

After reading of letters, interesting addresses, on Sabbath School work, were delivered by a number of the delegates present. An appropriate sermon was delivered in the evening by Rev. E. W. Itman, from the words found in the 10th verse of the 2nd chapter of Luke.

3rd Session—The subject for discussion, viz.—

Value of the Sabbath School to the church and community having been assigned, Rev. E. Whitman, was, in his absence laid over, and a very interesting and animated discussion on "the relation and responsibility of the church to the Sabbath School," was participated in by the opener, Rev. R. B. Kinley, and a number of others.

4th Session—Some important resolutions were submitted relating to Sabbath School work—and after being freely discussed, adopted by the Convention. During this session a model Bible-class was conducted by Rev. J. B. Wooland, in a very interesting and instructive manner.

On Thursday evening after listening to an excellent sermon by Rev. R. B. Kinley, some routine business was attended to, after which the session closed, and Convention adjourned, to meet at Belmont on the last Thursday in December, 1884. The above summary is forwarded by request to the CHRISTIAN MESSENGER and Christian Visitor, for publication.

J. B. LEARD,
Secy. of Convention.
Tryon, Jan. 3rd, 1884.

Home Missions.

The regular meeting of the Home Mission Board was held on the 14th inst.:
The Treasurer.

Reported that not one cent had been received during the past month, that—
Treasury was overdrawn to the amount of \$22.05, and that there were orders in hand in favour of missionaries to the amount of \$786.13.

Reports

were received from Brethren Henderson, Edwards, Haverstock, Vidito, Wallace, Marnie and Corey.

Grants.

1. To the Shelburne Church N. S. \$50.00 to assist them in supporting their Pastor one third of the time for one year, the remaining two thirds to be given to the other two Churches of the group. Rev. L. M. Weeks, pastor.

2. To the Knowlesville and Gassville field (Car. C.) N. E. \$100 for one year. Rev. H. J. Shaw, pastor.

3. To the Emerson Church, Manitoba, \$100 if necessary, to assist them in supporting a pastor.

4. To the Preston field, Manitoba \$50 additional to cover the two months not provided for in former grant. Rev. J. A. Marnie, pastor.

Remarks.

I need not say after what appears above that we are in pressing need of Funds. The Brethren to whom the \$786 above named are due, are all working on small salaries, and it is a matter of great importance to them that they should receive promptly the amounts due them from the Board, and it is no small grief to us that we are not able to pay them. Pastors and brethren will you not hasten forward your half-yearly contribution to Convention Fund.

2. The reports show an encouraging state of things on some of the mission fields:

Bro. Haverstock of Margaree C. B., reports further baptized and a very favourable outlook. Bro. Henderson of Dalhousie Victoria Co. N. B. also reports four baptized and the signs of further progress. Bro. Marnie of Preston, Manitoba is pressing on his work in his extensive field frequently riding 40 miles and holding three services in one day.

Our General Missionary.

Rev. I. Wallace is being greatly blessed in his work at Kempt, Queens Co. Eight were received into the church there on Sunday the 6th and twenty-one on Sunday the 13th inst. The church is greatly encouraged and hope to settle a pastor at once. Bro. Wallace goes to Port Medway this week and will then visit the destitute fields in the eastern part of N. S.

3. From the above it will be seen that we are still attempting to give a little assistance to Manitoba. Last year we aided them to the amount of \$250. We want to do more this. We shall be glad if friends having an interest in this work will make some special donations for the North West.

A. COHOON,
Cor. Secy,
Hebron, Jan. 16th, 1884.

Baptist Book and Tract Society.

104 GRANVILLE ST., HALIFAX.

Collections to Capital Account.

Berwick—Sidney O'borne, \$1; L. C. Illal, 5; Wm H. Coote, 5.

Debert—Robert Smith, \$1.

Digby—A. Andrew, \$1.

Sewiacock—Emily Cox, \$1.

East Pubnico—Charles Larkin, \$5.

Waterville—E. C. Banks, \$5.

Hantsport—W. A. Porter, \$10; D. W. Palfrey, 1; George A. Ferguson, 1; Mrs. J. S. Davis, 25c; M. S. J. A. Mumford, 1; Ann Dorman, 50c; J. A. Mumford, 1; Tom S. Saw, 1; John A. Borden, 1; Agency Fund, 1.30.

Avonport—Harris H. Reid, \$5; Mrs. Harris H. Reid, 1; J. shu. Reid, 2.

Falmouth—C. E. Young, \$5; John William Hanson, 1; Jo. L. Pavyant, 2; Charles Bacon, 1; Margaret Young, 50c; Mrs. L. yon, 20c; Mrs. E. Kennedy, 1; Agency collection, 1.09.

Margaret's Bay—James Hubley \$5.

Wentworth—William Crocker, \$5; Jas. Whitman, 1; H. Banks, \$1.

Bear River—Richard Clark, \$5; Rev. W. E. Hall, 5.

Onalaw—D. Blair, \$5.

Little River—Mrs. C. A. Webber, \$2.50.

Halifax—Dr. H. H. Reid, \$20.

Milville—Rev. R. S. Morton, 90c.
Agency collection—Digby, \$14.74.
Canar, Leonard Eston, \$3.

Margaretville—Mrs. A. Marshall, \$1; H. C. Gates, 1.

Paradise—Lulia S. Morse, \$1; Mrs. W. W. Saunders, 1.

Hillsboro, N. B.—Rev. J. C. Blakeney, \$5; Rev. C. B. W. Lott, 1; Mrs. M. E. Clifton, 1; W. H. Duff, 5; Mrs. M. G. Currie, 1; John Lewis, 1; Mrs. E. Gallagher, 1; J. D. Steves, 1; Nehemiah Steves, 1; A. H. McLatchey, 1; John C. Landers, 1.

Colportage Fund account.

Halifax—Granville Street Church collection, Sunday 12th January, \$15.64.
Gaspereaux Church—\$3.50; Austin Locke, 10; Clifford Locke, 4; Enos Churchill, 5; A. H. Fisk, 1; Mrs. A. H. Fisk, 1.

The Committee of Management beg to thank the Rev. J. F. Avery, who has so kindly donated to the Baptist Book and Tract Society, a space for 1884 in the columns of Buds & Blossoms, we wish both enterprises success during '84.
Geo. A. McDONALD, Secy.
Halifax, Jan. 17th, 1884.

For the Christian Messenger.
Temperance Hotel, Truro.

Mr. Yule, one of the Christian workers in the Baptist Church, has opened a Temperance Hotel, and strictly so. A waiter, (stranger) doubting the fact, calling the proprietor aside, said, "I suppose you keep a bar, 'no' was the prompt reply. 'Well I mean something to drink quietly.' 'No, not a glass of liquor shall be drank within the walls of this house if I know it, but we will treat you as well otherwise as possible.' The stranger said 'I will remain.' Temperance travellers should remember this fact and encourage Bro. Yule.

Yours, &c.,
OPEN EYE.

A CLERGYMAN ON INFANT SPRINKLING.

—Rev. W. L. Rolleston, M. A., vicar of Scraftoft, Leicestershire, England, who has for many years been widely known for the simple evangelical fervour with which he makes known the old fashioned Gospel, dwelt very strongly upon the hollow insufficiency of ritualism and the impotence of works as a means of salvation, and pressed upon his hearers the necessity of the faith—reliance upon the merits of his Saviour. The preacher, after deploring the ignorance which blinded men into believing the assumptions of Romanism in forgiving sins said, "It is a matter also of the greatest pain to me that there are hundreds of ministers in my own Church who are so false to their responsibilities as to teach that by the mere sprinkling of a few drops of water on the head of an unconscious infant regeneration takes place, and that of a necessity that life will be a sanctified and renewed existence. Oh, what gross darkness has fallen over the minds of men that such doctrines should be believed in!

THE IRISH LANGUAGE.

—At a recent meeting the Mayor of Dublin, said that his grand-parents had been Irish-speaking; that his father and mother had when children worn a wooden tally round their necks, in which was put a nick for every Irish word they lapsed into. When these nicked amount-d to a certain number they were punished. Thus by Irish parents the speaking of Irish was made penal. Another speaker stated that the people of the West of Ireland were anxious to forget their native tongue. Children pretended not to be able to speak it, and were beaten by their parents if they did.

A Christian is always on the perch, or on the wing; he is always reposing in God, or in flight after Him; and the latter is as good an evidence of religion as the former; for delight is not only a part of complacency and affection, but also fear, complaint, desire—fear of losing the object; complaint of our enjoying so little of it; desire to attain and feel more.—Henry.

News from the Churches.

KEMPT QUEEN'S CO.—We are informed that the good work in this locality is progressing gloriously, seven persons were baptized on Sabbath 13th and the hand of fellowship given to twenty-one. Others are pressing into the kingdom.

TRYON, P. E. I.—It may be interesting to some of your readers to hear from the little church worshipping in this place. We have evidence that the Lord is with us. The Sabbath services are well attended, the week evening prayer-meetings are sustained and are deeply interesting, though not so well attended as they should be, some seem to have forgotten the way to the house of God.

Some precious seasons have been enjoyed, the subjects have been fitly chosen, and a good influence seems to pervade the meetings. Our beloved pastor has been called to pass through the waters, in the affliction of his estimable partner, who has suffered from paralysis. The Lord has graciously answered prayer and blessed the means used, and hopes are entertained of her recovery. The weekly visits of the CHRISTIAN MESSENGER are appreciated, and we often feel sorry for those persons who have to deny themselves this luxury, in order that they may indulge in what seems to them a necessary life, tobacco. L.
January 3rd, 1884.

The Baptist Meeting House in Pubnico having undergone extensive alterations and repairs was re-opened on the 30th ult. Bro. J. D. Skinner of Arcadia was with us throughout the day, and his clear presentation of gospel truth was highly appreciated.

The house now has a tower and steeple, new roof and windows, and presents a well proportioned and handsome appearance. Within it has new ceiling, platform and deck, and new furniture, and is very comfortable and commodious. The architect J. M. Watt, Esq., of Barrington deserves honorable mention. The whole cost of the work will be in the neighbourhood of \$1000. Quite a sum for so small a church. But the people are united and have a "mind to work." May the Lord give them similar zeal in building the "walls of Zion." "Then the glory of their latter house shall exceed the glory of the former house."

Yours fraternally,
W. H. RICHAN.

To those who are anxious for a full church, Mr. Spurgeon gives a word of advice that is worth considering. He says "that is quite enough for a pastor to fill the pulpit well, and that the filling of the pews depends upon the zeal, the earnestness and the diligence of the members." He then continues: "If you, any of you, are mourning over empty pews in your place of worship, I would advise you to praise up your minister."

A correspondent of the New York Evangelist tells the following story: "Dr. Mutchmore, editor of the Presbyterian, tells of a good colored man who was engaged in blasting a rock that obstructed the progress of some well-diggers near his residence in Kentucky. After a fierce explosion that shook the house, the doctor went out to remonstrate against such earth-shaking charges, and said to the colored man: 'What are you about? At this rate, you will blow us all into the air.' 'Well, boss,' said he, 'I rammed down on that powder a piece of the Presbyterian. I wanted to show the folks around yer what Calvinism could do.'"

The best thing to give to your enemy is forgiveness; to an opponent, tolerance; to a friend, your heart; to your child, a good example; to a father, deference; to your mother, conduct that will make her proud of you; to your self, respect; to all men, charity.—Mrs. Balfour.