

The Christian Messenger.

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Vol. XXIX., No. 11.

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WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XLVIII., No. 11.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Benefits of Infant Baptism.

DR. VAN DYKE ON INFANT REGENERATION.

Dr. Van Dyke anticipates the inevitable inquiry as to the evidences of regeneration in the baptized infants, and thus replies:

If it be asked how we can know that this is true in regard to any baptized infant, the answer is that we know it in the same way and to the same extent that we know any adult who is baptized to be a child of God; that is to say, in both cases we assume it as credible, not upon positive, but upon probable evidence. The whole Scripture argument for the divine authority and efficacy of baptism in general, and of infant baptism in particular, enters into and supports this probability.

Paul and John give unequivocal tests of the genuineness of regeneration in professing believers. In Galatians v. and vi. the fruits of the Spirit and the works of the flesh are sharply contrasted, and in I. John the twofold evidence of the new birth is plainly laid down (1) in the inward witness of the Spirit, and (2) the outward obedience to the commands of the Master.

When and how do the baptized infants exhibit these evidences of the birth from above, these fruits of the Spirit?

In truth, does not all this talk about infant regeneration verge perilously near to intellectual nought?

If the Episcopal Liturgy, after praying that God would "mercifully look upon the child" and "wash him and sanctify him by the Holy Ghost, that he may receive remission of sins by spiritual regeneration," without attempting to pronounce authoritatively upon the question, simply expressed the faith of the participants that their prayer has been heard, and that the child has been regenerated according to covenant promise, we would have no hesitation to join in the thanksgiving. Nor would we deem it necessary in order to justify such faith and thanksgiving to give any ancient, patristic, or modified sense to the word regenerate. The presumption is that every child lawfully baptized is regenerate in the fullest sense of the word. Our hesitation to believe this indicates not a high, but a low view of regeneration as a work of God's sovereign grace. We limit the holy one of Israel in this mighty work by confounding, or at least connecting it inseparably, with what we call conversion, and by judging of its existence by our tests of religious experience. The divine grace which abounds in Christ beyond the abounding sin, and beyond our ability to define or even to conceive of its working, is stronger in every point of human existence than the fallen and corrupt nature we inherit from Adam. We all admit in theory that this divine grace can change the nature of a child, before its birth, or at its birth, or at the time of its baptism, as easily as at any subsequent period of its life. We all see the evidence that, in consistency with, and working through the law of heredity, God fulfills not only his threatening to visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him, but also his promise to show mercy to thousands of generations of them that love him and keep his commandments. The proverb of Matthew Henry that "grace does not run in the blood, but devilry does" is not altogether true. Hereditary gracious influences control and modify the nature of children born of Christian parents. The doctrine of total depravity is not the absurd notion that any one is as bad as he can be, nor that all are equally bad at their birth. Some are born less depraved than others. The grace of God makes them to differ. Samuel and John the Baptist and Timothy are not exceptional cases, but specimens of those who are filled with the Holy Ghost, even from their mother's womb. "Of such is the Kingdom of God" does not mean merely that the Kingdom is composed of adults who have been converted and become as little children; but that it is largely composed of heaven and on earth of little ones whom the Saviour has taken into his arms and blessed. The typical little one whom he set in the midst was a "young Christian," and not merely an unsuspecting child who might one day become a Christian. Connecting the sovereignty and omnipotence of God's grace with his covenant promises to believers and their children we maintain that every child lawfully baptized—not because of its baptism, but because of the relations and promises of which baptism is the sign and seal—is to be regarded and treated as a regenerate child of God, until the contrary is made to appear.

We are here brought face to face with the real doctrine of infant baptism, the falsehood that underlies the rite under

whatever guise it may be presented. It follows as a logical necessity that if the faith of the parent is a warrant for the baptism of the child, it is equally a guarantee of its salvation; and the candor with which Dr. Van Dyke accepts the situation, and defends the teachings of the Confession is absolutely refreshing.

If Presbyterian ministers believe their doctrine to be the truth of the gospel they should maintain it in the pulpit, and act on it in their daily ministrations. For instance, they may be sometimes called to the dying bed of a youth whose parents are exemplary believers, who was "lawfully baptized" in infancy, and whose life has been as blameless as that of the young man whom Jesus loved. But he has never felt in his own soul the answering witness of the Spirit that he has been born of God, and he anxiously inquires the way of Salvation. No fiction will avail him now, for he will soon be confronted with the verities of eternity. On which shall he rely, on Christ alone, or on his parents' faith? Dare they assure him that he is already "a regenerate child of God," through covenant promises signed and sealed in his infant baptism? If the doctrine is true it ought to bear the test put upon it in the hour of the soul's supremest need.

The principle defended is exactly the old Jewish notion of salvation by birth in opposition to the Christian principle of salvation by faith. It was that on which Nicodemus relied, and if parental faith and religious devotion can save the soul he needed no Saviour, but our Lord destroyed the last vestige of his hope, and his emphatic words "Ye must be born anew," will ring out forever as the death-knell to all false theories that come between the soul and the Saviour.

INFANT BAPTISM VERSUS ELECTION.
Dr. Van Dyke sees the conflict between the teachings of the Confession in regard to baptism and those relating to election, and thus tries to reconcile them:

The Sacraments and the unlimited invitations of the gospel, stand in this respect upon precisely the same footing. The Lord knows them that are his. But it is not for us to exercise divine prerogatives. Our office is simply ministerial and declarative. In the face of Christ's command to preach the gospel to every creature, the position, which some have assumed, that we have no right to offer salvation to any but the elect, is something worse than presumptuous; it is premeditated disobedience, and an implied censure upon God's administration of the economy of his grace. Knowing just who will be and who will not be saved, he commands that the offer of salvation shall be made indiscriminately to all. In the face of this divine example, it is arrant for us to restrict that offer even hypothetically, to say, or to think, that if we knew who the elect are we should make the offer only to them. It is not setting up a high claim for the sacraments to say that our administration of them rests upon the same basis with our preaching of the gospel. We have no right to restrict either their significance or their application where Christ has imposed no restriction, nor to require of those who would participate in them any condition which he has not required. Wherever these divinely appointed conditions are fulfilled we are bound to administer them, not as hypothetical, but as real sacraments, including both the outward sign and seal and the inward spiritual grace. To adults we say, as God's mouth-piece, "Repent, and be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." The only condition we have a right to insist upon is a credible profession of repentance, and faith in Christ, and that condition being fulfilled, we are bound to administer the sacrament as a real and whole transaction, and to declare that it is to the recipient the sign not only, but the seal of his engraving into Christ, and his partaking of all the benefits of the covenant of grace.

The only condition God has attached to infant baptism is that one or both parents shall be in covenant with him, and shall promise to bring up the child in his nurture; and that condition being credibly fulfilled, we are bound to administer the ordinance, as in the case of adults, in its entirety, without any restrictions as to its significance and efficacy, uttered or unexpressed.

As we have no right to take from the fulness of the gospel, and say, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and, if thou art one of the elect, thou shalt be saved;" neither have we any right to whittle away the meaning of the Sacraments by saying to believing parents, "Bring your children to be baptized, and bring

the n up in the nurture of the Lord; and if the grace signified in baptism belongs to them, according to the counsel of God's own will, it shall be sealed and applied to them."

The reasoning in the last extract is presumably clear to those for whom it was written, whose breadth of learning and depth of wisdom are so frequently and so modestly alluded to by Presbyterian journalists, but I confess I do not entirely see what he is driving at. One thing is certain: Point out in the Bible the condition God has attached to infant baptism, and the last quotation commanding its observance, and controversy is at an end.

PATER.
For the Christian Messenger.

Dear Sir,—

THE EXORCISER BAND OF HOPE OF ST. PETERS. C. B., had a very agreeable evening on Thursday the 14th ult. Mr. John Morrison, stage proprietor, being present was called upon to address the Band. He did so in a very encouraging manner, and complimented those engaged in the good work of instilling temperance principles in the minds of the young people of the place. Before taking his seat, to our very great delight, he presented us with a very handsome chandelier of four lamps. In behalf of the Band Mr. Angus McAskill spoke thanking Mr. Morrison for his very handsome and generous gift. In October Mr. O'Tool presented us with a chaldron of coal, and in January, John F. McKenzie, with a handsome and appropriate motto, (God bless our Band). Thus our hearts are encouraged and made glad as we labour in the good cause. The gifts we think very suggestive, for if we have warmth, from the fire, with the bright and shining light, and the blessing of God upon us we must prosper.

The members of the Band gave a successful entertainment in July, had an enjoyable picnic in August, and another successful entertainment in January. The interest has steadily increased since we organized in April, 1883. The meetings are regularly and well attended, and the order good. After the opening exercises, and the classes being taught the lesson for the evening, we have recitations, dialogues, readings &c.

Thanking you Mr. Editor for your valuable space.

MRS. ANGUS McASKILL,
Secretary to the Band.
St. Peter's, Feb. 15th, 1884.

For the Christian Messenger.

Reports of Cook's Lectures.

Dear Editor,—
The well-written and concise reports of Joseph Cook's lectures which you are giving your readers week by week, from the pen of my friend Mr. E. M. Chesley, are making good the promise you made some time ago when you told us to "look out for a treat." Some of us are not quite willing to accept all the views set forth either by the reporter or by the distinguished Boston Lecturer; but we are none the less willing to give a respectful hearing to men who are honestly striving to aid in the search for truth.

Mr. Chesley is one of the most literary of Acadia's graduates. His habits of close observation, his keen analytic mind and his thoroughly independent and original methods of investigation qualify him very eminently for the difficult task of reporting the utterances of such a man as Joseph Cook. You did well, therefore, to make arrangements for the publication of these articles, and you may be sure that a large proportion of the readers of the Messenger will peruse them with interest and profit.

One of Cook's pithy and telling sentences, as given in your last issue, pleased me immensely. "Matthew Arnold is a polished icicle." No more appropriate figure could have been chosen to designate the theological views of the great English Lecturer. I have just finished the perusal of his *Literature and Dogma*, in which he labors to convince us that the God of the Bible is a mere abstraction—"a power, not of ourselves, that makes for righteousness." This seems polished enough; but it is frigid as an icicle, and it causes a chill

to run through one's nerves. Cook handles such theology without mercy and we are not a little indebted to Mr. Chesley for keeping us informed as to the recent deliverances of this popular controversialist regarding the latest phases of the New Theology and of modern scientific nonsense.

W. H. WARREN.
Bridgetown, March 1st 1884.

For the Christian Messenger.
How all who love Christ may become Baptists?

It has been said that an honest thorough investigation of the subject of Baptism, with the Bible as the guide and a determination to please only the Lord, as the motive, has always had but one result. Statistics show that in the United States in the last twenty years, 200 Pedobaptist pastors have after such an investigation been buried with Christ in baptism, and ordained as Baptist Pastors. One of this number, Rev. S. L. Slack, who formerly belonged to the "Old Presbyterians," tells, in a ten cent pamphlet, the way out. The story is graphically and humbly told, and is intensely interesting. Let each Presbyterian who reads this notice do himself the justice, and pleasure of obtaining a copy. Let Baptists get a quantity and show Christ-like love, by lending them to their Pedobaptist neighbors, as is taught in James vi. 19, 20, "Brethren if any of you," (brethren, regenerated persons), do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins." Send for them to Geo. McDonald, 104 Granville Street, Halifax, D. ARCHIBALD.

For the Christian Messenger.

Help solicited for the Lunenburg Meeting-house.

Many thanks are tendered to those who have sent in their gifts to this treasury of the Lord, whereby all that has been done is clear of debt. The last donations received were very timely. They paid the last debt for work done which the committee were pressed for at the time they were received.

Now a few hundred dollars are needed to finish the inside of the house. The Baptist interest in town is suffering for the want of it. We want to establish a regular Prayer-meeting and Sunday school, but there is no place in which to hold them, and a miserable old hall is the only place to be had for preaching in, for which one dollar a service has to be paid. Are there not more friends throughout the country who will now send in their donations to help complete the house as quickly as possible, so that the Baptist interest in Lunenburg Town may have a chance to live and grow?

Men and women of Israel help! It will be the best investment you can make of some of the Lord's money which He has entrusted to your stewardship. Remember those who give quick give twice. The work cannot go on faster than the money comes to pay for it. A free seated Mission Chapel is wanted clear of debt, when it is finished where the work of the Lord as we understand the truth can be carried on without hindrance. Send donations to Isaac Gates, Treasurer, Lunenburg. In behalf of the Committee,
A. W. BARRE.
Mahone Bay, March 4th, 1884.

For the Christian Messenger.

Mission Work.

Dear Editor,—
On the 12th and 20th ult., the "Truro Baptist Mission Band" was organized with encouraging prospects. This is a noble work, and I believe, if generally introduced in all our churches, as it should be, the results would astonish even the most sanguine. I repeat the opinion that if we would have our future men and women richly imbued with a missionary spirit, and devoted to the cause of missions, see to it that the children become interested. Every church within the boundaries of the Convention should have such a youthful band of mission workers, and

and might by a little well directed effort. Mrs. C. H. Martell, of Onslow, is preparing for her own use and the Bands in Colchester County, which she is assisting to organize, a most interesting and instructive exercise of Questions and Answers respecting our Foreign Mission fields, the route to them, the different missions down to the last, the "Maritime Provinces," the manners and customs, idols, &c., to be used in connection with mission maps. It is really surprising how soon even children become familiar and deeply interested by this mode, with important mission knowledge. It will be seen at a glance the value of such a course for youth. It is to be hoped the Board's agent for Colchester Co., Mrs. Martell, will be induced to widen her sphere of usefulness, by permitting her work to go beyond this county.

TEMPERANCE.
As the liquor influence, and the mother of evils, is a noted hindrance to mission work, and has closely followed advanced mission work into heathen lands, proving very damaging, and our missionaries have experienced its baneful effects in prejudicing heathen enquirers, we would respectfully suggest to organizers of Mission Bands to add the pledge of total abstinence to the rules, and thus save many of our now innocent youth from such a sad end of life. Remember all drunkards' graves are filled by those who once were innocent children, and a little prevention is better than much cure. This is one effectual way to curtail the liquor traffic.
W. J. G.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Fyfe Missionary Society and the North West.

I have recently received the Second Annual Report of the Fyfe Missionary Society of McMaster Hall, together with an appeal for a contribution to its funds. As an accompanying post card from the Vice-President of the Society, informs me that it "has now become a Society of the Baptists of the Dominion," I presume that other pastors in the Maritime Provinces have been favored with the same.

Permit me then to call attention to the following sentence that appears in the Appeal: "Moreover there is at present no other organization in existence among the Baptists of the older provinces, which is doing, or can do immediate work in this direction"—i.e. in the great North West field. This sentence contains, as you well know, two incorrect statements, for the Home Mission Board of the Baptist Convention of the Maritime Provinces did work this last year, is doing work there this year, and can and desires to do very much more. All who desire to assist the Mission work in the North West (and we hope there are many such) need not therefore send their money to an irresponsible Society over which they have no control as the H. M. Board of our own Convention is prepared to receive and expend all funds for such work and to report to them in the regular way at the next Convention. We have already promised aid to the amount of about \$400, and if our funds permit we hope to increase this amount considerably. As I stated some time ago our Treasurer, Rev. C. Goodspeed, will be glad to receive special contributions for this work.

Very truly yours,
A. COBURN,
Cor. Sec'y H. M. Board.

Baptist Book and Tract Society,
104 GRANVILLE ST., HALIFAX.

Collections to Capital Account.

Upper Aylesford—Samuel Selfridge, \$10; John Brennan, 5; A. D. Patterson, 2; Mrs. Phinny Banks, 2; J. W. Dodge, 1; Mrs. A. Lee, 1; Charles Banks, 1; Whitman Morton, 5.
Long Point, Cornwallis—George W. Gould, \$2; Robert Ogilvie, 1; Silas C. Luter, 1; Alfred McBride, 1; Henry Best, 1; Isaac Cook, 1; Richard Marshall, 1; Ruben A. Hyland, 1; Isaac Ogilvie, 2; Joseph Swindle, 1.
Margaretville—Mrs. B. Phinny, \$3.
Fresport—Rev. R. H. Bishop, \$3.40.
Hillsboro, N. B.—John N. McLatchey, \$1.50; Samuel McLatchey, 1; Lewis A. Steeves, 5; Charlotte L. Steeves, 1; Gifford W. Steeves, 1; Edward Steeves, 1; Mrs. G. Duffy, 50 cts.; Joel Steeves,

2; Isiah Steeves, 2; Catherine Forsythe, 35 cts.; Mariner Steeves, 2; Mrs. W. T. Steeves, 1; widow Mariner Steeves, 1; Mrs. Elizabeth Duffy, 1; Willie S. Steeves, 1; Joshua Steeves, 1.50; Mrs. Abram Steeves, 1; Daniel Steeves, 1; Henry B. Steeves, 1; Mrs. Samuel Osborne, 1; E. E. Steeves, 1; Edw. Bozley, 1; Lewis S. Steeves, 1; Mrs. Levi S. Steeves, 1; Melzar Steeves, 1; Blissie S. Steeves, 50 cts.; Stephen Steeves, 1; Manning G. Steeves, 1; Spurgeon Steeves, 1; J. A. Steeves, 1; N. L. F. Steeves, 1; J. A. Steeves, 1; Jordan Steeves, 1; Mary O'Neill, 1; Dugdon Duffy, 1.

Issac Harbour, N. S.—E. J. Giffin, \$2.
East Pubnico—Mrs. Wm. Seeley, \$1;
New Tusket—Horace Sabean, \$1;
Jas Husset, 2

North Kingston, N. S.—John Killam, \$1; Jas. Burns, 1; Mrs. M. L. Baker, 50 cts.; Mrs. Inglis Neily, 50 cts.

Surrey—Michael Gross, \$1; William Woodworth, 1; R. T. Gross, 1; David Cameron, 1; Dawson Steeves, 50 cts.

Danville Creek, N. B.—Hugh Steeves, \$1; Mrs. J. W. Woodworth, 1; Lewis Woodworth, 1; Mrs. Lewis Woodworth, 1; Patrick Sinclair, 1; Titus Steeves, 25 cts.; John W. Steeves, 1; Henry W. Steeves, 2; Mrs. Salmon, 1.

Hopewell Corner, N. B.—Mrs. Alex. McLearn, \$1; B. H. Newcomb, 10.
Dugby, N. S.—David Sprowl, 50 cts.
Amount of Capital paid in to January 31st, 1884, \$3,792.76.

Continued.—Feb 1884.

Long Point—Joseph Swindle, \$1.
Middleton—Albert Gates, \$25; G.W. Charlton, 2.

Cornwallis—Abram Ellis, \$2.
Sydney, C. B.—C. H. Harrington, \$5.
Falmouth—Andrew Shand, \$5.

Williamston, Annapolis—G. C. Richardson, \$2; Mrs. G. C. Richardson, 2; Robert Fitz Randolph, 2; Burpee Randolph, 1; George Randolph, 2; J. Hadden Balcorn, 1; Miurari C. Beala, 1.
Colportage—Rev. C. R. B. Dodge, Milton Church \$3.45.

"When should children be baptized?"

This was the heading of a somewhat novel and interesting advertisement in three of the Belfast newspapers on Saturday, January 12, which announced that on the following evening, "Pastor William Usher would give a practical answer to the question in Great Victoria-street Baptist Meeting House." On Sunday evening accordingly the house was crowded before seven o'clock every available space being packed, and several hundreds had to go away unable to obtain admission. The service, which was short, consisted of an address by Mr. Usher, making reference to the Scriptures regarding the subjects of baptism, and one by Rev. Mr. William, of London, his father-in-law, to the candidates for baptism. Mr. Usher then immersed his eldest daughter, aged eight and a half years, and the daughter of one of the deacons of the church, aged ten years, both by profession young disciples of Jesus; also two other candidates from Newtownards, where the friends of the denomination hope soon to form a Baptist Church. The meeting was closed by the pastor pronouncing the benediction. Great interest was displayed in the entire service by all present, and the baptistry was inspected by a large number at the close.—*Freeman.*

Berwick-street Chapel, Newcastle-on-Tyne, has been sold to the Tyne Commissioners for £1,000, and the trustees retain all the interior fittings, organ, etc. They have to vacate it in May. Where they will meet, or what they will do with this large sum are questions not yet answered. The old chapel cost, with the site, nearly £5,000, but the ground has become very valuable. Some would like a handsome cathedral-like structure erected, while others think they would do better to build two chapels. It will need much wisdom to steer clear of rocks.

The memorial bronze statue of the martyr, William Tyndale, who first translated the New Testament from the Greek, was cast successfully near London three weeks ago. The figure is ten feet high, and the work of Mr. Boehm. It will be set up on the Thames Embankment, near Charing Cross Bridge.