

The Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

NEW SERIES.
Vol. I. No. 29.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, JULY 16, 1856.

WHOLE SERIES
Vol. XX. No. 29.

Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

Lines written by Mary, Queen of Scots.

O Domine Deus, speravi in Te!
O care mi Jesu, nunc libera me,
In dura catena; in misera penna,
Desidero Te.
Languendo, gemendo, et genuflectendo,
Adoro, imploro, ut libereris me.

TRANSLATION.

O Lord my God, I hope in thee
Salvation to obtain;
Dear Jesus! now deliver me,
In misery's iron chain.

Kneeling, fainting, yet adoring,
Bordering on the grave,
I worship thee, imploring
Thy powerful aid to save.

S. SHEPHERD.

Prayer.

How sweet it is to pray,
When God has deigned to hear,
To seek him every day,
For he is always near.
Thou dost command
Most Holy Lord
To ever pray
And search thy word.

Sweet to look up to him,
Who died our souls to save,
Who burst the bars of death
And triumphed o'er the grave,
Whose blood was shed
On Calvary
The atonement made
Our souls to free.

Weymouth, May, 1856.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Reply to the Rev. Wm. Wilson's Letter.
MESSRS. EDITORS,

THE article signed "A Hearer" in your paper of May the 14th, is characterized by the Rev. Wm. Wilson in the *Provincial Wesleyan* of June the 5th, as a caricature of his lectures on Christian baptism delivered at Lawrencetown and elsewhere. As I do not hesitate to acknowledge myself the writer, I doubt not you will grant space for a reply. Absence from home has prevented an earlier notice of his communication. But lest you should bring upon yourselves a repetition of the charge insinuated by Mr. Wilson, of disgracing the *Christian Messenger* "with personalities and caricatures," I will inform you and your readers from what sources I obtained the statements reported as having been made in his lectures.

In company with a brother minister I heard the Rev. Gentleman's course of three lectures on baptism, at Lawrencetown: I had the advantage of hearing them repeated with variations at Pine Grove; I heard also another lecture on the same subject in Granville, and two others given as a rejoinder to myself. Of all these lectures copious notes have been taken. Thus you perceive I have had a good opportunity of ascertaining what was stated. If the sense of hearing therefore can be relied upon as a source of evidence; if memory is of any value, and if there is any virtue in immediate transference to paper of what is spoken, then your readers may rest satisfied that my representations of what Mr. W. did say are so far as they go correct; indeed I might add correct beyond the power of successful contradiction. If Mr. W.'s lectures were not

themselves caricatures I have given no caricature of them. The *Christian Messenger* has maintained a fair and honourable character and has never been disgraced with such "caricatures" as were contained in the communications of "X. X.," a writer who a few years since figured in the *Provincial Wesleyan*, and with whom it is thought Mr. W. feels much sympathy.

The Rev. gentleman gives as a reason for his lectures—that he found "*Baptist principles*," so called, exceedingly rampant on the Bridgetown circuit. "Baptist principles rampant!" This is a choice description indeed! If "*Wesleyan principles*" should be spoken of in the same way, we might expect a lecture from Mr. W. on the "respect which Christian ministers and associated religious bodies" owe to each other. His zeal, however, it seems could not endure to see Baptist principles remain in the unseemly and offensive state or position he describes, so he undertakes a *modern crusade* against them. Lectures on baptism are given; and, according to his own account, with great success. The Societies to whom he ministers are now free from Baptist principles; perhaps he may succeed in expelling some other good things from them also. Baptists have no objection to any Pedobaptist minister preaching or lecturing on baptism or any other subject as often as he pleases. If Mr. W. has a right to advance his views and arguments on baptism, others who deem his statements incorrect or his arguments unsound have an equal right to controvert them.

The Rev. lecturer need not be offended at having his favorite ordinance referred to by the title,—"Baby Sprinkling." Did he not tell us in one of his lectures that he "wished people to call him a 'Baby Sprinkler' that he gloried in it, for he found it in the Bible?" But being perhaps carried away with *oratorical logic*, he does not recollect it now. He says it was distinctly and repeatedly stated that no attack whatever would be made upon those who differed from him. This is true; yet the attack was most certainly made. Mr. W. charges me with caricature in the statements I have given as having been made in his lectures; but if the term be admissible in connexion with the subject, his representations of the principles and arguments of the Baptists are justly entitled to that appellation.

My article is said to be "in true *Sam Slick* style." Mr. W. lectures us on "the respect which Christian Ministers owe each other;" is this a specimen of the respect he means to show? However, those who heard his lectures on baptism and also mine, ought to have no difficulty in deciding whose style bears the closest resemblance to that of the celebrated character he has introduced.

Mr. W. asserts that the statements made in the article of "A Hearer" "are so incorrect that he cannot think at present of replying to any of its details." This is a very convenient way of trying to get rid of them. But I do not deem it very honourable to deny statements publicly made. I am amazed that he should do so. If, as he alleges, my statements are incorrect, so much the better chance he has to expose their falsity. I challenge any person who heard Mr. W.'s lectures to contradict "*ever his own proper signature*" any statements I have attributed to him, and at the same time tell us what he did say. And I demand of Mr. W. to point out the "incorrect statements" he says my article contains. The Rev. lecturer says if I will publish his articles on baptism "*as he delivered them*," with any remarks I choose to make he will reply and defend them." Let me tell Mr. W. that if he will publish his lectures on baptism, "*as he delivered them*," I will

contribute towards meeting the expense, and also promise him a contribution for the same purpose from some of my friends, and then will deal with them as I think they deserve. But if he leaves out what "A Hearer" has alleged as having been stated in them, they will be incorrect—they will not be "*as he delivered them*." Mr. W. says if infant baptism and baptism by sprinkling agree not with the doctrine and precedent of the New Testament, they ought to be given up." This is undoubtedly a sound principle; it recognises the New Testament as the law-book of Christian ordinances; let him make infant baptism and baptism by sprinkling agree with the doctrine and precedent of the New Testament and Baptists will no more reject them.

Mr. W. gives expression to the idea that all Christian parents should feel it a positive duty to dedicate their children to God in early infancy in baptism. Now positive duties require positive injunctions; will he show parents the *positive injunction* for the baptism of infants in the New Testament? The Rev. gentleman speaks of methodist converts being beguiled away by the ostentatious parade and *scripturally groundless* practice of what is called "Believers immersion." I call the attention of those who heard his lectures first and last to this passage. They will remember that in his first lectures he unequivocally declared that immersion is not Christian baptism; in his rejoinder to me he as distinctly declared that it is Christian baptism; now he tells us that "believers immersion" is an "ostentatious parade"! Look at it. At first we are told immersion is *absurd*, that it is not Christian baptism; then we are told it is Christian baptism; at last the same man has the effrontery to tell us it is an "ostentatious parade"! I

"As no attack says Mr. W. was made upon our Baptist friends it is difficult to understand what business they had to interfere." The Baptists were attacked, it is not therefore difficult to understand why they should defend themselves.

Mr. W. says "it savours much of popish priestly influence" "that in this land of Bibles a Wesleyan minister cannot teach the doctrines and usages of Wesleyanism in a Wesleyan Chapel without the *impertinent interference* of Baptist preachers." This not very pertinent remark reminds me of what a brother minister assures me he heard Mr. W. say in the introduction to one of his lectures, viz:—"that the Baptists were like the Catholics, only they did not persecute, or call other people heretics." Mr. W. had no interference from Baptist preachers, but such as consists with fair and honourable discussion; and if this has been inconvenient to him, his intemperate zeal against "Believers immersion" has provoked it.

Mr. W. complains that a Wesleyan minister cannot teach Wesleyanism in a Wesleyan Chapel without the impertinent interference of Baptist preachers. Might not a Baptist minister complain that when on a baptismal occasion, he preached on baptism "to his own people, and in our own place," though nothing that could be justly esteemed offensive was said, and though there were at the time three Wesleyan ministers residing in Bridgetown, yet a Wesleyan minister travels about a hundred miles to preach on infant baptism and against what he calls the "ostentatious parade of Believers immersion" and the Baptists? Has Mr. W. forgotten that Journey?

Mr. W. says that a few humble Wesleyan members cannot express their opinion of their own minister in their own way and in their own periodical, but they must be held up to public ridicule by a person recognised

as a Protestant minister, and that a religious paper should bear the pasquinade with all its unblushing statements before the world, savours so much of popish priestly influence that it is ill suited to protestant taste." That a few humble Wesleyans at Lawrencetown should send forth to the public the "unblushing statement" of exulting commendation of Mr. W.'s lectures on baptism "*with all their unblushing statements*," and thus endorse them, is more than we thought any humble people would have ventured to do; but having done so, we know not why exemption from criticism should be claimed for their production.

It is, says Mr. W., deeply to be regretted that any body of Protestants should assume and try to maintain for themselves what they abhor in popery, namely, "We are the first church, &c." It is deeply to be regretted that the Rev. gentleman is in the same category. What is he contending for? Does he not "*assume*" that infant baptism was the practice of the first church? Does he not "*try to maintain*" it?

Mr. W. drags in the question of *communion* and makes an outcry against the Baptists for their adhesion to what is called close communion. We have no objection to discuss this point with him in its proper order, but as he and the writer both believe baptism to be a *pre-requisite* to communion, it is plain that he also holds to a *restricted* communion; in fact the greater number of those he baptizes are incapable of coming to the Lord's table, and if brought would be rejected.

After all would Mr. W. sit down to the Lord's table with those who have submitted to no baptism but that which he "contemptuously" calls "*the ostentatious parade of Believers immersion*?" We do not believe him honest or consistent in his objection.

Mr. W. speaks of what he calls "impertinent interference of Baptist preachers" as being "incongruous with that respect which Christian ministers owe to each other, &c." It is a pity he had not considered this before he gave his lectures. Then he would have refrained from charging a respected and well-known Baptist minister of this Province with denying the *Priesthood of Christ*. The charge was neither true nor respectful. In Mr. W.'s lectures the Baptists were said "*to turn every mud-hole into a Jordan*!" I will not ask is this true, but is it *respectful* to Baptist ministers, or to those who believe with them?

Then again the Baptists were represented by Mr. W. as "*singing doggerel verses going down the banks of Jordan*!" I need not ask if this is true; but is it respectful to the Baptist ministry and their people? Is it "congruous with that respect which Christian ministers owe each other" for this Rev. Brother to call "the Baptist divine residing on the right bank of the Annapolis river" a "Sey?"

But having survived the climax of *name-giving* when this "protestant minister" conferred on me the title of "*Pope*," I am not much alarmed by any additional honours he may bestow; and if it affords him any satisfaction he is welcome to it.

Mr. W. speaks of the non-essentials and adjuncts of our common Christianity. I do not like such phraseology, it savours too much of the pride of human wisdom. There is no doctrine, no principle, precept or ordinance comprised in Christianity by its Divine Founder that can justly be looked upon as non-essential. Though all are not equally important, yet the very least occupies an important place—a place assigned it by infinite Wisdom and Love.

Yours respectfully,

GEORGE ARMSTRONG.

Bridgetown, June 30th, 1856.