

Christian Messenger.

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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Religious.

Why am I a Close Communionist?

Spurgeon has lately and fearlessly lifted his voice against the soul-ruining dogma of baptismal regeneration and other errors. And what do we see, former friends forsaking him, abuse after abuse heaped upon him, his knowledge called in question, and his faithfulness to the cause of Christ misrepresented and denounced. But every one who regards the commands of Christ more than the traditions of men will rejoice in the conflict, sympathize with and pray for the success of this champion of the Cross, and come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

2. I am a close communionist, because the error (infant baptism) which open communion calls upon me to fellowship is not only unscriptural and unreasonable, but it is truly hurtful. Many are in the habit of viewing it as an insignificant and comparatively harmless thing, but in this they are mistaken. Among the many heresies which have arisen, and errors taught with a view to ignore Christianity, none have been more pernicious and hurtful to true religion than this. It not only sets itself up in direct opposition to the express commands of Christ, but destroys the order and purity of his church, making what he intended to be a light to the world, a cause of darkness and stumbling; instead of a living, holy temple, made up of living stones, it turns it into a worldly society, made up in greater part of sprinkled unbelievers. Before people speak of it as a harmless thing, they ought to ask, Is it no harm to teach in the name of Christ what he never taught, or impose on the ignorant as divine that which is merely human? Is it no harm to destroy multitudes of immortal souls, by teaching them that they were regenerated by baptism in their infancy, or sealed into the covenant of grace? Is it no harm to admit to church membership and the Supper of the Lord, without repentance or faith, or even a proper understanding of the plan of salvation? To make baptism and the Lord's Supper means of getting grace, when the Lord intended them as means of nourishment for gracious souls. Let those disposed to view this as a harmless thing, look at its effects both in Popish and Protestant lands, and they will see that it is the grand pillar and main stay of the Papacy, and the bridge over which a Protestant church may at any time return to her mother. Abolish infant sprinkling in our Protestant national churches, and others, and substitute in its place the scriptural qualifications for baptism and church membership—repentance and faith—and many of those churches, now so large in membership, would be sadly thinned. Not only is the dogma of infant baptism hurtful to the souls of men, but it has, ever since it had a being, been connected with persecution. Through it directly or indirectly, multitudes of the Lord's people have been put to death. Many of the souls now under the altar, whose blood was shed for the testimony of Jesus, owed their death to the influence of this error, both in the old world and the new. Thousands and tens of thousands of our martyred fathers were tortured, fined, imprisoned, banished, and put to death, by men holding this dogma; and, on account of their refusing to submit to it, both Papal and Protestant churches have had their hands defiled with blood in their endeavors to force this delusion upon their fellow creatures. Such facts stand out prominent on the page of history, and will appear still more prominent at the judgment of the great day. With these facts staring us in the face, how can any Baptist so far forget the past, and so far dishonor the Christian principle, the patient suffering, and heroic courage of our martyred fathers, as to countenance, and give fellowship to that which murdered our brethren.

3. I am a close communionist because I have a regard for my own conscience. If self-preservation be the first law in nature, so the first duty a man owes to himself is to keep his own conscience pure. That does not interfere with the rights of others' conscience; there being no compulsion. If a man chooses

to adhere to the error of infant baptism, he is at perfect liberty to do so; but, to violate my own conscience to accommodate his, is certainly placing charity upside down. To do so, would be to betray a lack of Christian principle, and a conscience destitute of conscientiousness; to do evil that good may come, or attempt to promote union, by the sacrifice of principle and the violation of conscience, is the way to throw a stumbling-block in the path of ourselves and those we esteem to be in error. The very fact that a Christian can make so little of what he esteems to be the Lord's command, is of itself enough to weaken its force in the estimation of those who oppose it. We admire principle, even though it be connected with error, and we commend a man for adhering to it until he is convinced it is one; but, for a man who sees the error, and condemns it, and yet has fellowship with it—for him we have no charity.

4. I am a close communionist, because open communion being unknown to and not taught by the Apostles, is an invention of men. It has been the glory and strength of the people called Baptists in all ages, that the New Testament is their only guide for doctrine, ordinances, the formation and government of the Church of Christ.

Let the Baptists keep to their old standard, the New Testament, and they will find themselves upon a rock from off which no enemy will be able to drive them. But let them adopt human standards, as others do, (however good they may be,) and like Samson they will be shorn of much of their strength. In the old Baptist standard (the New Testament) we find nothing of unions formed between truth and error, and the Lord's Supper made the bond of union—nothing of a charity that will fellowship what is untrue, knowing it to be so, but that charity which rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. There we find it written there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism. Therefore am I a close communionist, for the Divine Word has made me so.—*Can. Baptist.*

Death knocking at the Door.

The other day Death knocked at a man's door; he was obliged to let him in. Death said, "I am come to remove you from all joy, and introduce you to all sorrow—to take you from all laughing to all weeping—from all riches to eternal poverty—from all friends to where friendship is unknown—from every smile to where no smile, human, angelic, or Divine will ever greet you—from the wells of salvation to the boiling fountains of Almighty wrath—from the house of worship to the house of remorse—from the offers of mercy to the inflictions of justice—from the regions of hope to the dens of despair—from the music of earth to the groans of hell."

Having completed his errand, Death called upon another man, and said, with a smile, "I am sent by the King of kings to remove you from this bed of pain to where they never say, 'I am sick'—to take you from all sorrow and sighing to where peace and joy are waited on every breeze—from this earthly house of your tabernacle to a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens—from all poverty to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away—from all enemies to such friendship as cannot breathe on earth—from the frowns of evil men to the smiles of just men made perfect, of angels, and of God—from the imperfect and distant view to the beatific vision of God—from imperfect worship to the nearest approach to perfect worship of which you are capable—from the throne of mercy to the throne of glory—from faith to sight—from hope to fruition—from doubt and fear to eternal safety—from the languishing praises of earth to the jubilant hallelujahs of heaven."

Reader! When death knocks at your door, what will he say?

OF CHRIST.

Christ made himself like to us, that he might have us like to himself. Christ must needs have died, how else could sin be expiated, the law satisfied, the devil conquered, and man be saved?

They that deny themselves for Christ, shall enjoy themselves in Christ.

Men would rather hear of Christ crucified for them, than be crucified for Christ.

If Christ denied innocent nature out of love to us, shall not we deny corrupt nature out of love to him.

Christ, by his death, appeared to be the Son of man; by his resurrection he appeared to be the Son of God.

Christ was the great promise of the Old Testament, the Spirit is the great promise of the New.

Christ's strength is the strength of the Christian. If we would stand, Christ must be our foundation; if we would be safe, Christ must be our sanctuary.

In regard of natural life, we live in God; in regard of spiritual life, Christ lives in us.

He that thinks he hath no need of Christ, hath too high thoughts of himself; he that thinks Christ cannot help him, hath too low thoughts of Christ.

Presumption abuses Christ, despair refuses him.

The Box of Ointment.

It was broken and poured on the head of the Saviour. In this transaction, notice:

1. Christ is worthy of the most costly offerings we can make him. This woman used the most precious thing she possessed. The costliest things in heaven are cast at His feet—golden crowns. Every dying Christian offers the most precious thing he can to Christ, viz., his own soul. Every true and loving living Christian does the same.

2. A condemned action may be the most really honorable that can be performed, and have a world-wide notoriety. "Why was this waste?" said the scoffers. But the Incarnate One called it a "good work," and declared that remotest lands and distant ages should know and commend it.

3. See what kind of actions have highest and everlasting value: Any and everything done, heartily and lovingly, to or for Christ. "She hath wrought a good work in me," and never would the beauty and glory of it fade. Remembrance of it adds to the rapture of heaven.

4. No contempt or condemnation of others should hinder us from honoring Christ. "And they murmured at her." But love pressed that faithful saint on and through her work of honor to her Lord. The harshness of human contempt was lost in the sweet and heavenly music of her Redeemer's commendation.

6. If that Jewish female's imperfect knowledge of the glories of the Lamb produced such precious fruits, to what ought not our hundred-fold clearer vision to lead us? She saw, through a glass darkly, and yet with what intensity of love! We see, almost "with open face." How precious should be the ointment we should pour upon our Redeemer's head!—*New York Observer.*

Singing in Public Worship.

Late numbers of the *Provincial Wesleyan* have had some excellent remarks on "Church music." The following copied therefrom will be perused with interest by our readers:

"The writer was never more impressed with the effects of congregational singing, than on one occasion in the Rev. O. H. Spurgeon's Tabernacle, London. The singing of that congregation of about 7 or 8000 persons is led by one man who stands on a platform elevated about half way from the floor to the first gallery, just in front of and below the preacher. In the second singing, after the reading of the Scriptures, the full effect of that grand chorus was experienced. The tune was old 'Cambridge,' the hymn descriptive of the exercises of the saints in heaven. Mr. Spurgeon told the congregation at the commencement that he wished them to sing with the understanding; and before reading each stanza, he gave them directions how they were to engage in it. The first two were in a joyful strain, and such a volume of sound proceeded from that vast multitude, as we never before heard. The next stanzas, he directed them to sing softly, and then the

beautiful effect of that subdued chorus! The succeeding one was to be sung softer still; and so it was; that great mass of sound moved so gently! hushed at times into semi-silence; but still deep and powerful. In reading the next stanza, the great preacher raised his voice and waved his arm with animation, indicating by that means how they were to engage in singing it—and when that great assembly burst out with full force, in emulation of the grand chorus of Heaven, the effect was overwhelming—we were thrilled through and through—we never heard anything to equal it. There was true sympathy in that congregation; and the writer could not help thinking that the singing in itself, would be a sufficient attraction for the thousands who throng thither.

The writer has often been affected in the same way, although in a less degree in small churches in England, and other countries where congregational singing is engaged in heartily, and with propriety. The objection is sometimes made, that such singing is inharmonious, that in every congregation there are some, whose musical faculty is defective, and if all sing, intolerable discord, is the consequence. There may be some truth in this and in cases where the discord is intolerable, rather let those extremely few persons remain silent and sing in their hearts, as they will of necessity do if all besides themselves are joining earnestly in the song of praise. But we venture the opinion that provided such persons do not make their singing prominently heard, the effect is not all unpleasant, even to the most sensitive. Let a person place his ear close to an organ, when those stops technically called mixtures are used—the effect is truly intolerable discord; but at a distance the principal stops alone are heard with distinctness, and the effect is one of power and brilliancy. This may serve to illustrate the singing of a congregation where a few discordant voices may mingle with the majority of harmonious ones. Such little annoyance should be no more noticed by us than the discordant moaning of the wind outside, or the shuffling of feet within."

The Encyclical Letter

of Pope Pius IX. "given at St. Peters, in Rome the 8th day of December 1864, the tenth Anniversary of the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God."

This document addressed to the patriarchs, primates, &c., &c., is receiving more attention than such papal bulls do commonly nowadays.

There was a time when they were not so harmless as at present. His Holiness not only attacks Protestantism generally, but the principles of civil and religious liberty, in a style which we imagine will not be very acceptable even to his own subjects on this side of the Atlantic; they have contended for equal rights heretofore but the spirit of this letter demands far more. Its appearance is creating considerable sensation in Europe. The attack on civilization is calling forth much criticism from many able writers in England, and other countries; especially the United States. Catholic Countries even consider it as directed against their efforts in carrying out constitutional government, especially in this the case in Italy and France.

We would copy the whole document, but a few extracts will be sufficient to indicate what the Head of that church teaches to his subordinate dignitaries:

"You know, venerable brethren, with what care and what pastoral vigilance, the Roman Pontiffs, our predecessors, fulfilling the charge entrusted to them by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself in the person of the blessed Peter, chief of the apostles, have unflinchingly observed their duty in providing for the sheep and lambs, in assiduously nourishing the flock of the Lord with the words of faith, in imbuing them with salutary doctrine, and in turning them away from poisoned pastures. All this is known to you, and you have ap-