

For the Christian Messenger—
ON THE SUBJECT OF RECONCILIATION.

Do the Scriptures of divine truth teach,
1st. That man becomes reconciled to God, or
2nd. That God becomes reconciled to man, or

3rd. That there are two reconciliations.
First, Of man to God, and
Second, Of God to man? that is to say when the heart is changed, and man becomes a new creature.

It is a matter of great importance to have right and Scriptural views, on this and kindred subjects.

It would seem that there are teachers among our own denomination, who hold diverse views on this point. As Baptists we all appeal in such and like cases to a common authority, and yet we do not always arrive at common conclusions. I have long entertained certain views on this subject perhaps I am not orthodox. There are others, who have given much more of their time and attention to doctrinal matters, who perhaps would favour the readers of the *Messenger* with the results of their reading and meditation in reference to so interesting an inquiry, with their reasons annexed.

In the love of the truth,

Yours, &c.,

DISCIPULUS.

Feb. 1869.

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SWEARING.

Dear Brother,—

I have carefully read Bro. Harley's article on Swearing, and the reply of M. A. H., and also two articles by Bro. McKenzie in the *Visitor*. Bro. McK. has gone very fully into the subject and has endeavored to prove that our Lord did not intend to forbid oaths of all kinds. To me nothing new has been brought out in all this. I have long ago carefully examined what clever men and great divines have been able to say in defence of swearing by the followers of Jesus. And I beg to state that the view presented by Bro. Harley appears to me the most satisfactory. The Jews were allowed, yea commanded, to swear. It was a solemn act of religion. This is freely admitted. It was always a fearful thing to swear falsely. Our Blessed Lord quotes the prohibition. An oath must be performed. "But I say unto you," he adds, "swear not at all." I do not merely repeat what Moses and the prophets have enjoined, but I make an important change. What is that change? "Don't perjure yourselves?" this was no change. "Don't swear profanely?" Don't invoke the name of Jehovah in trifling affairs? in common light conversation? This could not have been introduced with a "but I say unto you." All this was clearly included in the third commandment. Nay, this is not it. "But I say unto you SWEAR NOT AT ALL." Swear no oath whatever! "Do not swear by God, do not swear by heaven, by earth, by Jerusalem, by your head, by your Bible, by the cross, nor by any thing whatever, nor upon any occasion whatever." The words of James are a fine comment on the words of his Lord. "Above all things"—as if he had said, "I have given you, and will give you, many cautions and warnings, but I wish to caution you with especial earnestness again one sin, the sin of swearing." I say, What kind of swearing? "Every kind of swearing" is his answer, as expressed as clear as words can make it. "SWEAR NOT," neither by heaven, neither by the earth, NEITHER BY ANY OTHER OATH." There is the statement. Words cannot be plainer, cannot be more express. They cannot be explained away.

But it is replied, "God swears." "The Saviour swore when the oath was administered by the High priest. And Paul swears over and over again, and finally, an angel swears." Answer, none of those cases are at all in point except the case of Paul. Our Lord was a Jew, in the strictest sense of that word. He lived and died a strict observer of all the Jewish rites and ceremonies. If, therefore, it were very clear, instead of being as it is, very obscure, that he really took the legal oath, it would be nothing to the point. I am concerned with what a Christian is to do, not with what the Jews were to practise. And as to the angels and the Lord God himself, I feel a sort of horror in mentioning them in such a connection, when a plain command to myself so easily understood and so easily fulfilled is before me. And with all deference to the great and good commentators, ancient and

modern, and to bro. McK. and bro. M. A. H., I beg to say that there really is not a single instance on record of Paul's swearing. "As the Lord liveth" was the usual Jewish formula of testifying on oath. Please point out the passage where Paul uses this expression, or where he swears by any thing!

"So help you God," is the formula, as our English magistrate puts it. That is, I must say by implication "May God not bless me if I do not tell the truth," &c., and it amounts to this, nothing less and nothing more, "May Almighty God send me to hell and punish me in fire and brimstone forever and ever if I do not tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth!" Horrible! What need of a child of God to add such a confirmation to his "yea, yea; nay, nay." Does not this "come of evil?"

Brother McKenzie will not I trust take it unkindly if I turn his closing sentence round a little and point it at himself. "The moral sense of those who scruple not to take an oath, is to a certain degree distempered, and needs to be brought back to the sacred oracles for a remedy." (The *Italics* are ours.) For my own part I am now nearly sixty years old. I have been a professor of religion for thirty-two years and over. During all that time I have never given testimony on oath, and I never did it but once in my life. When quite young I did once "witness to a deed." Most assuredly I never intend to do it again. I will respect the judgement of others. I will respect their conscientious scruples even though these scruples arise from a "distempered moral sense." But the Bible is given to me for my guide. And as to what meanings others put upon it, or as to how they explain away plain commands, that is their business, not mine. I am at liberty to differ in judgement from the most eminent uninspired commentators. This liberty I must, to be consistent, freely concede to others.

For one I thank brother Harley for his brief article. I deem it lucid, Scriptural, and to the point. I trust my own freely expressed opinions will not be taken amiss and that righteousness and truth may prevail.

Yours truly,

S. T. RAND.

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, FEBRUARY 17, 1869.

CHURCH GROWTH:

SHOULD IT BE FROM WITHIN OR FROM WITHOUT?

It has been a favorite idea with some Christian people that the church should look to its own membership as the great source of its increase, rather than to the outside world. The family, it is said, by such persons, is the model on which the church organization is constructed, that the children of its members are born into the church and that like those formerly brought into the Jewish commonwealth by circumcision, children are now required to be formally recognized by the initiatory ordinance, and that this should be done as soon as convenient after birth. This is, doubtless, a very pretty theory, and has a semblance of propriety about it, until the authority for doing so is sought for in the New Testament. Then we find out that such a principle is altogether unsupported by either precept or example, and is at variance with its real character. The duty of instructing the young at home and in the Sunday School, has by some been enforced by this notion, instead of its being based on the broad principle of it being our duty generally to communicate to others what we have ourselves learned and received.

The church relationship may have certain points of resemblance to that of a family, and it should be expected that the children of believers would be easily convinced of their sinful condition and converted to God, they would then be brought into the household of faith, and made partakers of all its blessings and privileges, but we think that church growth should be looked for from without. The field of operation is the world. Christianity is a system of proselyting. Our Lord's commission is "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Those who are afraid of being charged with making proselytes have not yet imbibed the spirit of their Master or that of his early disciples. The

church is to be the salt of the earth, the light of the world, the city set on a hill.

The truths entrusted to Christians are as necessary for others as for them, and it should be their aim to impart those truths, whether of doctrines, ordinances, or duties, to all, young and old, rich and poor, the educated and the refined, as well as the degraded and the sinful.

We have no sympathy with those who talk disparagingly of efforts to awaken religious inquiry. There is too much taken for granted. Men are often supposed to have good reasons for the views they entertain, whereas they have no prospect that reaches beyond the grave, and may be living without God and without hope. Let Christians look at their fellowmen more in the light of eternity, and seek to rescue them from impending ruin, and thus prove whence comes the real growth of the Church.

"HOLY BAPTISM."

It is not often that we see the Ritualistic views of Sacramental efficacy so unblushingly taught as they are in the *Church Chronicle* of last week. An article in our contemporary entitled, "Holy Baptism," says:—

"Holy Baptism is one of the Christian Sacraments, by which we are born again. By our birth into the world, the fallen nature of Adam was in us. By our second birth in Baptism we are made partakers of the Divine Nature of Jesus Christ."

It is administered, according to Christ's holy Ordinance, by washing with water, in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.—This is the outward sign. The inward grace given unto us in Baptism is 1. A Death unto sin. 2. A New Birth unto righteousness.

We leave the state of nature in the family of Adam, as a man leaves the world when he dies. We enter into a state of grace in the Body of Christ, as a man enters into the world when he is born.

It is required of persons to be baptized that they 1. Repent of sin. 2. Believe with all their heart."

If this is Church of England doctrine, it is strange that any should have had the hardihood to claim for that ecclesiastical organization the title of "the bulwark of Protestantism." Such a notion has been pretty well exploded in the last two or three years.

The explanation given of the above, in the subsequent part of the article, is upon a level with the doctrine taught before. These statements will sound strange to those who are accustomed to take the Word of God for their text-book and guide in those matters. The following are the next paragraphs to the above:—

"Regeneration is different from Conversion.—Regeneration, or Baptism, is that by which we are brought into a new relation to God, being born as His sons. Conversion is the act of a penitent soul, either before or after Baptism, turning from sin to God."

They who fall into wilful sin after Baptism, must be thus converted; or else they will be lost.

They who are not baptized until they reach years of discretion must be thus converted before they come to Baptism; or they profane that holy Sacrament."

The confounding of Regeneration and Baptism in the above we regard as a most destructive error. It strikes at the root of evangelical religion, and a death blow at the great leading truths of the Reformation—justification by faith—and indeed would uproot Christianity itself in its vital power.

This, however, is the natural tendency of Infant Baptism, by whomsoever administered, but we do not often find it so fully developed, or its fruit so ripe, in connection with nominal Protestantism. We are quite aware that the Church Catechism teaches that Baptism is "An outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace," but we do not apprehend that Churchmen, generally, will accept the above as the proper meaning of the Catechism's teaching on the subject of the said "sacrament."

We do not find any part of the Bible that would sanction such a statement as either of the above respecting the initiatory ordinance to the Christian Church. We find rather that Baptism is intended as a test of obedience, and represents Christ's death and burial and resurrection. The apostolic explanation of our Saviour's command to his disciples, is

"Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Nothing can more beautifully represent those great and glorious facts of the Christian faith than Baptism, when properly administered. The attempt to turn it away from this its simple and proper meaning is a more

serious matter than many suppose. It is something more than a mere matter of form and the use of a smaller or larger quantity of water in Baptism. Error on this primary feature of Christian practice creates confusion, and opens the door for all the destructive errors that have afflicted the church ever since the first perversion of this ordinance, and its administration to persons who were not believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

POLITICAL.

The Hon. Joseph Howe has published a Letter addressed to his constituents, the "Men of Hants," in which he states that, previous to the General Election, he almost invariably defined three lines of action:

1. To defeat the delegates who had framed the British American Act.
2. To endeavor to get that Act repealed; and
3. Should we fail in the effort to repeal the Act, that we should endeavor to modify and improve it.

He goes over the various stages of his progress in the endeavour to accomplish the two first of the above proposals, and refers to the decision of the Gladstone government, which led him to the conclusion that they had failed. Having arrived at this, he concludes:

"I could no longer hesitate. The plain path of duty lay before me. All rational repealers had professed that the battle was to last only till the answer came from Gladstone's Cabinet. The answer was here. The battle was over. Had I come home, I must have gone back to Ottawa to be sworn in, and then return to Nova Scotia to run my election. The Governor-General was to leave on Monday, and on Saturday afternoon I was sworn in as President of the Privy Council, to avoid a double journey, to and fro, of sixteen hundred miles."

This office, men of Hants, though the technical formalities make it mine, is in your gift, and to be of any value to me I must receive it at your hands. I could have accepted it with a seat in the Senate, and enjoyed it without your sanction. But you trusted me, and I am not afraid to trust you. On a calm review of all the circumstances, I believe that you will ratify by your suffrages my conduct and policy.

I cannot condescend to defend myself from the mean charges and insinuations with which those who have been for more than a year fattening on the public treasury, have already defiled the Press; but I shall be prepared to meet any of those persons before the electors of Hants, to defend my own conduct, and perhaps to do what I have not hitherto done, make some inquiry into the correctness of their own.

Apart altogether from the mere personal question, you have got now to decide whether Nova Scotia shall raise £40,000 a year by direct taxation, or whether, by this negotiation, ratified by the Canadian Parliament, our Roads and Bridges, and other public services, shall be amply provided for without any such necessity. You have also to decide whether there shall be a just and fair administration of public affairs, by your own Representative, who has seen some service, and gathered some experience, or whether Nova Scotia is to have no influence in conducting the Government of the Dominion, to the authority of which by law, her people are bound to submit.

I have to get into the County soon, and will then be prepared to answer any questions you may ask, or to give any further information that this paper does not supply."

The campaign on the chosen battle-field—Hants County—was opened at Windsor, on Saturday last. The Hon. Joseph Howe appeals to the constituency he now represents to confirm his appointment to the office of President of the Dominion Privy Council. He is being opposed by Mr. Manson H. Goudge—a respectable merchant of Windsor—formerly one of Mr. Howe's warmest supporters. Some of the leading men in the Local Government, and the party by whom they are sustained, were present, and took part in the Public Meeting. The contest is regarded as a test of the mind of Nova Scotia. No doubt a great responsibility rests on the electors of that County, and so the result might be regarded, if the election could be carried on without any improper influences being used. It is melancholy that in these days any mention of bribery should be necessary, and yet it was publicly stated at Windsor that large provision was made for this purpose.

The Court House was crowded. Mr. Howe spoke at length, in defence of his course and conduct. "In justification of his acceptance of office," the *Citizen* says, "he read a letter sent to him in England, in March, 1867, by Mr. Stairs, President of the League, after the Act had carried by the Imperial Parliament, thanking him for his efforts in the defence of the country's rights, and expressing the hope that he would look to his own personal interests, and find employment under the British Government; but that if he chose to return and take part in Provincial politics, the party would gladly received his