

## "RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCER"

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Rev. Joseph McLeod, Editor.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1876.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS.

Our contemporary, the *Christian Visitor*, has apparently been diverted from the even tenor of its way by a comment or two on our issue of the 13th instant. All along the line from New Brunswick to California a constant fusillade upon the common question of communion. Sometimes the bullets were warm, and the strife becomes lively; the close communion hosts set themselves to drive Christian communion from the face of the earth; they excommunicate churches and preachers and people with an unctious and an anathema worthy of the Middle Ages; they deliver their missiles right and left into every square that comes within range, and receive in return only the same kind of occasional shots upon some of their more vulnerable members who, in their zeal, get too far beyond the general line of fire and become annoying, which drive these back into line and quietude. Occasionally the *Intelligencer* has taken a shot in turn at some too valiant zealot who has ventured far from the line unnoticed or unchallenged. This is done to keep these people in mind of our true relative positions, respectively, and keep our readers informed of the state of affairs in this department of contemporary church history.

In our issue of the 13th instant we responded to the shot of one of these brave, and our response, simple as it was, seems to have been placed too surely to suit the style of, and to have indeed galled, some of the more regular veterans of the close communion ranks. The *Visitor* has taken it upon itself in a personal way, and comes out shaking its fist at us, demanding that we either take back what has been delivered, or apologize, declaring our remarks to be unjust, untrue, and intentionally offensive. It asks us unavailingly if we believe what we say; and if we will not please say something more or something else.

We cannot accommodate the *Visitor* in any of its requests. We believe and mean every word in the note to which objection has been made. We are not accustomed to speaking thoughtlessly, or to using its close communion friends unfairly. Our object has been to represent the liberal view of communion exactly alike. The trouble is that when it is fully presented it is so absurd and unchristian that many even of its friends are regretful that it is not better founded.

We know well that close Baptists are fond of iterating their statements of "good" and "bad" as in such a way as to intimidate or declare that no other people follow its rules. But that does not prove either an actual attachment or a correct apprehension of those rules on their part. It is in this profession, however, that the difficulty is rooted. Other denominations are just as much attached to that word as the strict Baptists profess to be or count on. And they do not hesitate to affirm that strict Baptists, in their practice of close communion exceed the limit, not only of absolute right according to the Scripture standard, but also to their social Christian right as a Christian community.

It is not strict Baptists that the design of the Supper is to show forth the Lord's death, or the participant's faith in that death; that the elements are to be received as memorials of Christ's body broken and blood shed; that the sacrament is the celebration of his death? We believe that they do know these things, and that they accept them in the intention here set forth.

The question as to the qualifications for communion is not here raised, nor was it raised in the former note. We know the strict Baptist view on this point, with what persistence they hold them, and with what logic they defend them. Whether we agree or not on this point is not just here of any consequence; it is not in question.

It is not against the Baptists' belief in this intention of the Supper that we have any quarrel. We agree with them in that perfectly. But the *Visitor* will hardly deny that the practice of that body is not in such absolute accordance with its belief. They openly and avowedly make the sacrament of the Supper a standing protest against infant sprinkling, and also against Christian communion, to the intent that they may destroy the Pedobaptist error, sprinkling, and bring the world to their own faith in the mode of baptism. It is with this design they guard the table as they do. They make this institution, in every intention with which they hold it, a factor simply in the propagation of their denominational views, and in the building up of that one sect. We affirm, however monstrous it may appear to our contemporary, that this is changing the design of the institution, and degrading, almost to contemptuousness, this most sacred ordinance. This is our former statement amplified. The apology we make is, "We are sorry it is a fact. Again: openly making the Supper a standing protest against Pedobaptism and Christian communion, is interfering by rule with other Christian communities. It is someone to pray about and try to make a show of letting every man please himself in this matter, while, with solemn and manifold observations as to the scriptural rectitude of your own practice, you tell him plainly that your participation in the Supper is itself a denial, and intended on your part to be a denial, not only of the correctness of his practice, but also of his absolute right to communion. The carnal profession of liberality but intensifies the mediocrity of the practice in such a case.

But the worst feature of the whole of it is the persistence with which these things are declared to be the scripture rule of faith and practice. There is no moderation in Baptist assertion on this point. They persist that this is the only true scripture view, so far as it applies. They strenuously repudiate the idea that they may, by any possibility, be under any misapprehension.

Now, there are other bodies of honest God-fearing people who hold the truth as sacred as the Baptists profess to hold it, who would not willingly depart from the letter and spirit of God's laws; and for these to be told periodically that their profession is a sham, that they do not believe what they practice, or that if they do their intelligence is grievously faulty,—to be told so by rule and systematically, is something that ought not to be done by a corporation professing to be Christian, and something that, when done, should meet its well merited rebuff. There is only one alternative in such a case,—either agree to the charges, or show the falsity of them. If the practices were rested in Baptist authority, as they ought to be, instead of on God's word, as they are, they would not merit the notice of any one who takes that word as the rule of faith and practice; but being vested in that word by a church which professes to follow it in fidelity, and to understand it perfectly, every one

who follows or tries to follow the true teachings of that word, and who does not choose to submit to the charge thus put upon him of stupidity or hypocrisy, must, in self-defence, and in defence of the truth, firmly resist the imputation, and endeavor to expose the falsity of the assumption. If Baptists will practice communion in the proper intention, or avow they have perverted its intention for certain purposes serviceable to themselves, and that they appear of sufficient importance to justify them in doing so, all offence at their practice will cease; but while they practice communion as they do, and justify themselves as they do, they may expect truth-loving people to remind them of their error.

Has the *Visitor* ability to understand these objections, and candor to acknowledge the force of them? We are not speaking of the order or of the relation of the sacrament, nor anything of that sort; we are speaking of that perversion of one of them from its original intention and to Christian and unchristian uses, which is the fundamental condition and practice of close communion.

The real strict Baptists manifest in pushing the truth as respects Baptism is indeed commendable, and they, like others, are justified in using all legitimate means in forwarding a good cause; but, as Baptists ourselves, we deny that they have any right to destroy one sacrament for the sake of establishing the other, or can show the least justification for it. We call the *Visitor's* attention to the fact that every characteristic which the sacrament of the Supper assumes in us, we put, or as an ordinance to be partaken of with closed doors against Christians, it is not the Lord's Supper, but is that a fact instituted by the Baptists, and may be partaken of at any time or place or with any elements they may choose to appoint.

Our contemporary represents us as "conceding to the Orthodox Young men the right to multiply wiles to his heart's content, so long as they do not 'without troubling his neighbours.' Will it please revise that statement?"

SLANDER.

The people of this city have been considerably agitated by statements made in a Quebec paper concerning the schools of St. John. The editor of *La Courrier du Canada*, a French paper published in the city of Quebec, was visiting this city, and in his editorial correspondence he made most serious, even infamous charges against the public schools of this city. Rev. Messrs. McLeod and Oullette accompanied him about the city, and probably furnished him with falsehoods he wrote to his paper. He says he saw "the cell in which they (Michael and Oullette) were shut up for refusing to pay the taxes of this year." Refusing to pay the tax they assured him was a "protest against the school system, and a refusal to recognize the Catholic Schools." He was told by the priests of the city that "Protestants had begged that their children should be received into the Catholic Schools," because "at the Common School they learn only evil, vice and immorality." But the *Intelligencer* is confident to satisfy itself that the charges are untrue, and to satisfy itself that the editor of *La Courrier du Canada*, and his associates, are not only false, but also malicious and maliciously false.

Such are the base lies against the respectable children of St. John, invented by the godly priests and circulated by their godly allies in the press. And these are the charges which are continually making a parade of their professed pity, telling of their sufferings for conscience sake, and making a charge of the most infamous and false as the Papacy itself. Here it is:—

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