

CHRISTIAN



VISITOR.

A Family Newspaper: devoted to

Religious & General Intelligence

REV. E. D. VERY,

"BY PURENESS, BY KNOWLEDGE—BY LOVE UNFEIGNED."—ST. PAUL.

EDITOR.

Volume V.

SAINT JOHN, NEW-BRUNSWICK, FRIDAY, JUNE 4, 1852.

Number 20.

[From the N. Y. Observer.]

THE SEASONS OF DEATH.

*"Leaves have their time to fall,
And flowers to wither at the North wind's breath,
And stars to set—but all,
Thou hast ALL seasons for thine own, O death!"*

INFANCY.

O come not for me, thou monster Death,
With your icy touch and your blasting breath,
For I'm nursed on the lap of tenderness now,
And a mother's fond kisses are pressing my brow;

Oh! ask not for me, till I've knelt beside
Those streams of pleasure that round me glide,
And the enjoyments of earth I've tried,
Come not for me.

When I've tasted the sweets of maturer hours,
When these infantile hands have plucked some
flowers

That hang so thick over life's green bowers,
Then come for me.

Death.

I cannot bear that look of love;
Those smiles of joy I can't approve;
I cannot breathe such air as this;
Your pain and misery are my bliss,
Kiss on, fond mother, while you may—
That rosy babe must die to-day!

YOUTH.

Oh come not for me, thou monster Death,
With your icy touch and your blasting breath;
For I'm basking in pleasure's purest light,
And I'm bathing in oceans of rich delight;
My brow is unwrinkled by age or care,
All—all around me is bright and fair,
And while youth and beauty are mine to share,
Come not for me.

When I've lived admired and loved awhile—
When friends and flatterers cease to smile,
And youth's gay phantoms no more beguile,
Then come for me.

Death.

I come to feast on beauty's wreck;
Youth's fondest hopes I love to check—
To freeze the warm blood in the veins,
I love to tread where pleasure reigns—
To breathe my chilling damps around,
And level all things with the ground.

MATURITY.

Oh! come not for me, thou monster Death,
With your icy touch and your blasting breath,
For a thousand attachments have bound my heart,
And with them, oh ask me not now to part;
For the fondest endearments of earth are mine,
How can I, so soon, have them all to resign?
While these social affections so closely en-
twine.

When the smiles of welcome I no more meet—
When love's warm accents shall cease to greet,
And the pulses of friendship no longer beat,
Then come for me.

Death.

Think not that I shall longer wait—
This day must seal your mortal fate,
And friends shall gather round the dead,
And bathe with tears the clay-cold head,
I come commissioned from on high—
My message is, "Thou too must die."

OLD AGE.

Oh! come not for me, thou monster Death,
With your icy touch and your blasting breath;
For youth and manhood have passed like a
dream,

So empty and vanishing now do they seem,
Their path has been but a thorny way—
Their pursuits but the burden and heat of my
day:

Oh! till the calm Evening has passed away,
Come not for me.

When I've crept along to life's outermost
brink—

When age and infirmity break the last link;
And nature exhausted, at length must sink,
Then come for me.

Death.

Vain thought! to rob me of my sting,
To pass my gate on pleasure's wing;
'T would be to rob me of my crown,
But one superior I own;
And they alone who've loved Him here,
May pass my ordeal without fear.

THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE BAPTISTS IN SCOTLAND.

FROM A CIRCULAR LETTER OF THE BAPTIST UNION FOR SCOTLAND.

Christianity was introduced into this island at a very early period of the gospel dispensation, and it is evident that the first Christian missionaries, whatever their honored names, who planted the standard of the cross on the British shores, held, in common with the primitive church, the distinct principles of the Baptists, and that these principles were maintained by the Christians of this land for several hundred years. This is rendered abundantly manifest from two historical facts; namely that the immersion of Christians, and not of children, was practised till the introduction of popery in the seventh century, and that, even after the bestowment of the ceremony upon children, immersion itself was retained till the reformation.

1. The ancient British church did not practise the immersion of children or even of minors. When Austin, the popish missionary, with others, visited the island at the close of the sixth and beginning of the seventh century, through their instrumentality thousands of the Saxons were dipped in the rivers upon a profession of faith. He however found Christian churches amongst the ancient Britons who did not baptize children, and being anxious to bring them into the Romish church, he made three demands of them, one of which was to give baptism to their children, but they would not yield. A crusade was afterwards undertaken against them, which was attended with a cruel massacre. At this period, immersion in the Romish church was administered to children seven years of age, and so continued for centuries; these were called minors; and it was to this the Britons would not submit. A fierce controversy followed, which lasted about a hundred years, not as to the mode, for all immersed, but as to the subjects whether they should be believers or children. A Saxon prince, named Ina, in the eighth century, brought the controversy to a summary close, not by appeal to the word of God, but by a law requiring children within thirty days old to be dipped, under a penalty of 30s. equal to £30 now, and if the child died undipped, the personal estate was to be forfeited. Thus the baptism of children came to be general in this country. The ancient Scottish records were destroyed by the English, but these British and Saxon memorials abundantly prove that the first Christians in this island were Baptists and so continued for centuries. Moreover, the power of the pope and the errors of popery did not extend to the northern part of the island till some time after they were established in the South.

2. Immersion continued in use, both in Scotland and England, till the reformation.—In the canons of councils held at Perth, in the years 1242 and 1296, one of the appointments in the administration of the ordinance was, "that before the immersion, the aforesaid words should be pronounced." The brazen font, in which the children of the kings of Scotland were dipped, was taken away from Holyrood chapel by the English in 1554, and was afterward destroyed in the days of Cromwell. In the Edinburgh Encyclopædia it is

candidly asserted that in this country (Scotland) sprinkling was never practised in ordinary cases till after the reformation; but that Scottish exiles, who had renounced the authority of the pope, having fled to Geneva, from persecution in England, implicitly acknowledged the authority of John Calvin. At Geneva, a book was published in 1556, containing forms of worship approved by Calvin, and amongst other things the administrator of baptism is enjoined to take water in his hand and lay it upon the child's forehead. For this authority, these exiles, returning to their own country with John Knox at their head, in 1552, established sprinkling in Scotland from which it made its way into England. These facts, obtained from the highest literary authorities, afford abundant evidence, not only that the first Christians were Baptists, but also the first Christians of Great Britain.

3. The first traces of the Baptists in Scotland, after the reformation, occur in the time of the Commonwealth. Having always been the avowed and distinguished friends of liberty—mental and corporeal, civil and religious—the distinctive peculiarities of the Baptists both attracted great attention and gained many converts during that memorable age of the march of freedom. But we regret to say that the bigotry of the religionists in Scotland, and their fermented ardor for Presbyterian and covenanted uniformity, were so powerful that independency and anabaptism were almost as much dreaded and scorned by the leaders of that age as black prelacy. The result was, that the Baptist movement of that day was mainly English—a circumstance of itself enough to blind the eyes of the Scottish people. Moreover, the movement was made entirely by men belonging to the army; and the very fact that they had conquered, and were in the country for the purpose of keeping the nation in subjection, was enough to prevent any impression either as to immersion or independency.

The English army under Cromwell came to Scotland in 1650, and many of the soldiers and officers were Baptists. These kept up the worship of God in the regiments, preached the gospel, and immersed those who from among them received the love of the truth. Some of the troops were stationed in Leith and Edinburgh, and the Baptists had a church there. In 1653, they printed and published at Leith a fourth edition of the Confession of Faith, drawn up by the London Baptist ministers.—To this edition they prefixed a preface, signed in the name and by the appointment of the church of Christ usually meeting at Leith and Edinburgh, by Thomas Spencer, Abraham Holmes, Thomas Powell, John Brady." At that same time they immersed a considerable number in the water of Leith, among whom, it is said, was Lady Wallace of Craigie. At Cupar in Fife also, there was a troop stationed, in which was a Baptist preacher named Browne, who both preached the gospel and immersed several of the regiment in the river Eden. A considerable impression seems to have been made on the minds of many. At a ministers' meeting held at Edinburgh as early as October, 1651, some of the assisting elders ventured to give it as their opinion, 'that children should not receive the sacrament of baptism till they could give confession of their faith.' Some ministers also embraced Baptist views;—Alexander Cornwell of Linlithgow, and Thomas Charteris of Stenhouse are said to have "baptized old people, maintained anabaptism, and would not baptize infants." In 1659, the Baptists in and about Edinburgh promoted a petition for universal toleration to all Scots except papists and prelatists. But when the English troops left the country upon the restoration of the profligate Charles in 1660, all traces of the Baptists in Scotland

seem to have vanished—a fatal termination was put to the progress of their principles, and to the reign of civil and religious freedom.

4. The next trace of the Baptists in Scotland is to be found in one Sir William Sinclair of Kiess, in Caithness, who lived in the early part of the eighteenth century, was immersed in England, came home, preached the gospel, immersed those who through his instrumentality were brought to a knowledge of the truth, and formed a Baptist church on his own estate; and, notwithstanding his rank, suffered much persecution. An old man who heard him, and who was pastor of the church formed by him, was alive in 1829.

Some Scotsmen, like Sir William Sinclair, became Baptists in England, but either they never thought of spreading their views in their native land, or they lacked opportunity. Among these was John Macgowan, the celebrated author of "The Shepherd," "Dialogues of Devils," &c., and who was pastor of the Baptist church assembling in Devonshire Square, London.

5. No permanent effort was made to establish the denomination in Scotland till 1765, when Robert Carmichael and Archibald Maclean were immersed, and a Baptist church was formed in Edinburgh, consisting at first of nine persons, having Carmichael for their pastor.—Maclean was chosen his colleague in 1768; after which time Baptist views rapidly spread into various parts of Scotland; it is not necessary further to pursue the history at present; this can be better done on some future occasion, as we hope it will. The jubilee of 1765 was 1815, and probably it was forgotten amid the din of war and Waterloo. But its centenary must not be forgotten. Let 1865 be a jubilee to the Lord; let it be characterized by a new and vigorous impulse given to the exertions and liberality of the Baptists in Scotland. But let it not be said that we are to wait for two-and-twenty years, and then to begin and do something. No, by that time many of us may be sleeping in the dust of death, or unable to share either in the toils or the spoils which may then be our lot. The voice of wisdom to every Baptist in Scotland is, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do with all thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest." A great work is to be done for God, and for truth, and for souls. Our substance, our time, our exertions, and our hearts are all needed, and are all demanded by the Head of the Church. We have already seen that our distinctive principles existed in this island for hundreds of years at an early period of the Christian dispensation.—We verily believe that they are again to spread and to fill the whole land; and that infant sprinkling, and every semblance of popery, are destined to give way before them. Let us be strong in faith; let us be cemented in holiness for the work. Now is the time for us to be up and doing, so that when 1865 arrives we may have doubled or trebled our present strength, filling every corner of our beloved land; and then we and our children shall be able to accomplish still more for the Lord our God.

TIME AND ETERNITY.

We step the earth—we look abroad over it, and it seems immense—so does the sea. What ages have men lived—and know but a small portion. They circumnavigate it now with a speed under which its vast bulk shrinks. But let the astronomer lift up his glass and he learns to believe in a mass of matter, compared with which this great globe itself becomes an imponderable grain of dust. And so to teach us walking along the road of life, a year, a day, or an hour shall seem long. As we grow older the time shortens; but when we lift up our eyes to look beyond this earth, our seventy years, and the few thousands of years which have rolled over the human race, vanish into a point; for then we are measuring Time against Eternity.