

— THE "CHRISTIAN" AND THE "MESSENGER AND VISITOR."—A few weeks ago we made a little innocent "jotting" about the "Disciples" of P. E. Island. In it were the following expressions:

"On the Island the 'Disciples' have a larger following than in any other place in the Dominion. . . . It is a pity they could not give up the idea that a man is not saved until faith has been supplemented by baptism, and join with us in the belief that baptism is an act of obedience for one already saved."

THE CHRISTIAN, a little monthly sheet of the "Disciples" of the Maritime Provinces, takes us to task for these statements. It declares our first erroneous, because

"According to the census of 1881, New Brunswick has twice as many as P. E. I., Nova Scotia three times, and should the number found on the Island be multiplied by 25, there would be a balance in favor of Ontario."

But our contemporary forgets that New Brunswick has three times, and Nova Scotia over four times the population of P. E. Island. Our remark is true of the Maritime Provinces, but it does not hold of Ontario, where the "Disciples" are a little more numerous, in proportion to population, than on the Island. We are glad to be corrected in this latter case.

It is a pity they (Disciples) could not give up the idea that a man is not saved, &c. This did not please THE CHRISTIAN. This is the important part of the criticism:

"The idea advanced that 'baptism is an act of obedience for one already saved,' is not a scriptural one. That Jesus in his great commission supplemented faith by baptism in order to salvation is evident from the words, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.' On the day of Pentecost, Peter said: 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sin, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.' Surely their sins were not remitted before the baptism! Ananias to Saul: 'And now, why tarriest thou; arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins.' From these, and many other passages, we are led to believe that baptism preceded by faith that purifies the heart, and repentance that produces a reformation in the life, and a public confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, is for the remission of sin."

Before we advance one step there must be a clear understanding of the term "saved." We used it to describe the state of those who should go to heaven, were they to die. The issue between us and THE CHRISTIAN then, is simply this: Our contemporary holds that a believer will not go to heaven, but to hell, when he dies, unless baptized; we hold that a believer, although unbaptized, would go to heaven, and not to hell, were he to pass away. Let us explain one case, however. A man professes to have believed, admits that baptism is a command of Christ, and still refuses to obey. What would you say of him? it may be asked. Just this: He is probably deceived; he is not a believer; for all true believers obey Christ's commands. He has no sufficient evidence that he is in a saved state. The trouble is not that he is not baptized, but that he is not prepared for this ordinance.

But to the question at issue between us. We wish to judge of the case, however, not by a few isolated texts; but by the general teaching of the New Testament.

Let us appeal first to the Gospels. Lu. viii. 12, in the parable of the sower, it is believe and be saved. Leaving out Jno. iii. 5., which THE CHRISTIAN will, no doubt, admit, has no meaning to aid his belief, we have reference in John in any number of cases to belief or faith as saving, and not the slightest reference of baptism as having anything to do with it. We refer to a number of them: chapter iii. 15, 16, 18, 30; iv. 39, 41; v. 35, 40, 47 &c. Now, the question is, if our Lord knew that faith did not save without baptism, why did he declare that faith alone saved, in these, and so many other passages in His teachings? Take one instance, as a sample of the other cases: In chap. iii. 16 "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life." If these words do not mean that faith saves, what do they mean? That is what they say. Had our Lord believed that baptism was necessary to salvation, in addition to faith, why did He not say so? It will not do to say that our Lord supplemented this teaching elsewhere. He, or John inspired by Him, here says that faith, of itself, saves. He gives here the full prescription for the dying sinner. To say that our Lord gave supplementary teaching elsewhere, to be added to this, would be

the same as for a physician to give a prescription to a patient lacking one of the essential ingredients, and say in excuse that he had mentioned the other drug in some part of his published works. With this general view of our Lord's teaching, what must we understand of the passage, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved?" We shall not certainly suppose that He means to contradict His previous utterances, and teach that faith alone does not save. Certainly, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but this does not say that a man is saved by the belief; it only necessarily implies that an act of obedience, in addition, will not make him any the less sure of salvation.

The foregoing, with but few abbreviations, is the Messenger and Visitor's reply to a criticism we offered on what it has since been pleased to call an "innocent jotting." Our paper being a monthly, and somewhat small, we are compelled to condense our remarks, and to leave unnoticed some of the assertions of our critic. In passing, we would say—if the 'jot' had stated what its author *now intimates* was his meaning (larger following according to population) no reference would have been made to it. The statement as it first stood was not true; with the explanation it is not far out. If over 50 per cent. can be called a "little," then no objections should be raised to "the Disciples are (in Ontario) a little more numerous."

(1) In reviewing the reply to our criticism, we find our contemporary making what is sometimes termed a change of base. The "jot" expressed a pity—not that the Disciples taught that a believer will not go to Heaven but to hell unless baptized, but for supplementing faith by baptism, and in not making it an act of obedience for one already saved. If our contemporary had stated in his "jot" what he now affirms to be the issue between us, we would have met it as we do now with square denial. In reply, we simply said, and say now, the idea advanced by the M. & V. is not a scriptural one.

(2) The issue between us we thought to be this—In the case of a penitent believer presenting himself for baptism, does the remission of sins take place before or after baptism? Our contemporary says—Certainly, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," and the man refusing to obey the command is not a believer, he has no sufficient evidence that he is saved, and then goes on to argue the doctrine of salvation by faith alone; and that a person can get to heaven just about as well without baptism as with it—seeing that it is but an "act of obedience that will not make him (candidate) any the less sure of salvation!"

Surely the M. & V. is not voicing the sentiments of its people in these parts. If such be their sentiments, why put forth such strenuous efforts to present to the world the subject of baptism? Why seek to influence as many as possible to submit to this ordinance? Where is the consistency of arguing that baptism is unnecessary to salvation and then conclude by saying, "Let us hold it as strongly as though it were necessary to salvation?" Why not join with the Baptists of England and discuss seriously, as they are doing, the propriety of granting to a candidate the choice of modes? If baptism is of such little importance, why did our contemporary condemn in such severe terms the Salvation Army? Here is what he said a year ago:—

"Does the Army consider baptism as a duty that must be performed? it is replied, "DECIDEDLY NOT." "The Army only considers one baptism essential to salvation, and that is THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT" Eph. iv. 5, where all Bible students suppose water baptism is meant, is given as proof. This sacred ordinance, is plainly commanded by our Lord as anything can be, is flung aside as having a place with shaving the head, washing the feet, etc., "which were never intended to be binding on our practice or consciences."

Has the M. & V. changed its views? Does it now agree with the Salvation Army, that baptism is a duty that need not be performed, and that only one baptism is essential to salvation? Unless such

a change exists we are somewhat puzzled to harmonize its remarks of a year ago with these of a recent date. If the above criticism on the "Army" had appeared in one of our papers it would be quoted as confirmatory evidence of the statement—they (Disciples) hold that a believer will not go to heaven but to hell unless baptized.

(3) We affirm no such doctrine implying that a person under no circumstance whatever can get to heaven without baptism. We simply go according to orders—"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Here faith (or belief) is supplemented by baptism, salvation or remission is placed not before but after baptism.

As to the question whether a person under certain circumstances will not be saved unless baptized, we trouble not ourselves—shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? We have desires and expectations favorable to some who have died unbaptized. But then the question comes, "How far were they censurable for the circumstances?" Not finding in God's word any explicit statement as to how He will treat such cases, we just say—we don't know. Surely there is a wide difference between *we don't know* and "they will not." Our contemporary, if we understand him correctly, says—not to the unenlightened only, but to others also: "You can go to heaven without obeying this command; but in submitting to it you will not make less sure your salvation."

(4) The question is asked, "Why did the Lord declare that *faith alone* saved?" We, too, will ask a question, "Where did the Lord say so?" True, God has promised salvation on faith as a condition, but *not on faith alone*. Salvation by faith does not exclude, but includes, the obedience of faith. But after examining the passages quoted by our critic to substantiate "salvation by faith alone" for the purpose of excluding baptism, we have this to say: (a) The word "alone" is not to be found. (b) Not one of the passages present a case of salvation by faith alone. (c) If "alone" appeared, would there not be a direct conflict with such passages as, "Faith without works is dead, being 'alone.'" Ye see then how "That by works a man is justified and *not* by faith only. And in Jno. xii. 42 we have a case of *faith alone* and the men were not saved.

Will the answer be, "Faith is the only thing mentioned, implying thereby the only thing required." Well, by a similar course of reasoning, we would have but little trouble in proving that even faith is not necessary. For example, faith is not mentioned in the following: Matt. x. 32; Rom. viii. 24; Ep. ii. 5; and 1 Peter iii. 21; "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, &c. For us to say that *confession alone; hope alone; grace alone; baptism alone*, will save a man, would be no more unscriptural than to say, *faith alone*. It is true that a man is saved by faith, by hope, by grace, by baptism; but that he is saved by any one of these *alone* is not true

(5) As to the illustration of the physician we have this to say: We have no objection to the position assigned us therein—that of looking around for supplementary teaching to find out the meaning (or ingredients) of the prescription. But when the same physician, after an elapse of two or three years, makes them known, (or, better perhaps, gives a *new one*), our critic looks back for another prescription in order to leave out, if possible, one of the ingredients of the last given.

(6) Here is a fact that no one will feel like calling in question: That an act of obedience in addition to faith (will not make him any the less sure of salvation.) For example, a teacher says to his scholars: "You that attend regularly and are good, shall receive, at the end of the year, a prize." A question is started among the scholars whether *good* is a necessary condition for obtaining the prize. Says one, I