

countless birds of all kinds, aquatic fowls by the lake side, partridges and pigeons hovering, as on the Nile bank, over the rich plain, immediately recall the "birds of the air" which came and devoured the seed by the way-side, or which took refuge in the spreading branches of the mustard-seed. It is impossible to see even the relics of the great fisheries, which once made the fame of Genesareth, the two or three solitary fishermen casting their nets into the lake from its rocky banks, without recalling the image which here alone, in inland Palestine, could have a meaning; of the net which was "cast into the sea and gathered of every kind" from all the various tribes which still people those lonely waters.—Stanley

### Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

DEAR SIR,

Matters of business connected with my position in life, have occasioned this long delay in replying to your answer to my inquiries. I am obliged to you for your kind expressions, but regret that my letter should unintentionally have been the occasion of angry feelings, between yourself and the Editor of the "Church Times." There can be no greater inconsistency than to attempt religious investigation in an irreligious mind. In replying therefore to your answer, I hope to persevere in that "commendable spirit" for which you give me credit, even though obliged to point out to you your own violation of that course which you praise in others. In speaking of the rite of Confirmation or laying on of hands, you term it "an invention," a "modern ceremonial" and a "sort of remedy." Now it is not my present purpose to enter upon the scriptural evidence for Confirmation; but, dear sir, calling names is not producing arguments. You may think in opposition to the Christian world, that the Ordinance of Confirmation is unsupported by scripture, but a modern invention that surely is not which the ancient Fathers considered no one could neglect with safety to his soul. Before leaving this topic allow me to say that in your references to scripture, you have omitted to notice the two most conclusive passages in the New Testament which could be adduced in behalf of Confirmation, viz. Acts viii. 14-17, and Hebrews. ch. 2 v. In the first we see that two of the Apostles were sent from Jerusalem to Samaria to do an office for the baptized converts, which the inspired Evangelist St. Philip was unable to do. In the second we find the laying on of hands mentioned as one of the first principles of the Christian faith—and even its relative position in the list placed by the Apostle exactly where we should expect it. The evidence of this passage was so conclusive in the opinion of the great Reformer Calvin, that he declared it abundantly sufficient to prove Confirmation to be of Apostolical institution. Again, why should you, as a follower of the gentle and loving One, allow that root of bitterness to show itself in the contemptuous phraseology which you apply to the mode of baptism practised by the Christian Church in general. The term "sprinkling" however, need not be offensive, though you may intend it to be so. In fact the use of it in various passages of both the Old and New Testament, strongly confirms that mode of baptism. We all agree that the washing of water in baptism is merely figurative, and emblematical of the cleansing of the soul by the blood of Christ. Now in reference to this very cleansing the word sprinkling is frequently used in Holy Scripture, and that alone should be sufficient to save it from the controversial sneer. But to the main question between us, you will recollect the following part of the quotation at the head of my first letter. The question is not yet settled with them (that is all who baptize infants,) whether a wicked man or woman who was sprinkled in infancy is a member of the Church or not. Now I was not aware that any doubt existed upon the subject, and therefore without referring to the truth or error of infant baptism, I asked your opinion of two or three passages of God's Word, which seemed to prove that those who had been made members of the household of faith by baptism, though subsequently they fell into grievous sin, were yet treated as disciples, though erring—sons, though disobedient sons, and hence were exhorted to repentance and amendment. The case of Simon Magus, (or if you prefer the circumlocution, Simon who used sorcery,) you decide by declaring that he was a false professor, and by the denunciation of St. Peter was no longer a member of the Church—but is this not an arbitrary decision. That he was a false professor I have no doubt—and that his iniquity had deprived him

of all part and lot in the spiritual blessings of baptism is I think equally clear—hence the Apostle exhorts him to repent and to pray to God for pardon.—Had he repented, you will allow he would not have been rebaptized—why? because he was already disciplined to Christ, and made a subject of His kingdom—what was required of him was obedience and fidelity to his Sovereign. The case of the "Corinthians (1 Cor. i. & iii. chaps.) which is by far the most conclusive, you pass over with a few most unsatisfactory observations, which are no answer. Those who were "carried, contentious, full of envy and strife, &c., who instead of loving one another and walking in all the commands of the Saviour, were worldly and godless," you admit were certainly members of the Christian Church; because St. Paul says so, whilst you deny Simon the privilege of membership though St. Peter did not cut him off. I venture to give my opinion that the language of St. Paul used in reference to the Corinthians decides the case of Simon and all others who sin subsequently to baptism. This is an important point, and has a grave bearing on your peculiar opinions, which I may hereafter more fully explain. But let me add some further proof from the Apostle's language touching the point we are considering. In the eleventh chap. of the same epistle we have a sad exhibition of human depravity in the 20th verse the apostle writes, "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper, for in eating every one taketh before other his own supper, and one is hungry and another is drunken—and in the following verses he desires them to examine themselves and to judge themselves that they may approach the Lord's Table in a better mind: Now observe of these so guilty persons the Apostle thus speaks in the next chapter; "as the Body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one Body being many, are one Body, so also is Christ—for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit—now ye are the Body of Christ and members in particular." These high and holy privileges, recollect, are declared to be the possession of those, very many of whom were grievous sinners; in fact guilty of such sin as is scarcely heard of among Christians of the present day. So again the 12th chap. of 2d. Epistle, affords similar illustrations; and I consider St. Peter's denunciations against Simon Magus applicable also to them, and to all who abuse God's gifts and their holy privileges, and who will surely forfeit that eternal inheritance to the hope of which they were raised by their incorporation into the Body of Christ, except they repent. The same conclusions may be deduced from the Spirit's address to the several Asiatic Churches in the Book of Revelations; and last though first in authority, we have the same instruction in our Lord's parables of the Tares and the net cast into the sea, and the Prodigal, to which I have already referred.

In your answer to my third inquiry, you thus write: "We do not however find that persons who have been baptized in infancy, give evidence of having been by that means made children of God more than others who have not been baptized." In discussing these holy truths it becomes us, dear Sir, to direct ourselves as much as possible of all prejudice and uncharitableness. Can you safely assert that there is no difference between persons who have been baptized in infancy when they grow up to years of understanding, and those who have not been baptized at all. Can you declare that the one has no moral and spiritual advantage over the other, unless having the faculty of Omniscience you can decide what the one might not have been, had he not been baptized—or what the other might have been had he been admitted to the same privilege. You can not say what measure of the Holy Spirit might have been given in answer to the prayer of faith, as was given to Samuel, to Jeremiah, and to John, even from his mother's womb, for the sanctification and direction of his future life. Understand me, I admit that some who are unbaptized, by the purity of their lives condemn many who have been baptized—but nothing can be proved from that except that there are some who abuse the gift of God—shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect.—Rom. iii. 3. You will scarcely say that the same does not take place among the baptized members of your own denomination. Of many of your people, (I mean no offender,) it may be truly declared, "they show that they are children of wrath even as others, and are not subject to the law of God, even though they have received the engraved word which is able to save their souls." Again, you thus proceed in your answer, "Your reference to it (the prodigal) shows that the great error, baptismal regeneration, has had some influence on your mind." I have long been convinced that the controversy respecting that doctrine which you pronounce the "great error" is rather a war of words than of opposite opinions. The respective combatants use the term regeneration in different senses, and hence the impossibility of arriving at an amicable agreement. But I trust that you as well as many others would rejoice at the removal of even one cause of difference between the professed followers of Him who prayed that all His disciples might be one even as He and His Father are One. Though I have not the presumption to expect success where the ablest men have failed, yet I would endeavour to show that there is far more unanimity between the disputants on baptismal regeneration than they themselves allow. For convenience I shall suppose the argument between a Churchman and a Baptist—and first the chief cause of difference originates in a confusion in the use of the words re-

generation and conversion. The Churchman considers regeneration ordinarily necessary to salvation, and likewise conversion—but he understands them as two distinct acts; the one the sole act of God, in which man has no participation—the other likewise the work of the Spirit, but "demanding the co-operation of our active will"—whereas in your paper of the 29th April, you show that you are not aware of that distinction, for you ask the question: "can it be that they suppose any change of heart is effected by this ceremonial (viz. infant baptism)?" I assure you, dear Sir, that no Churchman, high or low, believes in any such change as you mean, though he fully believes that his infant is regenerated in holy baptism. He believes that by the extension of God's mercy through Christ, the child's state is changed, being no longer an alien, but now restored to God's favour, and as a member of Christ, a joint heir also with Him of the heavenly inheritance—he believes that divine grace has been given the child, the seed of future holiness—but he does not believe the child's heart and affections have been turned to God, as you would speak of the conversion of an adult—further he believes that having offered his child to God in holy baptism for adoption into His family, it is his duty to bring him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, by the use of those means which the Lord appointed, by the word of truth, by prayer and by the holy ordinances of Christ's Church—by these divine means he hopes with the further aid of the Holy Spirit, that his child's heart may be turned to God, and that he may come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." But this turning to God is life long, as there is a daily decay, there must be a daily renewal—in this conversion the Churchman fully believes, but he does not call it regeneration—nor does he believe that such a change ever takes place in infancy—there is no opportunity for it, or need of it—the child has committed no actual sin—whatever you may think then of infant baptism or regeneration, remember that the Churchman does not regard either as effecting a change of heart in an infant; but a change of state in relation to God, being by nature born in sin and children of wrath, we are hereby made children of grace, and grafted into the Body of Christ. Should you deem these observations worthy of notice, please to let me know how you would use the term "Immersion" in describing baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire, (St. Matt. iii. ch. 11 v.) and that baptism as it actually occurred in Acts 2 ch. when God poured out of His Spirit upon the Apostles, and the tongues of fire sat upon each of them. Again let me inquire how you would bring little children, infants, to Christ, according to His command in St. Mark x. ch. 13-16, if not by baptism. I regret the length of this letter, yet I have given but a small portion of the evidence in favour of the points we are discussing. Should it not be inconvenient, you would oblige me by copying this communication into the "Christian Messenger," and I remain, sincerely yours,

INQUIRER.

Our friend of the *Christian Messenger*, if sincere, will now have a favorable opportunity of acting upon his own peculiar ideas of Editorial propriety; and he may permit us to express an opinion that all his readers would be essentially benefitted by the perusal of the above article.—*Editor Church Times.*

### News Department.

[Correspondence of the Church Journal.]

TORONTO, May, 1857.

Since I last wrote there has been an important meeting of the Executive Committee of the Synod in this City, and the following alterations in the Constitution adopted by the Synod of 1834, have been recommended for consideration at the next General Meeting:—

Article I. To expunge the following words: "or holding office in any College or School under the jurisdiction of the Bishop."

Article II. To add the following words: "The said declaration not to be required unless the qualification so stated be questioned."

Article VII. After the word "infirmary" to add the words "not under ecclesiastical censure." To expunge the words "and vote thereat," and insert the words "but not to vote thereat."

To add the following Article as Article VIII.: During necessary or authorized absence of the Rector or Incumbent of any Parish or Cure, the clergyman acting as Assistant Minister or Curate of such Incumbent shall be entitled to vote at meetings of the Synod, but not otherwise, unless licensed to a congregation, regularly organized, independent of that presided over by his Rector or Incumbent.

Article XI. (which would then be Article XII.) to add the words "the same to have power to appoint an Assistant Secretary."

The proposed alteration in Article I. would, if carried out, prevent the Rev. Professors of Trinity College from taking a part in the proceedings as representatives of the important Church Institution. I suppose that it was feared that the clerical influence would be too much strengthened by their presence unattended by lay delegates. The English universities and the Irish have their representatives in Parliament, and it does seem strange that our Church College should be unrepresented in our Synod. The change in Article II. would render it unnecessary for the electors of the lay delegates to state in writing that they