

LETTER No. XII.

MONCTON, N. B., May 14, 1878.

and Brother,—

I. PEDOBAPTIST TESTIMONY.

Controversialists who advocate that there is no baptism without dipping, and who teach that infants should not be baptized, frequently, when no other resource is left in the argument, flee to pedobaptist testimony, as they call it, for refuge. That is, Baptist's desire to make it appear, that certain supposed authorities, in the church or elsewhere, who do not believe Baptist doctrines, have "admitted," or "confessed," that the Baptist doctrines are true. Such testimony is, like that of the lexicons, only the testimony of fallible men; and when compared with the teachings of the Bible, of inferior quality, and more or less erroneous. It is possible to select passages, either with or without flagrant garbling, from the writings of theologians, and encyclopedists, which will misrepresent the author and mislead the reader; and thus make the author appear to teach doctrines he never believed, and with which he never had any sympathy.

In the estimation of some classes of minds it seems to be a fine thing to be able to say, that the Rev. Dr. So-and-so; and "all NOT-WORTHY divines;" and "all the great scholars;" and "all the profound lexicographers;" and "all the ministers of note" of all denominations; have always "admitted;" and admit now; and always must admit; and never can do anything else but admit—that is, if they are persons "of note"—that, though they believe in infant baptism and practice it, and believe in sprinkling and teach it, and were never immersed nor immersed others yet the Baptists are right, and all others are wrong. (See Graves, Cox, Campbell, Cramp, and yourself.) Do you think, brother Brown, that if you had pedobaptist testimony enough to make a library, as extensive as the Pope's library in the Vatican, that you could thereby prove the Bible to be wrong? The testimony of ten thousand inconsistent or mistaken men can not make putting a person under water an essential part of baptism, if the Bible does not make it so. What you call pedobaptist testimony, does not prove your doctrines; it only proves that, if what you say be true, those pedobaptists are, or were, either weak-minded, or dishonest, or both.

The testimony which Baptists quote, and represent as having culled from pedobaptist divines and scholars "of note," may be divided into three classes:

1. Some writers, without having examined, critically, the many connections in which the Greek word *baptizo*, and its root *bapto*, are found in Greek literature; and without having given very much attention to the sinuities of the baptismal controversy; have made ill-advised and erroneous admissions. Those admissions prove only that they are not competent to speak, authoritatively, on the question at issue.

2. Other writers are made to speak, and quotations are given, which are partially correct; but which are put in such a light as to misrepresent the person quoted, and mislead the reader. If the testimony of such persons were, as Baptists represent it to be, it would prove, not that Baptist principles are sound, but that those pedobaptists "of note," who make such confessions, were about as dishonest as it is possible for such men to be. They are made to appear as men who subscribed to one creed and believed a different one;—who taught the doctrines of their church in their pulpits, but confessed in the press that those doctrines were not true;—who, through all their ministry, baptized adults and infants by sprinkling, but admitted that such practices are unscriptural and wrong. No jury, in any court, would accept testimony from witnesses who would appear as inconsistent, as Baptists make their witnesses to be. If pedobaptists should accuse their Baptist brethren of "admitting" and "confessing" that the doctrines they preach were erroneous, and their mode of baptism unscriptural; those baptists might call them "accusers of the brethren;" and yet our Baptist brethren appear not to see that they are really accusers of the brethren, and uncharitable in the extreme.

3. There is a third class of this testimony, where pretended quotations are given which are either instances of flagrant garbling, or are utterly without foundation. Dr. Cramp, in the *Christian Messenger*, Feb. 22, 1865, says: "Every record of baptism in that book (the New Testament) is an instance of dipping, as John Wesley, and ministers of all Christian denominations, have again and again confessed." Of course, John Wesley never made such an untruthful and absurd "confession." The *Christian Visitor* of Jan. 5, 1871, and of other dates about that time, represents Dr. Lange, the eminent commentator, as saying: "All attempts to make out infant baptism from the New Testament fail. It is totally op-

posed to the spirit of the apostolic age, and to the FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES of the New Testament." The italics and capitals are given as they appear in the *Visitor*. Dr. Lange never published anything like that. He taught, over and over again, views of baptism directly opposite to those attributed to him in the *Visitor*.

As Wesley and Lange are "note-worthy" divines; and have been put upon the stand by Baptists to testify in the interest of immersionist dogmas; let me give a quotation or two from each of them:

Wesley says, Works, vol. 6, p. 12: "It can not be certainly proven from Scripture that even John's (baptism) was performed by dipping. Nor can it be proved that the baptism of our Saviour, or that administered by his disciples, was by immersion. No, nor that of the eunuch baptized by Philip. The words *baptize* and *baptism* do not necessarily imply dipping, but are used in other senses. That *washing or cleansing* is the true meaning of the word *baptizo* is testified by the greatest scholars and most proper judges in this matter."

Lange, in his notes on Matthew 28: 19, says: "The Baptist exegesis—in every case, first complete religious instruction, then baptize, is incorrect. It is unnatural and unscriptural to treat children as if they were adults. Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them, etc. Or, more correctly, according to the reading—make disciples of all, and having baptized (baptizantes) them, teach, etc. It will be observed that in our Lord's words, as in the church, the process of ordinary discipleship is from baptism to instruction, that is, admission in infancy to the covenant and growing up into all things." Lange also says, in his notes on Acts 16: 15: "The practice of infant baptism does not rest on inference, but on the continuity and identity of the covenant of grace to Jew and Christian, the sign only of admission being altered." Many passages might be quoted from Wesley's Works, and from Lange's Works, to show that they never could have said anything like what Baptist publications attribute to them.

So it is with many of the "testimonies" which Baptists publish as extracts from persons who hold and teach opposite views. It is surprising that Baptist writers give so large an amount of space in their publications to those mutilated, fictitious, garbled testimonies from pedobaptist scholars "of note." It is probable that the frequent reiteration of those testimonies has led many persons to believe them. Many excellent men have contributed, doubtless, to the circulation of such spurious coin because they found it in a Baptist store-house. And, probably, large numbers of persons, who were not able to discriminate, have been deceived, and caught, by chaff like that.

Now, brother Brown, please tell me if you do not think that the "Pedobaptist Testimony" argument, as urged by your co-religionists, is rather too thin? There are many persons, perhaps, who can not discern the fallacy, and absurdity, and quackery, involved in your handling of Pedobaptist Testimony; but you ought to be able to see these defects in your arguments, if others do not. Of course, you will remember that it is only a few centuries since Copernicus and Galileo discovered and demonstrated, that the sun does not roll around the earth each four and twenty-hours; and that the sun is the centre of our material system. Previous to their day "all the learning of the world," and "all the note-worthy scholars that ever lived," as you say, would have "testified," and "confessed," and "admitted," that the prevailing astronomical opinions, of former times were correct, and yet those opinions would have been entirely erroneous. Their testimony would have proved nothing but their own ignorance. It is precisely so with many who have testified concerning the meaning of *baptizo*, and the genuineness of Baptist doctrines generally. I can give you the names of scores of men, whom your writers have called "scholars of note," who never knew, all put together, one half as much about the baptismal controversy as you do. There united testimony if put into the balances would weigh no more than yours alone. It matters not what a thousand such men, or ten thousand mutilated lexicons may say. Let us prove all things, not by the vain teachings of lexicons, or other books, that repeatedly need revision and correction, but by the word of the living God that changeth not.

XVIII. PARTING SALUTATION.

In replying as I have done to your letter of inquiry, I have referred to points not directly raised therein; but which belong, nevertheless, to the same great theme. Through well-conducted discussions of this subject, mist, and doubts, and errors, are dispelled. There is one point upon which we can thoroughly agree, and that is this:—If the Baptist creed is a sound creed, all persons who

think they are Christians, and have not been immersed in Baptism, are in gross error. Hence it follows, that, if Baptists hold the truth on the baptismal question, Christ has no Church on the earth but the Baptist Church, and has no disciples in this world but the people who have been immersed.

If your theory be right, how few comparatively are the people of God; and how manifest and lamentable has been the failure of Christianity! How vast the grand army of other churches who believed on Jesus, and who loved the Saviour,—a multitude indeed whom no man can number, some of whom suffered at the martyr's stake, and others of whom passed away in the triumphs of the faith:—and yet, if the Baptist theory of baptism be correct, all those, because they were never immersed, were never "baptized into Jesus Christ;" and, therefore, must have gone out into the outer darkness, where the weeping and tears abide forever.

Please excuse me, brother Brown, if I express my astonishment that you do not see the unscripturalness, and inconsistency, and narrowness of your creed. There are breathings of better things among your brethren. When you meet on Christian platforms with ministers of another belief, and call them brethren; when you advocate "open communion;" and when you unite with others in Christian work; you practically and logically break away from the trammels of immersionist dogmas, and show that you have outgrown your creed.

I trust, dear brother, that both of us shall be permitted, successfully and joyfully, to finish the work our Master has given us to do; and that when ready to enter into the "better country," where all his people see eye to eye, we, both, and those to whom we minister, shall hear Him say: "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Yours, &c.
D. D. CURRIE.

A CHARGE

DELIVERED BY REV. JOHN GOODISON, EX PRESIDENT OF THE NEWFOUNDLAND CONFERENCE, ON THE OCCASION OF THE ORDINATION OF MISS YOUNG MINISTERS, AT WHOSE REQUEST IT IS PRINTED.

(Continued from our last.)

I. To show himself approved unto God, it is expected that every minister of the Gospel will be "a man of God," and that he will constantly have God's approving smile resting upon him. But this is not all that is required of him in this text. It is required here that he will show himself approved unto God and that before all men. How, we are led to ask is the minister of Christ to do this? We answer by constantly exhibiting to others that true and genuine piety which so eminently characterizes the servants of God in all ages of the world. The elements of true piety are ever found in the souls of the regenerated. This change has been pronounced by Christ as indispensable to the Christian character. You have entered the ministry of that section of the church of Christ which on its very threshold ask the important question, *Have you been born again?* And you know dear brethren that an answer in the negative would exclude you from engaging in any position of trust in the church of your choice. Brethren, *this is as it should be.* These are not the days for the church to admit unconverted unregenerate men into her ranks. It is the glory of the evangelical christianism that they have a regenerate ministry, and never may that glory depart. It is this that makes the memory of our fathers in the ministry so fragrant to us. It is this that is the hope of the church in the future. But it is also expected that the ministers will be eminent-ly pious. This expectation arises from the very exalted position they occupy. The teacher is naturally expected to know more than the scholar. The man who has for several years been master of his trade is expected to know more than the mere apprentice. And the minister whose whole time is or ought to be, occupied with holy things, is expected to know more of the deep things of God, to be more holy, more pious than those of his congregation who have so much to contend with, and who have so little time to devote to spiritual matters. Hence it is that persons look up to their ministers as examples in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity. If this is the case brethren, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness. How blameless your lives. How devoted to Christ, into that ministry into which you have been called to exercise your talents, we can boast of some of the holiest men that have ever breathed the breath of life. Did time permit we might name them by scores if not by hundreds. You have in the course of study read many of the saintly

lives, and you have observed I have no doubt that their eminent piety was the grand secret of their success. Living near to God, enjoying constant communion with the Father of spirits, God abundantly owned their labors, and crowned their ministry with marvellous success. We trust dear brethren you will be true successors of such men of God, and that the Divine blessing may attend your ministrations as it attended theirs. But all this should be done so as to obtain the Divine approval. We are to study to show ourselves approved unto God. If we study to do this with any other motive or intent, that moment we fail in our endeavors to please God. All we do is to be done as unto the Lord. As servants of God we are no longer to please ourselves, to gratify our desires, or to seek the applause of men, but we are to do all with a single eye to God's glory, and to the furtherance of His cause in the earth. Do not think my dear brethren that this will be easy in its accomplishment. You will find that such is the selfishness of your nature, such your desire to have the praise and honor of men, that it will only be the result of "LIVING VERY NEAR TO GOD," that you will be able to overcome such feelings, and give the honor and glory to Him to whom it belongs. You must see to it that you are so filled with God's love that all self-love may be eradicated from your hearts. You must be watchful of the praise that man bestoweth, lest it rob you of God's approving smile. Whatever else you have or have not you may lay it down a fixed principle that the approbation of God is that without which you can never succeed, in so sacred and high a calling. Do we not perceive dear brethren therefore the wisdom of such an exhortation as that now under consideration. You know how men who take very little thought about their own ways are very watchful indeed over the acts of the ministers of Christ. Things which are deemed small offences in the sight of God, and which in His great mercy he often overlooks or pardons, are by some men looked upon as enormities in a Christian minister, and on no account forgiven. Hence as servants of God we should avoid the very appearance of evil, that we give the enemies of Christ none occasion to blaspheme.

And are we not aware brethren that to have the approbation of God it will be necessary for us to be fully employed for Him. Is the work to which you have been called of so little importance that part of your time may be devoted to other pursuits and callings? Nay, but we think it is the duty of every minister of Christ to see that he is altogether unencumbered with every other service which would hinder him from faithfully serving his Lord and Master. We cannot think, nor do we believe that any minister of Christ who is encumbered with unnecessary cares of a worldly nature can have the full approbation of God. I put it to yourselves. What would you think of your servant, did you employ one, spending any portion of his time in serving another, or in using that time to which you had a lawful right in benefitting himself in any way? Would such a course of conduct commend that servant to you? Would you approve of such ways? Then if you could not do so how much less your Master? Besides, dear brethren you will find that such is the importance of the position you are to occupy that it will take up all your time in the faithful discharge of the duties devolving upon you. So multifarious are the duties of the minister of Christ that he need not be unemployed for one moment. As Methodist ministers you are urged upon by your venerable founder, "Always be employed, never be triflingly employed," and I say that if you still adhere to such sage advice given by one of the most successful preachers of the Gospel since the days of the apostles, you will see that you profit materially from so acting. Let me urge upon you then to devote yourselves, your time, your talents, your all to the entire service of Him whom you call "Lord and Master." By so doing you will have God's approbation here and his welcome hereafter. Yea, dear brethren it is to this you must be continually looking. You may not always receive approbation from men. You may not always have the approval of your brethren in the ministry. But always see to it that you have the approval and smile of God, and look forward to that time when your Master will come in the cloud of heaven, and when attended by his angels you will stand at his bar, I trust we all shall hear him say to each one of us, "Well done good and faithful servant enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

II. We are to notice that the apostle wishes him to become "A workman that needeth not to be ashamed." There is my dear brethren no work on earth comparable to that work in which a Christian minister is engaged, inasmuch as it has to do with the highest concerns of the souls of men, with the solemn interests of mankind both for time and eternity. There is no work that can surpass it, and cons-

quently it deserves the most anxious consideration of all who engage in it. In other works men may consult their own interests, their own welfare, their own ease; but in this we must not do our own will but God's, we must not think of our own praise and honor, but the glory and praise of Christ, we must labor for the salvation of souls and to have as I have said the approbation of God. And this work must be done faithfully, nor must we think of relaxing our efforts until the time come when we shall be released from the church militant to join the service of the church triumphant. In the prosecution of this work we shall often have to combat with adverse influences. Our blessed Lord and Master had much to contend with when working the works of him that sent him. But like him we must continue to do our duty until our work is done, even though it be through poverty, distress, pain and persecution. Such being the work to which you are called you will at once perceive with what holy caution and Christian prudence it should be undertaken. To engage in such a work as this we should have the solemn and settled conviction that we are "called to it" and that "wee is me if I preach not the gospel." That to shrink it would be displeasing to Christ, and that it would grieve the good Spirit of our God. No doubt you have thus looked upon this great work and are prepared to engage in it trusting that God would graciously assist you in the performance of the same. But in order that you may the more fully comprehend the importance of this great work we will consider it under the different names by which the servants of Christ are called in God's Holy Word. We notice that they are called

"TEACHERS."

Our blessed Lord said to his disciples just before his ascension "Go ye and TEACH all nations." You are to be teachers then. As such it will be expected that you have been instructed. It would be folly on the part of any to teach that which they know not. Our Lord sent those who were duly qualified, to impart instruction. And we see the aptness of the disciples for this office from the manner in which they spoke and preached after the descent of the Holy Ghost. Your duty then is to teach, For let them that is taught in the word communicate. The text book you are to use in the school of Christ is the infallible word of Divine truth. From its sacred pages you are to obtain matter for your instruction. You are not to obtrude upon your pupils your own notions independent of the teachings of God's holy word, but only those which are derivable from that sacred source. Never was there need to be more careful in handling the word of God than at present. Let the word of God then be your guide, your great book of reference, your chief source of knowledge. Let this be your green pasture into which you shall lead your flock. From this sacred treasury you must draw things both new and old. From this mine of truth you must endeavor to enrich all who set at your feet. I trust that the great Teacher himself may so instruct you that you may by his help be made a lasting blessing to others. We notice also that they are called

PASTORS.

Christ Jesus our Lord claims to be the Good Shepherd, and as proof of that claim he hath given his life for the sheep. Your duty, as under shepherds, or pastors, is to feed the flock of Christ which he hath purchased with his own blood. Our dear Lord in charging Peter said, "Feed my sheep," "Feed my lambs," and what Christ said to Peter he says to all his servants. 'Tis the duty of the shepherd to look well after the flock. To see they have good pasturage, and are properly secure within the fold. Alas how many of the sheep and lambs once in the fold of Christ have been lost by the negligence of those who have promised to care for them. How great the responsibility attached to the office of a pastor. Let it be yours dear brethren with intense anxiety to watch over, and with constant care and tenderness to look after those sheep and lambs of Christ's flock that the good Shepherd shall place you over. If one of these should be lost through your negligence how great will be the sin in the sight of God. Again they are called

"GUIDES."

Your example is to be such as shall enable you to say with the apostle Paul, "Be ye followers of me as I also am of Christ." The duty devolving upon you as guides is such as will require you to be very cautious indeed of your own steps lest you should lead others astray. It will also be necessary for you to be well acquainted with the way or you will be unable to direct aright. The way of prayer, of trust in God, of holy living, of upright conversation should be such in yourselves as at all times to command the attention and willing obedience of those who place themselves under your care. Let it be seen then during the whole course of your ministerial career that you are true and faithful guides, and that through your instrumentality many, very many are helped on their way to heaven.

(Conclusion next week.)