

working together to bring about that "consummation devoutly to be wished," the revival of the synodal functions of the Church of England. Towards that consummation the synodal elections which are at this moment in progress, will contribute in no small degree.—John Bull.

INFIDELITY, HOW PROPAGATED.

In the Rev. J. D. Mereweather's interesting *Diary of "Life on Board an Emigrant Ship,"* from which we quoted so largely in this place last week, we find the following entry:—

"In my cabin all the morning, reading an article of Chambers on the History of the Bible. There is much useful information in it: but every now and then one sees in this, as in all his works, that he studiously avoids confessing any particular Creed. . . . If I wished to bring up a number of young people entirely void of fixed principles on religious subjects, I would put into their hands Chambers' works."

We believe that very serious and fundamental objection applies to a very large number of popular and "liberal" periodicals and newspapers, many of which are chiefly supported and read by individuals and families professing to value, and even to reverence the Doctrines and Practices of the Church. They like the information and the amusement which they derive from such works, and in the pursuit of these they take far too little notice of the insidious and mischievous character of the errors of omission and commission which a vigilant and practised eye can detect in so many of the popular publications of the day, and which will often be found lurking in a single sentence, or even in a single word.

We can easily anticipate the reply to Mr. Mereweather's objection—an objection which will, in fact, be received, in such quarters, as the highest praise. It will be said "We make no profession and no attempt to teach 'any particular Creed;' we confess that we do, as you say, 'studiously avoid' doing so. Our object is to teach as much as we can to all parties, without distinction, and therefore we aim at being neutral as regards Creed," &c. Now, without stopping to enquire whether any Christian man has a right to aim at being neutral in such matters, we admit the plausibility of such language as this; but as regards all such professions of impartiality and neutrality in religion, we repeat what we have said on former occasions, in dealing with such parties, that not only is their theory evidently an impossible one, but their practices distinctly show it to be so. They do constantly, positively or negatively, by what they say or leave unsaid, teach, and if we may use the term, unteach certain religious Doctrines and Practices, and teach their own heresies.—Ed. C. C.]

We could not easily find a better illustration of the foregoing observations than that contained in a very few lines of a long article in "Chambers' Journal" for the present month. Most persons would pronounce it an interesting practically useful article—that is so far as the facts are concerned, for the style in which the narrative is written strikes us as affected and artificial. We can fancy practical men—earnest Churchmen—reading this paper to their family, re-commending it to their friends and neighbours, as well worth reading, without heeding the passage to which we allude, and which, if duly examined, must be admitted to be pre-eminently calculated, if not expressly intended, to inoculate the reader with feelings and principles theoretically and practically opposed to those which the Church would have us diligently cultivate, in ourselves and in our families.

The paper in question is the benevolent scheme carried out at Messrs. Price's Candle Manufactory, at Belmont, Vauxhall, for the education and recreation of the children employed there. Mr. Wilson, the chief manager, states that at the time of the Cholera, in 1849, the boys used to be allowed to spend a large proportion of their time at cricket, as one of the best means of preserving their health; and that "always when the game was finished, the boys collected in a corner of a field, and took off their caps for a very short prayer for the safety of themselves and their friends from cholera." Upon this very commendable practice, the author of the paper proceeds to make the following comment:—

"That informal prayer, made while the blood was warm with happiness and high with health, spoken in the open field, by themselves, direct to Heaven, without other interpreter between them, must have made a deep impression on the boys. Its very informality must have added to its solemnity making it appear and indeed making it in reality so much the more the genuine spontaneous heart-spoken expression of each individual than the mere customary attendance on a prescribed form can admit."

As we read this, it is neither more nor less than a distinct assertion that the system of worship which the Church has deliberately adopted is an inferior system, and not calculated for those who desire to pray "direct to Heaven," with "solemnity," and with "genuine, heart-spoken, expression." Now, surely this is not preserving neutrality, but is a very decided and fundamental objection to the Church. But it is not simply, nor chiefly, avowed Dissenters who will read and approve of this passage—for, in truth, though it appears at first sight to resolve itself into a question of extempore versus pre-composed forms of Prayer, yet there evidently was in this case a form of prayer, with a formal time, place, and manner of using that prayer; and Mr. Wilson speaks of "the tone in which they said their Amen"—all of which is, in reality, so far, part and parcel of that Church system which it is the evident object of the writer to depreciate. There is a large, and, we fear, increasing class of persons, who will gladly catch at the convenient plausibilities of this

passage, respecting worship in the "open field," "direct to heaven," "without other interpreter" (whatever that may mean)—its very informality adding to its solemnity, and "making it in reality so much the more the genuine, spontaneous, heart-spoken expression of each individual than the customary attendance on a prescribed form can admit." We are well acquainted with this green-fields-worshipping class of persons, who, disliking the "customary attendance on a prescribed form," wander forth on Sunday mornings, duly furnished with such "aids to devotion" as a well-filled cigar-case, a "Sunday newspaper," a volume of a novel, or the last number of Mr. Dickens' new "serial." The works of Messrs. Chambers, Dickens, and Douglas Jerrold, the columns of the *Examiner* newspaper, and periodicals of that class, so unsuspectingly, inconsiderately, and indiscriminately introduced among young persons, will be often found to undermine many of those principles and practices which provide the only safeguards and channels for sound religion and personal piety. The poison may be prepared in homoeopathic doses, but it will silently and surely do its work. It may but a very small portion of heaven, but it will speedily leaven the whole lump, unless Christian parents, sponsors, and teachers, are far more vigilant and systematic in their efforts to prevent or counteract the evil influence of the most popular periodical literature of these days of desultory and indiscriminate reading. Parents who now mourn, or who may hereafter mourn, over the heartlessness, inattention, and irreverence, or even the total neglect, of a son, or a daughter, in regard to public and private worship of Almighty God, may little suspect the real fact, that they have been unconsciously placing in their way the most attractive and fatal instruments for uprooting principles, and practices, which the Church has enjoined for the cultivation of that reverence and godly fear which is the beginning and the end of all true wisdom.

The *Christian Observer* has an able and highly seasonable article on the subtle and dangerous character of modern infidelity, with special reference to the new systems of geology, history, and exegesis. In another paper, equally valuable and seasonable, the question of the Missionary work of the Church in the colonies is discussed, with a view to show the mistaken and mischievous tendency of the attempt to set up a "Colonial Church Society" in opposition to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, whose character and proceedings the writer successfully vindicates from the objections raised against it by the promoters of the rival association.

The proposed visit of the Bishop of London to the Lord PRIMATE of Ireland, is, we trust, not a mere holiday trip. Much as we think our over-worked Diocesan entitled to the recreation of a summer excursion, we cannot suppress a hope that on the present occasion there may be more in his Lordship's movements than meets the eye. No doubt the ensuing session of Parliament, and, it is far from impossible, of the Convention of Bishops, will not pass over without some important measures affecting the National Church. In whatever is done, it is the interest of both the Churches, no less than of both the kingdoms, that the Union of the Churches should be more of a reality than it has been hitherto, despite of the title of a United Church.

The appearance of another new monthly, of which the second part now lies before us, we hail with great satisfaction. It is published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, under the title the "Home Friend," in weekly numbers, collected into monthly parts, and is well calculated, by the variety of its matter and the wood-cut illustrations which accompany the text, as well as by its exceedingly moderate price, to find its way into the dwellings of the middle and lower classes, in the place of some of the more questionable publications with which that department of the literary market is inundated.

POPULAR BAPTIST ARGUMENTS REVIEWED.

BY THE REV. J. T. LEWIS, A. B.
(Continued from No. 2, Page 11.)

THE first objection is as follows:—"JOHN PREACHED IN THE WILDERNESS OF JUDEA, AND BAPTIZED SUCH AS CONFESSED THEIR SINS.—MATT. III. HE BAPTIZED WITH THE BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE, SAYING UNTO THE PEOPLE THAT THEY SHOULD BELIEVE ON HIM WHO SHOULD COME AFTER HIM, THAT IS, ON CHRIST.—ACTS XIX. 4. As John required those whom he baptized to confess their sins, and believe in the coming Messiah, it is evident infants could not be the subject of his baptism." We would in the first place observe, that this objection from St. John's baptism is unfairly stated by our opponents. It is nowhere said that St. John baptized such as confessed their sins; this way of putting the objection might lead some to suppose that he baptized none else. But St. Matthew's words are, "Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, &c., and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." An acute reader will at once see a difference between these statements: the words "All Judea went out to him and were baptized, confessing their sins" are widely different from the words "John preached in Judea and baptized such as con-

fessed their sins," the latter evidently implying what St. Matthew does not, viz, that St. John selected those that confessed their sins. But the whole objection is utterly futile unless it can be shown that St. John baptized none but those who audibly confessed their sins. True it is that he did baptize such, but did he baptize none others? All that can be urged is, that St. Matthew says nothing about infants, and it would have been more extraordinary if he had. St. Matthew wrote his gospel for his own countrymen, the Jews, who were well acquainted with infant baptism, as it is well known that the Jews when they made proselytes from the Gentiles, circumcized and baptized the males, and baptized the female infants as well as adults. The custom of making proselytes (as St. John was doing) by the baptism of infants as well as adults, was familiar to the Jews, how absurd then to expect that St. Matthew, when writing to such persons would have specified infants. A Churchman or Methodist writing to Churchmen or Methodists, when narrating his success in baptizing, would not take care to particularize and inform his brethren that he included infants. Neither would a Jew writing to a Jew. May we not on the other hand infer from St. Matthew's silence, that infants were baptized, as the Jews to whom he wrote would have concluded that St. John did baptize infants, unless they were informed to the contrary. Indeed we know that St. John baptized some very young, because there were found at Ephesus, A.D. 56, twelve men who had been baptized by him, (Acts xix). Now, St. John was thrown into prison A.D. 30, so that supposing these men to have been baptized by St. John in his last year (and they may have been baptized earlier), they must have been baptized 27 years when St. Paul met them. We are not told that they were aged men, therefore there is a probability that some of the twelve were very young when baptized by St. John. Again St. John's baptism is altogether irrelevant, for suppose he excluded infants, does it follow that Christ should do the same? St. John carefully distinguished between his own and Christ's baptism, his being but a mere initiatory rite preparatory to the baptism of the Holy Ghost, so that on the supposition that St. John baptized none but adults, (which we are far from conceding) still it does not follow that Christ should do the same. The baptisms themselves were widely different; why may not the recipients also have been different?

"Our adorable Lord and Saviour was baptized not in infancy but when he began to be about thirty years of age."—LUKE III. 23. If this objection to infant baptism, founded on Christ's example, proves that we should not be baptized in infancy, it also proves that we should not be baptized till the age of thirty years; but, in fact, it proves neither. Though our Lord submitted to the rite, it was merely, as he himself said, "to fulfill righteousness," to set an example as he ever did, of scrupulous attention to outward acts of duty, and to exhibit in his own person that descent of the Holy Ghost which was to be the characteristic of his own baptism. He could not be said to be baptized into John's baptism, nor yet into Christian baptism; he could not have been baptized on a profession of repentance, for he had nothing to repent of. He could not be baptized on a profession of faith in himself, for that would be unmeaning; in short, the argument drawn from the example of Christ is singularly absurd. "Tis said our Lord was not baptized in infancy." How was it possible that he could? Christian baptism was not as yet introduced, and St. John was an infant like himself.

"Jesus baptized by his disciples in the land of Judea, and he made and baptized more disciples than John."—JOHN IV. He made disciples, then baptized them. We do not read of his baptizing any but disciples, and these could not be infants, for he says, "Whosoever doth not bear my cross and come after me cannot be my disciple."—LUKE XIV. 27. The distinction here drawn between making and baptizing disciples is as fanciful as if an officer should distinguish between making and enlisting a soldier, the fact being that disciples were made such by baptism, and soldiers by enlistment. This distinction of the Baptists may have arisen from misunder-

standing those words of our Saviour, "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them" &c., from which they argue that teaching must always precede baptism, and thus infants become necessarily excluded; but a slight knowledge of Greek will show any one that the true meaning of the word *teach* is literally "make disciples of," which translation, of course, overthrows the distinction between making and baptizing disciples. The force, however, of the Baptist's objection turns on this, whether infants can be termed disciples? No, say they, because Christ defined a disciple to be, "one who took up his cross and followed him." Infants cannot do this, therefore they cannot be disciples. To show the absurdity of this reasoning we will take another exactly parallel. Christ defined a disciple to be one who hated his father and mother in comparison with him; orphans cannot do this, therefore they are incapable of becoming disciples. The fallacy arises from not considering that Christ defined a disciple under certain circumstances. He who had a cross to bear and refused to bear it, he who had a parent and loved him more than Christ, these could not be disciples. But then there were other classes of disciples. Infants have no cross to bear therefore the objection is futile, because Christ's words are inapplicable to them. Our Saviour clearly meant by this definition to describe a genuine disciple, who, when called on was ready to suffer shame for his name, but there were other disciples of a far different kind. Christ himself drew a distinction between a disciple in word and a disciple indeed. "If ye continue in my word then are ye my disciples indeed."—JOHN VIII. 31. Nay, more, our Lord satisfactorily refuted this idea of the Baptists, that no man can be a disciple who does not daily bear his cross, by the choice of Judas as a disciple; he had been, no doubt, baptized, "For he was numbered with us," says St. Peter, (Acts i. 17), "and had obtained part of this ministry." Simon Magus too was made a disciple by baptism, yet our Lord's definition of a disciple was most inapplicable to him, and so it ever will be. "The kingdom of heaven (the visible church) is like unto a net cast into the sea which gathers of every kind. Let not man that is Christ's prerogative at the great account. But enough has been said to refute this attempt "to entangle Christ in his talk."

"The gospel commission is, 'Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'—MATT. XXVIII. 27. 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.'—MATT. XVI. 15. The Saviour made and baptized disciples in Judea, but the apostles were to go into all the world to make and baptize disciples. The first duty enjoined in this commission is to make disciples, by preaching the gospel. The second duty is to baptize such disciples, or believers, as they are called in Mark. This commission is no authority for infant baptism, but it positively commands the baptism of all believers."

True, this was part of the Apostolic Mission, and it is for us to consider in which sense it was likely to have been understood by the Apostles; bearing in mind that there was not the least necessity for our Lord to have particularized infants, speaking as he was to men who were acquainted with the practice of baptizing them; men to whom the custom was perfectly familiar, the laws (as we before said) invariably baptizing as well as circumcising the children of Gentiles converted to Judaism. Now the important point is this: our Lord must have known that His command "to baptize all nations," would convey to His Apostles the idea that they were to baptize all without excepting infants; if then He knew that he would be so understood, and yet did not disclaim this meaning of His words, in short, as he has not excepted infants, the inevitable conclusion is that he intended His Apostles to include them. So far then from this commission being no authority for infant baptism, it is a strong presumption in favor of the practice. To have specified infants would have been superfluous; that he did not except them is sufficient.

To be Continued.