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THE CHRISTIAN.

Vol. II. } SAINT JOHN, N. B., FEBRUARY, 1841. } No. 9.

CONDUCTED BY W. W. EATON.

Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.—Peter. On this Rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.—The Lord Messiah.

REMARKS ON CONTROVERSY.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN.]

JAMESTOWN, (OHIO), 9th December, 1840.

Dear Brother Eaton—One of the leading objections made to us by the religionists of the day is, that we are fond of controversy on religious subjects. They say there is no necessity for such controversies among Christians, who all believe in the same God, and who read the same Scriptures. In short they say, “that no good is done by controversy.” When reminded that the Apostles were great controversialists, disputing from day to day, and from time to time for months, and even years, they admit that it was then necessary, to break down Judaism and Heathenism, but that all necessity is now removed in this land of Bibles, where all wear the common name of Christians. They say it is an abomination for men professing the same religion to be disputing about doctrines and practices.

These sayings of theirs drive us away as pestilent fellows, disturbing the peace and harmony of religion, and distracting the minds of men, thereby unsettling all the doctrines that have been established in Christendom.

Will you permit me to put in a plea for this course of proceeding on our part. We do not profess to have learned any new plans of removing error and establishing truth; we acknowledge Jesus Christ as our pattern in all things; and do not aim at making improvements on his precepts nor examples. Let us then turn to the history of his life, and see how he combatted religious errors. The historians say there were divers sects, professing the religion taught by Moses; in many things they agreed, and were nominally all of the same religion; but on some points they differed and disputed among themselves. Jesus was born to this religion, being one of the sons of Abraham, and he was a strict observer of the religion taught by Moses and the other Prophets acknowledged by that Church or people, but his teachings and manners differed from all the sects professing that religion, in consequence of which he was compelled to defend his doctrines and practices. I shall not have room to give many examples in this essay, but will turn to the history, Matthew xxii 23, to

the end of the chapter. 1st. The Sadducees attack him, having heard perhaps that he taught the resurrection of the dead, a doctrine not believed by that sect, although they acknowledged Moses. Jesus had the affirmative and the Sadducee the negative; nevertheless the Sadducee opened the debate, and endeavoured to show that according to the teaching of Moses the resurrection of the dead was absurd. he used that kind of argument now known among logicians by the latin phrase of *reductio ad absurdum*, which is considered one of the strongest pushes that can be made at an opponent; he argued that if Moses was right in allowing a woman to have a succession of husbands, that it would create great confusion and difficulty if they were restored to life again—either Moses was ignorant of the resurrection, or else his law was a bad one. This closed the argument of the Sadducee. The Saviour then replied, or rather went about proving the doctrine he preached. He appeals to Moses, and uses the same kind of argument used by the Sadducee, i. e. he reduces his position to an absurdity, “Did you never read what God said to Moses at the burning bush? I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.” Now all these men were dead at the time, God spake these words to Moses, consequently your doctrine teaches, “that God is the God of the dead.” Besides God made promises to these men, that he would give them possession of things which they did not receive before their death, therefore they must be raised from the dead, else God’s promises must fail. Having silenced his opponent, the debate closed.

2dly. He was attacked by a learned advocate of another sect (a lawyer) of the Pharisees. The lawyer first proposed a question for discussion, namely, “Which is the first or greatest commandment in the law of Moses?” When this question was answered, the lawyer acknowledged its correctness. Then the Saviour proposed a question, “What do you think of the Messiah, whose son should he be?” This question led to a debate. The Pharisee affirmed that he should be a son of David, and no doubt thought he was warranted in doing so by the Scriptures. But the Saviour appealed to David himself, and completely refuted the Pharisee. So this short debate ended.

I have now shown the example set before us by our Lord combatting errors, which his opponents honestly thought they could sustain by the Scriptures, but failed to do so. Their failure, however, did not stop the propagation of their errors, and no doubt the same cry against religious debates was then raised by these sects, saying, “these debates do no good.” This has been the plea of error ever since it was introduced into the world. Error has always shunned light lest it should be exposed, and if there be any means of infusing light without expelling darkness, I confess I have never learned how it is done. I hope then I may be excused when removing error, that truth may take its place. One would be led to suppose from the objections urged against us, that truth and error had become homogeneous, and would dwell together in harmony.

Affectionately yours,

M. WINANS.

JAMESTOWN, (OHIO), 12th December, 1840.

Dear Brother Eaton—After much disputation about the conversion of sinners; some contending that they are converted by a direct operation

of the Holy Spirit, others that the word of the Spirit is the only means of conversion, and others that the word and spirit operate simultaneously; while others contend that the operation is exclusively moral, and others that it is physical, and others that it is both moral and physical. But suffice it to say, that this dispute about *the how* may be continued, *ad infinitum*, without effecting a single conversion. It resembles a set of speculative farmers about the growing of grain: some attributing the growth to the soil, others to the atmosphere, others to the sun's rays, and others to water, &c.; while the practical farmer says to them, "Gentlemen, you had better sow or plant the seed, and then cultivate the soil, and trust nature for its growth."

The great converter of sinners spake on this wise, "The word is the seed, the world is the field." Man is the sower, understanding (or intellect) is the soil, and the product mainly depends upon the good or bad qualities of the soil. All this diversity of soil in the field must be seeded however, else there will be no crop, either great or small; so that the main business of man is to sow clean seed, and trust God for the increase. All practical men work upon this theory, and expect the crop to be like the seed. If the seed be the production of man's wisdom, and is manifested by the flesh—the crop will be corruption. But if the seed be the production of Divine wisdom, and is manifested by the Spirit—the crop will be life everlasting.

From the foregoing theory it will be seen that the seed, the field, and the soil, are things already furnished. The business of the sower is not to make the seed, nor the field, nor the soil, but his business is to sow and cultivate. When this is well done he may expect an increase, but if this be neglected the field will become a wilderness, and the seed will be required of the sower by him who furnished it.

Having ascertained the work of God and the work of man in the conversion of sinners, let us not waste time in speculating upon the additions to be made on the part of God. He sends rain and refreshing seasons when and where he pleases, but these rains and seasons make no crops where seed has not been sown. Let us then be diligent in sowing the seed, which is the word or gospel of the Kingdom, and he will give the increase as in the days of old.

We have said the seed is the word or gospel of the Kingdom—which none will venture to deny, lest they should contradict the Saviour. This gospel exhibits the love of God to man, in the incarnation, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and requires of man a conformity to his precepts and example; they must believe and obey him, as he believed and obeyed his Father, or in other words, they must do the works pre-
sented by Jesus Christ.

These works may be said to consist of two parts, and are to be wrought by two classes of men, namely, by sinners and by saints. The former are required to believe, repent, and be baptized; the latter are required to do good works, namely, to preach the gospel, to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and in every possible way to do good among men, taking Jesus for their pattern, who after his baptism and anointing went about doing good, enlightening the minds and alleviating the bodies of men.

May the Lord of the harvest send more practical labourers into his field. Affectionately yours, M. WINANS.

P. S. In my former essay I tried to show the lawful disputes, and in this, the unlawful or useless ones. M. W.

DIALOGUE BETWEEN FAITH AND FEELING.

JAMESTOWN, (OHIO,) 13th January, 1841.

Dear Brother Eaton—It has been said of us that we found our religion wholly upon one chapter of the New Testament, namely, the second chapter of Acts. This accusation being in part true, I purpose, if it meet your approbation, to put in a plea for so doing, in the form of a dialogue between Feeling and Faith, which, I think, will set this matter right in the minds of your readers.

Feeling. Why do you always refer to the 2d chapter of Acts as the rule of becoming christians, and of their practices afterwards?

Faith. Because "we walk by faith and not by sight," nor by feeling. We therefore go to the beginning place, where the Holy Spirit taught in all languages how aliens were to be made subjects of the spiritual Kingdom, and how the subjects should conduct themselves afterwards, which was fully done in Jerusalem.

Feeling. Do you think all churches were to be constituted in the same way, and to be governed by the same rules every where?

Faith. The Apostles were commanded to preach repentance and remission of sins among all nations, beginning in Jerusalem, and were not permitted to go from thence until they were endowed with power from on high. And Jerusalem is said to be the Mother of us all. Therefore I conclude that the Jerusalem Church is the pattern of all churches in spiritual affairs, but not in temporal things.

Feeling. Why do you go to the Apostles, and not to Christ himself for instructions concerning the kingdom of heaven and its requirements?

Faith. Because Christ entrusted the affairs of the Kingdom to the Apostles, to occupy till he come again, and commanded them to conduct all things in his name, (or by his authority,) saying. "Fear not little flock for it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom"—and again when addressing his heavenly Father, he says, "The power (or authority) which thou gavest me, I have given to them, and the glory (or power to work miracles,) which thou gavest me I have given to them, and as thou hast sent me, even so have I sent hem; and again speaking to the apostles, he says, "Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven, and whose soever sins you remit are remitted, and whose soever sins you retain are retained." And besides the apostles claimed to be ambassadors for Christ, and to act in his stead. These are some of the reasons why we go to the apostles for instructions

Feeling. But why do you say the kingdom of heaven was set up on Pentecost, mentioned in Acts, 2d chapter?

I think the Kingdom was in existence long before that time, and that Lazarus, and Mary, and Martha, and the thief on the cross, and all the disciples, were in it.

Faith. You understand the Kingdom differently, to what we do, and therefore seem to differ with us, but perhaps when I explain we shall agree.

We understand the Kingdom on the earth to mean the church, over which Christ's laws extend. "He is head over all things to the church, and this church was incorporated, (to use a law phrase) and received all its powers from on high and on the day of Pentecost—and not till then, and—

Feeling. What no church on the earth till Pentecost ! !

Faith. Keep cool, and I will explain this matter. There was indeed a church over which Moses presided—but it was not Christ's body. You know that Christ's church was like Adam's wife, taken out of his body, and that it is bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, and his body was not opened long before Pentecost. And you know that Christ's Church was to be built on a certain foundation, namely—"Thou art Jesus the Christ, the Son of the living God."

On this rock will I build my church—said Christ.

And you also know if you have read attentively, that this doctrine was not preached before Pentecost, because Christ prohibited his disciples from making it known, consequently the church could not stand on this foundation before the foundation was laid. Read Matthew xvi. 20, "Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ;" and xvii. 9, "And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, tell the vision to no man until the Son of Man be risen again from the dead." What Vision? Why that you saw me glorified, and saw Moses and Elias talking with me, and heard God speak from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him." But to cut the matter short, you know that the resurrection of Christ could not be preached before it took place, and it is one of the prominent items of the Gospel.

Feeling. Then according to your notion the gospel was not preached before Pentecost. Christ did not preach his own gospel. This may do you, but I cannot believe it. I think he preached his own gospel, and spake as never man spake.

Faith. To preach the gospel of Christ with us, means to preach Christ himself in his official characters, and he could not be preached a High Priest until he entered into the discharge of the official duties of a priest, which he did not do while on earth. He made the offering in Heaven, and not in the Jewish Temple.

And he did not go about preaching himself to the people (as you suppose) nor did he preach in his own name or authority, but claimed authority from God his Father for all he did.

But when he commissioned his apostles he said to them. "All authority in heaven and in earth is given to me, go ye therefore and teach all nations," &c. This changed the scene—all things were now to be done in the name of Jesus Christ. The administration commenced in the name of the King—and even Devil's had to bow to his authority, as well as angels and men.

Feeling. I have some other objections, but have not time to state them now.

Faith. My chief delight consists in the investigation of the Kingdom of God, and the wonderful things that have been done, and are still being done, in the name of Jesus Christ. When you get time to state your objections call on me, and I shall take pleasure in answering them.

On behalf of Faith,

M. WINANS.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN.]

MR. EDITOR.—What does Brother DOYLE mean in his of August 28th, 1840, in the 4th number, "We are not in Apostolic order yet, &c.?" Do let me—yea let all—know of this, if convenient. If not in it—then what are 'WE' in?

W. B.

BROTHER DOYLE'S EXPLANATION.

Rawdon, December 5, 1840.

DEAR BROTHER EATON—I have just returned home. On the 20th of last month I left for Prince Edward Island; but in consequence of much fatigue and a severe cold, I became for some days very sick, and was obliged to give up the tour. After the lapse of ten days, I arrived at my cottage sick, but found all well. A wise Father knows how and when to administer gentle chastisements. O for a heart to praise our God with every breath. Being yet confined to my room, I am enjoying myself with the pages of the sixth number of the *Christian*; in which I find reference made by you to a remark in my letter, I think in number 4. Many inquiries have been made for my meaning, and some of my brethren have thought it not a fact that any of us are the greatest mongrels in the land. I had just said, "we are not in apostolic order yet; we are in part, and in our own order in part, this makes us the greatest mongrels, &c." Now, give me, dear brother, access to the *Christian*, that I may make my brethren understand what I meant. The force of the truth in the first position of the sentence I still feel—"We are not in apostolic order yet, only in part." But let us prove all things and hold fast the good. The apostolic order is, that we should not only believe truth, but also possess and cherish the spirit of that faith. That we should not only fear the Lord, but also possess the spirit of the fear of the Lord. Not only pray, but have the spirit of prayer. Nor is it sufficient that we should have a knowledge of the first principles of the gospel, but also have the spirit of wisdom and of a sound mind. The spirit of adoption is as necessary as any of the above. The spirit of meekness also and the spirit of life in Christ Jesus make the possessors of the above divine influence free—free from the law of sin and death. Ah freedom! precious word, apostolic standard, God's delight, and the Christian's glory!

Man, having the spirit of any business, pursues it with courage, surmounts difficulties, and generally accomplishes something; so with faith, the fear or service of the Lord, prayer, wisdom, adoption, meekness, and life. This appears to be the apostolic order which produces much delicious fruit, such as perfect holiness, perfect love, and benevolence.

It also looks like the seven spirits of God produced by the Holy Spirit through the word of truth in the church, and like the seven lamps which Zechariah saw on the top of the candlestick, all of gold. Are all our

brethren enjoying victory over sin? "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts;" it was the glory of Primitive Christians they had overcome the wicked one; they had communion with God, and fellowship one with the other. We have professed to count all things dross for the excellency of the Apostolic order; many of us have made serious sacrifices to obtain this object—and have we gained the prize? If so, God is ours and we are his; but if we have a profession only, and Christ's self-denying precepts be rejected, we are lambs without and ferocious tigers within; and not only the greatest mongrels in the land, but the greatest mongrels in heaven, earth, or hell. God knows I have no disposition to rejoice at the fall or errors of any man; for anguish is my portion while considering the severity of our God on those who fall. The 2d chapter of 2d Peter brings an awful picture to our view: "even teachers bring upon themselves swift destruction; and have forsaken the right way," (they must have been once in it or they could not well have forsaken it) "and have gone astray, following the way of Balaam, son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;" gain is not godliness, but godliness is great gain. Ah! dear brother Eaton, I fear the churches of the reformation have not approximated as near to primitive purity as some of our brethren imagine. Now is the time for the Brethren engaged in this glorious enterprize to put on the whole armour of light, and open the way for those who are yet unborn. We have many dear brethren in different churches in Nova Scotia who count not their estates or any thing they have dear unto them. O that God may spare my life to see all our churches, male and female, old and young, imitating the brave example of the Macedonian churches, to support the weak, to spread the savor of God, our Maker's love.

JOHN DOYLE.

MR. SLEEP'S COMMUNICATIONS.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN.]

Aylsford, 2d December, 1840.

Dear Sir—As you have been pleased to inform your readers, by an article in the 6th Number of the "Christian," that I have not redeemed my pledge by sending you the MSS. that I read in Cornwallis, I take the liberty of saying that it is not too late to fulfil my promise.

I wish also to be permitted to take notice of a few particulars in the above mentioned article. Had the person who gave you your information, said that I gave it as my decided opinion that Our Lord's words in the text referred to, had no reference whatever to Baptism, he would have told you the truth, (and I assure you this is my opinion,) and more than this, I stated that no man could prove that *Baptism* was intended in that text. But you think if I oppose your article, I shall oppose the venerable Wesley and nearly all the Commentators of note who have written on this subject.

But whether my opinion entirely agrees with Mr. Wesley's notes on the text or not, I think there is sufficient room to oppose your article without opposing him. Recollect—I do not oppose Baptism, I believe it to be an ordinance instituted by Christ to be continued in His church;

and I ground my opinion on a plain command, Matthew xxviii. 19. But I say that *Baptism* is never spoken of in the New Testament as being born of water *literally*. My opinion on the text, John iii. 5, agrees with Dr. Clarke's: "Our Lord asserts that a man must be born of water and of the spirit, i. e. of the Holy Ghost, which represented under the similitude of water, cleanses, refreshes, and purifies the soul." The remaining part of the note is worthy of being printed in letters of gold. The learned Bishop Hopkins has a note on this verse similar to the above. He says, "Born of water &c., except he be renewed by the Holy Ghost working as water, leaving the same effect upon the soul in cleansing and purifying it from sinful defilement as water doth upon the body in washing off contracted filth, &c. I suppose, Sir, you will allow that the above mentioned commentators who have written upon this subject were men of some note, and their piety and learning were not inferior to most commentators.

In conclusion I may observe, that if you have mentioned in your article all that your informant stated to you, he did not relate all that he heard, for I told the persons who heard me read the article that you had given a false statement of Our Lord's words, in saying that He did not say "any one" but "except a *man*" &c., for the word "*man*" is not in the original, and is only supplied by the translators to signify the human species, and therefore simply means "*any one*."

In your article under the head of "Baptism, No. 6," you say, relative to the administration of the ordinance, "Wesleyan Clergymen use the same Liturgy," &c. (You refer here to the Romish, Greek and Episcopal Churches.) In this I may take the liberty to inform you, you are not correct: I hope not intentionally so. The Liturgy of the Wesleyans is an abridgement of the "Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England," and not "the same;" and may I not suggest that before you publish in "The Christian!" (I will not say what you know is not correct, but,) what you do not know is correct, you had better call on some Wesleyan clergyman, and borrow a "Sunday service," and then you will know that *no one* has heard the language which you say "is used in the hearing of every one."

Mr. Wesley's Notes on Acts xxii. 16, is generally believed by Wesleyan Ministers, but it has nothing do with the present controversy.

In reply to your inquiry, "where then shall we learn their sentiments on the design of Baptism, I reply in works approved by the English Conference. You will find in the 3d Volume Watson's Institutes a summary of this doctrine as held by us. If you have time you would derive much benefit from the careful perusal of Isaac's "Baptism discussed," and Thoms' "Modern Immersion not Scripture Baptism," which you can probably obtain from the Wesleyan Depository for books in St. John. I could mention other works, but those already noticed will furnish you all the information necessary.

I remain, dear Sir, yours, &c.

PETER SLEEP.

Aylesford, 27th July, 1840.

MR. EATON—Dear Sir,—On perusing the 1st No. of the 2d vol. of the "Christian," and noticing an article written on John iii. 5, I was

led to read it with care and attention, that I might understand your view of the subject.

Your first inquiry, as being solemn and important, is worthy of being proposed to the reader, but I cannot agree with you respecting the criterion by which persons ought to judge of their spiritual state.

I think the marks of the new birth are so clearly revealed in the New Testament, that all persons who will read it with prayerful attention may easily perceive whether they have experienced it or not; and I think further, that when we presume either to speak or write on this subject for the benefit of others, our statements should not only be scriptural, but also correctly applied, as it is evident there is nothing more likely to lead the unsuspecting inquirer astray than to bring forth scripture and apply it to cases for which it was never intended. Now Sir, it certainly appears to me that you have done this in saying that the water and the blood are two of the witnesses whose testimony is necessary to inform the believer that he is born of God, or if you please, that he is a member of the Kingdom of God. It is true the Apostle John in his first Epistle v. 8., speaks of the *water* and the *blood*, in connexion with the spirit, as bearing witness to the personality and divinity of Jesus Christ. But when speaking of believers he says, "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us because he hath given us of his spirit." And again, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God," "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." Now, with these passages before us, let us read the epistle through, and see if ever the apostle speaks of the *water* and the *blood* as having any thing to do with the believer's evidence of his adoption into the family of God; and if he does not, why should any person make use of his words, and apply them to a subject for which they were never intended?

Let us now notice your remarks on "this mundane system." Your argument appears very plausible at first, because of the *analogy* between the *creation* of the *world* and the *new birth*; but on examining the subject more closely, and at the same time noticing the conversation which took place between Nicodemus and our Lord, I can find nothing in the whole narrative that will furnish us with the slightest ground for believing that our Lord had any reference whatever to the foundation of the earth. It is also evident that Nicodemus did not understand our Lord in that sense—and therefore it must be improper for one, who takes the liberty of explaining our Lord's words, to endeavour to do it by a subject which was quite foreign to the text.

Your inquiry on the same page is worthy of remark: "Would the Saviour, think you, use an ambiguous word when addressing an inquirer on a subject of so great importance?" To this I reply, if the words "born of water" mean Baptism, then they are ambiguous words; inasmuch as there is not another place in the New Testament in which the words are used in that sense. Not only so, but in all the conversation there is not another word that could have any tendency to persuade Nicodemus that the new birth spoken of by our Lord meant baptism. If the words "born of water and the spirit" are to be understood in a figurative sense, as ap-

plied to that divine change which an individual experiences when he is adopted into the family of God, then our Lord has himself explained these terms as far as they can be brought down to the capacity of man. The reason why our Lord calls this change a "being born again," is because of the similitude that exists between this important change and the natural birth; and when these words are received in this sense, they can be understood by persons of limited intellectual capacity who have experienced any thing of a work of grace in their souls. Your assertion that, "When our Lord used the word water in any other than its literal or actual acceptation, he always used a qualifying epithet," is easier made than proved. If your assertion would prove what you intended to prove by it, then it must be understood that the qualifying epithet used by our Lord, John iv. 10, was a term that would be used in that part of the world to signify *water* literally; which would be to assume what is not true—for learned persons tell us that the term *living* when applied to *water* means running, as opposed to still or stagnant water; and that it was in this sense the words were understood in that part of the world in which the scripture was written.

From the above remarks it appears that the term *living*, when applied to water, is not sufficient to prove that it means grace, neither does the absence of the term prove that the word water must be understood literally. The only way then to understand whether the words are to be understood literally or figuratively is to view them in connexion with the context.

I have as much reason to believe that our Lord would use the word in a figurative sense, without any qualifying epithet, as the Prophets who wrote the Old Testament, and unless you can find some stronger proof than any you have yet produced, your argument will be but the "baseless fabric of a vision," unless it be with persons who know but little of scripture or history, and with whom assertion is proof.

If you please you can read the following passages, where the term *water* is used without any qualifying epithet, and yet it must be acknowledged to refer to the grace of God:—Isaiah xii. 3, xxxv. 6, 7, xlv. 3, lv. 1; Joel iii. 18.

The meaning of our Lord seems to be this: The blessings which I shall bestow on those who believe in me may not only be compared to water, but water which flows spontaneously. This is clear from the 14th verse. Perhaps the reason why our Lord conversed in this figurative manner with Nicodemus, and also with the woman, was, that his conversation might produce a more lasting and powerful effect.

Let us now notice your sentence on the 10th page, "Yet we can see no reason," &c. and first inquire, what do the words "born of water clearly express?" To find your answer, I turn to the 9th page, where I find it is "emerging from the baptismal font." Now, to prove that you have mistaken our Lord's meaning, I think it will be necessary to apply only to his own words: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit."

We will now consider your argument on the 12th page. "It is now apparent" &c., "that only one birth is spoken of." I agree with you, Sir that only one birth is spoken of, and therefore I ask is it of the

body or of the spirit? The Saviour says it is the spirit, and therefore the body "emerging from the font" has no more to do with it than the birth spoken of by Nicodemus. It appears from our Lord's words that the sense in which He uses the word "born" is not coming out of, as you seem to suppose, but it is being placed in a new condition, and this condition in which the soul is placed when it is born again, enables it to exert its powers and enjoy the benefits connected with its new situation. The reason why the grace of God is spoken of under the emblem of water, in connexion with the spirit, is because of its purifying qualities; and thus the soul that is "born again," is like an infant, washed, in order that as its strength increases it may enjoy the benefits connected with its new situation. Now, Sir, if I am not mistaken this is the plain meaning of our Lord's words, and to give them any other meaning is in my opinion "to put them on the rack to make them speak something besides what they plainly express." Your quotation from Matthew iii. 11, is also erroneous, as the word "en" cannot be translated "in" in this place. John was not sent to baptize *in* but *with* water, and he says—He that cometh after me shall baptize you *with* (not immerse you *in*) the Holy Ghost and with fire. In the 12th page you have anticipated an objection to your exposition, but this you seem to overcome with triumph. But here, Sir, you have run too fast and too far in saying that our Lord does not say "any one," "but except a man," &c. I hope this was through ignorance; if so it is the more excusable, but I must confess it appears too much like trying to prove a favourite sentiment. The word "*tis*" in Greek is properly translated "any one," &c., and this is *the word* you have informed your readers does not mean "any one." The word man is not in the original, but supplied by the translators to signify the human species, and simply means any one.

Your remarks on "modern expositors" are of no importance, as we are not so much concerned to know what persons have said of the texts, as we are to know what our Lord's meaning was when he delivered the words.

That you and I may enjoy all the blessings which are to be experienced by those who are born of the Spirit, is the prayer of, dear Sir, your's, respectfully,
PETER SLEEP.

EXAMINATION OF MR. SLEEP'S COMMUNICATIONS.

My Dear Sir—A very singular coincidence in dates has happened between your communications and my article which called them forth. On New Year's eve, 1839, I penned the remarks on being born of water and spirit. My family wishing to attend a Methodist watch-night meeting, that they might all be accommodated, I remained at home—rocked the cradle—and to improve usefully the midnight hours, I hastily wrote the article under consideration. It was written more for the purpose of throwing my views into order than for the public eye. The manuscript was thrown by with other papers for nearly six months, when believing that the public mind needed arousing on an important point, it was published. But to the coincidence: just one year from the time it was written, your criticism on that and other matters came to hand!

1.* Although that article was thus hastily written, yet on a careful re-perusal I see no reason for changing my mind on one argument adduced. A few words may need a little qualification, but I cannot admit that one argument is now shaken. You may have bruised the cement of the edifice, but not a stone is loosened. Without the addition of a word, cheerfully would I send the article, in the first Number of the current volume, on being "born again," with your criticism appended to it, out before the world and risk the consequences with all those who are capable of discriminating between truth and error. But you have introduced irrelevant matter, which shall be carefully examined together with all your remarks on the subject under consideration.

2. The first question to be settled is this, viz :—Does the expression "*born of water*" refer to baptism? I take the affirmative. You say these words have "no reference whatever to Baptism." Here then we join issue—this is the turning point. If the affirmative can be established, then the question relative to the action meant by baptism is set at rest, and also the indispensable necessity of immersion in order to citizenship in the kingdom of God! If you are right, I have only lost *one* argument for the design and importance of immersion.

3. Why, Mr. Sleep, did you not try your strength at my principal argument? You have thrown a few arrows at the out-flanks, why not attack the main body. Had you been as confident of a good cause as was David when he went out to meet Goliath, you would not have made an effort merely to paralyze his armour-bearer. You could not have read that article so carelessly as not to perceive on which argument I particularly relied for the establishment of the main point. Hear it again: "*When one principal word in a sentence has an allegorical, figurative or literal meaning, so must the other principal words.*" Had you succeeded in overturning this, then you might have done something; but as it is, every remark you have made, and every argument you have offered, have been as subversive of regeneration by the spirit of God as of the doctrine of immersion in order to entering into his kingdom. If either of us, Sir, were called upon to prove that the Lord Jesus taught the necessity of being born of the spirit, unhesitatingly we should refer them to his conversation with Nicodemus. But suppose the inquirer should dispute the correctness of our interpretations, and say, "the passage cannot mean literally the spirit of God, for it is joined with the word 'water,' and you say, that that is figurative, and if one is, so must be the other!" What would be your reply? How can you prove the Saviour meant the Holy Spirit in the text under consideration? Remember, Sir, by the same argument I shall prove that he meant, literally, water. Let it once be admitted that one member of a sentence has a literal meaning and the other a figurative, and away goes every doctrine of the Bible before the whims and fancies of cringing men. Now, Sir, produce if you can, a plain passage in the Oracles of God, or in any other book of common sense, where the writer in a short sentence couples two principal words, where one must necessarily have a figurative and the other a literal meaning. No, this cannot be done. One of the most

* That you may the more easily refer to my arguments, I shall number each paragraph, which you will please to imitate in your reply.

obvious rules of interpretation must be violated to make "water" in John iii. 5, figurative! I repeat what I have already said, that if to be born of the spirit, mean the Holy Spirit of God, then to be born of water means literally emerging, not the body only, but body, soul and spirit, from the "Laver of regeneration," (Titus iii. 5) as Mr. Wesley most properly translates this passage. To say with you, Dr. Clarke, Bishop Hopkins, and a very few others, that water is figurative of the spirit, would be accusing the Saviour of the most unmeaning language ever uttered! Hear it, "Except a man be born of *the spirit* and the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God!" Yet, sir, your argument reduced to a point must compel you to admit that this is the reading which you prefer to the passage as it stands.

4. Universalists, like yourselves, delude each other by violating the common sense rule of interpretation. With them, the creation of the world, with its vegetables, animals, &c., the birth of Cain and Abel, and the destruction of the world by a flood, are a plain narrative of facts—literally true; but the Garden of Eden, the fruit trees, and man's first disobedience and banishment therefrom, although recorded in the midst of other circumstances literally true, is a fine allegory!

In the Old Testament "bread and water" are frequently spoken of, and in the New, we read of "blood and water" flowing from the Saviour's side. Suppose now that some person under the influence of hydrophobia should say, "it is true that literal bread and blood is spoken of, but that water can mean the literal element is out of the question!" Ah! what is the reason? "I do not like water, it is hateful to me, and I would therefore dash it from the book!"

5. The fifth verse was uttered as explanatory of the fourth, but on your hypothesis it is much more obscure! The Lord said to Nicodemus—"you must be born again," (or from above.) "How," said he, "can a grown man be born?" The Saviour explained the difficulty under which he laboured. "You must be born of water and the spirit." But on your view of the subject the Saviour gave him no explanation, but simply added another word, which according to your views has no meaning at all!

6. With the vague, indefinite views which you have of being born again, how can *you* blame a master in Israel for not understanding them? But, if to be born from above is to hear the words of the Spirit, believe them, and receive them into good and honest hearts—that is into a truly penitent heart—and then to be immersed into the name of the holy three, then are all masters and servants in the world, to whom the gospel has come, worthy of censure for not understanding the language of the Lord Jesus Christ. All the language in the connexion is plain and unfigurative, or with the use of such figures as are clearly perceived—why, then, should the first attempt of our Lord to make his subject plain, be construed into a figure? Will you think of this, Sir, and get clear of the difficulty if you can!

7. My argument presented in favor of a literal construction of the passage, drawn from the fact that a qualifying epithet is always connected with water when used in the New Testament, to denote spiritual blessings, remains still in full force, notwithstanding your effort to make

John iv. 10, read *springing or flowing* water, instead of living water, as it plainly reads. But his speaking of living water, in contrast with that in the well before him, is proof sufficient that he was using figurative language. To your admission, however, I cheerfully comply, that the connexion will always determine whether the language is literal or figurative. Make an application of this, your own admission, to all those passages referred to in Isaiah, and you perceive that the connexion is all figurative! But to the plain unfigurative language of Jesus and his Apostles I call your attention, to show me if you can, where the word water is used figuratively, except in prophetic language, or when it is called the "water of life," "living water," &c.

8. But your own favorite Dr. Clarke admits that Titus iii. v. ("the washing of regeneration,") refers to baptism! And I do not now remember of a single author who does not consider John iii. 5, and Titus iii. 5, parallel passages. It is true the Dr. endeavours to give this an unnecessary gloss; but his admission is plain. Hear him—"Undoubtedly the apostle here means baptism, the rite by which persons were admitted into the church; and the visible sign of the cleansing and purifying influences of the Holy Spirit, which the Apostle immediately subjoins. Baptism is only a sign, and therefore should never be separated from the thing signified; but it is a rite commanded by God himself, and therefore the thing signified should never be expected without it."

Remember "a rite," and the thing "signified" by it is regeneration, which he tells us we should not expect without baptism! My argument from this is, that whether the Dr. believed that to be "born of water" referred to baptism or not, he, in the above passage, taught that it was necessary in order to regeneration; which, if admitted, at once settles the question in favor of the literal construction of John iii. 5.

9. My next argument that to be born of water means to be baptized, is drawn from the fact that none, under the gospel dispensation, were considered born again until they were baptized. Now, if the Lord and his apostles taught the same doctrine, one would not proclaim regeneration with, and the other without, baptism. Attend to a few facts on this point. The passage to which you allude, and on which you "ground your opinion that baptism is to be continued in his church," viz. Matt. xxviii. 19—"Go ye and disciple* all nations, baptizing them," &c. plainly declares that no person can be *discipled* without baptism? "*for the active participle, in connexion with an imperative, either declares the manner in which the imperative shall be obeyed, or explains the meaning of the command.*" To this I have not found an exception: for example, "cleanse the house, sweeping it,"—"cleanse the garment, washing it,"† shows the manner in which the command is to be obeyed, or explains the meaning of it. Thus the command "convert (or disciple) the nations, baptizing them," &c. expresses the manner in which the command is to be obeyed. What the nations had to believe and experience before they were baptized is not now the question, but that according to the passage on which you, Sir, found your "opinion" of

* Mr. Wesley's Translation.

† For other examples of a similar kind of expression see the following Scriptures:—Heb. xiii. 10; 1 Tim. ii. 3, v. 21, vi. 20; 2 Tim. ii. 15; Col. iv. 5; Eph. vi. 25; Gal. v. 26.

the perpetuity of baptism, no individual can become a disciple of Christ without it, is so clearly made out that I venture to assert that you will not dare to dispute the authority adduced. The only point now necessary to be established, to make the whole clear to the most common capacity, is,—can a child of Adam become a disciple of Christ without being born again? I have been acquainted with many Methodist clergymen, with whom it was always a favourite theme, that to be born again was essential to constitute a disciple of Christ. I shall then venture to conclude that you believe the same doctrine. Hear, then, my conclusion from these premises. Christ and his apostles taught the necessity of baptism in order to being born again; Christ proclaimed to Nicodemus the necessity of being born of water and spirit in order to the new birth; therefore, to be born of water and the spirit is equivalent to believing and being baptized. Now, Sir, if you can detect an error either in the premises or the conclusion of this argument, I hope you will do your best to expose it.

10. But you admit the premises in the above argument; for you say that “Mr. Wesley’s note on Acts xxii. 16, is generally believed by Wesleyan Ministers.” Then Wesleyan Ministers believe that “baptism to real penitents is both the means and seal of pardon!” Why, then, do they *rantize* babes that have no sins to pardon, and maintain almost perpetual silence on the subject of baptism when addressing penitents on the great doctrines of pardon and justification! The fact is, Sir, in your opposition to the doctrine of baptism for remission of sins, advocated by myself, and a few others scattered over New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, not only do you oppose us, but Mr. Wesley and the Apostles of Jesus Christ! This may be construed into a grave charge, but it is none the less true for that. None question the literal construction of John iii. 5, but those who are opposed to the doctrine of baptism for the remission of sins, a doctrine taught by the apostles and the primitive church, and never questioned until within a very few centuries.

11. I am pleased to hear your admission in relation to human authority, and with you I will readily say I am not so much concerned to know what others may think of being born of water and spirit, as the meaning attached to it by the Lord. Yet, notwithstanding this, Dr. Clarke and Bishop Hopkins are the only witnesses cited to prove that the text is figurative. I have the Doctor’s remarks beside me, which, taken altogether, show that he was not fully satisfied relative to his own exposition; but you need some aid, and I will, therefore, let you have the Bishop and the Doctor, together with Dr. Scott and the Baptist Dr. Gill; but have any of them gone into a critical examination of this text? If they have, the world has not been blessed with the result of their researches! Have any of those men cited a passage where one word in the sentence has had a figurative and the other a literal meaning? Have they given the *rationale* of associating literal and figurative language in the same sentence to explain a subject of such vast importance?

12. But if human authority has any weight with you, Sir, take the following:—

That John iii. 5, and Titus iii. 5, refer to immersion, is the judgment of all the learned Catholics and Protestants of every name under Heaven.

The authors and finishers of the Westminster creed—one hundred and twenty

one divines, ten Lords, and twenty Commissioners of the Parliament of England, under the question 165, "*What is baptism?*" quote John iii. 5, Titus iii 5, to prove that baptism is a washing with water, and a "*sign of remission of sins*"

Michaelis, Horne, Lightfoot, Beveridge, Taylor, Jones of Nayland, Bp. Mant, Whitby, Burkit, Bp. Hall, Dr. Wells, Hooker, Dr. G. Ridley, Bp. Ryder—but why attempt a list of great names. There are a thousand more who assert it.

Bp. White says, that "regeneration, as detached from baptism, never entered into any creed before the 17th century."

Whitby, on John iii. 5, says, "That our Lord here speaks of baptismal regeneration, the whole christian church from its earliest times has invariably taught"

Our modern "great divines" even in America, have taught the same. Timothy Dwight, the greatest Rabbi of Presbyterianism the New World has produced, says, vol. iv. pp. 300, 301, "*to be born again, is precisely the same thing as to be born of water and the Spirit.*"—"To be born of water is to be baptized." And how uncharitable!—He adds, "He who, understanding the nature and authority of this institution, refuses to be baptized, will never enter into the visible nor invisible kingdom of God."—Vol. iv. p. 302. So preached the President of Yale College.

George Whitfield, writing on John iii. 5, says, "Does not this verse urge the absolute necessity of water baptism? Yes, when it may be had. But how God will deal with persons unbaptized, we cannot tell."—Vol. iv. p. 355. I say with him, we cannot tell with certainty. But I am of opinion, that when a neglect proceeds from a simple mistake or sheer ignorance, and when there is no aversion, but a will to do every thing the Lord commands, the Lord will admit into the everlasting kingdom those who by reason of this mistake, never had the testimony of God assuring them of pardon or justification here, and consequently, never did fully enjoy the salvation of God on earth. But I will say with the renowned President of Yale, that "he who, understanding the nature and authority of this institution, refuses to be baptized, will never enter the visible nor invisible kingdom of God. By the "visible and invisible kingdom," he means the kingdom of grace and glory. He adds on the same page, "He who persists in this act of rebellion against the authority of Christ, will never belong to his kingdom." Vol. iv. p. 302.

John Wesley asserts, that "by baptism we enter into covenant with God, an everlasting covenant, are admitted into the church, made members of Christ, made the children of God. By water as the means, the water of baptism, we are regenerated or born again." [Preservative, pp. 146—150.]

13. Why is the conversion of Nicodemus read at the baptism of adults,* if you do not believe that it has any "reference whatever to baptism?" That the originator of the book of "Common Prayer" understood "born of water," as referring to baptism you do not question for it is too plain to admit of a doubt; and that these were also the sentiments of your "venerated Founder" you cannot dispute. Why call yourself a Wesleyan clergyman, and then oppose Mr. Wesley's doctrine—a doctrine too which is approved by the "English Conference!" Are not Mr. Wesley's notes on the New Testament, and his sermons, approved by the Conference equally with the "Institutes" of Mr. Watson? "Our distinguishing sentiments," said a Wesleyan clergyman to me, "are found in Mr. Wesley's notes on the New Testament, and in his sermons;" Mr. Sleep says, "in the works approved by the English Conference." And these contradict each other, who is to decide? Ah! the works approved by a human conference sounds so much like the decrees of councils, synods &c., that I cannot help thinking of the one hundred and thirty five huge volumes of the traditions of the Romish hierarchy in addition to the Apocryphal books of the Old and New Testaments, all appended to the Oracles of God, which make them of no effect by their traditions! Tell me, Sir, when you refer to books "approved by the English Conference,

* See Sunday Service, p. 163.

what is there to prevent the Methodist church from augmenting their works to tenfold the number of the church already alluded to, and then we must wade through the whole of them before we dare to say what you do or do not believe!!

14. Ah! these human decrees often lead many astray. Will Mr. Sleep be so kind as to inform our readers how long it has been since the "Sunday Service" took the place of the book of "Common Prayer?" Are there not Wesleyan Clergymen in this city now, who have repeated the language which I have attributed to them? Will you say to our readers that these clergymen have not within a short time stood before the congregation, and said, "Dearly beloved, seeing this child is born of water," &c.? Do not again accuse me of publishing *incorrect* intelligence until you answer the above questions. You admit that the "Wesleyan Liturgy is an abridgment of the book of Common Prayer;" will you please to show us, then, in what it differs from it? When you say* "We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to receive *this infant* for thy child by adoption, and to admit *him* into thy holy church." And again: "Grant that *this child* now baptized, may receive the fulness of thy grace," &c. And—"Seeing, dearly beloved, that *this child* is admitted into the body of Christ's church, let us give thanks, &c." Do you believe that this child is "adopted" into the family of God—that he receives the fulness of God's "grace," and that then he is "admitted into the body of Christ's church?" If you do believe this, then can you show me the difference between these sentiments and those attributed to you in the article to which reference is made?† You certainly cannot! According, then, to your own exposition of being "born of water and spirit," and the Wesleyan "Sunday Service," you admit that unconscious babes are born of water and spirit, which is all that I intended to express. So much, then, for my "ignorance" of the changes going on in Methodism!

15. But a graver charge than this is preferred, for asserting that the Saviour did not say "*any one*," but "except a man." Your allusion to this in both articles naturally leads us to suppose that you were sensible of a signal triumph: "Here Eaton is pinned to the wall!" Well, I hope that it is not too late to amend our ways! Nothing better calculated to humble the aspiring than to be compelled to confess their faults! Hence the Lord requires his children to confess their faults one to another; and promises pardon to the erring and disobedient, only on condition that they confess their sins. But have I a confession to make? What is it? I will tell you, sir. I confess that when I wrote the article which called your's forth I had no Greek Testament before me; No! nothing but King James' translation; and believing that it was a faithful version of the original of that passage, I wrote and commented as you have seen!! This, sir, is my confession! You may now attribute it to "ignorance," or a design to "prove a favourite sentiment." It does not offend me to be accused of "ignorance;" of this I am sensible! But tell me, sir, was Mr. Wesley ignorant of the Greek when he gave the same version of the passage under consideration? If he thought that "tis" in the passage meant "*any one*" why did he not so translate

* Sunday Service pp. 163-163.

† Christian, vol. 2, p. 135.

it, and thus have prevented an ignoramus like me from running into such unpardonable blunders! Was Dr. Adam Clarke and Dr. George Campbell, two of the most learned men of which the past and present century can boast, ignorant of the original language in which the New Testament was written, when they had the temerity to retain the same reading of our present version of the scriptures? Will Mr. Sleep say that they had any favourite doctrine to sustain when this great blunder (in his estimation) was passed by without a remark; not even so much as to mark it as a supplied word! Rather let me refer you to the original, and ask if "tis" is not an adjective pronoun, and inquire if you do not remember an old rule in grammar, which is a standing rule in *Greek* as well as *English*, viz. *Every adjective pronoun belongs to some noun or pronoun expressed or understood.* Will Mr. Sleep be so kind as to inform our readers to what noun "tis" belongs? It is true, as you assert, that *anthropos* (man) is not in the *fifth* verse, but it is in the *fourth*, and a *grown man* or person was the subject under consideration, and not as you say the whole "human species." "Tis," (any) therefore, belongs to "*anthropos*," (man,) and the translation is correct! Had the translators supplied a word not necessarily understood they would have given it in *italic* as in other portions of the word of God. One fact is sufficient to show that the Saviour was not speaking of the whole human species; and that is, *infants cannot be born again*; for this very good reason—all who are born, either into the kingdom of nature or grace, must first be begotten! Now, the first Christians were "*begotten through the Gospel.*" "Of his own will *begat* he us by the word of truth," says an Apostle. No person, then, can be begotten by the "gospel," "the word of truth," until they believed it; and it is an exhibition of the grossest ignorance to talk about an individual being born again without being begotten by the Gospel. This being a fact which I know you cannot dispute, you see the Saviour had no necessity of alluding to infants—you must be sensible that the regeneration of infants finds no place in the Oracles of God. They will enjoy the benefits of Christ's death without any of the ordinances of the gospel—"of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." I hope, now, Sir, you are satisfied with my *confession*, if not I shall cheerfully make a longer one in my next.

16. Having given the principal burthen of your epistles a passing notice, we will turn our attention to some other allusions. You think that our Lord, in his conversation with the Jewish Rabbi, had "no reference whatever to the formation of the earth." I did not say that he had; but simply that the creation of the earth was analogous to the new birth, which I think you will not venture to dispute. For Moses calls the creation of all things the "generation of the heavens and the earth," and when the Lord Jesus speaks of the establishment of his church, he calls it the *regeneration*. The first creation of man was his generation, and the last is properly termed his recreation, regeneration, or, in the Saviour's language, his being born again. As then the deranged particles of matter came out of the water to exist in a new creation, to bring forth fruit for man and exhibit the creative energies of its Almighty Maker—so man, from a state of darkness, condemnation and death, arises from

the baptismal water to bring forth fruit to God, and extol the riches of His grace in Christ Jesus.

17. You also think that the allusion to these earthly witnesses is calculated to mislead the "unsuspecting inquirer;" and that I have applied it to a subject "for which it was never intended." I cheerfully admit with you, sir, that the spirit, the water, and the blood, "bear witness to the Personality and Divinity of Jesus Christ;" but if you will read all of the 5th chapter of 1st John, you will see that the evidences of christian character are previously and subsequently to this verse under consideration, and the doctrine of the first *twelve* verses of the chapter is the Gospel facts to be believed, and the faith and obedience which overcome the world. As Jesus, or the truths to be believed, shown forth conspicuously by the spirit, the water, and the blood, so we know that we love him, and have confidence in him as our Saviour, when these three earthly witnesses bear testimony. Both Dr. Clarke and Mr. Wesley consider water in these verses as applying to baptism. Why, Mr. Sleep, in your opposition did you not show that this had no "reference whatever to baptism," which you could have done more easily than in the former case? If I am mistaken in the above exposition, so are some of your authors who have furnished books for the "English Conference." Read Mr. Wesley's notes on the chapter, and hear Dr. Clarke's comment on the record: "To *know*, to *feel* his sins forgiven, to have the testimony of this in the heart from the holy spirit himself, is the privilege of every true believer in Christ. [Verse 11. *This is the record.*] The great truth to which the *spirit*, the *water*, and the *blood*, bear testimony." He had previously remarked on this subject that "*baptism* points out *regeneration* and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and is still maintained as an initiatory rite in the Christian Church," &c. But want of room on our pages prevents me from making as full extracts as I desire.—These must suffice on this point.

18. But a subject of very great importance yet demands at least a passing notice; and that is, what you call "the marks of the New Birth." If we are born again, and continue to walk in Christ Jesus as we received him, we shall, notwithstanding many errors, live and die in the enjoyment of salvation; but if we make a false step here we stumble at the very threshold—we build upon the sand. The great day of the Almighty will sweep away our sandy foundations, and great will be our fall. Who then are building on the rock—the sure foundation—the tried corner stone? The great teacher answers, "He that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them." His sayings are the truths revealed in the Oracles of God; to do them is to believe—"This is the work of God that you *believe* on him whom he hath sent;" to repent—"God commandeth all men every where to *repent*;" to be baptized; the same spirit that influenced the Apostles to command all men to repent, also said, through an Apostle. "be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ *for remission of sins*," &c. These three steps bring the individual into the house of God, where he must attend all the duties devolving upon the children of God, in order to enter into "the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." To such the Spirit bears witness that they are born of God, not only by a secret impulse, but, in

plain language, like this, "and hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." The water testifies the same, for the baptized disciple says "I believed with all my heart, and have been baptized on a confession of that faith, and the Lord Jesus has promised me salvation." The blood which flowed from the Saviour, which he shed in his death, testifies of his love and mercy, and exhibits an all-sufficient sin-offering, in which I trust for present and future salvation; this testifies that I am pardoned and accepted of God. Surely, "if we can believe the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater."

19. But what, Sir, are *your* "marks of the new birth?" You quote from the first Epistle of John, "We know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his spirit." Very good, Sir. And how do we know whether we have the spirit or not? John says that even in his day there were false spirits abroad. May it not be possible that there are such now, and that many who imagine that they have the spirit of God, are only under the influence of the spirit of a party, or the spirit of a favorite teacher? A man may be laboring zealously and faithfully, and daily receiving money, imagining that he is laying up treasure in bank notes, for which he expects to receive the full value, when behold! at the year's end he learns that they are all counterfeit! Is there no danger, Sir, that many persons may be trusting in the promises of men instead of the promises of God? Now the Apostle John informs us how we may distinguish between the true and the false Spirit; and I pray you, Sir, to examine well his words: "He that knoweth God, heareth us; [the Apostles,] he that is not of God, heareth not us; Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the Spirit of error." John iv. 6. From this we are authorized to conclude that those persons who hear not, or do not, what the Apostles have declared and commanded, and yet profess to have the Spirit, are deceiving themselves. Let it then be remembered that the Spirit, since Jesus was glorified, has not been promised to any but those who have heard, believed, repented, and have been baptized. "We are witnesses," said the Apostles, "and so is also the Holy Spirit whom God hath given to them that *obey* him." "Repent and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." How many of your fellow-laborers, even in the ministry, Sir, can plead any claim to such promises as the above? Even admitting that aspersion is a proper "mode of baptism," were any of you baptized for remission of sins? Were you not baptized before you had any *sins*? You will not question but that baptism is a command of God! You know that God never commanded infants to be baptized! The command was never issued to any but believing penitents. "We are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," says an Apostle. How? "For as many of you as have been *baptized into* Christ have put on Christ." Gal. iii. 26, 27. I repeat it: God never promised his Spirit to the *unbaptized* since Jesus was glorified, but he has promised his spirit to those who do sincerely obey him. For you, then, to take the language of the Apostle, and apply it to the unbaptized, "is to apply it to cases for which it was never intended!"

20. Love to God and our brethren is properly brought as marks of the new birth. Hear the Apostle explain himself relative to these points:

“If a man love me,’ says Jesus, ‘he will keep my words.’” “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments: for this is the love of God that we keep his commandments.” If we say that we know God and keep not his commandments, John says we are liars. I say, then, that no man, living or dead, since the church of Christ was established, has had or can have any scriptural evidence that he is born again, until he *believes* the gospel, *repents* of his sins, and is *immersed* into the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. If you, or any other man capable of examining the subject, question this, the pages of the Christian are open—speak out—you shall have a hearing.

21. Faith is certainly an evidence of justification; but not as your “Sunday Service” has it:—“Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort!” Wholesome, truly! James says, that “Faith alone is dead!!” And in chapter 2d, verse 24, he declares, that “by works a man is justified and *not by faith only!!!*” This discrepancy between the Apostle and your articles of faith I shall leave you to settle at a higher tribunal than the readers of the *Christian!*

22. But what evidence have the great mass, whom you receive as members, that they are born again? Remember, sir, I do not question their honesty nor zeal. They are unquestionably sincere; and so are the Hindoo devotees who fall before the car of Juggernaut, and are in a moment launched into eternity, and the Romanist who confesses his sins to his Ghostly Father in this land of Bibles. Will you carefully peruse an article from Nova Scotia on the virtue of sincerity? This will save me the labour of writing any thing more on this subject. But to the question. How do you know, Sir, that you are born again? The question may be deemed invidious: but you are a public teacher, and should, therefore, be ever ready to give a reason of your hope. I have associated with Methodists; and although never a theoretical, yet for some time a practical Methodist; being a constant attendant of a “class meeting” for nearly a year, and therefore know what constitutes the evidence of regeneration, justification, &c. &c. And what are they? “A desire to flee from the wrath to come” gives the individual the privilege of meeting in the class, where he is prayed for, and exhorted to pray for himself until he is relieved from his burden and anxiety, or until he is converted. And how does he know this? Why, he *feels* peace of mind! Persons of warm and strong feelings will find peace in a short time, while others of a more calm and even temper will be weeks, months, and sometimes year seeking the Lord! I have always observed that the warmer the meeting, that is, the more exciting the prayers and exhortations, the sooner persons are said to be converted. This conversion is a conversion to Methodism, and it is something that takes place wholly in the individual’s own soul. He *feels* that he is a sinner, he *feels* that he believes, and he *feels* that he is born again! He trusts wholly to his feelings; and as I asked the Baptists, permit me now to ask the Wesleyans, through you, from whence then originate our feelings? From our hearts most assuredly. To say, then, we believe that we are born again because we *feel* thus and so, is to say, our hearts bear testimony

that this is the fact! Now, the wise man says, that he "who trusts to his own heart is a fool," and the scriptures plainly declare that "the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Hence those evidences *last* to be looked for, are the beginning, middle, and end. This, then, is the criterion of discipleship. No wonder, then, that such persons' happiness should be as vascillating as their feelings! How different the primitive Christian! He heard of Jesus—he believed the testimony—convinced of his sins he forsook them—he was forthwith baptized, and went on his way rejoicing; not only did his heart testify, but Father, Son, and Holy Spirit testified that he was born again—of water and the spirit.

23. You object to translating "*en*" by *in*, and say it should be *with*. You should know, sir, if you do not already, that the Latin and English preposition *in* is derived from the Greek *en*, and you must also certainly know that *in* exactly corresponds with *en*, and should *never* be translated by any other English preposition than *in*, when the connexion will possibly make sense. This subject is too plain to require many words. If the authors of the Bible, or the inspiring spirit, had meant *with* water, *with* fire, &c., the Greek language was not so barren that they were under the necessity of using one word in so many different significations, especially when a positive institution of heaven was to be spoken of. They had *meta* and *pros*, the first of which primarily means *with*, and is so translated as invariably as *en* is by *in*. When the Apostles say—Grace, peace, &c. be *with* you—it is in all the places which I have just glanced at *meta*, and never *en*. But if *en* is not *always* to be translated *in*, when the connexion will possibly admit of it, then, sir, I challenge you, or any other person, to prove, that the three Hebrew children were *in* the fiery furnace—that Jonah was *in* the great fish—that the Savior was *in* the heart of the earth—that the swine were drowned *in* the sea—that the *Logos* was *in* the beginning with God, or that any person ever was, or ever will be, in Heaven, Hades, or Hell. By more numerous arguments, sir, will I prove that the ancient disciples of John and Jesus were baptized *in* water; that the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, and Cornelius and his household, were baptized *in* the Holy Spirit, and that the wicked Jews who would not obey the Lord Jesus were baptized *in* fire at the destruction of Jerusalem, than you can bring to prove that Jesus was *in* Joseph's tomb, or that any person will ever be in heaven or hell; the last I as firmly believe, however, as the former, but on similar testimony, and by the same construction of language.

24. I am obliged to you for the books to which you have cited my attention. "Watson's Institutes" I have partially examined, the others; I shall read when I can find leisure. But how can you recommend Thorn's* work when he says, "Modern Immersion is not scripture baptism," when your "Sunday Service" says, the Minister "shall dip him in the water, or pour water upon him, or shall sprinkle him therewith." Will you perform a ceremony which you do not believe is "scriptural?" For one at least of your leading Ministers in Nova-Scotia has been known to immerse an individual whom he knew

* This name was printed, by mistake, *Thoms'* in Mr. Sleep's letter of the 2d December, inserted in this number. The reader will please make the correction.

had been sprinkled, lest he should lose one of his flock; but this in the United States is of frequent occurrence, notwithstanding some of your great men say it is open profanity.

25. But time and space fail me. I have written in such haste that I shall only vouch for the sentiments advanced, and not for the grammatical or rhetorical correctness of the expressions used in them. I have been able only to keep one page of manuscript ahead of the compositors. Had I taken more time, I should probably have written less. The pages of the Christian are at your service. If I receive an article by the 26th inst. it will be in time for the next number. The work is small; I shall be able to afford you no more than six pages per month, and my replies shall be limited to that; but we must not introduce too many subjects into one letter. Make your selection of the subjects introduced into this letter: Does born of water mean baptism? Is immersion the one baptism commanded by the Lord? Have the *unimmersed* a promise of remission of sins, the Holy Spirit, or eternal salvation? The discussion of any of these questions will bring before us truths connected with the happiness of our fellow creatures.

I most cordially reciprocate the wish expressed at the conclusion of your last letter, and would only add that I hope you will ere long *know* what the Saviour meant by being "born of water and the Spirit."

Very respectfully, yours,

W. W. EATON.

QUEEN'S COUNTY, (Nova Scotia,) 1840.

To the Editor of the Christian,

SIR—The query we handed you, and which appears in No. 7, 2d volume, viz.: "Is the *goodness* of men's *actions* to be weighed by the *sincerity* of their *intentions*?" If the following remarks in reply are, in the absence of any thing else, to your satisfaction, they are at your service.

If the answer were in the affirmative, might we not object the vile and detestable nature of *Persecution*, though attended with sincerity in the *Persecutor*? Or if in the negative, would it be argued as inconsistent with the justice of God not to accept the sincerity of the persecutor, notwithstanding the injustice, &c. of the persecution? This supposes the same moral quality equally and reciprocally predicated of the *action* and the *agent*; or in other words, that *goodness* or *illness* in any *action* implies a proportionable degree of *merit* or *demerit* in the *agent* with respect to that action.

An evil intention perverts the best actions. It makes them in reality so many shining sins: it gives an evil action all possible blackness and horror, or in the emphatic language of sacred writ makes *sin exceeding sinful*. A good intention joined to a good action gives it force and efficacy; joined to an evil action, extenuates its malignity only as far as human laws are concerned, but not as regards Heaven's immutable law of action. If therefore God has laid down such law of action, perfect and complete, steady and immutable, it is in its nature altogether independent of the judgments, opinions, and intentions of men; therefore actions agreeing with or deviating from this rule, so far as such are considered in themselves without regard to the intention of the agent, may be

said to be good or ill. Hence the quality of an action and the quality of an agent with respect to that action are very different things, and to be weighed by a very different standard. It is possible a man may do an action in itself good, while he imagines it to be ill; or an action in itself ill, while he imagines it to be good; but his conceptions, how ever grave, solemn, and sincere, do not alter the nature of either; they do not make good evil nor evil good.

Suppose the Lords of the Inquisition acting all the cruelties of that tribunal from *sincere* motives of conscience, and a full persuasion that they were doing God service, would their intentions alter the nature and horror of actions so opposed to reason and to the moral government of God? Or if in the same men such opinions and convictions exist, yet suppose for the sake of a bribe they acquit an accused criminal, who would not pronounce them depraved villains, and the vilest scoundrels; yet this character does not alter the nature of the acquittal; the act, independent of their motives, is just, equitable, and good.

Were not the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of the groves, sincere in their sacrifices and prayers, crying from mornning until the time of the evening sacrifice, "O Baal, hear us!" yet did the prophet Elijah approve their worship, because of their honest sincerity; or did he treat with tenderness or profound respect their conscientious zeal, as if an adherence to the *perfect and immutable rule of action* were alone the peculiar felicity and perfection of angels? Quite the reverse.

Were not the chief priests, the scribes, and rulers of the Jews, actuated with *sincerity*, in prosecuting the Son of God unto death, on a charge of blasphemy, and for bearing witness to *the truth*. Can we doubt that the disputers with Stephen, and the high priest and council who condemned him to be stoned—or of Saul of Tarsus, while breathing blasphemy and destruction against the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, were all actuated with zealous sincerity towards God? Though we may admit their honesty, yet with all their *sincerity of intention*, we pronounce their *opinions and actions* as most deplorable depravity, and detest them as superlatively shocking, and deaf as the adder to the voice of humanity, or to the discord of hell.

The will of God as revealed in the Bible, is the immutable criterion of thought and action, of feeling and conduct, the standard of right and wrong; therefore, how deep and pervading should be the conviction of individual personal responsibility to God, for the character and tendency of action, to the retributions of eternity. Apply these principles to the worship, order, and faith of churches, and much of the intrusive and imaginative caprice and visionary schemes of man, although having a share of wisdom in will worship, are averse to all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, and captivity of thought to the obedience of Christ, should crumble to the dust. Whatever sentiment or practice in social worship is based on the cherished observance of the apostolic churches, under the approving supervision of an apostle, is equal to a *thus saith the Lord*. "He that heareth you heareth me," &c. Finally, let the honesty of man be estimated by his sincerity, but the goodness of his actions by their conformity to the above immutable rule of action.

Sir, your's,

KRITIKOS.