

THE

CHRISTIAN BANNER.

"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God,"
"This is love, that we walk after his commandments."

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BAPTIST HISTORY.

This large and influential body of Christians claim that theirs have been the true doctrines of the church in all ages; and that amid all the corruptions of Popery, the few dissenters therefrom have been for the most part Baptists. In modern times they trace their pedigree to the Waldneses, of whom Greece was the parent; Spain the nurse; France the foster-mother; Savoy the jailor; and the Reformation the release. It is generally conceded that they sprung from the *Paulicians*, who, being persecuted by the Greek emperors, passed over into Spain. Hence, on the invasion of the Saracens, they crossed the Pyrenees and settled in France, chiefly in and near the city of Lyons, once so famous for evangelical dissenters. Finally they sought refuge in Piedmont, a state very unwilling to persecute, but, like other jailors, obliged to do as it was told. Amongst the various sects that trace their origin to the illustrious body of Christians, we may very fairly admit the claim of the Baptists. We do not mean to say that all the Waldneses practised baptism by immersion. There is much conflicting testimony on this subject in works which both parties quote as authorities. This, however, is easily explained. We are apt to look upon the Waldneses, somehow or other, as if they were a sect, whereas they were of all manner of sects and opinions, and are best distinguished as "Anti-Lutheran Protestants," who, while they all agreed in opposing the Roman Church, differed as much from each other in standards, creeds, and forms, as do the anti-Catholics of the present day. They spread all over Europe, and passed by different names, as Albigenses in France, Waldneses in Savoy, Picards and Hussites in Bohemia, Lollards and Wickliffites in England, &c. All were substantially the same people, and many of them practised baptism by immersion.

Of the early settlers in New England, some were Baptists; and though they made no distinct profession, but worshipped with the other colonists, they brought with them the grain of mustard seed which, when once rooted in American soil, sprang up and became a great and spreading tree, overshadowing a large portion of these Uni-

ted States. No men are more decided in what they believe to be right, than Baptists.

The organization of this church in America is thus accounted for. Roger Williams, a minister of the Church of England, a Puritan in sentiment, landed in Massachusetts in the seventeenth century, where he expected religious liberty was fully enjoyed. For refusing to obey the laws of the colony, Roger Williams was banished to Rhode Island, where he founded a colony on land granted by the Indians, and called the new settlement Providence. Others followed him, believing that if the civil power was to enforce religious duties, the church became a kingdom of the world. In this state-religionism, they saw the Beast of the Revelations, and the number of it, when counted, turned out to be the name of a man they had seen before, with the cross in one hand, and the sword in the other.

John Quincy Adams, however, defended the Puritans against the charge of intolerance to Roger Williams, and maintained that he was banished for a turbulent, seditious spirit, refusing to recognize the constituted authorities.

While in Rhode Island, Roger Williams became a Baptist, but there was no minister to baptize him. He called on one Halliman to baptize him, after which he, in turn, baptized said Halliman and ten others. And thus was founded the first Baptist church in America. An attempt to organize at Boston was suppressed by the civil power; nor was a church formed in New York till the year 1762. The cause made very little progress in Massachusetts, for the reasons already suggested. The Rev. M. Chauncey advocated immersion, and was dealt with by the magistrates. President Dunster renounced infant baptism about the year 1640. The celebrated Lady Moody did the same, but escaped the storm by taking refuge amongst the Dutch on Long Island. In Rhode Island the cause succeeded abundantly, under the fostering care of Williams, who at length became Governor.

During the Revolution, the Baptists were too busy to attend much to church matters, and their churches become partially disorganized; but after the Declaration of Independence secured the free exercise of religious liberty, the principles of the Baptists spread and extensively prevailed in every part of the Confederacy. The sentiments of the general body now are strictly orthodox. Education was at one time at a very low ebb; a learned ministry, in many places, could scarce get a hearing; and so low had the ministry sunk in some parts of the old country, that when Andrew Fuller read two pamphlets issued against him, he broke out into that well-known sarcasm on the greatness of the famine, when *an Ass's Head* was sold for so much, (the price of one book); and *the fourth part of a cab* of Doves'-Dung for the price of the other. But now things are different. Education is now in such demand that they have twenty colleges, eight theological institutions, with a large number of schools, academies, &c., two expensive Publication Societies, a number of missionary colporteurs and agents, together with a Sabbath School Union, of a highly respectable character.

Their government and worship are well known. Their close communion has led to charges against them of bigotry and exclusiveness;

but we do not see how, with their sentiments, they could possibly do otherwise.

We have only to add of this church that her ministers are about 8,000 ; her congregations near 11,000 ; her foreign missions amongst the most respectable in the world ; whilst her apparatus for doing good is so extensive that she can reach the whole United States, and act with such impression and efficiency, as to answer the great end of her being. K.

POSITION AND PRINCIPLES OF DISCIPLES.

No. III.

One governing principle common to Disciples is the principle of frank dealing and free intercourse (as far as possible) with those who rank themselves in opposition. Controversy, for the sake of controversy, exhibits, we think, a very different spirit from the spirit of the christian religion. Still, we cannot and do not wholly condemn controversy. Nay, rather, we approve of it—guided and restricted by a love of truth. The Lord, when he appeared among men, was a great controversialist ; Paul, James, Jude, together with Peter, engaged deeply in controversy ; and in them we have a divine model. They contended not for victory nor for vain glory. They contended for truth. We desire to be as bold as, but no bolder than they ; and to teach our zeal to flow in the same channel. The timidity and pious fearfulness about disputation, so often seen and felt in the ranks of those who are very happy in christening themselves the evangelical, we cannot always approve ; and here we would ' show a more excellent way.'

These remarks are made with the design of introducing a species of controversial letter, or a letter that may claim some such title. It was not our intention when commencing these papers to introduce this topic until we had offered much more on other topics ; but recent events prevent us from being more orderly. We shall resume our regular doctrinal principles and practical position in our next. Meantime we have judged it expedient to let the following letter see light without farther delay. It will serve in some measure to illustrate our spirit of controversy :—

TO MR. TAWS, A PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER :—

DEAR SIR : It is credibly and confidently reported, that, when invited the other evening to be present at a meeting held by messengers or evangelists of co-operating churches of Christ in Canada, you offered various reasons for rejecting the invitation, among which were those that claim some little attention from me, as one of the parties

concerned. Having none other than feelings of kindness and good will toward all men, Mr. Taws included, I do not write to you from any motive but such as you would approve if you could realize that it existed.

Speaking of the evangelists to whom I have alluded, (their names being Black and Oliphant) you were pleased to say that they were not only errorists but taught error unmixed—that they were Satan's agents in the garb of light—that they were unlearned men—that Paul would not and did not preach where others had preached the gospel.

Your remarks, friend Taws, may be divided into two sections: 1st. Our learning. 2nd. Our theology. The first department may be disposed of thus: Will you meet us with your Greek Testament (I take it for granted you have one) and your English Grammar, for the purpose of testing before any learned community whether or not we can tell *tupto* from *tupti*, and whether or not we know a verb from a noun? I ask you the simple question, Mr. Taws, whether you will consent to appoint a time and a place to make good your assertion concerning our lack of learning. If you do not, will it be surprizing if some of your friends should affirm that you are more disposed to make assertions when we are absent than to meet us face to face and show that you "speak the words of truth and soberness."

But I have far more to say about our theology. I am truly sorry to learn that you are afraid of our teaching because we have renounced all standards of religious instruction but the Book of God—that you set us down as not only entertaining error, but disseminating unmixed error, because we point men to the language dictated by the Holy Spirit—that you view us as the emissaries of the Enemy of souls because we preach the same things preached by the apostles, instead of preaching the Covenants and Catechisms ordained by Scotland's and England's learned sons—that we are looked upon as building on another man's foundation because we have come peaceably into this vicinity to preach Christ and him crucified. Paul, you say, never preached where others had previously preached; but you and the evangelist Luke differ widely here, for Luke says at the close of the Acts that Paul preached the gospel at Rome after he was taken there as a prisoner, and you will doubtless admit that the apostle had written his letter to the saints in Rome long before he ever saw the city, plainly showing that he did labour in the gospel both by word and writing where others had laboured before him. And it was his common practice to send labourers into cities and countries where he himself had laboured.

Even however if Paul never did preach where others had proclaimed the gospel, this would be no reason, Mr. Taws, why we should have scruples respecting our labours in your neighborhood. You affirm, and affirm truly, that we do not preach what you preach. Are we not, then, consistent with ourselves in endeavouring to teach the people what they have not before been taught? Would you not consider it your duty, if, by invitation, you were in a section of country where the inhabitants were principally Disciples, to preach to them the gospel according to the Westminster Confession?

But I am desirous of coming more directly and pointedly to our heresies, theological aberrations, and fatal perversions. That you, Mr. Taws, can say more against us than was charged against the Anointed One through whom salvation has been offered to a ruined world, or that you are able to revile us with greater vigour and more pious authority than were the apostles by the Jews and idolatrous Gentiles, I think you will yourself doubt; and while neither I nor the excellent father in Israel who is with me will permit our hearts to hold one feeling of hatred toward you, on account of what you say or do in disparaging us or our labours, I am for one resolved to deal in plain frankness in speaking of your theology and what is called our heresy. You may call me proud, and others may call me too bold; but if I have my own approbation in the discharge of duty in contending for the truth of the living God, it is a small matter to me to be opposed and judged by men.

That the theology you teach comes from a confession made by a number of learned men designated "Divines," which confession is partly composed of Bible truth and partly made up of human opinions, I frankly concede. That the theology of Christ is found in the New Testament, will be admitted, I doubt not, cheerfully by you.—Thus far, then, we agree. We may be agreed still further; for, in the absence of proof to the contrary, I take for granted that you are a sincere man, and devotedly attached to the standard of truth delivered to you by the fathers of the church of Scotland. I know not, my dear sir, whether you will as readily award to me as great sincerity in my attachment to the standard given by the fathers of the church of Christ; but inasmuch as it is not our personal sincerity or insincerity which is at present of most consequence, but the truth of God, it is not important whether you agree to call me sincere or the reverse.

Where shall we find the truth of Christ, Mr. Taws? Where shall a poor sinner find salvation? Where shall a dying man find life and

enjoy the hope of a place in that world where death never comes and sin never enters? These are the questions, my dear sir, the answer to which will satisfy the soul, or leave it in moral barrenness and poverty. The theology which you love answers—The Bible, Creeds, and Ministers are the media through which truth and life are enjoyed by erring, dying man. The Bible first, traditions and written articles next, and then commentators and ordained ministers to explain the traditions and the creed, compose, if I understand it, your system. The Bible, therefore, on your own ground, is the great fountain—the great centre to which every doctrine, custom, and influence must be brought in order to be tested. This is Protestantism. And unless we go to Rome direct, you and I must unite in saying that every organization called “the church” is to be tested by the Bible, and not the Bible by “the church.” Is this so? Then surely no man is obligated to look at the Bible through any thing called “the church,” but he is bound to look at the claims of “the church” and at the church itself through the Bible.

You have the Bible, traditions, a creed, and manufactured ministers for a standard; I have the New Testament with its college of apostles for a standard. What do you gain? What do I lose? Can you tell? I ask you solemnly, in the presence of the Judge before whom you and I must soon meet, to tell the people of this region what you gain and what I lose by our respective standards. What part of the Christian religion has the apostles failed to teach, and, in receiving them as our instructors under Christ, what influence are we as a people deficient of? Mr. Taws, open your Greek or your English New Testament, the last Will of the Lord Jesus to a sinful world, and honestly as a minister of God say wherein we are agents of Satan in propagating error. We appeal to the Christian oracles. This is fair. You admit that they are the chief part of the correct standard. We allow you the traditions, the creeds, the customs, and all the ministerial ability you approve, by which you may arrive at the true meaning of the Divine Book; and therefore if there be any advantage in having the knowledge and use of these helps and lights, you are cheerfully awarded that advantage. We ask to be tested by Heaven's Book. It is the highest tribunal, yourself being judge.—If we are not afraid of the highest test, you need not: for you say that traditions and the Westminster Creed help to interpret and simplify the inspired Word. Be it so—let us take it for granted; come therefore with all your superior helps in your superior station, as you call them and it; and we are ready to be judged by ‘Thus saith Jesus Christ through his apostles filled with the Holy Spirit.’

In conclusion, I am willing to make this promise, that on the Holy Word convicting us of what is erroneous, we will as publicly renounce every error thus evolved as we have publicly promulgated it, in this or any other vicinity in the Province.

Desirous of being zealous,
I am &c.,

D. OLIPHANT.

King, March 6th, 1852.

EFFORTS FOR THE CONVERSION OF DEAR FRIENDS.

Although the great Master has taught us that his friends are those who do the will of his heavenly Father, yet he has not forbidden a more special interest in the present and future happiness of our personal acquaintances, than in that of any others. For it is not in the nature of saint or sinner to feel as deeply interested in the well being of a stranger, as in the prosperity of those with whom he has often held pleasant and friendly intercourse. Indeed, duty seems obviously to point out our acquaintances as the first objects of our teachings, exhortations, and admonitions. If we cannot adapt our efforts to them it would seem to be out of the question to expect to bring home the truth to the conscience and hearts of strangers. We seldom form an intimacy with a young person in whose salvation we do not feel more than an ordinary interest. This is more especially the case when we behold in them gifts and talents, which, if consecrated to God would be extensively useful. They then become objects of our prayers and frequent efforts, that through God's grace they may be led to devote the entire energies of their being to that work for which the Saviour poured out the last drop of his most precious blood. But alas! how often have we cause to mourn that so few youths of promise behold in the work of the ministry, or even in a life of special devotion to God's service, that beauty and excellency that so charmed the ancient prophets when they sang of the honour, the usefulness, and the excellency of the proclaiming of good news upon the walls of Zion.

A young man, a most intimate friend of mine, for whose present and future usefulness and happiness I have been more anxious than for that of any other, now writes to me in the following strain: [I am not at liberty to give any names, or make any disclosures more than in the above intimations. I give publicity to a letter written for my eye only, not as the basis of a few facts for his consideration; merely, but for the benefit of others. We may have readers among

our young men under similar influences. Comments, arguments, and exhortations for his benefit may prove a blessing to others. I pray Heaven that this may be the case. O that the educated young men of America were truly educated in the service of religion. How few of them study this science of sciences; this foundation of all true science! To study man as a mere animal—to give *no attention* to his spiritual nature; to that within him that thinks and reasons, that goes on from world to world, and from sun to sun—that weighs and measures and composes—that divinity within him that longs to live again in a world of immortality! O how irrational! Whence am I? For what purpose created? Whither am I going? These are questions that will often obtrude themselves upon us, whatever may be our employment, study, or mode of reasoning.] But to the letter and then the comments:

“MY DEAR SIR: I was very happy to receive a letter from you after so long a silence. * * * I do not know as I can afford you any explanation of our family rejection of offered mercy, to which you allude, but suppose it is because we have never been brought to feel just as you do about it. I do not pretend to answer a great many queries that my own mind often presents in relation to the gospel; such as how it is that we are to receive the proper disposition necessarily precedent to a life of faith; how is it that we are constituted so prone to sin, yet made responsible for our own salvation, made to depend upon the miraculous interposition of the spirit, bestowed or withheld according to the will of a Being before whom the “prayers of the wicked are an abomination!”

That such questions should often present themselves to the mind of a thinking man will not seem so strange as that they never receive an answer. You will say that ‘such things have nothing to do with our salvation; Believe, or Repent, Believe and be baptized, and you shall be saved.’ Aye, very true! but such questions *are* of importance, in my view, that involve the inception to a life of holiness. I cannot make myself believe what my reason does not assent to! Save and except some few things, such as the belief of a great first uncaused cause, man’s belief must depend upon examination, and the consequent assent of his reason! This reason will be content with argument upheld by facts and principles many degrees short of demonstration; for there are but few things in this world absolutely demonstrable. But some evidence there must be; some ground to start upon. And how is a sinner to come into the presence of God where his prayers are an abomination? The sinner, say our divines,

is cursed from the womb with the sin of Adam, and there is no sound spot in him. He is unable to begin, continue, or to sustain a life of holiness without God's aid! Now, to all this, in the exact sense they proclaim it, my reason gives no assent. Does the Bible say so? You can answer me on that point. If it does, then it must be received on the score of faith alone, and I must pray for faith to believe, what by the whole analogy of nature, I could not.

Is not religion a practical thing? Does it not consist in such a course of life as there is reason to think is commanded by the author of nature, and as will upon the whole be our happiness under his government? We are taught by experience and precept that success in our temporal concerns, depends upon our own manly endeavours: that future happiness is placed upon the same footing, [only as it is a more noble aim it claims our noblest powers and efforts,] seems equally taught, when we are commanded "to work out our own salvation." But I am getting prolix, and must leave the subject.

I am very pleasantly situated at present. I am studying Law as hard as I can—have nearly completed Blackstone. * * * * *

I cannot say as——does, that I feel very deeply upon the subject of my personal salvation. I dare say, we all need divine aid, for without it we cannot live a moment; but I am so far from being what you call a christian, that my mind has been long a stranger to those raptures and sorrows, those agonies and joys which many christians describe as sweet assurances of divine acceptance.

You say, 'write plainly and allow me to commune with you in your hopes and plans.' Well, I have written just as I feel at present. As to "plans" I am going to the "far west" if things do not just suit me in——at the end of the coming year. I am going to try what I can do in some new country where mother nature is fresh and blooming. * * * My ambition is perhaps—political distinction. You will not approve of it, but I believe if I am designed for anything in particular it is that. "There is no obstacle to him that wills," says the great Kossuth; and he is a living witness of his own doctrine.—But my letter is getting lengthy. Remember me to all friends.

I am as ever, yours &c.

L.

LETTERS TO A YOUNG FRIEND.

No. I.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND:—The deep interest which I feel in your salvation is the best reason I can give for publishing your letter to me. Having suppressed names, dates, etc., our readers will know nothing but the facts which bear upon the main question. Every thing else will be as inviolate as though locked in my drawer.

I would have some time since addressed you privately, but I am writing for others as well as yourself. Indeed, my private correspondence has become so heavy that I have, for some time, neglected our publications and studies of importance. I purpose, therefore, in future to write shorter letters to friends that I may have more time to write for our "Banner."

To bring your case more distinctly and intelligibly before our readers, permit me to allude to your past history. This will explain some things in your letter and make my responses more easily understood.

From you I have learned that some seven or eight years since your attention was particularly called to the subject of religion. You sought the Lord with all your heart—according to the best light that then dawned upon your pathway. You doubtless *thought* that the light by which you were guided was the best. This, I was then disposed to question. Study, time, and your present state of mind, all confirm my conclusions. But in your own estimation, and in that of all the religious friends by whom you were surrounded, you became a christian. You rejoiced in a change of heart and in hope of eternal life. In the ardour of your young soul you lifted up your voice in prayer and praise. In the assemblies of those who met to worship God you spoke out distinctly, for Him and His cause. You called the attention of sinners to Jesus who was to you the “chief among ten thousand”—the “one altogether lovely.”

Then came up the question of “church membership.” Revivals in different denominations do not prevent the leaders’ efforts to get as many to join their respective parties as possible. On the one hand you were solicited to unite with this society and warned against that from many considerations. “In this you will enjoy yourself best, for O, how absurd and inconsistent is ‘infant baptism!’” But the great men of the other society respond “what can be more inconsistent and uncharitable than ‘close communion?’”

After all the fervour you heard and saw in these societies for the conversion of sinners—then to experience in your own person the efforts of prominent men to proselyte you to their respective churches extinguished your zeal and threw you among mere rationalists! And here you have lived seven long years. *Your statements and correspondence* have made these impressions upon my mind. Now your studies, your tastes, and your ambition have one and only one tendency. A profound, and an elegant young lawyer and political distinction are nearly allied; especially to a graduate of a justly celebrated and long established University.

Indeed, my dear sir, were it not that I have carefully scanned the whole ground over which you have travelled, religiously, if not doubtfully, I should hesitate some time before rushing into the arena before one so completely armed. But I trust your familiarity with ancient and modern languages—your careful study of mental, moral and political science, and your intimate acquaintance with the entire circle of mathematics will enable you to examine with a master’s eye, the claims which “Bible christianity” have upon you. I wish you to understand it. I make no demands upon your heart until your understanding fully yields. * * * I will not promise to give you mathematical demonstrations of the facts, commands, and promises of the gospel; for I trust you are too good a scholar to ask for mathematical proof of historic facts. A profound thinker would as soon demand historic proof of the truth of Euclid’s elements of Geometry as he would mathematical demonstrations of Evangelical history.

I trust you have already learned that "the proposition and the proof, must necessarily be homogeneous. Mathematical propositions can only be sustained by mathematical evidence; speculative and abstract truths, by abstract reasonings; matters of fact or historical truths, by testimony; and supernatural communications, by displays of supernatural power, usually called miracles."

I promise you, then, moral demonstrations of all the abstract and speculative theories which I may submit. But as the facts, commands and promises of the gospel are first made known to us by history, you shall have for each and every one—if you ask it—the testimony of men who have given supernatural demonstrations that they are men of truth inspired by the Divine Spirit. But when I come to scan closely your letter to find your reasons for your present position it becomes at once apparent that you placed before your eye the speculations of frail uninspired men; and have taken for granted that such are the teachings and claims of the word of God! Here is your first error! You ask, "How is it that we are constituted so prone to sin * * * * and our salvation-made to depend upon the miraculous interposition of the Spirit, bestowed or withheld according to the will of a being before whom the prayers of the wicked are an abomination!" Where did you learn this? Not in your bible, certainly. I will not pause here to complain of what I deem the false teachings of the present age. In a communication to me, knowing as you do, that my appeal is to the divine word alone, you should have submitted difficulties, if you could find any, based on a fair construction of some portion of the record!

Here are the facts: Engaged in the study of Blackstone—visions of political distinction floating far above the horizon—your whole soul engaged in the things of earth; and yet cannot account for the fact that you are not disposed to engage zealously in the service of God! Under such circumstances it would be little short of a miracle were you ever to feel interested in the things of eternity! Alluding to yourself and others—as a reason for not serving the Lord—you say, "I suppose it is because we have never been brought to feel just as you do about it!" The idea formed of the ways of God to man—I should conclude from these remarks—is that God must implant in the soul a disposition to love and serve Him by the miraculous influences of his Spirit before any one is expected to serve him. But the facts are as follows: God has created us with desires for happiness—for life—for immortality. However "prone to sin," these desires of our nature are not extinguished. All men have them. They are never extinguished in the sane mind. God, in great mercy has provided all the means necessary to the full enjoyment of these desires. In his word the conditions are plainly set forth, and their practical working upon the souls of thousands so manifest that every one not willingly blind can behold them. What more can Heaven do to dispose your heart to love and serve Jesus Christ than has been done? Ponder seriously, until you hear from me again, this question. God our Heavenly Father has spoken by Patriarchs and Prophets; in these last days he has spoken by his Son. Having all authority in Heaven

and on earth, he took his seat on the throne of the Universe. He then sent the Holy Spirit to seal the commission of his Apostles. To them he said, "He that hears you hears me, and he that hears me hears him that sent me." "I pray for them who believe on me thro' their word." "He that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, shall be like the wise man who builds his house upon the rock." Allow me to ask again, What more do you desire the Lord to do to dispose your heart to love and serve him? What more can he do for you until you submit to his authority? Expect to hear from me next month, the Lord willing. Your friend. W. W. E.

THE POVERTY OF OUR FAITH.

"So shall you be my Disciples." How? By honoring God in bearing much fruit—the fruit of righteousness—the fruit of the Spirit—the fruit which is love, and joy, and peace, and goodness, &c. And this fruit is produced by those in whose hearts the words of Jesus take possession and abide—in those who nourish and cherish within them the sayings of the Lord Jesus.

He who has the word of Christ abiding in him is a man of faith. He is a spiritual man. He is not of the world. He is alive to God. He dwells in heavenly places even on earth. He thinks, feels, and acts like his Teacher, and is conformed to Him, as much as a mortal can be like the Lord of Glory. Jesus speaks: he hears—he learns. Jesus acts: he imitates. What a union! What fruit! What results on earth! What glory in heaven! And it is all by faith. Blessed be the name of the Lord, we are privileged to confide in Him who became subject to death for poor sinful mortals, and to bear fruit unto holiness in his name, for our own good and for his glory. Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will among men through such a blissful medium!

"So shall you be my disciples" by faith. Here is the root—the spring—the groundwork, so far as man is concerned. Love is the great moving principle in all that Heaven has done for man's salvation—faith is the living and central power in all that man does in accepting and enjoying salvation. Who would not thank the Lord that it is possible to walk by faith? Who will not rejoice in the love of Jesus Christ that offers to us something on which to lay hold in order to eternal life? O how shall we speak of the blessedness, power, and fame of that union which is effected by the love of God and the faith of the creature meeting in the same heart! "We walk by faith" says one of the boldest sons of inspiration; and a sure—a happy—and a hopeful walk it is! He "stumbleth not" who thus walks. He "walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly." He takes a lively step along the path

of life, leading away safely to immortality. He walks not the broad road, the end of which is destruction. The narrow way is the way of his choice, and therein he walks, happy in the company of those who like himself are keeping their eye on Jesus, following Him through good report, and evil report—careful lest he offend by the way, and the name and cause of his Master suffer on his account.

“So shall you be my disciples” by bearing fruit to God by faith. Divine lesson!—shall we receive it and “be fruitful in *every good work*.” This is the practical point at which we have been looking from the first word of this article. *Every good work*—yes—EVERY GOOD WORK—there is a sermon, nay, there is a volume in these three words. Christians are great workers; slothfulness is intolerable to the great Master, and he will cast out from his presence every one who fails to give all diligence to copy the divine pattern as shown in labours of love by himself. Hence Christians—we mean not mere religious speculators—but Christians, made after the image of Him who created them—are full of labours in the gospel. Their minds think, their hearts feel, their mouths speak, their souls yearn, their hands work—their whole man is active for the sake of Him who planned, and sympathized, and wrought, and died, and was glorified to redeem the fallen race of Adam.

A most unaccountable and very fatal delusion has seized the men of this generation, who profess to be the friends of the exalted Lord. They are, they say, doing the will of Christ by right views and good feelings without works! They are on the road to heaven, and, to speak figuratively, their walking consists of feeling right, and having good theological views! Wonderful—to find a man making a journey from Rome to Jerusalem by standing stock still at the gates of the former, telling every one that he is certain he is pursuing his journey because he has faith in the direction of the road, and because he has pious feelings! Or, on the like principle, we meet with a servant among the vines in the Master's vineyard, who, listless and inactive, proves to us that he is working according to the Lord's commands because he verily thinks his heart is warm toward him! If this be not a fatal as well as a pious delusion, then the Lord will exercise more charity than he has promised—a species of charity that we cannot, as now advised, recommend to any mortal who seeks deliverance from sin.

Some—nay more than a few—of those from whom better things should be expected, are among the good feeling and non-acting species of christians. They certainly desire both God and man to take

'the will for the deed' to an alarming extent. At least we are disposed to reason with them as did the inspired James with some in his time—'Show me your good feelings without works, and I will show you my feelings by my works.' Have we not a just right to conclude that Christ's words abide in few—that faith is exceedingly scarce; because wherever faith is, it produces fruits—it develops itself openly and overtly in well doing, of which the children of the great Father do not soon become weary.

Reader, what are you *doing* in the name of the Lord? Are you going out and coming in day by day, attending to *your own* business as you are pleased to call it, and in the meanwhile persuading yourself that the theory of religion will carry you to heaven? Do you *feel that your feelings will preserve you safe*, and that when the Lord comes to reward every one according as his works shall be, your feelings will be accounted works to be rewarded? Let us say in positive terms that in feeling thus *you feel wrong!* Your feelings are not produced by faith—not made by the word of Christ abiding in you, when they permit you to stand idle, either in the market place, or any other place, while there is so much to be done by the Lord's chosen servants.

Every primitive disciple was a worker, a zealous worker, an untiring worker. The Master was his model. He saw his Master taking pity upon ignorant men, and teaching them the true knowledge; hence he was desirous of diffusing the knowledge of God in like manner.—He saw the Divine Friend of man visiting the sick couch, ministering to the poor and needy, and relieving the afflicted and distressed in all their circumstances of woe; therefore was he moved to 'do likewise.' He saw Jesus travelling throughout Judea—meeting opposers—suffering persecution—working and toiling night and day, by sea and land, in country and city, with a multitude or with a few individuals, for the good, not of himself, but others; he saw that he spared not his own life, but freely made himself a sacrifice, not for his own sake, but for the sake of sinners; and, catching the spirit of such zeal, of such holy energy, of such active goodness, he entered the Lord's field of labour in earnest, and determined to be like his Lord. Was he saved by faith? *Yes, but not by faith alone!* His faith had life in it—it moved and had its being in active benevolence, resulting in blessings to man and honour to the Lord of life; and therefore assuredly it was *saving faith!*

But modern faith—what is it? A barren, fruitless, worthless, insipid, powerless sentimentalism! It is not worth a farthing on earth, and

it will never see heaven. Reader, the faith of the gospel is full of power, of zeal, of good fruits, of divine works. Tell no man that you have faith—think not yourself that you have faith—until you practice the will of Him who is the author of salvation. It is a mockery, a fatal deception, for any one to call himself a christian who never *walks*, who never *works*, who never *lives* by faith. The faith which saves according to the New Testament, is a faith that *works by love, purifies the heart, overcomes the world*. It takes hold and keeps hold of the life divine by doing that which is consistent with the divine will. Faith responds to, and heartily accords with, the language of the Great Teacher and Divine Lawgiver when he says, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." Let no one count himself a friend of the Redeemer, who, in the midst of the darkness, moral death, and awful woe everywhere in our world, can spend his strength and his substance as do men who seek this world's goods, and in the meantime hold all his religion in some hidden corner of his mind, or located in some of his feelings. We have not so learned Christ.

D. O.

Nottawasaga, 16th March.

ATONEMENT OR RECONCILIATION.

The following are a few remarks, which were designed to accompany the observations of our friend and Brother D. C., page 56, No. 2, but inadvertently omitted in our absence. We hope to have leisure to deliver ourselves more fully on this most interesting topic at another time:—

If our brother—who co-operates with the Baptists for unity's sake—is desirous of hearing a word or two from us on the subject of the work of Jesus on Calvary, (certainly as attractive to every soul as the "work of the Spirit,") we have no objections to offer a few remarks.

Paul, who was a better commentator than the Greek scholars who teach theology in Canada, not only tells us that Jesus Christ came into the world, but he lets us into the secret of the object he had in coming. He came into the world, says the apostle, to save sinners. We conclude therefore with the apostle that it was sinners, and not any special class of sinners, that Jesus came to save. Wherever he found a sinner or a number of sinners, he lifted his voice and preached to him or them the tidings of life, saying, "Christ came into the world to save you."

Could we find all men as faithful in acknowledging Jesus, as we find fulness in the Propitiatory through his blood, we should not hes-

itate to believe in the salvation of all men, from the lowest to the highest. God, in Christ, does not need to be reconciled; he freely offered up his life, and gave himself a sacrifice for all. Hence, the Son of God, Jesus the Messiah, the Divine One, is preached by apostolic authority, not as a Saviour who has set bounds to his grace, or limit to his saving energy; but as one who really paid the Ransom Price for all without exception.

Good meaning men sometimes tell us, with much gravity and piety, that Christ died for sinners called elect. These sincere men have not studied their New Testament thoroughly. Elect sinners is not a scriptural phrase—nay, it conveys an unscriptural idea. Two errors are committed by those who thus speak; first, they greatly err in affirming that Christ's sacrifice had reference only to a certain number of mankind; and secondly, they speak incorrectly of sinners in calling a portion of them the elect, and others the non-elect. No apostle ever so spake. True, we hear them speak of the elect, and tell that they were elected in Christ before the world was made; intimating to believers the value of their faith; as it had been determined before the foundation of the world that believers in Christ should be the elect; and therefore elected in Christ before either man or sin were in the world! Thus spake the inspired teachers to believers in order to encourage, strengthen, and edify them: but who ever learned from the preaching of the apostles and inspired evangelists that they classified sinners into two parties—those that were by fore-ordination to be saved, and for whom Christ died, and those fore-ordained to be doomed to perdition, and for whom Christ did not die? Rather, do we not hear an apostle speaking of certain men perishing for whom Christ died?

Believers then are elected, and elected *in* Christ—not *out* of Christ; and let it be fully understood that there is no such thing, according to the Sacred Book, as elect sinners. The apostles preached Jesus every where as the Deliverer from sin—the gospel message upon the mind and conscience of every sinner, Jew or Greek, bond or free, learned or rude. Let us follow their example and cease from all the speculations which gender strife rather than godly edifying. D O.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

THE PREPARATION, No. 1.

The time was long between the promise given to our first parents in the garden of Eden and the actual appearance of the Saviour of the world. The Patriarchs to whom the original promise had been repeated in terms more definite than the first, were expecting the Messiah, but his advent was delayed. The heaven-taught Prophets who foretold the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should succeed these sufferings, inquired diligently into the meaning of their own predictions, "searching what and what manner of time the Spirit of Christ who was in them did signify," to whom it was revealed that not for themselves but for coming generations they ministered these things. Time passed on, and in consequence of these predictions,

the promised 'seed' became the desire of all nations. Holy men were watching and waiting, and holy women too, were anxiously looking for the highly favoured one who should be the mother of the Son of God. But the set time was not yet come. So long indeed was the promise delayed that some began to despair of its fulfilment, and others questioned the divine origin of the predictions which had caused universal expectation. Yet God had not forgotten his promise; but had been preparing the way for its accomplishment as fast as his unerring wisdom thought best. From eternity he had regarded it, and arranged his plans of creation, providence and redemption with reference to it. The predicted event was great, and the preparation for it must be great also, and ages must circle away before it can be complete.—God, the Eternal, delights in progression; although his works were finished, *in semine* from the beginning; yet the law of gradual development is strictly observed, in bringing them forward into actual and complete existence. First the blade and then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear, suggests a principle fully carried out in the system of remedial mercy. Religion has had its infancy and childhood as well as man. The primitive simplicity of the patriarchal institution which was divinely instituted in the first age of the world, was the most simple that we can conceive. It contemplated no other bond of union but the marriage covenant and the relations growing out of it. This was well adapted to lead the mind forward to future developements of God's purposes in the plan of redemption. After a lapse of two thousand five hundred years the more complex doctrines and usages of Judaism were added to the divine simplicity of the family worship. The law was added to it, but did not supersede it, being founded on the matrimonial compact, and that on nature itself it cannot be superseded so long as the true worshippers of God are drawn together by family ties. The doctrines and usages of Judaism were chiefly representative and typical in their character, and designed to lead forward another step towards the full development of the scheme of redemption, already formed in the divine mind. The law was given by the dispensation of angels, and the Jewish types set up with reference to the promised "seed." This is the secret of their power to save. Through these the Saints who died before the Hope of Israel came, looked forward to his advent with intense feeling; for he it was who should confirm their title to endless bliss. They were all saved in anticipation of his sacrifice.—Through this they obtained pardon, holiness and eternal life. By these shadowy representations the work of preparation for the grand event which was yet future, progressed, and four thousand years passed slowly away before this long cherished and eager expectation was fulfilled; and then he who was in the form of God took upon himself the form of a servant, and men beheld his glory as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace, and truth. Events had taken place of great interest, and revolution had succeeded revolution to prepare the way for his appearance. The fulness of time had come when God sent forth his Son. It was in every respect the fit season; neither too soon nor too late to accomplish the object of his mission.

He was introduced into the world by a convoy of angels who, returning, sung a song "then unsung. The heavenly cadences that roached the earth were "glory to God in the highest heaven, peace on earth, and good will to men." The infant Jesus was no doubt the Messiah. There was no mistake; there could be none. Prophets filled with God's own inspiration, had named his birth-place and carefully noted the circumstances and the time of his appearance centuries before. They had sketched, too, his very form and features, and recorded with historic accuracy the events of his eventful life. He answered to the prophecies. Besides, his life, discourses, and miracles are every way worthy the plenipotentiary of Heaven, and of themselves carry conviction to thoughtful minds that he was sent from God. The evidences of his Messiahship drawn from these sources, acquire a brighter lustre and a mightier strength as He approaches the goal on which salvation seems tremblingly suspended. But his death and the events connected with this most momentous event, at last, demonstrate the proposition on which the scale of redemption turns, and the mighty intelligences of the universe are relieved from their long suspense by the successful issue of an hour around which eternity revolves. The past points to it. The future unrolls from it. The events of no other hour are so intimately connected with the past and the future, with time and eternity, with God and men, with our deepest woes and our highest joys in this world and the world to come, as the mysterious events of that hour in which Jesus of Nazareth cried, "It is finished" and then yielded up his spirit. This was the hour and the power of darkness. Different and contrary purposes were accomplished by wicked men and the ever blessed God. Men thought to disprove his claims to the Messiahship by putting him to death. They succeeded in nailing him to the cross, and no doubt congratulated themselves on the success of their scheme. But ah! the blindness of men. For paradoxical as it may seem, their success was their failure, and their triumph their overthrow, for the accomplishment of their purposes was their frustration. He claimed to be God's Son. They thought by this slow murder to disprove his claims and prove him to be an imposter. But his death was the strongest proof of the truth of these claims. It accomplished the prophecies and fulfilled the types. They expected too, to maintain the honour and perpetuity of their law against him who they thought was about to destroy it; but by the very means of his death that law was abrogated. Till that moment its representative institutions had an efficacy but now it had accomplished its purpose and served to bring in a better hope, and then the shadowy dispensation fled away forever—Then the first will was taken away that the second might be established upon better promises. Mysterious and important hour! the central point in the dial plate of time. Four thousand years were not too long to prepare the universe for its development. Great was the responsibility resting upon the meek sufferer on the Roman cross, and He fully realized it. A thousand prophecies and a thousand types were to be fulfilled in order to the successful accomplishment of the mighty plan,—a single failure now and all is lost. All

the intelligences in the universe were watching and waiting with concentrated interest and eager expectation. The Saviour from his lofty stand-point threw His glance over the universe, and through eternity, and announced the result of his survey by saying, 'It is finished,' and immediately bowed his head and yielded up his spirit. Then a strange thrill shook the earth,—the Sun was darkened, the rocks were rent, and many of the saints arose from their long sleep to gaze upon the scene, but all was over, except that the sepulchre was yet to open and the slain Christ was yet to mount the heavens in his glorious ascension to bear the priceless sacrifice which had been offered on the altar of the world into the most holy place in the Heavens. It was accepted,—the world was redeemed. J. S.

For the Christian Banner.

CHRISTIAN UNION.

BROTHER OLIPHANT:—Will you admit a few thoughts to your pages on the above subject? After a silence of some months, for which an apology might be offered, I hope to continue my contributions, at least once a month; and if judged worthy, please place them on your pages, and if not, put them under your table.

No subject, of a general character, has, perhaps, occupied more of the attention and interest of the wise and good, during the last quarter of a century, than that suggested by the above caption.

The idea of a catholic church—a pure church—and holy—founded on the Rock of Ages, has enlisted the warmest affections and the best efforts of one portion, (and that a no small portion) of the religious world; while that of a sectarian ascendancy has been the largest thought in the minds of another portion; and a sectarian triumph, has haunted the minds of still another, and more daring, class. A sectarian ascendancy or triumph is nothing for christianity. Anciently, the Greek and Roman Churches were alternately in the ascendancy—more recently, the Arian and Trinitarian sections alternated—but during these times christianity was fleeing and fled to the mountains and obscure passes. Rome at length triumphed, and christianity was then hunted among the mountains and passes, that it might be banished from the world. The virulence that hunted down and crucified the Author of christianity was exceeded by Rome in the palmy days of her might. We may not again however expect or fear a *crusade*—a war of the cross—for, perhaps, the simple reason that our ancestors were engaged in such scenes, and history has recorded them. But if the fourteenth century had not waged "a holy war," it would not be safe to become responsible for the nineteenth. Louis Bonaparte is no better man than Louis IX. of France. But although a sectarian ascendancy or triumph would not now produce a spirit so virulent as formerly, it would nevertheless be intolerant—for sectarianism is not of *measurement* but *quality*.

A union upon any other foundation than that of *divine truth* would be worthless. It must not be a union upon a *part* of the truth, or of any inductions or deductions from the truth, or opinions concerning

the truth—but it must be a union upon the *revealed* truth of our Lord Jesus Christ—observe, *revealed* truth—such as the Father of Mercies has seen fit to stamp with his own likeness, and impress with his own Spirit.

In view of the above, the careful observer of the “signs of the times,” may discern the dawn of a better day. A clearer light is beginning to beam upon us, and we hail it as the “beginning of the end.” An increasing reverence for the Holy Scriptures is an unmistakable feature of the present—and a *growing* anxiety for a *pure* translation of the sacred oracles, into all languages, (and even into the English, to the manifest hazard of many darling opinions and distinctive peculiarities,) is spreading from the rivers to the mountains throughout all the land. With these, let it be also noted, that the religious systems of modern structure, whether emanating from Geneva, Edinburgh, or Oxford, are slackening their hold upon the minds and consciences of the present generation—so that almost every man you meet, although he has subscribed the articles of his church as formally as any one did forty years ago, yet he desires you to understand that he *does not* fully and cordially believe and receive it *all*, (neither will he affirm he has all the truth.) As felt David in the armour of the son of Kish, so do men of this day feel in the armour of Wittemberg, London, or Philadelphia.

From all these indications who can fail to see a rising hope of a better and brighter day near at hand? An actual recovery of ancient christianity—the christianity of the Holy Scriptures—only, is that to which all these things point. This, may we not hope, is soon to become the ruling feature of the age. As we have sometimes seen the brilliant streaks of light restlessly dancing in the northern sky, till, issuing from the very horizon, the Arc of a circle of light arose slowly, but majestically, till it became the master of the scene.

That reformation to which the *Christian Banner* is understood to be pledged, is one peculiarly demanded by the present state of society, as well as called for by divine authority. The emancipation of the mind from despotic masters, and the emancipation of christianity from ancient mysteries and modern systems, in order to a return to the ancient “law of liberty,” as spread out on the page of the Sacred Oracles, pure from the mind of enthroned wisdom, are, undoubtedly, leading features of what is sometimes called the “reformation of the nineteenth century.”

That there are, and have been, persons of corrupt minds, who have caused themselves to be identified, in the public eye at least, with this movement, who were not, and are not, in any justice, entitled to such a distinction, past experience but too well testifies;—and the letter from our highly esteemed Brother Black, and the article from the *Christian Observer*, in a recent number of your paper, remind us that the enemies are still round about the camp. And there are still others, both large and small, who are not willing that any should think except by their permission—in whose minds it is presumption, on the part of any one, to think upon any subject upon which they have not thought, and *only as they have thought*. This is all to be

expected in the progress of a movement like the present. And these things will probably yet cause the effort and its friends "to be sifted as wheat." Though these things may come under the shelter of age, and their bearers be "as tall as the pine," yet must those true in heart—true to God—"set their faces like the flint" against them. The atmosphere is purified by the storm, although the flood marks may be visible for some time beneath our feet.

Notwithstanding that men of corrupt minds,—the ambitious—the designing—the selfish—have been, and are, and, doubtless, will be, among us, yet we have every element in the present frame of society, to encourage us to hope for success at no distant day. And the antagonism, above alluded to, is sufficient to prompt us to watchfulness, vigilance, effort. But let every one remember that the Lord has committed the kingdom and its progress to his children. If they should sleep upon their posts, the enemy will surely gain upon their outposts, if no more. Every one, must, therefore, labour according to his ability, as the Lord has given him, even under the penalty of his own everlasting salvation.

J****

 COMMUNION.

No. II.

Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to the disciples, and said, Take eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.—MATT. xxvi: 26.

Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat that bread, and drink that wine.—1 Cor xi, 28

It was to the disciples that Jesus gave the new emblems of himself as a sacrifice for sin. It was the saints, or those who were sanctified in Christ Jesus, then dwelling in the city of Corinth, that Paul addressed when he said let a man examine himself, and so let him partake. The apostles in every place carried out the will of the holy Master by requiring his disciples to remember Him in the Weekly Supper stately and in the right spirit.

No one, so far as known to us, questions the fact that disciples and only disciples, in primitive times, were to receive the supper of the Lord. There is too much good evidence in support of this fact to be disputed with any show of reason or propriety. But a new question is propounded, in the answering of which very many of the professors of our times are at variance. That question is, *Who, in these days of divisions, are the disciples of Jesus?* This enquiry reaches the very core of the controversy: for there is not a teacher or preacher in christendom worthy of a moment's consideration as a teacher or preacher who desires to sit down at the Lord's table with any but those who are the Lord's people. Hence, the different means by which the people of God are tested or known, explain the variations of prac-

tion at the Lord's table in receiving and rejecting those who would sit down at the feast.

Open communion is said to be charitable communion; and charity being put by some as the chief judge in deciding who are on the Lord's side, this kind of communion is advocated because charity demands it, and because charity is affirmed to be the soul of christianity. Charity says that Mr. Feelgood is a child of heaven—a lover of Jesus; therefore he is invited to take his place at the communion table. But close communion is said to be uncharitable communion, and certainly it arrives at conclusions far different from those approved by what is called *charitable communion*. This kind of communion is not willing to abide by the directions left by the primitive workmen, but, as a system, excludes many who have the faith and manifest the obedience of the gospel. The advocates of this principle of communion do not say with Paul, "Let a man examine himself," but they say, Let him be examined by the most orthodox close communion members, and if he be not in all points like them, he must be held at arm's length, and if he ever feast at all, he must mingle with others more like himself and less like them.

But we cannot get our pry on the right fulcrum without fairly considering the question, Who are the people of the Lord? The Lord's Supper is for such people—who are they? This settled and all is easy. This left unsettled and all is uncertainty. But ere we can decide this question, we must dig still deeper by way of preparation. What test shall we apply in order to determine who are Christ's? Will feelings answer for evidence upon this great question?—will the principles of expediency?—will the fine old Presbyterian, Episcopal, or Papal fathers?—will the nicely balanced articles of some well written creed?—will anything answer but the oracles of the Lord of life? "The oracles," says one; "the oracles," says another; "the oracles," says every intelligent professor. To the oracles then we will go, and there learn who and what are the Lord's people.

"Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." Thus Paul speaks to the believers in the city of Rome in his letter to them, Rom. vi. They had been obedient to what?—to a form of doctrine says the apostle. What doctrine?—the doctrine delivered to them. And what doctrine did the original proclaimers invariably deliver to both Jews and Gentiles—to assemblies in Rome or Jerusalem? Here is their doctrine:—that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Highest—that he died for our sins—that he left the dead—that he is Lord of all—that remission of sins is preached in his name—that these things concerning Jesus are to be cordially embraced by faith—that there is the obedience of faith,

beginning with the putting on Christ by baptism—that a continued union with Christ is to be kept up by living according to the spirit of holiness. Such was the doctrine delivered to those in Rome to whom Paul wrote, and such therefore was the doctrine by which they were governed, or that they obeyed.

Do we require such doctrine and such obedience in the year of grace 1852 as the pre-requisite and groundwork of communion? We do. This is the apostolic model. It is therefore the model for us. We love it—we recommend it—we practice it.

But though there is a happy oneness of faith and of teaching, there is not always a union of opinion among our brethren relative to what is religious freedom at the Lord's table; in other words, there are two opinions in reference to what is christian watchfulness on the part of the church when the Lord's table is spread and surrounded.—Now an opinion, it is agreed on all hands, is of no authority in the churches of the saints. We may tell an opinion, but we dare not teach it. We may hold an opinion, but not enforce it upon others.—It is tyranny for any one to force his opinion upon another; it is equally tyranny to compel any one to give up his opinion, unless it can be made manifest that said opinion is used unlawfully and works injury. If any brother's opinion, or the use that is made of it, by himself or by a church, shall give offence to any brother or any church, the opinion so far as it operates practically should be at once given up. This is clearly implied in the admission that an opinion is not and cannot be authoritative. The christian religion and the christian brotherhood are constituted upon this principle.

It is, however not to be forgotten, that on the communion question, the power of opinionism is not on one side only—both parties in the controversy are opinionists! Now an opinion when it passes a certain boundary, and therefore becomes offensive, is to be corrected by the authority of the Lord—driven back and kept in its place by the mind of the Spirit; but surely no intelligent man in the inspired record would assume the prerogative of correcting one opinion by the power of another! We should respond to his zeal in the language of Paul to a Judaizer, "Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" He who would see clearly to remove the dust from his brother's eye, must have a clear eye himself.

There is an impression indeed, in certain quarters, that we are more fond of the opinion on one side than on the other. Before we have finished these essays we shall ascertain how this position agrees with the position we occupy. Meantime we have submitted cardinal principles on which and by which we are determined to work.

D. OLPHANT.

St. Vincent, 22nd March.

THE IMAGE OF GOD.—Man is God's image, and to curse wickedly the image of God, is to curse God himself. Suppose that a man should say with his mouth, I wish that the King's picture were burned; would not this man's so saying render him as an enemy to the person of the king? Even so it is with them, that, by cursing, wish evil to their neighbors or themselves, they condemn the image of God.

THE MARRIAGE QUESTION.

Marriage according to the scriptures was the first institution that God gave the world, and although its requirements are minutely pointed out, yet still there exists a considerable difference of opinion as to how some of its laws are to be understood. The part we propose to make some remarks upon is this: Are members of the church bound by the law to marry only members of the church?

There are many who contend that it is a sin for a member to marry out of the church, and that the person so offending must be cut off from the body; others think it venial, and that a reproof before all is sufficient. There are others who think that the whole of Adam's posterity have the liberty of choice as to who they may be married to. In some churches when a case of this nature occurs, it is agitated until all parties are willing to let it drop. There it remains until another comes up. It is again agitated, and with the same results. There are others who think that the nature of this argument is such that it cannot be decided by the scriptures. As it is very desirable that unanimity in all things should prevail amongst us, in order to obtain this the following remarks are made upon some of the proofs brought forward by those who contend that to marry out of the church is a sin.

The first proof that is generally quoted is from Gen. vi: 2. "The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and took them wives of all which they choose." Now according to my mind, this quotation is decidedly against the theory of those who quote it, but as there is considerable stress put on it, we will offer a few remarks.

The first remark is, Who were the sons of God alluded to? Adam was a son by creation, and all his posterity in a temporal point of view are sons of God. The apostle says "we are also his offspring." The men in the first verse and the sons of God in the second, there can be no doubt as to there being the posterity of Adam, and the scriptures do not inform us that the descendants of Cain inherited their fathers' mark; but the scriptures do inform us that "the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father" so that the descendants of Cain and the descendants of Seth were upon equal standing in the sight of God, and we have it also mentioned in this quotation that the institution of marriage had taken effect, and the result was that men began to multiply on the face of the earth, not by creation as was Adam and Eve, but by the natural means that God has appointed. There is also another important fact mentioned in this portion of scripture, and that is, that the antediluvians enjoyed the liberty of marrying "all which they chose."

The next quotation is the law that prevailed amongst the Jews where intermarriage is prohibited with the nations around them; but as they are a distinct people from all other nations, and had laws peculiar to themselves, we will not at present offer any remarks on this.

It appears that those who agitate this question under review, base their whole argument upon the last clause of 1 Cor. vii: 39; but as

the whole chapter is taken up with this subject, we will first offer a few general remarks. It appears that the Corinthians had written to the apostle and propounded a number of questions regarding marriage, and to all their questions he rendered clear and distinct answers; but nowhere laid the smallest restriction on the freedom of choice, and Peter in his first epistle, third chapter, confirms the same doctrine that Paul "ordained in all churches" verse 39, "but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will." There is no ambiguity in this language, and it is in harmony with what precedes it in this chapter. "Only in the Lord." It is contended that these words convey the idea that the person (the widow) is permitted to be married to, must be in the Lord. Now there is no construction that can be put upon these words that can make them have any reference to the man the widow is at liberty to be married to, no not even by inference.

Now beyond all dispute to be married "only in the Lord" is a spiritual marriage, and the apostle throughout this chapter is giving commands and advice concerning temporal marriage, so that the words "only in the Lord" is unconnected with any part of the chapter; but these words as they stand alone cannot convey to us the information the apostle intended. We must therefore examine some other part of his writings, where he is treating of the same subject. This we will find in Rom vii: 2-3, in these verses we have the same subject, the same reasoning, and the same decision as in Cor. vii: 39. In the fourth verse of this chapter he shows the necessity of being dead to the law, before we can be married to him who is raised from the dead. When we are thus married we are in a state that we can "bring forth fruit unto God." This important doctrine the Apostle inculcates throughout his writings. In scripture language to "put on Christ" or to be "married to him who is raised from the dead" is synonymous with being married "only in the Lord," none will dispute. In 1 Cor. vii: 40, the apostle's judgment is that if the widow would remain unmarried she would be happier; and we have his reasons for thinking so in the 32, 33, and 34th verses of this chapter. Here the apostle shows that the unmarried are in a better state for bringing forth fruit unto God than those that are married. By giving the above quotations due consideration, I think that none need be at a loss to know what the Apostle means by the words "only in the Lord."

In Gen vi: 2 it is showed that the antediluvians were at liberty to be married "to all which they chose." In Num. xxxvi: 6, when the case of the daughters of Zelophehad was brought before the Lord, the response was, "saying, let them marry to whom they think best" and in 1 Cor. vii: 39, "she is at liberty to be married to whom she will." Here are three creditable witnesses, and they are decisive in the absence of all opposing testimony that the whole of Adam's posterity have the liberty of being married to whom they will, and this harmonizes with the law and the gospel; if they make a judicious choice they will be happy, but if they make an injudicious choice misery may be the result.

Before I dismiss this subject, I would make a few remarks on some statements that appeared in the March Number of the *Witness of Truth* for 1850. The article alluded to is headed *Marriage with Unbelievers*, and written by Mathetes. As it is the duty and the privilege of all Christians to correct any errors that may be put forth purporting to be scriptural, as the statements alluded to are not taken notice of by any one, I will avail myself of the christian privilege by pointing them out.

The pith of Mathetes' arguments and reasoning is to show that it is sinful for a member of the church to marry one that is not a member of the church. He says "the condition of his being a son of God, is his being separated from the world." Now, according to Mathetes, if a member of the church marry a member of the church they are separated from the world, consequently they are a son and daughter of God; but so it is that they may be thus married and yet not be a son or a daughter of God, and I am sorry to add that there are many such marriages in the church, so that temporal marriage cannot be the condition of his being "a son of God." "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." There are no circumstances that a Christian can be placed in, that can wholly deprive him of this privilege. But Mathetes quotes from 2 Cor. vi: 17. Now if the apostle was in this second letter giving commands concerning temporal marriage he would just be undoing all that he had done in 1 Cor. 7th chapter, thereby un-linging the minds of the Coriuthians concerning temporal marriage; but in the portion of scripture, that this quotation is taken from, the connexion commences at the 11th verse inclusive to the end. Here the apostle gives a command to the church, "be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," infidels, or worshippers of idols; and adds a number of pertinent reasons why they should not do so, and finishes with one of the most gracious promises recorded in holy writ.

But hear Mathetes again: "but if his choice of a wife is to be made subsequent to the enlightenment of his mind, christianity dictates and expediency suggests that the object of his choice should be in the Lord." If the Lord or any of his apostles dictated this, I confess that I do not know where to find it. Perhaps Mathetes will inform us where it is to be found in the scriptures.

SENEX.

18th Feb., 1852.

Before calling upon brother Mathetes to explain himself, let us ask the friendly writer who offers the preceding strictures, if he does not regard it as among the things that are "comely" and of "good report" for believers to unite themselves for life with believers?

D O.

LABOURS OF EVANGELIST.

REPORT No. II.

Frequent Reports are desired by the brethren, and with this desire we cheerfully comply. Our reports will be numerous and concise.

At King, as mentioned in our last, we found encouragement to address the people a few miles north-east of the locality where the brethren usually meet. We spoke five times at that point, from Tuesday evening March 2nd to Saturday the 8th, inclusive. That some benefit resulted, and may yet result, through these efforts, we can scarcely doubt; for strong prejudices were removed from the minds of at least a portion of the hearers, and we are persuaded that the good seed fell upon soil which may in time bring forth fruit unto holiness.

On Lord's day the 7th, we enjoyed a social meeting with the Brethren, and in the evening we held a meeting near Yonge Street, in a chapel recently built, and commonly occupied by Mr. Dick, of Thorn Hill. This House, if we rightly recollect, belongs to what is called the Secession—one of the numerous families of Presbyterians. Good attention was paid to what was said, and some of the prominent members of the Church were understood to express themselves as being satisfied that the Disciples had been greatly misrepresented.

Monday morning, 8th March, we were compelled to bid adieu to the Brethren, and turn our faces toward the shores of the Georgian Bay, for the purpose of cheering the brethren in that region and proclaiming the gospel to those who might hear.

D. OLIPHANT,
JAMES BLACK.

Nottawasaga, 15th March.

REPORT No. III.

After a tedious journey from King to Nottawasaga, we arrived at the residence of the estimable brother A. McArthur, March 11th.—While on our way from King, we had the pleasure of remaining a night with a friend by the name of Mr. Jack, resident in the township of Essa. He has been a reader of the brethren's Monthly since its commencement. He entertains the views of the Scotch Independents, and on many points he is with the Disciples. Baptism is doubtless the only subject of much difference. We were cordially invited to hold meetings in that vicinity, but having calculated to press forward north and west, we kept on our journey as zealously as possible.

Brother McArthur, soon as we arrived, had his neighbors informed that speakers were come from afar, and that meetings would commence at his house, preaching in English and Gaelic, on Friday evening, March 12th. A goodly number attended. Saturday evening (the 13th) was exceedingly stormy and rainy, but still a few pressed through the storm and made a meeting. On Lord's day the 14th, though still rainy, we all journeyed to the meeting place of the bre-

thren—the residence of brother James D. Stephens, who from the beginning has been at pains to keep up the meetings there, and by whose countenance, with the valuable co-operation of father James Hood—a truly Christian patriarch—the meetings of the few brethren have been sustained. Father Hood was a Scotch Baptist, and was a member of that connexion in the city of Glasgow when the whole Brotherhood were agitated and finally fractured into two bodies upon the communion question—upon the question whether the Weekly Supper should be observed in the absence of Elders. The Brethren in Nottawasaga speak much in his praise, and justly so, from all that we observed or learned.

In said vicinity we remained several days, speaking publicly only on three several occasions. These were when the Brethren met to break bread, then on Lord's day evening, and afterwards on Monday evening, 14th and 15th of March. We spoke in a School House about a mile north from brother Stephen's house. The roads were breaking up—the weather unfavourable—the mind of the community distracted by other objects and interests—and we concluded to move upward and westward. We left Nottawasaga separately; one leaving on Wednesday the 17th, the other on Friday the 19th. We were kindly received by the Brethren of St. Vincent, and on the evening of the 19th commenced a series of meetings.

JAMES BLACK,
D. OLIPHANT.

St. Vincent, 22d March.

✍ A travelling editor and an industrious printer, can, unitedly, be made to appear as singular as comic Almanac makers. Our No. 2 contained some specimens of rebellion against Grammar and good sense which we are seriously thinking of handing down in a new form to our children's children through the power of the Daguerreotype art, provided we can find an artist who will undertake the business. * * * * * A very full edition of major and minor inaccuracies are to be found in our last No., which must be charged to any one the charity of the reader pleases. We have arranged to secure the services of a gentleman in our absence to correct the press, so that one apostle will not be put for the whole twelve, as on page 40, nor such a term as 'disturbing' be manufactured from the word *distrusting*, as on page 41, nor the term *teaching* be transformed into something as base as 'treachery,' as on page 47. We apologize, too, for the appearance of the article on the subject of the Sabbath, since our notice in No. 1 relative to such communications clearly intimated that they would be withheld. It was published by mistake, without our authority. Any respectably written letter, on the Sabbath or on any other religious topic, not making allusions as specified in our January No., will be cordially received from any and every quarter whatever.

St. Vincent, March, 1852.

D. O.

For "was certain speculations," page 47, No 2, read *were certain speculations*.