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BAPTIST MESSENGER.

AN

Evangelical Treasury and Chronicle of the Churches.

No. 3.

JUNE, 1854.

Price One Halfpenny.



SCRIPTURE ILLUSTRATIONS.—No. II.

THE SMITTEN ROCK.

THE accounts given by Oriental travellers of the valley of Rephidim unanimously testify to the presence of a rock remaining geographically just about the place that is indicated in the scriptural account, and having such unequivocal traces of a miraculous structure and character, that such writers as Pocock, Shaw, and Dr. Olin, of America, are all persuaded that it is the very rock that was smitten

by the rod of Moses. It is a red granite rock, fifteen feet long, ten feet wide, and twelve feet high; there are huge fissures or rents in it, and these fissures are not perpendicular, as we might expect if it had been an accidental rending, but horizontal. They are two or three inches in breadth, and a foot or eighteen inches in length, and of such a strange character, that it is impossible to explain their existence, except upon the supposition that the rock is the very one struck by the rod of Moses. The Bedouins and Arabs in the desert have a tradition respecting it confirmatory of the scriptural account; and although we would not attach much weight to tradition, yet, when connected with the biblical history, it may have some value. They call the rock "the stone of Moses;" and the last American traveller, Dr. Olin, thus describes it: "This stone made more impression upon me than any natural object claiming to attest a miracle ever did. Had any enlightened geologist, utterly ignorant of the miracle of Moses, passed up this ravine and seen the rock as it now is, he would have declared, though the position of the stone and the present condition of the country around should have opposed any such impression, that strong and long-continued fountains of water had flowed in gurgling currents from it and over it. He could not waver in his belief for a moment, so natural and so perfect are the indications. I examined it thoroughly, and if it be a forgery, I am satisfied for my own part that a greater than Michael Angelo designed and executed it. I cannot differ from Shaw's opinion, that neither art nor chance could by any means be concerned in the contrivance of these holes, which formed so many fountains. The more I gazed upon the irregular mouth-like chasms in the rocks, the more I felt my scepticism shaken, and at last I could not help asking myself whether it was not a very natural solution of the matter, that this was indeed the rock which Moses struck, that from it the waters gushed forth, and poured their streams down Wady Leja to Wady-esh-Sheik, along it to Rephidim, where Israel was encamped, perishing with thirst." In Finden's "Illustrations of the Bible," edited by Hartwell Horne, you will find engravings of the rock; and all seem with one consent to concur in the belief that it is the very granite rock that was smitten by the rod of Moses, and that these horizontal fissures, so peculiar in their character, give proof, by their rounded lips, that water must have gushed from them for many years.

TRIALS FOR THE TRUTH; HISTORIC SKETCHES OF BAPTIST NONCONFORMITY.

CHAPTER IV.—A CLOUD GATHERING.

THE trio of stern Puritans, who, a store, expressed their fears respecting few days before, had, in Mr. Bates's the spread of the Baptists, were, by a

kind of peculiar sympathy, frequently drawn together. At the close of service one lecture day, after Parson Cotton had preached a long and forcible sermon against the spread of heresy, they were attracted to each other, and walked away from the meeting-house together.

"Our godly minister was graciously helped of the Spirit to-day," said Endicott, commencing the conversation.

"Yes, he spake the truth with great boldness and power," replied Dudley.

"I could not help thinking," said Pynchon, "when he was pouring out his burning anathemas upon heretics with so much edifying earnestness and eloquence,—I could not help thinking of the description of the Son of man which is given us in the first chapter of the Revelation, and especially of that part which informeth us that out of his mouth goeth a sharp, two-edged sword; for verily the word of our parson to-day was quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword upon all errorists and schismatics."

"Did you notice the effect upon our brother of the mill?"

"No; he sits not within my view in the sanctuary; but I suppose he hung his head like a guilty criminal hearing his sentence pronounced."

"Far from it. His head was erect, and he continued looking with the greatest boldness —"

"Impudence, I should say," interrupted one of the others—

"Into the minister's face, till he closed the sermon. No one would have suspected, from his appearance, that anything said from the pulpit was in the least degree applicable to him."

"That's always the policy of heresy. Its companions are hypocrisy and effrontery."

"Let that be as it may," replied Dudley, "I have no doubt this heresy is spreading. Information has reached me that some whom we little imagine are becoming tainted with it. The obligation is becoming more and more imperative for us to arrest it by wholesome laws; and unless we erect a high and strong barrier, by stringent enact-

ments, it will overflow the country like the waters of a deluge."

"Tis even so. The arm of the civil power must be extended for the protection of the interests of the church. Unless this theological miasma be arrested, it will poison our whole community, and defeat the object of our settlement in this waste howling wilderness."

"You are correct. With immense labour, expense, and self-sacrifice, we have crossed, at the hazard of our lives, the wide waste of three thousand miles of water, to establish a colony in the midst of uncleared forests and untamed savages, that we and our children might escape not only the sword of persecution, but, what is worse, the contaminating influence of pestilent heresies. Self-preservation and obligation to our families require us to deal with these errorists. If Baptists, Familists, and other errorists be tolerated in the midst of us, and allowed to diffuse their pernicious doctrines, it will not be long before 'Iehabod' will be written upon the fairest portions of Zion, for her glory will have departed."

"You think, then," said Pynchon, "we must suppress it by law?"

"There is no other way," replied Dudley. "If we resort to the wholesome discipline of fines, whippings, prisons, and banishments, we may purify ourselves from this contagion; but otherwise it will spread as doth a canker. To connive at it will be like conniving at the weeds in one's garden. All they desire from the law is to be let alone; but to let them alone is to let them grow. Let a plague, a pestilence, a conflagration alone —"

"Our danger is the more imminent," interrupted Endicott, "from certain great names among us who greatly encourage them."

"True; it is one of the mysteries of Providence that so good, and learned, and able a man as Dunster should have been seduced into any of these errors. If he had not allowed himself to be blinded in this matter, he might have continued at the head of the college,

and made himself a bright and a burning light for years to come."

"Verily thou speakest wisely; but his denial of the sacred ordinance of infant baptism showed, as the apostle saith, that 'Satan had gotten the advantage of him.' The plague-spot was upon him, and it was unsafe to retain him in a position of so much influence. He might have infected the whole school."

"Strange that the first president of Harvard College should have been tainted with this heresy."

"And not only the first, but the second also; for you recollect that Chauncy has no faith in sprinkling, whether of the old or the young, but insists that dipping, or the immersion of the whole body in water, is essential to the ordinance. How absurd!"

"Absurd or not, as these are known to be learned men,—persons of note and standing among us,—they will have great influence in giving currency to these dangerous heresies, and beguiling unstable souls."

"They have done so already. Their preaching and their private conversation have already led some astray. As for Dunster, prudent counsels have no effect upon him. He might have retained his office as president of the college, if he had only promised to *remain silent* upon his favourite error. This he refused. He preferred to relinquish that honourable and useful position, rather than remain quiet upon that obnoxious and mischief-making dogma. If he could control matters, never again would an infant be allowed to receive the sacred seal of the covenant."

"If he had lived in the days of Moses," added Dudley, "I suppose he would have denied the rite of circumcision to children, though it would have secured his exclusion from the tribes of Israel. Chauncy has shown more wisdom. Though he insists that immersion only is valid baptism, and has administered it in that mode to both young and old, yet he was willing to comply with the conditions of his office, which require him to abstain

from disseminating his sentiments on that subject. He consented to close his lips on doctrine, that he might have the opportunity of opening them for bread."

"Not entirely so, I trust. He doubtless regards his present position as head of the college eminently favourable for usefulness. He is, therefore, willing to be silent on one point, which he knows the ministry and the government regard as erroneous, that he may have the privilege of teaching the youth of the church, branches in which we are all agreed."

"And there is Lady Moody, too, who is at Lynn. We must endeavour, if possible, to save her. She is an amiable, discreet, religious woman; highly thought of by those who know her. But her conscience is inveigled into an approbation of the spreading heresy to so great a degree, that, like Dunster, she rejects infant baptism entirely. She is doing much injury to the Lord's heritage there; but if she could be reclaimed, and all this bad leaven eradicated from her, she might become a useful mother in Israel."

Dudley, with a long sigh, expressed the fear that that was hopeless. Error and fanaticism were nearly inseparable in his view, and the latter always increased the strength of the former. To him reclamation appeared well-nigh hopeless. Prevention of its further spreading was, he thought, the true policy. "Let those who are already marked with the leprous spot," said he, "go; but let us labour to prevent the plague from spreading. We must make examples of some of them to deter others."

Their conversation continued in this strain until they reached Mr. Bates's store, which they all three entered.

CHAPTER V.—A STORM THREATENING.

"WELL," said Endicott, addressing Mr. Bates, "how does our brother of the mill feel, since he met with that signal rebuke of Divine Providence?"

"Rebuke?" replied Strongfaith, not perceiving the bearing of the question.

"I did not know that he had received any."

"Perhaps," said Dudley, who fully comprehended the drift of the inquiry, "brother Bates does not regard it as a rebuke."

"You are too deep for me," said Bates.

"As the water was for his drowning boy, who had fallen into the mill-stream," immediately rejoined Dudley. Bates now understood them fully.

"I apprehend," said he, "that he does not view that event in the same light that you do."

"I see not," replied Dudley, "in what other light he can regard it than as a solemn admonition of him for his dangerous error. He insists upon it there must be a burial in water to render baptism valid; and has not his boy been buried in water nigh unto death? Is it not an intimation that this tampering with sacred ordinances involves great peril?"

"Ay," said Pynchon, "even as the touching of the tottering ark of the covenant was a terrible offence in Uzzah, and brought down the judgment of Heaven upon his guilty head. We live under a milder administration, and hence our reproofs are the more tender."

Stephen now for the first time learned that the brother of the mill was Eaton, and that he was tainted with baptistical heresies. He listened, therefore, to the conversation with deep attention. He learned from it that from the first there had been some in the colony who rejected the popular doctrine of infant baptism, and some who denied the validity of sprinkling. But as they were members of the church, attended to all the usages of the Puritans, and were not forward to thrust their opinions upon others, they had not been disturbed. But now the subject was receiving greater attention than ever. The deep and wide-spread agitation which had been occasioned by the sentiments and conduct of Roger Williams, together with the severe treatment which he and others received, had been the means of directing the minds of men to the subject. They

read whatever books upon this important topic they could find; they searched the Scriptures; they conversed freely upon it, so that there were many occasions of debate between those who cherished opposite sentiments upon this exciting theme. The result was, that a number were convinced of the truthfulness of Baptist sentiments. They refused to bring their children to the church to have them christened; or if they did, it was with great reluctance. Others were desirous that the ordinance should be administered to young and old by immersion: they did not believe that any other mode was valid; whilst a third class maintained not only the necessity of immersion, but insisted further, that the only proper subjects of baptism were those who had repented of sin and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

This conversation opened to Stephen new topics of thought and inquiry, and he resolved to imitate the example of his employer, and make the question of Christian baptism a subject of special investigation.

From this time these two inquirers after truth had long and frequent conversations upon this topic. All the passages of Scripture referring to it were examined and re-examined, many times. The arguments of the opposite parties they discussed, and all the light which they could obtain they cheerfully received. Whatever books upon either side of the question they could find, they eagerly read. To their examination they added conscientious and earnest prayer.

CHAPTER VI.—CHURCH AND STATE.

DURING this process of investigation, a circumstance occurred which would have deterred some minds from prosecuting the subject.

A Mrs. Painter, being a member of the church, naturally felt solicitous that her infant should receive the ordinance of baptism. She suggested the subject to her husband; but Mr. Painter, being one of Bates's customers, had for some time been in the habit of conversing

with Strongfaith and Stephen upon the baptismal question, and had become fully convinced of the impropriety of administering the ordinance to infants. Being a conscientious man, he was unwilling that his practice should be in violation of his principles. His wife differed with him upon this subject. It was her desire that their infant child should be carried to the church, and according to the customs of the Puritans, there receive the ordinance. Painter would not consent. He strongly insisted upon it that infant baptism was not a divine ordinance, but an invention of men, and instead of being beneficial, or even harmless, was positively injurious. Frequent, and sometimes warm, were the domestic discussions between the two upon this subject. The wife was unwilling to disobey her husband, and the husband was equally unwilling to sanction by his own example what he believed was a religious error. Parson Cotton was kept informed of all the births that occurred in the town. And being a vigilant and faithful shepherd, he kept his eye upon all these tender lambs, to see that they were solemnly dedicated to God in baptism. He knew all the little ones in town who had received the seal of the covenant, and all who had not. The parents of these latter he did not fail to visit, and remind them of their duty to their offspring. Having noticed that Painter had delayed to bring his last child to the church for the ordinance, he made the family a pastoral call to ascertain the reason. He was not long in discovering that it was owing to the influence of the dreadful plague of heresy which was troubling the colony.

Painter frankly acknowledged that he had no confidence in the ordinance of infant baptism, and did not believe that it was sustained by any scriptural evidence. This led the good pastor to enter into an argument with him upon the subject. He went over the whole ground, dwelling particularly upon the Abrahamic covenant, and urged every conceivable motive to induce Painter to bring out his child to the ordinance.

He was unsuccessful in producing any change in his opinions, or of obtaining from him a promise that his child should be presented for the rite. Painter defended his own views with considerable adroitness and force. He insisted upon it that there was no command in the Scriptures enjoining it as a duty, and therefore he would not have his child baptized. The faithful pastor reminded him that if he persisted in his heresy, the consequences would be painful, and he had better pause, and not proceed further in a course which he would find was strewed with thorns.

"I will walk," replied Painter, "in the way which I believe is right, though I find it paved with coals of fire."

"Be not presumptuous, brother; remember you are arraying yourself against both the church and the civil power. To endure the keen edge of the sword of state, and the dreadful anathemas of Zion, you will find to be no easy service."

To this threat, which Painter knew was based upon truth, he firmly replied,—

"My trust is in God. I believe that his grace will be sufficient for me."

After a few words of sympathy and consolation to the mother, and an exhortation to her to remain firm in the truth, the parson patted the cheeks of the little infant sitting in its mother's lap, and took his departure.

A recollection of the sermon which he had preached a short time before, in which he had, with great cogency of reasoning and energy of manner, urged the importance of vigilance to detect the germs of heresy, and destroy them before they had time to grow, strengthened his determination to bring this case before the church at Boston, and have it settled, so that all others, who were in danger of being affected by the same error, might know what to expect, in case they caught the contagion.

At the next meeting of the church, the defection of brother Painter was presented. The matter was solemnly considered. Some were in favour of immediate exclusion; others urged for-

bearance, and the desirableness of making efforts to persuade him to abandon his foolish and dangerous error. These latter counsels prevailed, and the pastor and two of the elder brethren were appointed to labour with him, and endeavour to convince him of the truth, and keep him in the bosom of the church.

These church officials were faithful to their duty. They visited Painter, sometimes together, at other times alone, and had with him long conversations. But they made not the slightest impression on his mind. Neither could they persuade him to say that his child might be baptized, provided that would insure him against ecclesiastical censure.

"No, rather than consent to what I believe to be an unscriptural and injurious practice, I will suffer any censures the church can pass upon me. I have nothing to fear if I do what I think is right, but everything if I do what I believe is wrong."

Finding it impossible to convince him of his error, or even persuade him to consent to the sprinkling of his child, his case was brought before the church for final action, and he was formally excommunicated for heresy, and for a contempt of the ordinance of God.

This act not only excluded him from the privileges of the church—it also disfranchised him. For it was a law of Massachusetts at that time, that none but members of the church should be entitled to the rights and immunities of freemen. Consequently, Painter could no longer take part in the affairs of the colony, nor even vote for officers.

His case, however, was not allowed to rest here. This refusal of a poor man to have his child sprinkled was deemed a subject of too great magnitude to escape the vigilance "of the powers that be." Civil government was invoked to protect the interests of the church; and poor Painter was brought by a legal warrant before the court to answer for the great misdemeanour of refusing to perform a religious ceremony which his conscience and judgment both taught him was wrong. It

was nowise difficult to find sufficient evidence to convict him. After the facts were all known, the court, with formal dignity, interposed its authority, and ordered Painter to have his child baptized. He, however, was no more disposed to obey this order of court, and conform to Puritan usage, than his judges were to obey the "orders of council," which required conformity to the church of England. In his defence, he maintained that the sprinkling of infants was an unchristian ordinance, and consequently carried with it no obligation whatever. He was conscientiously opposed to it, and he would not violate his conscience to please any court or escape any penalty on earth. The august tribunal before whom he was brought, deemed this a matter of such great magnitude as to require the infliction of a healthful punishment, lest their leniency might encourage others, and thus increase the heresy; they therefore passed sentence that he should be publicly whipped.

At the appointed time, this theological criminal was taken to the public whipping-post, there bound, and in the presence of a multitude, *cruelly whipped, because he refused to have his infant sprinkled!*

He endured the brutal infliction with great fortitude, and at the close, though faint and trembling from the effects, he thanked God for the grace and strength by which he had been sustained under the painful ordeal.

CHAPTER VII.—EFFECTS OF PERSECUTION.

THE public whipping of Mr. Painter created no small stir in the colony. There were those who fully approved the deed, and who considered it a truly politic, as well as just procedure. Others, though they regarded Painter as in great error, and justified his exclusion from the church, yet judged his punishment at the whipping-post to be both cruel and unwise; a third class, who differed from "the standing order" on various points, considered the measure as a piece of tyrannical persecution, and had their sympathies deeply

enlisted in behalf of the sufferer; whilst a fourth class, embracing those who were inclined to Baptist sentiments, instead of having their heretical tendencies corrected by this exhibition of ecclesiastical cruelty, were more firmly resolved than ever to adhere to what they believed was right. Intelligence of this punishment was soon circulated throughout the colonies, showing to all what they must expect, in case they differed in opinion or practice from the Congregational standard.

The effect of this upon Stephen and his employer was, to make them more open and bold in the expression of any opinions they cherished which were not in harmony with the standing order. Especially were they more free to converse upon the subject of baptism. Many and long were the arguments which they had with different individuals upon this exciting theme—some of whom strenuously opposed them, while others were greatly moved by their arguments. Neither Mr. Bates nor Stephen was at this time fully converted to the sentiments of the Baptists. They were merely inquirers upon the subject, though it must be confessed that the farther they examined it, the more did they lean to the side of the heresy. The more they became acquainted with the arguments of the Baptists, and with their method of interpreting Scripture, the deeper became the impression upon their minds that this persecuted people were on the side of truth.

There was one point, however, on which Mr. Bates could not obtain satisfactory information. Although he was a man of strong mind, a clear thinker and sound reasoner, yet he had not been favoured with a liberal education, and was ignorant of the ancient languages. It seemed to him that a knowledge of the meaning of the original Greek word, which, in the English version of the Bible was rendered "baptize," was of great importance.

"If I only knew," said he to Stephen, in one of the frequent conversations he was accustomed to have with his clerk, "how the Greeks, in the days of the Saviour, understood the word which is

translated 'baptize,' it would afford me not only relief, but great assistance."

"You know what the Baptists themselves say upon the subject?"

"Yes; but many of them are no more learned than myself, and what they assert they have received second-handed, and therefore cannot vouch for its accuracy. What I want is, for some one well acquainted with the ancient languages, to tell me the meaning of the original word 'baptize.'"

"Why not ask the president of Harvard College?" said Stephen.

"True; I did not think of that. President Chauncy is admitted by all to be a very learned man, and is as competent to give information upon this subject, as any man in the new, or the old world."

The next day a small boat, with two men, was seen crossing Charles River, from Boston to Cambridge. At that time the appearance of the river and the country was widely different from that which now greets the eye. Instead of the numerous bridges which now span the stream for the accommodation of cars, carriages, and foot passengers, it was all open. Not a bridge had been erected, not a pile for the purpose driven. Instead of large cities and towns presenting themselves in every direction, the banks of the river, and the islands of the harbour, with the shores of the bay, were covered with green. Dense forests, beautifully rolling hills, or fertile plains, variegated with a few small villages, with here and there a cluster of Indian wigwams, completed the picture. Now and then an Indian might be seen paddling his light bark canoe across the water, or pausing in the middle of the stream, engaged in fishing.

When the boat reached the shore of Cambridge, at a point not far from the present termination of Harvard Street, one of the men left it, and walked towards the college; the other, who was the owner of the craft, remained to prevent it from being stolen by the Indians. The first, who was no other than Mr. Bates on his way to President Chauncy, was soon concealed by the thick underbrush which covered the land.

THE LIGHT IS EVER SILENT.

THE Light is ever silent;
 It calls up voices over sea and earth,
 And fills the glowing air with harmonies,—
 The lark's gay chant, the note of forest-dove,
 The lamb's quick bleat, and the bee's earnest hum,
 The sea-bird's winged wail upon the wave.
 It wakes the voice of childhood soft and clear;
 The city's noisy rush, the village-stir,
 And the world's mighty murmur that had sunk,
 For a short hour, to sleep upon the down
 That darkness spreads for wearied limbs and eyes.
 But still it sounds not, speaks not, whispers not!
 Not one faint throb of its vast pulse is heard
 By creature-ear. How silent is the Light!
 Even when of old it waken'd Memnon's lyre,
 It breathed no music of its own; and still,
 When at sweet sunrise, on its golden wings,
 It brings the melodies of dawn to man,
 It scatters them in silence o'er the earth.

The Light is ever silent;
 It sparkles on morn's million gems of dew;
 It flings itself into the shower of noon;
 It weaves its gold into the cloud of sunset,—
 Yet not a sound is heard; it dashes full
 On yon broad rock, yet not an echo answers;
 It lights in myriad drops upon the flower,
 Yet not a blossom stirs; it does not move
 The slightest film of floating gossamer,
 Which the faint touch of insect's wing would shiver.

The Light is ever silent;
 Most silent of all heavenly silences;
 Not even the darkness stiller; nor so still;
 Too swift for sound or speech it rushes on
 Light through the yielding skies, a massive flood
 Of multitudinous beams: an endless sea,
 That flows but ebbs not, breaking on the shore
 Of this dark earth, with never-ceasing wave.
 Yet, in its swiftest flow or fullest spring-tide,
 Giving less sound than does one falling blossom,
 Which the May-breeze lays lightly on the sward.

Such let my life be here;
 Not marked by noise but by success alone;
 Not known by bustle but by useful deeds.
 Quiet and gentle, clear and fair as light;
 Yet full of its all penetrating power,
 Its silent but resistless influence;
 Wasting no needless sound, yet ever working,
 Hour after hour upon a needy world!

THE GOLDEN PURCHASE.

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich."—
 Rev. iii. 18.

AMONGST material substances, the one most prized is gold. Not only is it very beautiful, but it is the means of procuring each rare commodity. Hence, we call him a rich man who abounds in it, and him a poor man who has got none of it. And in the spiritual domain, the equivalent of gold is goodness. By holy beings, and by God himself, the thing most prized is not money, but moral worth; not gold, but goodness. And when God first ushered on existence his new creature, Man, he gave him a portion of heaven's capital to begin with: he gave him holy tastes and dispositions, a pure and pious mind. But man soon lost it. He suffered himself to be defrauded of his original righteousness; and on that dismal day, he who rose the heir of immortality, lay down a bankrupt and a pauper. All was lost; and though he tried to replace it by a glittering counterfeit, the substitute had not one atom of what is essential to genuine goodness. It entirely lacked THE LOVE OF GOD; and no sooner had Jehovah applied the touchstone, than in grief and displeasure he exclaimed, "How is the gold become dim!—how is the most fine gold changed!" And yet that gold was essential—nothing could compensate for it. No merit, then no reward; no righteousness, no heaven. And man had lost the only thing which entitled him to the favour of God—the only thing which guaranteed a glorious immortality. It was then that his case was undertaken by a Kinsman-Redeemer. To a holy humanity he superadded the wisdom and strength of Deity; and divinely authorized, he took the field—the surety and representative of ruined

man. In his heart he hid the holy law, and in his sublime fulfilment of it, he magnified that law and made it honourable. And betwixt the precious blood he shed as an expiation for sin, and the spotless obedience which he offered on behalf of his people, he wrought out a redundant and everlasting righteousness. It was tested, and was found to be without one particle of alloy. It was put into the balance, but the sin has never yet been found which could outweigh the merits of Immanuel. The righteousness of Christ, as the sinner's representative, is the most golden thing in all the Gospel; and it is because of its conveying and revealing that righteousness, that the Gospel is the power of God, and the wisdom of God unto salvation.* Be counselled to buy this fine gold, and you will be rich.† Accept, poor sinner, this righteousness of the Saviour, and you will be justified freely by a gracious God, through the redemption that is in Christ.‡ God will be well pleased with you because you are well pleased with his beloved Son; and will count you righteous for the sake of that righteousness which the Saviour wrought out, and which the Gospel reveals, and which, thankfully receiving, you present to a righteous God as your plea for pardon and your passport to the kingdom of heaven.

In other days, when men were in want of money, they sometimes tried to manufacture gold. The alchemist gleaned a portion of every possible substance from ocean, earth, and air, and put them all into his crucible,

* Rom. i. 16, 17. † Rev. iii. 18.

‡ Rom. iii. 20—26.

and then subjected the medley to the most tedious and expensive processes. And after days or months of watching, the poor man was rewarded by seeing a few grains of shining metal, and in the excitement of near discovery, the sweat stood upon his brow, and he urged the fire afresh, and muttered, with trembling diligence, the spell which was to evoke the mystery. And thus, day by day, and year by year, with hungry face and blinking eyes, he gazed into his fining-pot, and stirred the molten rubbish, till one morning the neighbours came and found the fire extinct, and the ashes blown about, and the old alchemist stiff and dead on the laboratory floor; and when they looked into the broken crucible, they saw that after all his pains, the base metals remained as base as ever.

But though men no longer endeavour to manufacture gold, they still try to manufacture goodness. The merit which is to open heaven, the moral excellence which is to render God propitious, the fine gold of righteousness, they fancy that they can themselves elaborate. As he passed along, the apostle Paul sometimes saw these moral alchemists at work; and as he observed them so earnest for salvation—as he saw them casting into the crucible prayers, and alms, and tears, and fastings, and self-tortures, he was moved with pity. He told them that depraved humanity was material too base to yield the precious thing they wanted. He told them that they were spending their strength for nought; and that the merit which they were so eager to

create exists already. He told them that if they were only to avail themselves of it, they might obtain, without restriction, the righteousness of a Divine Redeemer. "I pray that you may be saved; I sympathize with your anxiety; I love your earnest zeal, whilst I deplore your deadly error. But ignorant of the righteousness which God has already provided, and going about to establish a righteousness of your own, you are missing the great magazine of merit—the great repository of righteousness—Jesus Christ. You need not scale the heavens to bring righteousness down; you need not dive into the deep in order to fetch it up; you need not watch, and toil, and do penance, in order to create it—for it exists already there. God has made his own dear Son the sinner's righteousness, and in the gospel it is thus declared: "The gift is nigh thee. It is at thy door; it is in thy hand. Receive it, and be righteous; receive it, and rejoice."* And so, dear reader, if you are anxious for peace with God, accept God's own gift—the peace-procuring righteousness. Present, as your only plea with a holy God, the atonement of his Son; despair of bringing merit out of vileness, or sanctity out of sin. With Luther, learn to know Christ crucified; learn to sing a new song. Renouncing your own work, cry to Him, Lord, thou art my righteousness, and I am thy sin. Thou hast taken on thee what was mine, and given to me what was thine. What thou wert not, thou becamest, that I might become what I was not.

* Rom. x. 1—12; 1 Cor. i. 30; 2 Cor. v. 21.

BAPTIST ANNIVERSARIES.

The Devotional Meeting, preceding the annual gatherings of our denominational societies, was held in the Library of the Mission House, April 20th, when

prayer was offered by Messrs. Smith, of Cheltenham; and Overbury, of Devonport; and an address delivered by Mr. Watson, of Edinburgh. In the evening of the same day, at the Poultry Chapel, after prayer by Mr. Hinton, the sermon to young men was preached by Mr. New, of Birmingham, from "Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the Lord."

THE BAPTIST HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

THE annual meeting of this Society was held at Finsbury Chapel, on Monday evening, April 24th, W. Middlemore, Esq., in the chair. The Rev. T. Winter, of Bristol, opened the proceedings with prayer. After an address by the Chairman, the Rev. S. J. Davis read the Report. The several resolutions were spoken to by the Revs. W. Aitchison, of Newport; B. Evans, of Swansea; MacLaren, of Southampton; J. H. Hinton, of Devonshire Square, London; J. Price, of Montacute; and B. Evans, of Scarborough. For their chief interest, the proceedings were indebted to Mr. Horace Mann's Report on the Census of Religious Worship.

The Rev. Alexander MacLaren was led to take a somewhat gloomy view of the state of things disclosed. "If," said he, "the schedules had been ruled with three columns, church-goers, chapel-goers, and beershop-goers, the last of these columns would have had a larger number than either of the other two, and all but as many as both of them put together."

The Rev. J. H. Hinton took a more encouraging view of these statistics. With characteristic fearlessness, he accepts even the varieties of religious belief as a glorious proof of religious liberty, and as a better pledge of eventual unity than any the State has been able to afford. Had religious despotism continued to exist, we should have had just the number of places of worship belonging to the National Church, and no others; but, under the working of religious liberty, we have a very different state of things. It might have been thought, that, under the more complete religious liberty which exists in the

United States, there would have been a greater number of sects than in England; but such is not the fact. The American Almanack for 1853 enumerates twenty communities; but the list is twice as long in the Census Returns of England and Wales. "I say," continued Mr. Hinton, "this is noble, it is creditable to England. Indeed I do. It speaks loudly and gloriously for the victory of the human mind over the trammels of despotism. (Cheers.) I would rather find a man belonging to any *ism*, than banded in swaddling clothes, or girded with iron fetters." (Cheers.) He would not, he said, be prevented from using such language by the existence of those five millions who did not go to church or chapel. But for the establishment of religious liberty, the country would have been in a very different state. Out of the 34,000 places of worship, only 14,000 belong to the Established Church. Where, it is asked, would have been the religion of England but for the Established Church? where, he asked, would it have been, but for Non-conformity? Within the last few years, some 3000 and odd places had been built in connexion with the Establishment, largely as the result of the stimulus imparted by Dissenters. Without these, there would be but 10,000 or 11,000; so that there are three times as many places now, as there would have been, but for the expansive power of a living, individual Christianity.

Mr. Hinton added some valuable remarks as a check to the despondency which a hasty view of the number of absentees is apt to engender. "Multitudes," he said, "are born every year in England and Wales, and they are not born Christians. The work, therefore, of the Christian Church is never done; but, as a new generation comes into the world, the entire process has to be effected over and over again. Were every man alive converted to-day, there would be another race of sinners born to-morrow."

BAPTIST IRISH SOCIETY.

THE annual public meeting of this society was held in Finsbury Chapel, on

Tuesday evening, April 25. Richard Foster, Esq., of Cambridge, in the chair. Rev. E. Probert, of Bristol, commenced the proceedings with prayer. A brief report of the society's proceedings during the last year was read by the Rev. W. Groser. Total receipts for the year, £2569 11s. 4d. Addresses were delivered by Revs. J. Bigwood, Hugh Stowell Brown, of Liverpool; Milligan, of Dublin; and John Aldis, of Maze Pond, London.

The prominence given by Baptists to the *personality* of the Christian character and profession, becomes a valuable force arrayed on the side of Scriptural Evangelism against human traditions, sacerdotal pretensions, and ecclesiastical superstitions. It is the direct antidote and antagonist to that *official* virtue and authority upon which the Church of Rome has based the grand apostasy, and from which neither the Church of England, nor even the Church of Luther, to name no other man-made Churches, has purged, or will purge, itself free. On this principle, perhaps, we may account for the dawn of a new Reformation in Germany being apparently identified with the diffusion of Baptist sentiments in so many of its States, and for the virulence with which those persons who teach and those who adopt them are persecuted and oppressed by Governments inspired by ecclesiastical jealousies and alarms. In like manner, it may be expected, that, in proportion as the same views of the strictly personal nature of religion come into conflict with the rank and rampant Popery of Ireland, and with the scarcely less Popish though quieter sacerdotalism still infesting the rural parishes of England, the labours of the Baptist Irish and Home Missionary Societies will tend to precipitate the final battle one day to be fought between the phalanx of Truth and Error.

BAPTIST UNION.

THE forty-second annual session of the Baptist Union was held at the Mission House on Friday, April 21st—Dr. Hoby in the chair, whose introductory address elicited a vote of thanks, accompanied

with a request for its publication. After prayer by the Rev. D. Rees, of Braintree, the report was read by the Rev. J. H. Hinton, which stated, that during the past year 32 churches had been added to the Union. The aspect it presented of the state of the churches was by no means cheering. A very interesting statement was also given of the proceedings of Dr. Steane and Mr. Hinton, who attended, as a deputation from the Union, the meeting of the Kirchentag, or Assembly of the Evangelical churches of Germany, held in September last, at Berlin. It was further stated, that measures of a persecuting character are still pursued towards the Baptists throughout Continental Europe.

The adoption of the report was proposed by Rev. J. Bigwood, and seconded by Rev. J. Wigner, of Lynn, Norfolk. Other resolutions were proposed, seconded, and spoken to by the Revs. E. Probert, of Bristol; Isaac New, and W. Landels, of Birmingham; J. H. Hinton, F. Wills, W. Groser, D. Steane, and Owen Clarke, of London; Revs. J. P. Mursell, of Leicester; Wallace, of Tottenham; Dr. Ackworth, of Bradford; W. Robinson, of Cambridge; A. Burnett, of Aberdeen; Brown, Reading; B. Evans, Scarborough; Milligan, of Dublin; Mr. Morris, and by Mr. Underhill.

THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

THE sixty-second annual meeting of the Baptist Missionary Society was held at Exeter Hall on Thursday, April 27. The chair was taken at 11 o'clock by S. M. Peto, Esq., M.P., one of the treasurers of the Society. After a speech from the Chairman, breathing a devout and catholic spirit, the report was read by the Rev. F. Trestrail, and the balance-sheet by Mr. G. B. Underhill, from which it appeared that the income of the Society was £24,759 12s. 8d., and the expenditure £21,738 4s. 10d.; the payment of an outstanding debt of £1813 0s. 5d. reduced the balance in favour of the Society to £1208 7s. 6d. Of the West India Cholera Fund there is £348 6s. 7d. in hand. The addresses were delivered by Revs. S. Manning, of Frome; J. Taylor, of Birmingham,

T. Hands, from Jamaica; Hon. Baptist W. Noel, and James Sheridan Knowles, Esq. Of the several speeches, all of which were most excellent, we have not room to comment further than to remark that the Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel presented a luminous view of the state and prospects of Missions in British India, and the Rev. T. Hands gave an interesting and cheering account of the social and religious condition of the negro and coloured population of Jamaica. Financially considered, the past year seems to have been one of the most prosperous in the history of the Society. Notwithstanding the apprehensions caused by the enhanced price of provisions, the monthly receipts greeted the committee with a progressive increase, which has resulted in a total of nearly £25,000, being an increase upon the year 1853 of £6350. Deducting the splendid donation of £1813 to liquidate the debt, and special donations for the augmentation of the Mission in India, amounting to £2551, there yet remains a substantial increase of £1400. It would therefore appear, that the committee will have no difficulty, so far as the money is concerned, in carrying into effect their scheme of augmentation, which they proposed to spread over a series of years. The only difficulty of which they complain is, the want of men. Not, we believe, that offers of service have been wanting; but the practical hinderance lies in obtaining the proper men. Unfortunately, where moral fitness is undoubted, the want of physical adaptation often presents insuperable obstacles, sometimes on the husband's, sometimes on the wife's side; and it is essential to the success of a scheme in which consolidation is one of the ends of augmentation, that some at least of the new agents should be men of tried character and pastoral experience.

In the meantime, the committee receive good tidings from every section of the Missionary field. The three great processes of Translation, Education, and Evangelization, are prospering both in the East and in the West. Not merely does the pecu-

liarity of Baptist sentiments place no barrier to the religious instruction of the young, but, in this work, which Carey and his companions were the first to engage in, their successors are preparing to engage more systematically and more extensively. Normal schools for the two sexes are about to be established at Serampore and Intally severally; and the committee have also received with great pleasure a proposal from the President and Committee of Calabar Theological Institution, Jamaica, to found a Normal-school on a broad and unsectarian basis in its grounds. For the promotion of these objects, a special fund is to be set apart, distinct from the Missionary operations of the Society. Thus an opportunity will be afforded to persons who might object to contribute for the support of sectarian teaching, of indulging their desire for the spread of education on the catholic basis of the Holy Scriptures. In this way, the Society of Friends have become fellow-labourers with the Baptist Missionaries in Trinidad, and will doubtless do the same at Calabar; while the Society for the Promotion of Female Education in the East have liberally offered to support a lady every way qualified to take the superintendence of the girls' boarding-school in contemplation at Intally.

Everything conspires to show, that in India, the fields are already white unto the harvest. Native churches under native pastors are declaring their independence. The thirst for European instruction increases on every hand. Young men regard the idolatries of their parents with undisguised derision; and nothing but adequate religious instruction, accompanied with the Divine blessing, is needed to convert them from idolaters into Christians, instead of sinking, through the purely secular system of the Government schools, from the depths of superstition into the more gloomy and hopeless abyss of infidelity. In Agra, it is commonly exclaimed, that the Sahibs are determined to conquer the whole city for Christ; and while, in the words of the report, "the Word of the Lord has

free course, and is glorified in the Ephesus of Northern India," the platforms of temples have become the pulpits of Evangelists, and the very car of Juggernaut a stall for the distribution of the Scriptures.

SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION.

THE annual meeting of the Sunday School Union was held on Thursday, May 4. J. Cheetham, Esq., in the chair.

After prayer by the Rev. H. Addiscott, and a hymn sung, Mr. Watson read the report, which contained matter of great interest and importance. The speakers on the occasion were Mr. Alderman and Sheriff Wire, Mr. G. Corderoy, of Lambeth; Revs. N. Hayercroft, of Bristol; Isaac Vaughan, of the New Tabernacle; the Rev. John Corbin, of the Old Tabernacle, and the Rev. Dr. Hewlett.

MONTHLY SUMMARY OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

THE GUN and the GOSPEL have divided public attention during the past month.

The results of the former have hitherto been confined to the destruction of the outworks of Odessa and Sebastopol in the Black Sea, the allied fleets taking several merchant-ships as prizes, and of one of the Russian forts in the Baltic, about 25 miles from Cronstadt. In this last affair Sir C. Napier, it is said, has taken 1500 of the Russians prisoners. There seems to be a disposition on the part of Sweden to join the Western powers; if so, it is likely that she may recover some of the territorial possessions of which Russia has deprived her, and be a strong bulwark against the ambitious aggressions of the Russian Czar. The "Tiger," a British steam-ship, went on shore near Odessa, and was forced to surrender. Her captain lost one leg, a midshipman both; five men were wounded. After taking 250 prisoners, the Russians set fire to the vessel.

The missionary and other philanthropic meetings have in general been well at-

tended, and possessed an interest equal to those of former years.

The British Parliament has been making some advance in the right direction. On Tuesday, 23rd June, Sir W. Clay's motion for the total Abolition of Church-Rates was carried by a majority of two to one, although strenuously opposed by Lord John Russell, who displayed on the occasion a more than ordinary amount of High Church partisanship. When will Dissenters cease to regard his lordship as a right-hearted friend to ecclesiastical reform? Lord John's references to the opposition of Dissenters to Church-Rates were most bitter. The Thunderer of "The Times," however, has pronounced against Lord John's churchmanship, and in favour of the total abolition of the Church-Rate impost. Its doom is sealed.

The Preston mechanics have yielded to the force of circumstances, and in a very good spirit have, after a strike of more than eight months' duration, returned to their occupation.

DENOMINATIONAL INTELLIGENCE.

OPENING OF NEW CHAPELS, ETC.

LONDON, CAMBERWELL, SOUTHAMPTON STREET.—This chapel, after having been closed four years, has been purchased by the Rev. B. Lewis, late of Trinity Street, Southwark, and Friends, and was reopened on Wednesday, April 5. Sermons were preached on the occasion by the Rev. Dr. Steane, of Camberwell; and the Rev. W. Katters, of Hackney, the Rev. W. Howieson, of Walworth, J. Burnet, of Camberwell, and C. Woollacott, of Little Wild Street, assisted in the devotional exercises.

LONDON, BRIXTON HILL.—Salem Chapel was reopened on March 30, after being closed for the erection of galleries; on which occasion the Rev. W. Brock preached, and about £300, including promises previously made, was collected.

LANDBEACH, CAMBRIDGE.—The foundation-stone of a new Baptist chapel was laid by R. Foster, Esq., of Cambridge; on which occasion an eloquent address was delivered by the Rev. W. Robinson, of Cambridge; and a public meeting was held in the evening, when addresses were delivered by the Rev. W. Robinson, M. W. Flanders, of Cottenham, C. R. Player, of Great Shelford, R. R. Blinkhorn, of Willingham, and J. C. Wooster, the minister of the congregation.

MINISTERIAL CHANGES.

HADDENHAM, ISLE OF ELY.—The Rev. J. Spooner, from Attleborough, Warwickshire.

SUTTON, YORKSHIRE.—The Rev. J. Walcot, from Bramley.

LONDON, PARK-STREET, SOUTHWARK.—

The Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, from Water-beach, near Cambridge.
TARPORLEY.—Rev. H. Smith, from Coalville, Leicestershire.

RESIGNATIONS.

MONMOUTH.—The Rev. H. Clark, A. M., resigns his connexion with the Baptist Church, at the end of the present month.
LONDON, ISLINGTON-GREEN.—Through ill-health, the Rev. G. B. Thomas has felt himself compelled to relinquish his pastoral charge.

PRESENTATION SERVICES.

LONDON, LITTLE ALIE STREET, GOODMAN'S FIELDS.—The centenary of the settlement of the first pastor.—After the members of the church and congregation had partaken of tea refreshments, a public meeting was held: the Pastor, Mr. P. Dickerson, presided, and called upon Mr. Milner, of Shadwell, to implore the Divine blessing.—Mr. E. Deane, the senior deacon, read a very interesting narrative of the dealings of God with the Church during the past 100 years.—Mr. Belgrave, another deacon, addressed the meeting with much point and fluency, and presented to Mr. Dickerson a purse, with valuable contents, as a practical expression of the affectionate regards of the church and congregation.—This was acknowledged in a very feeling and appropriate manner by their esteemed Pastor.
LONDON, ISLINGTON-GREEN.—Rev. G. B. Thomas, on his resignation through ill-health, received, with a letter of sympathy and regrets, a very handsome present.
JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES, ESQ.—This once celebrated dramatist, now a preacher of Christ's holy Gospel, in connexion with the Baptist denomination, was presented, on May 12th, by the students of Stepney College, with "Bagster's large, comprehensive Bible," richly bound, and with silver plate, at the conclusion of his lectures on Elocution.

BAPTISMS.

AMERSHAM, Upper Meeting, April 9.—One by Mr. Sexton, of Tring.
BRANCHCLIFF, HEBDEN-BRIDGE, YORKSHIRE, April 1.—Fourteen by Mr. Lockwood.
BROSELEY, Old Baptist Chapel, March 26.—Two—both teachers in the Sabbath school—by Mr. Howe, of Shrewsbury.
CHIPPING SODBURY, April 2.—Three by the Rev. — Rolleston.
EBW VALE (English), April 2.—Two by Mr. Hill.
ENFORD April 16.—Three by Mr. Mower.
EYNSFORD, KENT, April 30.—One by Mr. Whittemore.
GRANTHAM, April 9.—Three in the Baptist Chapel, Bottesford, by Mr. Bishop.

HANLEY, STAFFORDSHIRE, April 14.—Four by Mr. Reade—after a sermon by the pastor, Mr. L. J. Abington—two of whom were from the Sunday school.

IPSWICH, TURRET-GREEN, April 2.—Two by Mr. Lord.

LONDON, DEVONSHIRE-SQUARE, March 30.—Four, after an address from "Alive unto God," by Mr. Hinton.

LONDON, DALSTON, March 26.—Three—two females and a converted Polish Jew, who addressed his brethren after the flesh, and among whom he had been engaged as a missionary—by Mr. Miall. This was the first time the solemn ordinance was administered in this new and commodious chapel. Several Jews were present.
LONDON, MOUNT ZION, HILL-STREET, DORSET-SQUARE, March 26.—Four by Mr. Foreman.

LONDON, PIMLICO, REHOOTH, March 20.—Six by Mr. Felton, of Deptford.

LONDON, KEPPEL-STREET, March 30.—Three by Mr. E. Mote.

LUTON, BEDFORDSHIRE, March 26.—Seven by Mr. Cook.

LOUGHWOOD, DEVONSHIRE, March 5.—One, and on April 2, one, by Mr. Shembridge.

MANORBEAR, PEMBROKESHIRE, March 26.—Nine by Mr. B. S. Evans.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE, New Court, May 4.—Five by Mr. Davies.

SAUNDERSFOOT, PEMBROKESHIRE, April 2.—Two by Mr. B. Lewis.

SHEFFIELD, EYRE-STREET, April 16.—Six—four from the Sunday school—by Mr. H. Ashberry.

SOHAM, CAMBRIDGESHIRE, March 26.—One by Mr. Smith.

TORRE TORQUAY, DEVONSHIRE, April 30.—Two, after a sermon on the "One Baptism," by Mr. Carto.

TROWBRIDGE, WILTS, Bethesda Chapel, April 2.—Nine by Mr. Webster, four of whom received their first impressions in connexion with Sabbath-school instruction.

WARWICK, March 26.—Two by Mr. Nash.

WELLINGTON, SALOP, March 28.—One by Mr. Clark.

DEATHS.

WILES, Miss ELIZABETH, April 30, at St. Albans, aged 36.

PEWTRESS, Mr. BENJ., of Gracechurch-street, and at Iping, Middlesex, aged 65.

THOMAS, WILLIAM, second son of Rev. T. Thomas, President of the Baptist College at Pontypool, on May 2, aged 20.

A youth of great promise and genuine piety.

JOHNSTON, Miss ANNIE, daughter of the Rev. R. Johnston, Baptist Minister, Irvine, Ayrshire, on May 20, aged 15.

MONTGOMERY, JAS., Esq., the Poet, Sheffield, on April 30, aged 84.

LONDON: PUBLISHED BY BENJ. L. GREEN, PATERNOSTER ROW.

To whom all Communications, under Cover to the Editors, are to be addressed.