

KIRWAN'S LETTER

TO PR. CÔTE

ON

BAPTISM,

WITH

DR. CÔTE'S REPLY.

New-York:

LEWIS COLBY,

122 NASSAU-STREET.

....

1849.

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KIRWAN'S LETTER

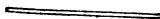
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INTRODUCTION.

To render intelligible the correspondence which it is the design of this pamphlet to give to the public, it becomes necessary to refer to the circumstances by which it was occasioned. The Grande Ligne Mission in Canada East, of which Madame Feller, a benevolent Swiss lady, was the principal and distinguished founder, is well known to the Christian people of the United States. Its aim is to propagate the gospel among the French Canadians, and to lead that ignorant and superstitious people from the darkness of Romanism to the light and blessings of a better faith. By the blessing of God it has been singularly successful, and has received the cordial support of American Christians of several denominations. The mission, however, has always been mainly a Baptist mission, and was generally understood so to be. It has always been an independent mission, managing its own affairs, and holding no ecclesiastical connexions which limited its freedom. It has received the support of different denominations, not at all on the score of ecclesiastical affinities, either in one direction or another, but solely as a work of evangelization. In

process of time, however, its independent character became the occasion of a withdrawal of support by the Foreign Evangelical Society, and, as a very necessary consequence, of a more intimate sympathy between the mission and the Baptists of Canada and the United States. It would too largely extend this introduction, and is, indeed, foreign to the design of this pamphlet, to dwell on the circumstances of this change in the relations of the mission ; and it need therefore only be said, that it is understood to have occurred without any diminution of Christian confidence in any quarter. This change occurred in the year 1845. Many Pædobaptist supporters of the mission, however, continued their generous benefactions, and are among its cordial friends to this day.

Madame Feller, accompanied by the Rev. C. H. O. Côte, M. D., was on a visit to the friends of the mission in the United States, last autumn, and unexpectedly they found themselves in Rochester at the time of the meeting of the New-York Baptist State Convention in that city. There was likewise held in connexion with the meetings of that body a special meeting in behalf of the American Baptist Publication Society. This latter society had rendered special aid to the Grande Ligne Mission by grants of books and tracts for distribution, and Dr. Côte very naturally felt a grateful interest in its objects. He was invited, as a Baptist minister, to address this Baptist Society, and did so in a man-

ner very acceptable to those present. He was, however, in no sense a representative of the mission at the time;—he spoke as any other Baptist minister would speak on such an occasion:

His remarks, as reported in the *New-York Recorder*, gave great offence to the then editor of the *New-York Observer*, and became the occasion of an ungracious attack by him on both Dr. Côte and the mission. The *Observer* was likewise offended by Dr. Côte's answer to an inquiry addressed to him subsequently in the Convention, as to the order of the mission church in the matter of communion,—Dr. Côte's answer being, as reported, that "it was not strict in its communion, but a change was evidently going on in the minds of its members." The enormity of this offence in the eye of the *Observer*, was aggravated by the testimony of the Rev. Mr. Cleghorn, who said that the mission church was "anxiously inquiring after truth in reference to the communion question, and he had no doubt would soon conform to the uniform practice of the denomination." These expressions of opinion, the very idea that "anxious inquiries after truth" were likely to tend in such a direction, threw the *Observer* into great discomposure, and it so lost its propriety as to taunt the mission with uncourteous treatment of those from whom its missionaries had received their "bread!" The injustice of the taunt was fully exposed in the *New-York Recorder*. It was, however, the remarks of Dr. Côte at the Pub-

lication Society meeting which occasioned the following correspondence, and to those remarks the attention of the reader is called.

The *New-York Recorder's* report of Dr. Côté's remarks, as quoted by the *Observer*, was as follows :

"He (Dr. C.) was educated in the rites and superstitions of the Romish faith—the doctrines which rested on the traditions of men, and not on the word of God. The Bible converted him; after his conversion to the truth he cast away tradition, and all the institutions which are founded upon it. He related a circumstance which took place in his own history, to illustrate the truth that many Protestant churches retain some of the traditions of Rome. In an interview between himself, a Congregational minister, and a Romish priest, the latter charged the Congregationalist with retaining some of the peculiar usages of Rome. 'Your infant sprinkling,' said he, 'is one of our traditions; it is not in the Bible; it belongs to us. How can you talk to us about our traditions?' He then referred to the argument of Bossuet, that if Protestants retain one of the Romish traditions, they are no better than if they adopted the whole. The Baptists were the only people who can adopt the motto, 'The Bible, and nothing but the Bible.'"

When the *Observer* containing this passage met the eye of Dr. Côté, he saw at once that his remarks had been misapprehended by the reporter of the *Recorder*, and he therefore very properly availed

himself of the *Recorder's* columns to correct the report, and set himself right before its readers. Having done this, he proceeded to defend himself against the aspersions of the *Observer*, by citing in his support the testimony of the *Observer's* friend KIRWAN, whose letters had appeared with much applause in the columns of that paper. The *Observer*, though it has well known, since last November, that its attack on Dr. Côte and the Grande Ligne Mission, was based on an erroneous report of his remarks, has never given the slightest intimation to that effect to its readers!—a fact as disingenuous and discreditable as any that occurs to the writer in the annals of religious newspaper controversy. The letter of Dr. Côte to the *Recorder*, which was published in that paper of November 22, is here subjoined. It will amply repay a perusal, which is indeed indispensable to a right understanding of the correspondence of Kirwan and Dr. Côte.

To the Editor of the New-York Recorder :

In your paper of the 25th of October, you have a report of the proceedings of the New-York Missionary Convention, held lately at Rochester, in which your correspondent has given you an outline of remarks made by me in behalf of the claims of the American Baptist Publication Society. In examining what I am reported to have said, I find that many things have been omitted, which, if reported, would have thrown more light on the subject, and also that I have in the report been made to say

a thing which I never said. For instance, I never said that, "If Protestants retain one of the Romish traditions, they are no *better* than if they adopted the whole;" but I have said that, "Bossuet in his *Variations of the Protestant Churches*, reproached the Protestants with adopting infant sprinkling instead of immersion, whilst at the same time, they refused to take the Lord's Supper with bread *only*, arguing that there was no greater difference between taking the Eucharist with bread *only*, and receiving that ordinance with bread and wine, than there really was between sprinkling as practised by the Protestants, and the Apostolical practice of immersion." I furthermore added, that "a Protestant who had rejected the tradition of infant sprinkling was on a *safer* ground to meet a Romish priest in controversy." You will, therefore, do me the favor to correct these mistakes of your correspondent.

But this is not all that I wish to say to you. The New-York Observer of the 4th instant, has taken occasion from your article to wage war upon me, and to attack one who cannot find grace in the eyes of the editor of that paper, for the single fault of his being decidedly and conscientiously a Baptist. I indeed am sorry, that in trying to admonish me for my want of *courtesy*, the editor of the Observer has himself made use of expressions so little in accordance with the rules of common politeness. Every impartial reader may decide for himself whether, in the article of the Observer, headed

“The Baptists at Grande Ligne,” I was treated courteously. But I am ready to pass in silence all the rudeness of the editor of the Observer. My desire is to attract your attention to the fact that the greatest crime of which I am accused, is, that I have said that “infant sprinkling is a tradition of the Romish church.” The editor of the Observer must know that the statement with which he thus reproaches me, is common to the whole body of the Baptist denomination, who look upon infant sprinkling as unscriptural, and as having no other foundation than the tradition of the church of Rome. He must also know that a great number of the members of the Pædobaptist churches have considered in times past, and do still consider infant sprinkling in the same light. Could it be that when he read what I was reported to have said on the subject at Rochester, the assertion actually made by me and here last repeated, was a new sound to his ears? Has he never known that as surely as a Pædobaptist Protestant minister enters into a controversy with a Pædobaptist Romish priest, this latter one calls upon the Protestant to prove infant sprinkling from the Bible? Has he never observed that when the Protestant minister has toiled in vain to win the victory by proving infant sprinkling from the Bible, his antagonist, in a few words, shows that the church of Rome had established, by her own authority, that peculiar rite? Is the Observer ignorant that Luther, the great

luminary of the sixteenth century, candidly said, that from the New-Testament it was impossible to prove that infant sprinkling was an institution of Jesus Christ? Is he not aware that Neander, who is considered the most faithful and enlightened modern sacred historian, if not the greatest scholar in Ecclesiastical history the Christian churches have ever seen, uses the following language—"As to your question on infant sprinkling, it cannot possibly be proved that it was practised in the Apostolical age?"

But what astonishes me the most, is to see the displeasure of the editor of the Observer at what I have uttered against infant sprinkling, and to know at the same time that the editor of that journal has been, and undoubtedly is still, a most devoted admirer of Kirwan's letters, and in commending these letters to the Christian public thought himself warranted in saying, "The clearness of the argument and illustration will carry conviction to the minds of those who have the independence to decide for themselves by the *light* of the *Bible* and *common sense*." Now, Kirwan, in showing to Bishop Hughes the absurdity of the ceremonies performed in the Romish church in sprinkling a child, alluding to the "simplicity of the sacrament (baptism) as taught in the Bible," says:—"The apostles administered baptism to those who *confessed* faith in Jesus Christ, and through this sacrament we obtain a place and a name in the visible

church. This all men can understand.”—[2d series, fol. 66.] The same author, a little further on, in speaking of the true character of the ministry of the Gospel, makes use of the following language—“*To those who believe*, he administers the rite of baptism, and as God gives him opportunity, he administers the Lord’s Supper to the faithful for the purpose of commemorating the death of Christ, until he comes the second time, without sin unto salvation. Such were the ministers of Christ before the rise of popery, and such *ONLY are the true ministers of Christ now.*”—[2d series, fol. 91.] If I turn to page 99, of same series, I find Kirwan giving a description of those to whom the Apostle Peter administered baptism on the day of Pentecost, “They obeyed, that is, they forsook their sins—they believed in Jesus Christ—they were baptized in his name.” No one admires Kirwan’s letters more than I do, not even our editor; Kirwan, however, exposes the folly of the ceremonies which are a part of infant sprinkling in the Romish church, but he is cautious not to say a word about infant sprinkling in the Protestant churches. Why, after having ably shown how ridiculous the ceremonies performed by the Romish priest were, *did he not point out how infant sprinkling ought to be administered scripturally?* No—he alludes to the “simplicity of the sacrament as taught in the Bible;” and what is that simplicity? Why, “the apostles administered baptism to those who confess faith in Jesus

Christ." Is not infant sprinkling laid aside completely by Kirwan, and yet the editor of the *Observer* can in good conscience say, that "the clearness of the argument will carry conviction to the minds of those who have the independence to decide for themselves by the light of the Bible and common sense?" I must confess that I have found the illustration clear. The apostles baptized believers, and did not sprinkle babes. Kirwan's statement goes to *un-church* all those who baptize others than believers—I never went so far as that. I merely said, and still maintain, that infant sprinkling is a tradition of the Romish church retained by *some* of our Protestant churches. But Kirwan, lauded and applauded, and not unjustly, by our editor, says that, "*Such* [those who baptize believers,] *only* are the true ministers of Christ, *now*." Where is the infant sprinkler? According to Kirwan, whose letters first appeared in the columns of the *Observer*, *before the rise of popery* none were baptized *but* believers. According to Dr. Côté, infant sprinkling is a tradition of the popish church. I leave it to all candid men, whether I have said as much as Kirwan. He certainly has gone a great deal farther than I ever did; yet he is honored, and am I to be vilified? Why this difference. Kirwan, if we are rightly informed, is a Presbyterian, who has, in his letters to Bishop Hughes, not avowed himself a Pædobaptist, but, on the contrary, proclaimed Baptist doctrines, while I am not a Pædobaptist, but

openly and avowedly a Baptist. The inconsistency of the Observer in blaming in one what he extols in the other, cannot be well understood by those who have "independence to decide for themselves by the light of the Bible and *common sense*."

If to Kirwan's testimony, the editor of the Observer would add that of Scheffmacher, one of the most able controversialists of the church of Rome of the present day, he would find that this champion of popery, in his arguments in favor of tradition, exposes in a very bold manner the inconsistency of Protestants who refuse to join the church of Rome, because this latter teaches traditions, and yet practice infant sprinkling, which is established *only* by the authority of the popish church.

I have then said nothing worse than the whole Baptist denomination say; nothing worse than Luther said; nothing worse than Neander says; nothing worse than Kirwan has said, and yet the Observer arrays itself against me! Why all this bitterness against a Baptist who has but said what so many respectable Pædobaptists have fully demonstrated? Let the Observer answer.

Having recapitulated my peremptory denial of the first expression imputed to me, that all Protestants who hold but one Romish tradition, are no better than the Romanists who keep all, I must conclude by saying, that the missionaries of Grande Ligne feel for their Pædobaptist friends who have aided them, and who do still aid them in their hum-

ble efforts to extend the Kingdom of Christ in Canada, the most profound attachment, the most sincere love. They will always remember that they are very much indebted to these Pædobaptist friends. They hope that such of their Pædobaptist friends will still be liberal enough to allow the Baptists at Grande Ligne to differ from them on the subject of baptism, and yet continue to love and help the missionaries, whilst these think their present course required by their duty to Christ.

As for myself, I have fully made up my mind to "obey God rather than man," even were I to know that thereby I should fall under human displeasure. I could not be happy unless I found myself entirely on the ground of God's Word, after having rejected, as I trust that I have done, all human traditions in religion.

Ever yours in the Lord,

C. H. O. CÔTE.

By reading this letter from Dr. Côté, Kirwan was moved to write the famous letter which follows. How much it misrepresents Baptists, for whom, nevertheless, it professes great regard, the intelligent reader need hardly be told. A denomination which holds baptism to be in itself no more than the badge of a religious profession, *assumed in obedience to Christ's command* BY THOSE WHO HAVE ALREADY BECOME UNITED TO HIM BY FAITH, is here charged with an undue exaltation of the ordinance, an exalta-

tion even approaching the baptismal regeneration of Dr. Pusey and his school! If Dr. Murray understood no better than this the sentiments of Baptists, it was his duty to be silent until he obtained more correct information. If he knew their sentiments when he uttered the unfounded aspersion, his language can be accounted for only by an estimation of his moral sense, which it is not necessary for the writer to express. But apart from the misrepresentations of Baptists which the letter contains, considered solely with reference to its theological developments, the letter of Kirwan, taken in connexion with the reply of Dr. Côte, is curious and important.

The public here may see two men, who were born and bred Romanists, and who accepted at mature age the common principles of Protestantism,—the supremacy of the Word of God and the right of private judgment,—at issue on a point which involves the natural development of those principles,—Dr. Murray halting and stumbling amid the inconsistencies and embarrassments in which he is involved by adhering to a rite which has no authority whatever but TRADITION, and Dr. Côte, true to the common principles from which they start, and with the conscious strength of a man who knows the ground he stands on, exposing those embarrassments and inconsistencies, and showing that the true Protestant cannot stop short of being a Baptist. Under this view, the

correspondence which follows is specially worthy of study. Anxious to avoid the only issue which could legitimately arise between himself and Dr. Côte, Dr. Murray never alludes to the language cited from his letter to Bishop Hughes, which it was his duty to justify as reconcilable with his practice of infant baptism, but seeks to extricate himself by raising a cloud of dust, under the cover of which he may flee. Dr. Côte, nothing daunted, holds him to his point, and fastens upon him beyond the possibility of removal, that however strong may be his Protestantism in principle, he is no consistent Protestant in practice, until he returns literally to the order of procedure in preaching and baptizing, which he has so well laid down in his controversy with the Bishop, as the primitive and apostolic plan.

But the reader is long enough detained from the letters which are to follow. In justice to Dr. Côte, it is proper to say, as accounting for his style, that he is a Frenchman writing in English; and furthermore, to intimate to the reader, as Dr. Côte has not called attention to that point, that the withdrawal from the Grande Ligne Mission of Pædobaptist support, which the reader would understand to have occurred in consequence of Dr. Côte's remarks at Rochester, occurred in the main in the year 1845, when the Foreign Evangelical Society closed its connexion with the mission. It remains yet to be known whether the excellent Pædobaptist Chris-

tians who continued to aid the mission, notwithstanding this disconnection, have been alienated by the uncalled for and unjustifiable hostility of the *New-York Observer*.

[From the *New-York Observer.*]

KIRWAN ON BAPTISM.

TO THE REV. C. H. O. CÔTE:

MY DEAR BROTHER—Your very kind favor of the 18th ultimo, accompanying a translation of Pengilly on Baptism into French, was duly received. I thank you for the letter, and for the book; and so far as I have examined the portions of my letters which you have seen fit to transfer to the pages of that book, the translation into French is faithfully made. With Pengilly's tract in English I have been for years acquainted, and have always deemed it a specious, but most inconclusive argument on the subject of which it treats. Nor can I possibly conceive how your extracts from my letters in this French edition can give either point, force, or conclusiveness to his statements. They

might have been inclosed in brackets, signifying that in the reading they may be omitted, without injury to the sense.

Just as I was about sealing a private letter to you, the New-York Recorder of the 22d November last, was placed in my hands, containing a letter from you to the editor of that able journal. The reading of that letter—the construction you put upon mine to Bishop Hughes—and the manner in which you not only seek to involve me in your controversy, but to bring me to the support of your peculiar views on Baptism, have induced me to lay aside my private letter, and to address you through the press. And my object is not to enter with you into a discussion upon the subject of baptism—this I must decline—but to make to you some remarks on the general subject, hoping that they may lead to good.

1. I am amazed at the process by which you draw a conclusion like this from my letters: “Kirwan’s statement goes to *unchurch* all those who baptize others than believers.” This looks so much to me like “transubstantiation,” that if you had been a Catholic priest, I would almost have concluded that you had been saying “hoc est corpus” over my letters. There

is not an unchurching idea in my mind, or feeling in my soul, towards any who truly believe in Jesus Christ. The Papist or Protestant, Baptist or Pædobaptist that my Lord receives, is good enough for my church, and for my communion table. They may differ from me on minor points, but if Christ receives them, can I reject them? Will you do me the kindness to believe that there is no unchurching dogma in my heart?—will you do me the justice to withdraw the assertion, that there is any such dogma in my letters? Will you do me the favor of partaking of my Christian hospitality, in my house, my pulpit, and at our communion table?

2. I rather wonder at the use *you* make of the assertions of such men as Bossuet and Scheffmacher, champions of Romanism. What if they do say that our only authority for infant baptism is the tradition of their Church! Do they not say the same about the Scriptures, and about the Sabbath, and about the Church? And if all Protestants, like Baptists, give up infant baptism, for the sake of spiking some of the guns of these papal doctors, will you then follow suit, and give up the Scriptures, and the Sabbath, and the Church, as you receive them, for

the sake of spiking others ? Where, my brother, would the principle land you, on which you would urge the three-fourths of the Christian world to abstain from consecrating their children to God ? I supposed you had heard, long ago, that papal assertions and assumptions were very unsafe foundations upon which to build an argument.

3. I esteem it a matter of deep regret that *you or your worthy colleagues should have taken such a course on the subject of baptism* as to withdraw from your support at Grande Ligne all those, or nearly all, who are not Baptists. This was unnecessary. Our Christian people in the States were entirely willing that you should enjoy your own opinions, and teach them, when you felt constrained so to do ; but they were not willing to support you ; and then to be denounced by you as holding a most pestiferous doctrine, which had nothing to sustain it but papal tradition. For years past your mission has been regarded as a common channel through which pious people of various denominations could act upon Canadian Papists. *Whilst thus regarded, you had free access to our church ; but when you abandoned the common, for sectarian ground, then those who*

*were not Baptists felt that they must seek other channels for their contributions.** This I under-

* In addition to the intimation given in the introduction to this pamphlet, it cannot be out of place to call particular attention to the impression created by the language in the above paragraph which is italicised, and indeed by the whole paragraph, as to the occasion of the withdrawal of Pædobaptist support from the Grande Ligne Mission. It is here stated distinctly and positively that that occasion was found in the sectarianism of the mission—its “course on the subject of baptism”—its “abandoning the common for sectarian ground”—its denouncing as “a pestiferous doctrine” something held and practiced by those who had befriended it,” &c. Now, the formal withdrawal of Pædobaptist support occurred in 1845, when the Foreign Evangelical Society, the chief channel of that support, ceased to be the patron of the mission—but there was then no pretence of any such occasion for that measure. On the other hand, the Baptist character of the mission was a thing spoken of in the official act of the society, as understood from the beginning, and no bar to patronage. It was the *independent* character of the mission—its being under the control of no society, and so largely dependent on the life of one individual, “confessedly excellent,” which led to the disconnection, and there was no intimation whatever of any diminution of Christian confidence between the parties. Could Kirwan then have had reference to that withdrawal of support? But when the Foreign Evangelical Society withdrew its support, all Pædobaptists did not follow its lead. Many Pædobaptist ladies continued their sympathy and benefactions, though the mission now turned mainly to Baptists. Does Kirwan mean to say, that the “course” of Dr. Côte and his colleagues “on baptism” had alienated *these*

stand to be the ground of the *Observer*, a paper which has done perhaps as much as any other agency for your mission; and in its views it will be sustained by the Christian public. Indeed, I know of many who, in sorrow, are compelled to withdraw from your support. An effect like this it was needless to produce. If your speech at Rochester was incorrectly re-

friends? There was not the slightest pretence of offence on this ground until the Rochester revelations, which so decomposed the *Observer*; and when Kirwan wrote he could not know, except on a limited scale, within the circle of his own personal observation, what had been or would be the effect of the *Observer's* onset. The effect of that onset is not yet proved, nor can it be until the present year shall have closed. Kirwan then has placed himself, by the inconsiderateness of his language, in an unfortunate dilemma. He has either totally misrepresented the occasion of the Foreign Evangelical Society's withdrawal of support, or he has uttered what he does not know concerning the influence of the events at Rochester upon the course of those Pædobaptist ladies who have continued their patronage since 1845. To whichever patronage he alludes, he has wronged the truth and the mission; and though in some quarters his misrepresentations, like those of the *Observer*, may have the effect to divert some proportion of Pædobaptist patronage, the mission has Pædobaptist patrons who see through this whole proceeding—who understand well where the sectarianism lies, and who will continue their aid to the mission, under the well assured conviction that it is as worthy as ever.

ported, you might have easily satisfied the public by your own report of it, and the remarks of the Observer would, I have no doubt, have been withdrawn;—but you do not mend the matter by your efforts to correct the report to which you object. Your feelings are obviously intensely Baptist; and it would be a great deal better for you to let them have vent, than to seek to hide yourself behind my thin shade; than to seek to represent me as having gone further in the unchurching process than you have ever done! And now that you are broadly out on sectarian ground, I know not that you have any claim upon Christians who are not Baptists, beyond those of the apostolic Judson, or any other Baptist missionary; whilst you owe them a far higher debt of gratitude.

4. Hobbies in religion usually lead to undesirable results. They are not desirable things in any department of life. Our excellent Baptist brethren have their hobby, and sometimes ride it very hard. They separate from other Protestants mainly on the ground of baptism; that gives them their name—that is their distinguishing characteristic—and there is a strong temptation to make more of it than does the Bible. To this temptation they yield, and thus fall into

a grievous snare. With too many, baptism takes the place of Christ and him crucified. Never did a papist more strongly insist on "Thou art Peter," or a modern High Churchman on "apostolical succession," than some Baptists do upon immersion. With too many it is "the one thing needful." They will exclude from their table a humble disciple of our Lord, because not immersed; and they will admit a most forlorn member of their own body, because he is! If they make it not baptismal regeneration, they make it something very like it. The view they take of immersion, is very near akin to the views of our former friends on sacramental grace. If it is not Papal, it is Puseyistic. And I deeply regret that so large and pious a body of Christians, and in the main so truly excellent and orthodox, should harbor any opinion that bears any relation to that volatized nonsense, Puseyism, which has, within a few years, risen as scum to the surface of the great fermenting-vat of religious opinion. It is popery, but without its manliness, head or heart.

5. It strikes me very much as does "Extreme Unction," that if I believe in Christ, I cannot belong to his Church, unless I am put all over under water. If my head is left out—or my

hand—or my foot—or if only immersed to the waist—I cannot belong to the Church of my Master, on whom I rest alone for salvation. My connection with that Church does not depend on my change of heart, or on the profession of my faith, but on the fact, whether or not I have been put all over under water! Does this, my brother, look like the “law of liberty?” Does it coincide with the great principle of Paul, that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything, but a new creature? Does it not look very much like something which you and I ought to have left behind us in Babylon?

6. If the Saviour was baptized by immersion; if it was the way in which the apostles baptized; why insist on a closer imitation in the one sacrament than in the other? Why not have the Lord's Supper administered in the evening—and in an upper room—and seated at a table—and with unleavened bread? Might not some as reasonably become *Eucharists* as *Baptists*, and exclude from the Church because of a departure from the example of our Lord, in the one case as in the other? But immersion is not the baptism taught in the New Testament; and to insist on it, as do our Baptist brethren, is like popery in this respect—it is teaching for doctrines

the commandments of men. It is forming a yoke of an ordinance, and excluding from the visible Church of Christ all who cannot in conscience wear it, however clearly the image of God may be drawn upon their hearts. In this view of it, it seems to me like a Jewish or Papal ceremonial. And as to infant baptism, or infant connection with the Church visible, my position is this: God once allowed it, and I find no reason, in nature or revelation, to believe that he has changed his mind. When he informs me that he has done so, I will instantly change my belief and practice.

Feeling, as you honestly do, a very strong desire that at least your converts from popery should be rightly instructed upon the sacrament of baptism, you will put "Pengilly sur le Bapteme" into their hands. But that will give them but a partisan and one-sided view of the subject. Such a view is rarely a right one; it would have kept you forever in the darkness of popery. And that your French converts may have the other side of the subject, I would advise you to have translated Peter Edwards on Baptism, who was once a Baptist minister, and who, on searching the Scriptures to fortify his opinions, was induced to become a Pædobap-

tist. Put both books into their hands, and then they will have the means of forming an intelligent opinion. It is hardly worth the trouble to immerse a person, because, for the want of light, he knows of no other way of passing from the world into a connection with the visible Church of Christ.

7. As a man graciously delivered from the darkness of popery—as a missionary of the Lord Jesus Christ—as a man devoting your life and talents to the conversion of Papists, it is scarcely worth your while to permit yourself to be enticed away from your direct work, to engage in a controversy where nothing can be said anew to any purpose; and in which no laurels are to be won. Were you simply a pastor, it might be different; your course of study might lie in that direction; but as a missionary, and a missionary to the Papists, and in the midst of them, I think you ought to say with Paul, “Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.”

You will excuse me, my brother, for this letter. It is written with a heart full of kindness to you, your mission, and your work. I sincerely thank you for your very favorable opinion

of my letters to Bishop Hughes. You are a fit judge of their truthfulness ; but your published interpretation and use of them, so as to sustain your peculiar views of baptism, *to the proper mode of which they have not even a reference*, requires that this should be published, rather than a private letter. And I feel that now, when the Pope of Rome has fled, in the livery of a servant, from the chair of St. Peter—when he is deposed by good Catholics from his temporal power—when his cardinals are forbidden to return to the seven hills—when all over the earth, in its head and in its members, God is smiting the Mystery of Iniquity—when, in all lands, thousands are breaking away from the trammels of this waning superstition, you have work enough to do among Papists, without seeking in any way to embroil yourself in the disputes that separate Protestants. If a believer is immersed, he is not the better ; if otherwise baptized, he is not the worse. You are called of God to a higher service than controversy, or to submission to external and symbolical ordinances. Others, differently educated, know more upon such subjects than you do ; but few know as much as you do about the wiles and cunning craft of popery. And as you are in the midst of its adherents, “ Let the

dead bury the dead : go thou and preach the Gospel."

Hoping I may, at some time, have an opportunity of showing you personally my cordial and catholic esteem for you as a man and as a minister of Christ,

I am, with great respect, yours,

KIRWAN.

[From the New-York Recorder.]

DR. CÔTE TO KIRWAN.

GRANDE LIGNE MISSION HOUSE,
St. John's, C. E., Feb. 21, 1849. }

DEAR KIRWAN :—The letter with which you honored me in the New-York Observer of the 13th January, was put into my hands some time since. I should have answered it before this, if my labors as a missionary had allowed me so to do. You will, therefore, be so kind as to believe that it was not through neglect, and still less from the difficulty of the task, that I have been silent up to this day.

But before proceeding to take up your points in order, allow me to make one or two preliminary remarks. You say, in the preamble of your letter, that “ your object is not to enter with me into a discussion of the subject of baptism,—that you must decline ;” and still, before you have concluded your seven-headed letter, you have poured forth upon the Baptists, and their doctrine, a bountiful share of supercilious contempt. Allow me to ask you candidly, were you honest and straight-forward, dear Kirwan,

when you spoke thus? Or may it be that, in the puzzling difficulty in which you found yourself so unexpectedly involved, to give a Pædo-baptist color to the sentiments which you had expressed on baptism, in your letters to Bishop Hughes, and which I had so rashly exposed to broad daylight, you did not feel composed enough to follow the thread of your propositions and of your arguments? As far as I am concerned, I know not the motive which prompted you to act as you did; but to me one thing is evident, and it is that there is a palpable contradiction between your declaration, that you desire not to enter into a discussion with me on the subject of baptism, which you decline, and what you say, a little further on, concerning that ordinance of our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, and those who observe it in its primitive form.

Divided as it is, your letter will, now and then, afford me an opportunity of entering into details that may be disagreeable to you. I am sorry for this, for your sake. I regret it, dear Kirwan, on account of the laurels which you have won in your controversy with Bishop Hughes. For when you were contending with Romanism, you appeared the terror and dread of that false system; in a word, you were like

Sampson of old, not finding it a hard task "to take the doors of the gate of the city and the two posts, and to go away with them, bar and all, and to put them on your shoulders, and carry them to the top of the hill;" but when the ill-fated hour came to fight against the doctrine of believers' baptism, it is evidently seen that, like Sampson, whose whole strength was in the seven locks of his head, which the treacherous Delilah caused to be shorn off, you have lost all your fire, energy, and strength; you have undertaken to defend a doctrine which you cannot possibly sustain by a positive command of the New Testament. From the very moment that you have allowed yourself to sleep upon the knees of the perfidious tradition of the Church of Rome, who, during your sleep, has deprived you of your strength, you "have become weak, and like any other man." I am only astonished that Bishop Hughes, that bold champion of Romanism, whose sagacity is so well-known, has not yet challenged you on the Scriptural authority of infant-sprinkling.

I shall now take up your seven heads,—not that I believe them to have any connection with the seven heads of the beast of which we are told in the Apocalypse; for it is said that these

were seven mountains ; and certainly, dear Kirwan, you will not presume to believe that yours are seven mountains ; at any rate, it is certain that they are not so difficult to be overthrown. I claim your attention then, respectfully, to the demonstration of the fact, that the whole of your letter to me is a sad and poor appendix to the beautiful and manly, as well as truthful, letters of Kirwan to Bishop Hughes, and that for the honor of those letters, it would have been much better if you had abstained from addressing me in the style and manner which you have chosen.

1. I am accused by you of having laid violent hands on your ideas, and upon your writings, when in my letter to the *New-York Recorder* I said, " Kirwan's statement goes to *unchurch* all those who baptize others than believers." I am willing, dear Kirwan, to believe you, when you say, that " there are no unchurching dogmas in your heart." But if there are no unchurching dogmas in your heart, then your heart is not in full unison with your pen. For I must confess, that the more I read that portion of your ninth letter, second series, pages 90 and 91, beginning with the words, " Once secure a just and Scriptural view of the character of a *true* minister of Christ, and of the great end of a Gospel

ministry;" and ending with the words, "Such were the ministers of Christ before the rise of popery, and SUCH ONLY are the TRUE ministers of Christ NOW," the more I wonder at the boldness and the presumption with which you seek to escape the just conclusions to which those who read that portion of your letters are naturally led. On consulting Webster's Dictionary, I find that "*to unchurch*" means "*to deprive of the character and rights of a church.*" Now, let us follow your argument and the expressions you have used yourself. Your aim was to establish the characteristics of a true minister of our Lord Jesus Christ; to which task you proceed by laying down a rule to which you make no exception. According to the description that you give yourself, and of which I entirely approve, you say that "a true minister is one who, with love to God and of the salvation of men filling his soul, goes out into all the ways which Providence opens before him; preaching everywhere, as did Peter and Paul, repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; that he has only one object—to lead men to the knowledge of truth; that he goes out with an open Bible, to expound it, praying that the Holy Ghost may so apply its

truths to the hearts of his hearers, that they may be created anew in Christ Jesus, unto all good works ; that to those who believe he administers the rite of baptism, and as God gives him an opportunity, he administers the Lord's Supper to the faithful, for the purpose of commemorating the death of Christ until he comes the second time, without sin, unto salvation ; that *such* were the ministers of Christ *before the rise of popery* ; and that *such ONLY* are the *true* ministers *now*." 'Please tell me, dear Kirwan, are these your own words? Have I mutilated them? Was not your object to establish the true characteristics of the Christian ministry, and to contrast them with those of the ministry of the Church of Rome, which you really consider, as I do, as being Antichrist? Then what are those characteristics which you have established? Are they not—first, to preach the Gospel of repentance towards God, and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ ; secondly, to administer the rite of baptism to those who believe that Gospel ; thirdly, to administer the Lord's Supper to those who have received the Gospel, and who have submitted themselves to the ordinance of baptism? A little further you say, that before the rise of popery the ministers of

Christ acted thus ; and those only who act thus are the true ministers of Christ now. I should like to know, Kirwan, what you have done with those whose general practice is to baptize others than those who believe, and who do not, therefore, act according to the rule you have laid down yourself? Did I venture too far when I said, that you "*unchurched*" them? What have you done with the sprinkler of the unconscious and unbelieving babe? Can you classify him with the true minister of Christ, who, according to your own definition, administers the rite of baptism *only to those who believe*? Here is the time for you to regret the good old doctrine of transubstantiation ! How you would like to transubstantiate the infant-sprinkler into the baptizer of believers ! But the thing is not easily done. I invite all impartial readers to peruse that part of your letters to Bishop Hughes. I cannot but pity you, poor Kirwan, if you have a pen which, in spite of the sentiments of your heart, which has no *unchurching dogmas* in it, can betray you into mistakes, and create on the minds of your readers impressions so widely at variance with those you intended. Do not blame your readers, but rather go back to your old formula of confession when you were in the

Church of Rome, and smiting your breast, with a penitent heart and a broken spirit, say, "*Meá culpá, meá culpá, meá maximá culpá.*"

2. The second thing with which you reproach me is, that I made use of assertions of such men as Bossuet and Scheffmacher. Again, dear Kirwan, as above, you are caught in the net of your own inconsistencies. Whilst you are ever ready to make use of a weapon, which you handle with a great deal of dexterity against your opponent, you cannot feel reconciled to the fact, that an antagonist, in his turn, uses the same arm against yourself, to expose the fallacy of your own position. Pray tell me why, in your letters to Bishop Hughes, you have made use of the testimonies of St. Gregory, of Cardinals Hugo and Mandrucio, against the Church of Rome? Be so kind as to tell me why you have cited the interpretations of a Soto and of a Vega, which were contradictory to the decisions of the Council of Trent? Tell me, if you please, what was your object in bringing that host of Romish authors, which you so ably cited in different parts of your letters, against the creed and the absurd practices of the Church of Rome? Was not your object to bring the testimony of Papists against Papists? And I, following in your foot-

steps, have taken the advantage of the testimonies of Pædobaptists against Pædobaptists. Allow me to add, dear Kirwan, that I do really believe that when Bossuet and Scheffmacher spoke of infant-sprinkling as a tradition of their church, they were honest and frank. Entertaining Baptist sentiments as I am known to do, no one can blame me for having brought to light the contradictions of Pædobaptists against each other. You have cited Romish authorities to expose the contradictions and folly of Romanism; and I have cited Pædobaptist authorities, pertaining to the Church of Rome, to show that the Pædobaptists of the Protestant Church have no better authority for their infant-sprinkling than the tradition of the Church of Rome herself. Thus, to be consistent, you cannot blame me for doing the same thing you have done yourself, unless previously you have recourse to one of your old formulas of prayers, which, undoubtedly, you have oftentimes repeated when you were a Romanist—I mean “*an act of contrition*,” for having done that which you condemn in others.

3. As to your third charge, I can answer but for myself. If my colleagues think proper to enter into the arena, they will do it. I do not

constitute myself their apologist. I feel confident that there is not one of them who is not ready at all times to defend his own conduct, and to "give an answer to every man that asketh him a reason of the hope that is in him." I feel, indeed, sorry that your better judgment did not teach you the impropriety of calling into question the Grande Ligne Mission. Could you not confine yourself to Dr. Côte, without dragging before the public those who had not taken any part in the controversy pending between the Pædobaptists and myself? There is no doubt the missionaries deeply regret that so large a number of their former Pædobaptist friends think that it is their duty to withdraw their support, but they have never as yet attempted to throw the blame upon any one. Thanks and praises will ever be the expression of the deep-felt gratitude which they entertain towards their ancient allies who think proper to withdraw from an important work in which they have been associated. As for myself, and I am certain that it is the case with my colleagues, I will never be willing to sacrifice my Baptist principles at the shrine of Pædobaptist support.

I have still a word to say to you respecting my speech at Rochester, and then I have done

with you as far as that part of your letter is concerned. You seem to have lost sight entirely of the fact that it was as a Baptist minister that I was called upon to speak in behalf of a Baptist society. It was not in the capacity of agent of the Swiss mission that I addressed that meeting, and consequently the Swiss mission ought not to be made responsible for what I said. Confine yourself to me, and aim not your blows at the mission of which I am a member. I can assure you that your blows are not of such a nature that I require the helmet of the Swiss mission to shield me.

4. When I came to read the fourth division of your letter, the paper fell several times from my hands, and as it dropped upon my desk, I said to myself, Were we to judge of the accuracy and correctness of Kirwan's assertions against the Church of Rome, by what he says so unjustly and so unfoundedly against the Baptists and their sentiments, certainly the verdict of public opinion would be against the man to whom Bishop Hughes found it so difficult to respond. Had I not been personally acquainted with all the errors of the Church of Rome, it would have been impossible for me, after having read that section of your letter, to believe that

you could be an impartial writer,—able to say things just as they really are. Allow me, dear brother, to tell you candidly, that if there is a “hobby” with anybody, infant-sprinkling must be the thing with those who would be afraid to risk the eternal welfare of their offspring, without previously having conferred upon them what they deem to be baptism. Certainly baptism cannot be a “hobby” with the Baptists, who wait to confer their ordinance *until the recipient of it has believed*. The Baptists certainly cannot be charged with attaching an undue importance to baptism, but rather our Pædobaptist friends who make such strenuous efforts to perpetuate a worn-out doctrine, which the more enlightened men in their own lands candidly confess, is not to be found in the whole New Testament. If your infant-sprinkling, dear Kirwan, is necessary, why do you allow so many members of your churches to discard it,—not bringing their children to the baptismal font? If it is *not* necessary, why press the observance of that unmeaning rite upon your people, when you can hardly find two of your own Pædobaptist authors who can agree as to the foundation on which it rests.

It requires all the pliability of a mind like

yours, to be able to reconcile what you say about your regrets "that so large and *pious* a body of Christians, and in the main so *truly excellent* and *orthodox*," as the Baptists, should make of immersion "*the one thing needful*," with what you say a few lines further on, about the close confraternity which exists between these *orthodox* Baptists and the heterodox Puseyites. Minds more straightforward and unbiassed, will not be able to see anything analogous between Puseyism and the doctrines of the Church with which I am connected. If my object was to make comparisons to hurt the feelings of others, I could easily establish a point of union between Puseyism, where infants are sprinkled, and other Protestant sects who observe the same unauthorized rite; but my desire is not to wound the feelings of any one. Grateful to God who has, in his mercy, delivered me from the bondage of popery, of which I am not conscious of having retained a single relic, brotherly love teaches me to exercise forbearance towards those of my Protestant brethren, who still cleave to lingering modifications of that Romish doctrine.

That you, my dear brother, have allowed yourself to be taken in the fact of misrepresenting your Baptist brethren, as you have done, is

only a proof that every man has his weak side. The mightiness of your strength was never so well exhibited as when, in your letters to Bishop Hughes, you demonstrated to that Romish prelate the absurdity of his creed, and the contradictions of the tenets of his Church. But next comes your turn to expose your weak side, Kirwan, when you try to grapple with and overthrow the Scriptural doctrine of believers' baptism; and when I behold your contradictions and misrepresentations, I must be allowed to exclaim with an unfeigned regret, Kirwan! Kirwan!! Oh, Kirwan!!! How are the mighty fallen! Did you not blush when you uttered the charge against your Baptist brethren, which you know to be entirely gratuitous, that "with too many baptism took the place of Christ and him crucified?" What right have you to expect that a Baptist, who reads such a grave and uncalled for accusation on your part, against the body to which he belongs, can place any confidence whatever in all that you have heretofore said, or may say hereafter, on Romanism, or any other subject on which you may choose to write? It would be far better for your fame as a writer to adhere to facts, rather than to venture into bold and unfounded assertions

against brethren who, although they still see in you a remnant of that old system which you have repudiated, still desire to love you as a fellow-member of Christ. Believe me, dear Kirwan, more modesty on your part would be a desirable feature in an individual, one side of whom remains yet fully exposed to the grape-shot of his Baptist brethren. Misrepresentation is always an unworthy arm, very soon exposed, and never fails to occasion a poor opinion of its originator. If ever it falls again to your lot to contend with Baptists, allow me to advise you, as a friend, never to speak rashly, and allow yourself to be carried away by the sway of your passions and prejudices. Confine yourself to well-authenticated facts, and you will be sure of winning the respect even of your opponents, however erroneous they may deem your opinions.

5. I shall now pass to the fifth head of your letter. I must tell you the plain truth. It was for me the most painful part of your epistle. That a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ should allow himself to try to justify his own peculiar and favorable views at the expense of his Divine Master's wisdom! You are at a loss to know why, in not submitting yourself to the ordinance of baptism as established by our Lord Jesus

Christ, you cannot be regularly and properly a member of that visible body of which baptism is constituted the initiatory rite! I feel sorry that your earlier Romish education, and your later Presbyterian training, allow you to fall into a strain of half-sarcastical and half-jeering expressions, when speaking of the mode of an ordinance established by Him whose minister and servant you profess to be. I would like to find words strong enough to show you the undignified manner with which you treat so lightly what so large a number of your Presbyterian brethren confess to be the original mode of administering baptism. What a powerful arm you have thus lent to Bishop Hughes, in your letters, to whom you profess to have so much reverence for all the doctrines taught in the Holy Bible! Solemnity and respectful language would have been preferable to scoffing and light words. Really I feel abashed that a Protestant brother could expose himself in the manner you have done. To attack the immersion of the believer with the powerless arm of ridicule—to compare this sacred rite with the Extreme Unction of the Romish Church—were the proper means calculated to blast for ever the fair fame which you have won in your controversy with Bishop Hughes.

Really, it appears to me, that when you wrote about Extreme Unction, you felt your theory as a Pædobaptist on the eve of giving up the ghost; which circumstance recalled to your waning memory the sacrament of the old dame which she administers only *in articulo mortis*. I can in no other way account for your bringing Romish Extreme Unction into such connection with the Scriptural mode of baptism.

Oftentimes it happens to poor weak humanity, that when it feels itself in the wrong, it thinks that it will find strength and power in the weapons of ridicule and misrepresentation. I would like to be able to believe, for the honor of the cause which you have so nobly defended, that your intentions, in this instance, were better than your language. I would willingly believe that your heart neither cherishes nor harbors ill-will and uncharitableness, and accept the supposition that your uncurbed and unfaithful pen has traced words which are not the faithful representatives of your feelings. I dismiss this portion of your letter, by placing you in the presence of that sacred book, to which you and I have no right to add, and from which we have no right to take, but which will judge us both at the last day.

6. When I came to the sixth division of your letter, I found in it something so singular, and at the same time so contradictory, compared with what you had said elsewhere, that I paused, reflecting painfully on your inconsistencies. Baptists affirm that the immersion of the believer is the only Scriptural baptism. On your side, you deny positively that immersion is the baptism taught in the New Testament. According to the standing rules of controversy and of logic, the burden of the proof fell upon me. But here you stand, dear Kirwan, with your declaration at the head of your epistle, "My object is not to enter into a discussion with you on the subject of baptism—this I must decline." You are not then willing to enter into an argument on this particular subject with me. You decline so doing; but still you cannot refrain from discussing the matter yourself, after your own way. You deny the facts, and yet you decline entering into a discussion on them. Do you not, dear Kirwan, imitate tolerably well the conduct of that certain Bishop, who, for the purpose of putting a stop to an unequal contest with you, *took a journey to Halifax*. Be manly, dear brother, if you desire to avoid a controversy on the subject of baptism, and do not endeavour to

evade it, by copying an example which your keen wit has made ridiculous.

Your attempt to defend infant-sprinkling is lame, as it opens the door to nearly the whole host of superstitious practices, which are to be found at the present day in the Romish Church. Had you not yourself so positively declared that your object was not to enter into a discussion on the subject of baptism, the task would be comparatively an easy one, to prove by the Scriptures and by the testimonies of distinguished Pædobaptist authors, that infant-sprinkling is nowhere to be found in the New Testament.

But before dismissing this subject, allow me to relate to you an anecdote. I know you to be a friend who takes a deep interest in all the Missionary operations which are carried on, to convert Romanists to the true Christian faith. You must know, from the acquaintance that you have had with the teachers of the Romish Church, that we are constantly annoyed and perplexed by them. You are aware, undoubtedly, that they have a thousand little tricks, to which they have constant recourse, to thwart the progress of truth. Since Canada has had the misfortune of being infested by the wily and cunning Jesuits, who have been of late expelled

from down-trodden Europe, we find our task increasingly difficult, inasmuch as it is a very hard business to catch those Jesuits, so as to hold an argument with them. Would you believe, dear Kirwan, that lately the Jesuits held a protracted meeting at ——, and there openly asserted that the Romish Church was the only true one; whilst Protestantism, according to them, was a novelty, and an untruth? One of our missionaries at last succeeded in catching one of those fellows, but as soon as the subject of religion was introduced, what do you think the Jesuit said? Why, he said, "My object is not to enter into a discussion with you,—this I must decline;" and thus was the missionary defeated in his purpose. Dear Kirwan, you are accustomed to deal with that kind of gentry, and what, pray, would you have done in the place of that missionary?

7. I turn to the last part of your letter, which I must consider as an exhortation of a senior brother to a junior. I thank you for it, dear Kirwan. Yes, my object is to preach the whole Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to the poor unenlightened Romanists, who are now laboring under the delusions of popery, as you and I were in times past. But I want to preach ex-

actly the same Gospel which Jesus Christ ordered his Apostles to preach, when he said to them, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." I desire not to teach them a single tradition of the Church of Rome; nay, not any rite or doctrine resting upon it, however remotely.

Delighted that, at last, you have unfurled your true colors, and that hereafter people will not be wicked enough to accuse you of fighting under the cover of Baptist principles, as some say that you have done in your letters to Bishop Hughes, I would take the liberty of suggesting to you the propriety of studying the Scriptures with an earnest and unbiassed spirit, for the purpose of finding in them the truth and foundation of your doctrine of infant-sprinkling. For if Bishop Hughes ever makes up his mind to renew the discussion with you, I would not at all be surprised if he should do, as I am informed he has already done with some others, that is to say, call upon you to prove by the New Testament the practice of infant-sprinkling. I can assure

you that it will not be a long while before he proves, beyond a shadow of doubt, that, as stiff-necked as you appear to be against the yoke of the Church of Rome, you still wear a part of that same yoke, by submitting yourself to, and by teaching an ordinance which the Church of Rome has substituted for apostolical baptism. The race which you shall have then to run, believe me, dear Kirwan, will be a hard and fatiguing one. Allow me to suggest the propriety of an early and effectual training.

I must now conclude by assuring you, dear Kirwan, that I am much obliged to you for your kind expressions towards me, and that I feel highly honored by them. Extending to you a cordial invitation to come and visit me in my Missionary field, at your earliest convenience, I am, with feelings of high personal respect for yourself, ever yours in Christ,

C. H. O. CÔTE.

APPENDIX.

[*From the Christian Watchman and Reflector.*]

KIRWAN AND DR. CÔTE.

THE New-York Observer of January 13, contains a curious letter from Rev. Dr. Murray, pastor of the Presbyterian church in Elizabethtown, N. J., addressed to Dr. Côté, of the Grande Ligne Mission in Canada, in relation to the Baptismal question. Dr. Murray is well-known to the public as *Kirwan*, author of the letters to Bishop Hughes; letters which display a profound knowledge of the true genius of the papal system. Both he and Dr. Côté were born within the pale of the Romish church; both have heartily abandoned it; each cherishes respect for the piety and sincerity of the other, but in the view of Dr. Côté, Kirwan still retains an element of Romish tradition in his creed, inasmuch as he practices infant sprinkling instead of the Christian baptism of the New Testament. This idea of the influence of the church tradition over the minds of Protestants, Dr. Côté expressed in a public meeting at Rochester, several months ago. For this expression he was attacked by the New-York Observer; he replied to this attack in the

columns of the *New-York Recorder*, and found occasion to support his position by a quotation from Kirwan's letters to Bishop Hughes. This quotation draws out Kirwan in a late number of the *Observer*, which brings us his letter to Dr. Côte, repelling the suggestion that any thing in his reply to Bishop Hughes can be justly used to strengthen the position of the Baptists. In his introductory paragraph, Kirwan says, "My object is not to enter with you into a discussion of the subject of baptism—this I must decline—but to make to you some remarks on the general subject, hoping that they may lead to good." From the letter itself, it is very obvious that Kirwan is wise in "declining discussion" on the merits of the question; for, well-versed as he is in all the labyrinths and wiles of the papal arguments, it is very clear that he has never understood the true positions of the Baptists—has never apprehended the grounds on which they rest, nor opened his mind to the essential spirit of their reasonings.

Kirwan's "remarks on the general subject," embrace seven points, which we will notice in the order of his own arrangement.

1. He expresses surprise at Dr. Côte's saying, "Kirwan's statement goes to *unchurch* all those who baptize others than believers." In answering this, Kirwan says, "There is no unchurching idea in my mind, or feeling in my soul, towards any who truly believe in Jesus Christ. The Papist or Protestant, Baptist or Pædobaptist that my Lord receives, is

good enough for my church, and for my communion-table. Will you do me the kindness to believe that there is no unchurching dogma in my heart," &c. Now the truth is that Dr. Côte said nothing about the state of Kirwan's mind, heart or feelings; but simply stated what Kirwan's *principles*, as set forth in his letters, would lead to, if legitimately followed out. Kirwan declares his willingness to receive pious Papists to his communion table; we should like to ask him one question on this point: If a Papist of undoubted sincerity should be so far loosened from Romish bondage as to be willing to come to your communion-table, but should insist on receiving the *bread alone*, and calling that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper as he had been accustomed to do—would you, for his sake, "put asunder" what Christ "joined together"—would you administer to *him* the bread, and take the wine *yourself*? If you would, then as a Protestant, you would violate your own canons, and would substitute church tradition for the command of Christ, in the administration of his ordinance. On the other hand, if you would not, then you would *unchurch* this pious Catholic in the sense in which Dr. Côte used that term. Which would you do?

We have scarcely a doubt, friend Kirwan, respecting what you would do. You would express your fraternal love towards him as a sincere believer—a member of Christ's spiritual body; but as to the administration of ordinances in the visible church,

you would tell him that Christ's command is to you a binding rule, and that in this case the command is, "Drink ye *all* of it." If he should reply in the language of his church, "Jesus Christ is received entire under one kind—he promised his kingdom to those who eat the bread of life without mentioning the chalice," would you, as a minister of Christ, yield up your convictions, and act on the ground of church authority? No; you would still adhere to Christ's command, and in doing so, you would treat your Catholic brother with the same charity that Dr. Côte exercises towards you; for he finds in the New Testament that the "baptism of repentance," a personal act, is enjoined as a precedent to the supper, as truly as the bread is joined to the wine in the supper itself. Now, if in the latter case you would not venture to "put asunder" what Christ has "joined together," why should you blame us for acting on the same principle in the former case?

2. Dr. Côte asserted that Bossuet, Scheffmacher, and other learned champions of Romanism, declare that church tradition is the only authority for infant baptism. Kirwan asks, "Do they not say the same about the Scriptures, and about the Sabbath, and about the church? And if all Protestants, like Baptists, give up infant baptism, for the sake of spiking some of the guns of these papal doctors, will you then follow suit, and give up the Scriptures, and the Sabbath, and the church, for the sake of

spiking others?" Dear Kirwan, we never rejected infant baptism because the Papists could not find it in the Scriptures, but because we could not find it there ourselves. They practice it; and when we challenge them to prove it from the Scriptures, they candidly own that they cannot do it, and plead ancient church authority on its behalf. Can you yourself do any better for this observance? We can find Scripture warrant for the Sabbath, the church, and for receiving the Scriptures as the *sufficient* rule of faith; but will you give us Scripture warrant for infant baptism? If you will quote the command or the example, you will settle the question, and oblige us very much, for we should really like to be in the same church with you. Are you not aware that many Pædobaptists feel this difficulty as well as we; that some of the most learned Protestants in the world, with Dr. Neander at their head, freely confess that they can neither find infant baptism in the New Testament, nor any trace of it in the first century.

3. Kirwan expresses his deep regret that Dr. Côte has "abandoned the common for sectarian ground," and was not content to stay as he had been in his external relations, in which he might "enjoy his own opinions." But it ought to be considered that Dr. Côte was really *driven* to take the position which he now occupies. He was surrounded with Papists; his mission was to them; he argued with them against their various observances; they plead-

ed church authority; he argued from the Scriptures against church authority; they defied him to maintain infant baptism on any better grounds; he tried to maintain it from the Scriptures, but failed to do it, and thus found himself within the range of the Papal guns, without any means of "spiking" them. As a last resort, he betook himself to the rocky fortress which he now securely occupies, and which, in the apostolic age, was not "sectarian ground." Who can blame him for doing as he did in such an emergency? Was he to stand still where he saw that he was liable to be shot down in every contest? Kirwan should fairly consider all the circumstances, and seriously ask himself how he would have managed in his campaign with Bishop Hughes, if his antagonist had only had the skill to draw him into a similar position. Then he could not have said, as he does now, "I must decline discussion upon the subject." He would have found out that in the war with Romanism, even he has "one weak point."

4. Kirwan next indulges in a little declamation. He speaks of hobbies; that they are not desirable; that the Baptists have theirs; and that it is baptism. He says: "With too many, baptism takes the place of Christ and Him crucified." Never did a Papist more strongly insist on "thou art Peter," or a modern High Churchman on "apostolical succession," than some Baptists do on immersion. With the many it is "the one thing needful." If they

make it not baptismal regeneration, they make it something very like it. The view they take of immersion is very near akin to the view of our former friends on sacramental grace. If it is not Papal, it is Puseyistic.

It is very likely that in these sentences, Kirwan speaks according to his degree of light; but if Bishop Hughes himself had taken the matter in hand, he would not have made a statement more entirely groundless. Only think of the folly of charging a people with a Puseyistic spirit, whose distinguishing doctrine is, that personal repentance and faith must *precede* baptism; that without these, baptism availeth nothing; who teach, in distinction from other Protestants, that "unless a man be born again," he has no right to any ordinance of the church. This representation of Baptist sentiments is about as near the mark as was that report of Paul's doctrines which was given by the Athenian philosophers, who said, "He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods!" For Paul's hearers to charge him with Polytheism was about as correct as for Kirwan to charge the Baptists with Puseyism. True, the philosophers, like Kirwan, were very intelligent reporters, and had the means of knowing; but neither of them, from their point of view, could comprehend the vital sentiment—the animating spirit of those whose doctrines they reported. Probably Kirwan never knew, or never reflected on the fact, that more than three centuries

ago, in the reign of Henry VIII., Baptists were put to death in England for adhering to their testimony, that "the infant of a Pagan or a Turk may go to heaven without baptism, as well as may the infant of a Christian with it." Such was the light which they held forth in "the dark ages;" and we should like to know whether, even now, Kirwan and his Presbyterian brethren in the ministry are sufficiently anti-Puseyistic to say as much as that?

5. The next paragraph is in a similar strain. In representing the principles of Dr. Côte and the Baptists, Kirwan says: "My connection with the church does not depend on my change of heart, or on the profession of my faith, but on the fact, whether or not I have been put all over under water. Does this, my brother, look like 'the law of liberty?' Does it coincide with the great principle of Paul, that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything but a new creature?"—These questions would have some meaning and propriety, if Kirwan had rejected baptism altogether; but even he cannot admit any persons to membership in his church unless they have received what *passes for baptism*, according to the Presbyterian confession of faith: and a Transcendentalist or a Quaker might ridicule any requisition of that sort with as good a grace as Kirwan ridicules the requisition of immersion. Such an one might say to him, "I see that faith, love, and good works go for nothing with you; but a little water sprink-

led on an infant's face qualifies one for your church." Is this according to the "law of liberty?" But to what would such ridicule amount? If brought to bear upon Kirwan's own practice, he would feel that it were of little worth.

6. In the sixth place, Kirwan treats lightly the very attempt to conform ourselves to the apostolic standard in regard to baptism. He asks, "Why insist on a closer imitation in the one sacrament than in the other? Why not have the Lord's Supper administered in the evening, and in an upper room—and seated at table—and with unleavened bread?" Our answer is, these things are not commanded. Show that they are commanded, and we will observe them. It is not servile imitation that we inculcate, but submission to Divine authority. In the Christian ritual there are only three essential acts enjoined; these are expressed by three specific words: *Baptize—eat—drink*. We might as well abolish these commands as to substitute others in their place. As to the acts denoted by the two latter words, there is no question; and as to the primitive baptism being immersion—why, as Dr. Gregory, the celebrated mathematician of the Royal Military School at Woolwich, once observed—"It is the only question in theology where the evidence is all on one side!"

7. In the seventh place, Kirwan advises Dr. Côté to disregard the subject of baptism entirely—to do the work of a missionary like Paul, who said,

“Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.” But it is a great mistake, to infer from this text, that Paul treated one half of “the Great Commission” as of no account. In regard to the Corinthians, to be sure, he rejoiced that he had not administered baptism to them personally, lest, in their intense party spirit, they should have had reason to call themselves *Paulites*. But he regarded baptism as a part of his apostolic teaching. In his Epistles, he *took it for granted*, that every professed Christian had been baptized. In addressing the Romans, Galatians and Colossians, he argued from the meaning of their baptism back to the doctrines which he had taught. Read the sixth of Romans, and see how sublime a moral sense he attached to the ordinance.

We hope that Kirwan will examine anew the grounds on which he stands. Living, as he does, in a peaceful community of his own faith and order, he is not forced, like Dr. Côte, to subject his principles to that fiery trial which comes from daily argumentation with opponents. Nevertheless, a man like him ought to be sure that he is going to the Judgment Seat of Christ with a pure New Testament religion in his head and in his heart—to see to it that he “break not one of these least commands, and teach men so”—for heaven and earth shall pass away, but “**MY WORD,**” saith Christ, “shall not pass away.”

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