

the notes on THE NATURE OF THE GOSPEL, page 59; GOSPEL INVITATIONS, page 70, etc.

The reported sermons found in the Acts of the Apostles, notably that in xiii. 16—41, which is addressed to Jews, and that in xvii. 22—31, which is an appeal to Gentiles, are admirable models.

In the Epistles to Timothy and Titus it is difficult, in some instances, to know whether these are simply addressed as Evangelists, or as possessing the higher gift, but generally the sense is evident.

This subject is of immense present importance. No one should be allowed to preach in our chapels who does not possess the Scriptural qualifications of an Evangelist—though the utmost recklessness is manifested by Deacons in this matter.

A preacher should "make full proof of his ministry" as an "Evangelist" before a Church proceeds to enquire whether he possesses the higher qualifications of a Bishop or presiding teacher and preacher. (See page 140.)

THE CHRISTIAN DEACON.

NOTE 8.—The term Deacon is a transliteration of the Greek word *Diakonos*—a waiting-man or servant. Among ourselves, it is solely applied to brethren who manage the secular business of a Church.

The origin of the office is related in Acts iv. 34—37, and vi. 1—6. The Church at Jerusalem, in a fit of beautiful enthusiasm, adopted the fantastic and impracticable theory known in modern times as communism, divesting themselves of individual property, and throwing all they had and earned into a common stock.* This necessitated a daily distribution (or *deaconing*) of goods and money, which appears to have been at first done in an informal way, without the special appointment of any brethren to the delicate and important duty. Trouble at length arose, the Grecian Jews complaining that their widows did not receive due consideration. The Apostles pleaded that *their* spiritual duties precluded their making this matter their concern. They could not consistently neglect the

*This, it will be noticed, God neither sanctioned nor condemned, but suffered the wild idea to be worked out to its issue. It led to the division of Acts vi. 1, and the tragedy of Acts v. 1—10, and appears to have been gradually dropped. It is clear from allusions in the Epistles that it soon ceased to be practised.

word of God to serve (literally, *to deacon*) tables. They, therefore, desired the multitude of the disciples to look out seven suitable men to whom the daily ministration (or *deaconing*) might be entrusted, or who, in other words, might, to the satisfaction of all, serve (or *deacon*) tables. The counsel proving acceptable, the seven were chosen or elected, (*ex-elevanto*.) It is true that such brethren were not at first called Deacons,* but the humble unobtrusive title (as is obvious from 1 Tim. iii. 8—13) was subsequently applied to them from their Office, which became a permanent one in the Churches of Christ.

NOTE 9.—It is plain that no society can meet at stated times in one building without secular matters claiming attention, and expenses being incurred. It is as evident that it is uncomely, and even objectionable, for Ministers to have the financial responsibility of the Chapels in which they preach. It is still "not reason that they should leave the word of God," and attend to these things.

To meet this constant exigency the office of Deacon has been appointed by Jesus Christ. (See Note 1, page 149.)

NOTE 10.—The secular business connected with a Church should be entrusted to recognised Christians only—not to outsiders. A Committee composed partly of members and partly of persons who make no profession of religion, is an expedient unknown in the Scriptures.

The Polity of the New Testament knows of no governing body but the Church—namely the spiritually-minded men and women acting in their corporate capacity.

THE IDEAL DEACON.

NOTE 11.—It is clear that Deacons must not only be in fellowship with the Church, but men well-known for the spirituality of their religion, the consistency of their lives, their

*The above will, it is trusted, be deemed a sufficient reply to the objection that Acts vi. 1—6 and 1 Tim. iii. 8—13 do not refer to the same officials. The "administration" of Acts vi. 1, is the daily "deaconing," (*diakonía*). "To serve tables," verse 2, is to *deacon* them (*diakoneó*) in contrast to "the ministry (*diakonía*) of the word" of verse 4. In 1 Tim. iii. 8—13, the officers specified are called Deacons (*diakonos*.) Their business is to "serve or wait on," (*diakoneo*, to serve as deacons) verse 10. They are to be moral; of good repute; sound in the faith, and with well-ordered homes. Not a word is said about their preaching or ministering the word.

adherence to the doctrines of the gospel, and their manifested fitness for the work.

They were originally to be (Acts vi. 3) members of the Church, "Look out men from among yourselves;" respectable,—"borne witness to," or "of good report:" spiritual, "full of the Spirit;" and wise "[full] of wisdom."

When the office was subsequently fully recognised it is stated that—

1 Tim. iii. 8. [It behoves] Deacons* in like manner [to be] 1. Grave; 2. Not double-tongued; 3. Not given to much wine; 4. Not seeking gain by base means (verse 9); 5. Holding the mystery of the Faith in [connection with] a pure conscience.

(Verse 10) And (before their actual election) let these (brethren who manifest such *traits* of Christian character) first be proved: then, (by your formal choice) let them serve as Deacons, if they be (possibly so long as they are) blameless.

(Verse 11) Even so [it behoves] their wives† [to be] grave, not slanderers; and that they should be sober (or temperate in judgment, of an equable disposition); faithful in all things.

(Verse 12) 6. Let the Deacons be [the] husbands of one wife; 7. Ruling their children and their own families well.

Thus in seven particulars the characteristics of those only whom Churches should choose to serve as Deacons are given.

NOTE 12.—The familiar statement that Deacons have to see to the *Lord's Table*, that the elements are duly provided: the *Minister's Table*, that he be relieved of temporal anxiety: and the *Table of the poor*, that they do not suffer the bitterness of actual want—is worthy of continual remembrance.

IS THE OFFICE OF DEACON A PERPETUAL ONE?

NOTE 13.—It is the usage of our Churches to regard a

*Not *the* Deacon, as in verse 2, *The Bishop*. The ideal Church which the Apostle had in his mind possessed one Bishop and several Deacons. (Compare Note, page 141.)

†The Revised Version renders this simply "women." Some refer it to Deaconesses like Phœbe, Rom. xvi. 1, who is supposed to have been a chosen official of the Church at Cenchrea. The word *gunē* is, however, rendered "wife" in verses 2 and 11, and it seems hardly permissible to change its meaning here. The teaching, to our thinking, is, that if a Christian man is united to a woman who is a slanderer—the word used is *diabolos* (false accuser, one of the names of Satan)—or intemperate or false, he should on no account be suffered to act as a Deacon.

Deacon as chosen for life unless he resigns his Office,* or manifests moral or spiritual unfitness for it. As a Deacon is *first* a member of a Church; *then* its official servant; it is obvious that if his membership from any cause, ceases, he falls out of office. Deacons who know that they lack any of the qualifications of 1 Tim. iii. 8—13, should honourably resign their position. None who are not humble, consistent, devout and truth-loving Christians can possibly serve Churches in this capacity, to their advantage and the glory of God. Moral and spiritual deficiency are fatal to usefulness. On the other hand, men of few natural gifts and many lawful engagements often prove most useful—and the Office should never be lightly abandoned on account of depleted inability.

PERIODICAL DEACONS.

NOTE 14.—It is a vexed question whether Deacons should not be invariably elected for a limited time only (say twelve months) and reinstated or passed over at the expiration of this period by the suffrages of the Church. The New Testament is hardly decisive on the point—but it is indisputable that the majority of wise and reliable Christians of our Section of the Denomination regard the election of a Deacon by a Church as a *life-choice* with the reservations mentioned in Note 11.† The advantages of being able to rid ourselves of a Diotrephes (3 John 9) are indeed great; but if Churches chose none but brethren who had first demonstrated their fitness for the office by unobtrusive, unofficial service, and rejected all persons in whom the qualifications of 1 Tim. iii. 8—13 were conspicuously lacking, the sorrows often complained of would be so minimised as to put an end to all criticism and complaint.

The Church-order here insisted on is Divine and, therefore, satisfactory. It fails only when Church members disregard the principles so clearly laid down in the New Testament.

*Philip was first a Deacon, afterwards an Evangelist. So many worthy Deacons have to-day become honoured Itinerant Ministers, and some, Pastors. The assertion that the word *chreia*, rendered "business" in Acts vi. 3, has the exclusive meaning of "a transient emergency" is not true. "Business" is the correct translation. The seven brethren were chosen to transact the business in hand, *or any other* which did not come under the head of the "ministry of the word."

†If 1 Tim. iii. 10 means, "Let him use the office of a Deacon so long [only] as he is found blameless"—it is clear that a Church should depose a blameworthy Deacon.

TEACHERS.

NOTE 15.—Christ “gave some.....Pastors and Teachers.” Eph. iv. 11. Does this refer to two offices, or to one only? Are these Pastors and Teachers different individuals, or the same—the two terms presenting two features of the work of a regular minister?

The latter view is the more common. The grammar of the passage seems to require it. It does not read “He gave some (*tous men*) apostles, and some (*tous de*) prophets, and some (*tous de*) evangelists, and some (*tous de*) pastors, and some (*tous de*) teachers,” but “pastors and (*kai*) teachers”—the last two terms in the series being united, not dissociated. Moreover, a settled minister, if efficient, is unquestionably a Pastor-teacher. In 1 Pet. v. 2, those who have the oversight (or are Bishops) of the Churches are bidden to “feed” (or act as the Pastors of) their “flocks:” while in 1 Tim. iii. 3 they are required to be “apt to teach.”

George Wright, of Beccles,* however, a high authority, judged that two Offices *are* intended. “Apostles and prophets were given [to the Church] for a short season only. Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers are continued, that, by the use of their various gifts they may, in their respective Offices, contribute their quota of service for perfecting ‘the body of Christ.’”

“Evangelists are endowed with the gift of preaching the word, and are ordained to go whither the Lord may direct them, to publish the glad tidings.

“Pastors are bishops, or overseers, who are appointed to rule over a body of congregated believers united in fellowship under the headship of Christ, according to His word.

“Teachers are brethren, who being ‘partakers of the Holy Ghost,’ and ‘holding the mystery of the Faith in a pure conscience,’ are able in a private capacity to instruct others by teaching them ‘the word of God more perfectly.’”

The reader must come to his own conclusion. It may be observed that—

The instruction of Christians who are less taught than ourselves is undoubtedly a Christian duty. (Col. iii. 16; Heb. v. 12; Acts xviii. 26.)

*“The New Testament Ministry”—the Circular Letter of the Suffolk and Norfolk Association of Particular Baptist Churches for 1860, page 20. The above is quoted with approval in the Circular Letter for 1862, on “The Government and Discipline of a Gospel Church,” by Charles Hill, page 15. The quotations on page 151 are also made from these.

That there *were* men styled “Teachers” in the early Churches is clear. Acts xiii. 1, “There were at Antioch prophets and teachers.” 1 Cor. xii. 28, “God set (or placed) in the Churchteachers.” Rom. xii. 7, “He that teacheth, [let him occupy himself] in teaching.”

See also Gal. vi. 6, “Let him that is taught (orally instructed, or catechised, *katechēō*) in the word, share with him that teaches (or catechises) in all good things.” The verb of which our familiar word “catechise” is a transliteration is here employed.

Whether these were *official* Teachers, set apart for the work by an act of the Church may be questioned. Certainly honour was paid to those who thus laid themselves out to instruct their brethren; and we are taught how *we* should regard the conductors of Bible classes, etc., in our own Churches.

NOTE 16.—“Evangelists, Pastors, Teachers: these Offices are distinct yet harmonious, resembling the wheels of a well-constructed machine, working together, each in its place; that as an adjusted organism they may promote and preserve the spirituality and glory of the Church.

“Brethren who are called to any special ministration, should, by great searchings of heart and fervent prayer, seek to ascertain which of these Offices it is the will of God they should occupy. For want of a just discernment, we may err, by supposing that we are able to fill *one* Office when our gifts are only adapted for another. A Teacher may thus imagine that he should go forth in public as an Evangelist; or an Evangelist that he should take the shepherd’s rod and become the Pastor of a flock. Instances are not uncommon in which an Evangelist who has been useful in a village or town has stepped into the Pastor’s office, and become comparatively useless or even worse; the Church of which he accepted the oversight having suffered loss from his want of capacity to rule and feed. Let brethren and the Churches deliberately and solemnly consider this, that when occasion arises they may act wisely. “Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain,” Prov. xxv. 14.—GEORGE WRIGHT.

No folly is greater than the promotion of inefficient men to posts of responsibility—yet how common it is!

“Impatience and undue anxiety to obtain a settled Minister, in order to remove the inconvenience and trouble of procuring Supplies, have led to the election of persons altogether unqualified for the discharge of the onerous and sacred duties of the Pastorate.

“Pecuniary considerations, too, [a desire to secure the services of a man simply because he can be had cheaply] have often

unrighteously influenced a Church in this most important matter. A policy so worldly and carnal has been followed by consequences in harmony with the [wicked] principles thus adopted and carried out."—CHARLES HILL.

Article XVIII.—The Two Ordinances. Page 10.

SACRAMENTALISTS AND EVANGELICALS.

NOTE 1.—It is customary to divide Christendom into Protestant and Catholic. It were better to divide it into the Evangelical and the Sacramental sections. These are sharply distinguished by various other things, but by nothing so definitely as this. The Evangelicals rely substantially for their preservation and extension upon the power of God's truth—the Gospel as a living force upon the hearts of men; while Sacramentalists—in all their various forms—rely, for their perpetuation and extension, upon the administration of religious rites by duly qualified officials.

Both hold to the indispensableness of Divine influence, but the one believe that God acts on human minds and hearts *directly*, through the Gospel, especially when vocalised by spiritually living men; the others believe that the power of God works chiefly, if not wholly, through rites or ceremonies which He has ordained, and which are actually the channels or instrumental means of saving grace.

Evangelicals, therefore, are those who practically hold that "the Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," Rom. i. 16: "by which [men] are saved," 1 Cor. xv. 2. They contend that no part of God's Word expresses the idea of sinners being saved, or saints being established, through grace conveyed by a rite or ceremony; and deny that the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are Sacraments, as the word is generally understood.

Sacramentalists, on the other hand insist that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are veritable *Sacraments*—that is, "outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace;" "means whereby" men "receive the same;" and "pledges to assure them thereof" and, therefore, "*generally* (that is, in all cases without exception) necessary to salvation." They also hold that their Ministers are Priests, who receive at their ordination authority and power so to administer the Ordinances as to render them thus the effective means of grace.

Sacramentalists—broadly so called—are a large class, embracing the Greek, or Western Church; the Roman Catholic,

or Eastern Church; and the Ritualistic section of the Anglican Church.

Evangelicals—broadly so called—comprehend the Evangelical Section of the Church of England, and the various Free Churches which adhere to the great truths of salvation by grace, and attribute no spiritual efficacy to the two Ordinances of the Gospel.

ORDINANCES, NOT SACRAMENTS.

NOTE 2.—A Divine ordinance, strictly speaking, is a duty or practice enjoined upon Churches as such, by God Himself. Of these there are several—such as the public preaching of the Gospel to all men, Matt. xxviii, 19, 20: meetings of Christians for prayer, 1 Tim. ii. 1—8: the care to be extended to the poor, Gal. vi. 10, etc. The use of the term is confined by English Dissenters to the two Rites or religious ceremonies established in the Church by Christ—namely Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

NOTE 3.—Strict and Particular Baptists are emphatic in denying that these Ordinances are Sacraments. It is nowhere stated in the New Testament that they are designed to be the exclusive channels, mediums, or instruments for communicating any forms of grace. Baptism is never stated to confer spiritual life. The bread and wine at the Lord's Supper are never said to impart Christ's flesh and blood; the receiving and partaking of which are purely the act of faith. Christians are blessed in their obedience, but the blessing comes directly from God to their souls, and not through any virtue infused into the water, bread and wine, and so communicated to men.

THE ORDINANCES PERPETUAL.

NOTE 4.—We, however, insist, in opposition to the Quakers, the Salvation Army, and some of the followers of William Huntington, that the Immersion of Believers in actual water; and the physical eating of bread and drinking of "the fruit of the vine" are Ordinances of perpetual obligation, while Time shall last. They were practised by the Apostles and their associates; nor is it anywhere stated that they have been abrogated.

We agree with these Brethren in holding that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is all-important and communion with Christ by Faith paramount to the existence and maintenance of Salvation, but we repudiate their inference that *therefore* Ordinances which God established are vain and unprofitable. Many, indeed, have abused them. We conceive that we best glorify

Him by assigning to them their right place in the worship and service of God.

NOTE 5.—Our Article affirms that “all other ritualistic forms and ceremonies” than Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are forbidden by the Word of God. The Puritans sternly opposed “will-worship,” Col. ii. 23, which they conceived to be any form of religious service which lacked Divine authority; and all that are responsible for the conduct of the public proceedings in our chapels should diligently enquire whether every act which receives our attention has the sanction of the Book to which we profess to appeal for positive support for all that we do.

Article XIX. Baptism, its Subjects, Method, and Significance. Page 10.

This Article expresses our convictions as to the MODE, SUBJECTS and SIGNIFICANCE of Christian Baptism.

BAPTISM IS IMMERSION.

NOTE 1.—It “is the immersion of the whole person in water.” For

The word *Baptise* is a transliteration of the Greek verb *Baptizō*, which is invariably allowed to mean, “I immerse.” Were *sprinkling* intended, the word *rhantizō* (as in Heb. ix. 13, 19) would have been used; were *pouring*, we should find *ekcheō*, as in Rev. xvi. 1. The admitted force of the original word is thus a strong confirmation of the Scripturalness of our practice.

Baptizō, I baptise, is frequently followed by the preposition *en* which means *in*, (Matt. iii. 6; Mark i. 3; John i. 31; 1 Cor. x. 2) and which would not make sense if used to describe the application of water by sprinkling. In this case the words used would be *Rhantizō*, I sprinkle, *hydati*, with water. John, however, says, “*Ego*, I, *baptiso*, baptise, *en*, in, *hydati*, water.”

That the Baptisms of the New Testament were by Immersion is clear from the phraseology used in describing them. Matt. iii. 16: “Jesus, when He was baptised, went up out of the water.” John iii. 23: “Ænon, near to Salim, because there was much water (or there were many waters or streams of water) there.” Acts viii. 38: “And they both went down into the water, and he (Philip) baptised him.”

Lastly, That Baptism should be by Immersion appears from the figurative use of the term.

It is a symbol of cleansing—that is to say, it presents to the eye, by a figurative act, the great spiritual fact of the washing away of sins by the blood of Christ. (Acts xxii. 16.) The removal of impurity by a displacing medium would not be suggested by the act of sprinkling; whereas the plunging of a body into water is highly expressive of such cleansing as grace effects within the souls of believers.

The Church is said to be baptised in the Holy Ghost, Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 8; Luke iii. 16; Acts i. 5. On the Day of Pentecost, a new and enlarged relation was established between the Spirit and Christians. He did not simply come into contact with their spiritual natures, as drops of water might touch a human face, but became the environment of their being—the element of their lives—the pervading, permeating, all-surrounding power of their existence, as the children of God. Henceforth they were not to exist as Units, but as a Unity—they were “all baptised in One Spirit into one Body,” 1 Cor. xii. 13. These sublime facts are strikingly symbolised by Baptism—if we grant that by it, Immersion is intended.

Baptism is figuratively employed by Christ to describe the universality and intensity of His sufferings. Just as when a person is baptised, his whole person is covered with water, so our Lord “suffered, being tempted”—“in all points,” (Heb. ii. 18 and iv. 15) not only morally and spiritually, but “in the flesh” as well (1 Pet. iv. 1.) See “Baptism Accomplished, and Jesus Straitened no more,” by John Stevens. (Luke xii. 50.)

Baptism is an emblem of the great spiritual fact of our death, and especially our burial and resurrection, with Christ, (Rom. vi. 4; Col. ii. 12.) But the figure would have no point, and the parallel be wholly incomplete if Baptism did not, in its literal sense, mean the immersion of the whole person, as burial is the consignment of a corpse to a grave or tomb.

Baptism is likened to the [trans]planting of a tree, (Rom. vi. 5) the roots of which are covered with earth, as the person of a believer is covered with water during this act of obedience to his Lord.

The Israelites are said to have been baptised “in the cloud,” “under which” they were when in the Red Sea, (1 Cor. x. 1, 2.) This cannot mean that the cloud distilled drops of rain which sprinkled them as they advanced, but that the dense mass of vapour surrounded and closed upon them.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

NOTE 2.—It has been urged that Baptists, in contending for Immersion, as the true and only mode of Christian Baptism,

fight for a shadow—for “what can it matter, whether a few drops or a few gallons of water are employed? It were better to let all ‘be fully convinced’ in their ‘own minds,’ and to suffer a question so unimportant, and even paltry, to rest.”

We reply, that Baptism is an act of obedience, and obedience is the implicit deference to the known will of one in authority. For reasons given, we believe that the Lord’s command is to immerse believers. If this *is* His meaning, it is not a question of little water or much—of wetting the face or drenching the person—but of keeping His word. What He says should be carried out. We, therefore, refuse to sprinkle, and maintain immersion.

Again, Baptism is a ritual ordinance. Its value, therefore, depends on close attention to details. For example, the Lord’s Supper consists not solely in Christians eating and drinking in company, but in eating and drinking bread and the juice of the grape. Were fruit and water partaken of instead, the ceremony would be meaningless *as to its true import*, though it might be picturesque and full of suggestion. Baptism (so called) by sprinkling can, we admit, be made a beautiful and imposing ceremony, but it cannot set forth the same facts as Immersion does, or symbolism would be useless as a presentation of truth.

It has been urged that in Baptism the mode is of little moment as the spirit is everything. We reply, “If the mode is of no importance, why baptise at all.” It were more logical to follow the Quakers and the Salvation Army, and dispense altogether with the outward rite.

We might further ask of our Congregational brethren, “If the spirit or truth symbolised by Baptism is paramount, and the mode so unimportant, why do they baptise infants, who can have no appreciation of what is symbolised?”

Lastly, the Master said in connection with His own Baptism, “Thus it becometh *us* to fulfil all righteousness,” Matt. iii. 15. The word “thus” (*outo*) refers both to the act and the way in which it was performed. It became the great Surety of His people to be baptised, and to be baptised in the same way that He wills they shall be. Speaking, then, for Himself and all His loyal followers, He said, “Thus it becometh *us*,” etc.

THE SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM.

NOTE 3.—We are sometimes described as practising **Adult Baptism*** The expression is misleading. We do not consider age in this matter, but qualifications, which, through grace, may be possessed as well by children as persons who are

advanced in years. The qualifications are Intelligence and Faith.

FIRST QUALIFICATION—INTELLIGENCE.

“Go ye, therefore, and MAKE DISCIPLES of all the nations,BAPTISING [the disciples so made]and TEACHING them,” Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. The Apostles were thus to baptise such people of all nationalities as became disciples, or intelligent and believing recipients of the truths of the Gospel through their preaching, and who were capable of receiving and observing subsequent instruction on the higher teachings of the Master.

The Baptisms of the New Testament are described as the actions of conscious and voluntary agents. The verb describing the act is sometimes used in the ‘middle voice,’ as in Acts xxii. 16, where it has the sense, “to procure Baptism for one’s self.” (Rev. T. S. Green, Greek-English Lexicon.)

Moreover, when persons are addressed as having been baptised, it is always implied that they then knew what they were doing, and had, at the time, an appreciation of the significance of the rite. The Roman saints were aware that when they “were baptised into Christ, they were baptised into His death,” Rom. vi. 3; the Galatians that they had thus “put on Christ,” Gal. iii. 27. The Colossian believers knew that they had been baptised as those that were dead, buried, and risen with Christ, Col. ii. 12.

1 Cor. xv. 29. Baptism for the dead appears to have been one of the corruptions of the religion of Christ which crept into the Church at Corinth. It is referred to in this place only. Commentators have loaded the subject with difficulties by wild guesses at its nature, on which Scripture is absolutely silent.

Some centuries later, when Baptism had grown to be regarded as a saving Ordinance, if a candidate for Immersion died before the ceremony could be performed, a living man was [re-?] baptised in his stead. (Chrysostom, quoted by William Hanna, D.D.) This vicarious or proxy Baptism has been supposed to be the ceremony here referred to, but the idea lacks proof. There is no evidence that this grossly superstitious rite was practised at this time, nor is it probable that Paul would have mentioned it without some word of disfavour or censure.

Many again follow Doddridge in his fanciful idea that the reference is to the custom of [re-?] baptising living men to succeed to the offices of prominent Bishops or Evangelists who had fallen martyrs in the cause of Christ. Such a practice

may have existed in subsequent years, but this Epistle was penned in A.D. 56, at which period the persecution of Christians was by no means general enough to admit of the custom being so common and well-known as to warrant its introduction into an argument like the present.

It were surely wiser to confess ignorance when God has given no information.* This only is certain. It was a practice confined to a few only—the Apostle speaking of those that observed it, as “they” and not “you” or “we.” It was not the Baptism which all the members of the Church underwent when they became Christians, for it reads, not as in Rom. vi. 3, 4, “were baptised,” “were buried,” (R.V.) but “they.....who are [being] baptised for the dead.” It evidently refers to a new and exceptional practice which was then in vogue among those that are here addressed, on which the Apostle withholds his judgment. Some that maintained it, denied the Resurrection, and Paul, *taking them on their own ground*, shows their position to be untenable. Baptism for the dead (whatever it was) would be incongruous and absurd if the dead be not raised at all.

It is, however, clear from this *imitation* of a Divine rite that, at this time, Baptism was regarded as an act of intelligence, and not as a form, of the nature of which those on whom it was performed were ignorant or unconscious.

1 Pet. iii. 21. “Which also, Baptism, the antitype now saveth you.”

Not [merely]† the putting away of the filth of the flesh;

But the interrogation [or inquiry to which it is implied that a satisfactory answer is given] of a good conscience toward [or as before, or in the sight of] God.

*“On the whole, therefore, the passage must be considered to admit of no satisfactory explanation.”—CONYBEARE AND HOWSON’S ST. PAUL. Student’s Edition, page 413.

†“Not,” the adverb of negation, is occasionally used in the New Testament in a modified rather than an absolute sense, when it should be understood to mean, “not exclusively,” “not merely,” rather than “not at all.” Thus “Labour (or work) not [exclusively] for the food that perishes,” John vi. 27.—“For our wrestling is not [exclusively] against flesh and blood,” Eph. vi. 12.—“Look not each of you at his own things [only] but,” Phil. ii. 4.—“No longer drink water [only], but use a little wine.” So 1 Pet. iii. 21, as above. None who have not put away the filth of the flesh should be baptised, but inward and spiritual cleansing and rectification are also needful.

By the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

This appears to be an introverted parallelism or Hyperbaton, (page 26) consisting of four clauses, of which the first and fourth, and the second and third correspond. Baptism, as the antitype (of the water of Noah’s flood) saves us by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. [Baptism is appropriate not when moral reformation only has been effected—its significance,] not [being limited to] the putting away of the filth of the flesh; but [it involves and expresses] the interrogation, [and satisfactory testimony in response, of one who is the favoured possessor] of a good conscience toward [before, or, in the sight of] God.

The reference is to the fact that it was customary to examine candidates for Baptism in order to ascertain their spiritual condition, and the rite was not performed unless their answers warranted the conclusion that their consciences had been enlightened by the Spirit, and purged and pacified by the blood of Christ. Clearly then, Baptism as here contemplated by Peter, was not that of unconscious infants, but of those who could understand such an enquiry and return an intelligent answer.

These considerations show that Baptism should be administered to such persons only as have some knowledge of its meaning; and necessarily exclude infants, whose intellectual powers are wholly undeveloped.

SECOND QUALIFICATION—REPENTANCE AND FAITH.

Many texts assert or imply that spiritual Repentance and Faith are pre-requisites to Christian Baptism. Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 16; Acts ii. 38, 41 (where note that “gladly” *asmendōs* should be omitted); Acts viii. 13, 37, (See note, page 84); Acts xvi. 3; xviii. 8.

This is expressly or implicitly denied by our Congregational Brethren—who, though not Sacramentalists, contend for Infant Baptism. These differ greatly among themselves as to the import of the rite,* but the fact that they practise it upon children, who cannot possess personal Faith in Christ, demonstrates that they do not consider that believers only should receive it.

The Church of England, though decidedly sacramental in her teachings, requires Faith as a pre-requisite to Baptism. A babe, however, cannot believe. Individuals called sponsors (namely, persons who undertake on behalf of others) are re-

*See Note 6, page 169.

quired to do this for it. These profess a belief in all the Articles of the Christian Faith, and express a wish on its behalf to be baptised in this holy Faith, and promise that it shall believe in after years.

Thus our National Church not only admits, but contends very earnestly for a position which many would deem peculiar to the Christians called Baptists.

Note that when the apostles preached Baptism to Jews, they pressed the pre-requisite of Repentance; when to Gentiles, they urged Faith. Either involved the other—and the reason for this line of testimony is obvious.

BAPTISM—NOT A CONDITION OF SALVATION.

NOTE 4.—Certain texts in the New Testament are cited as representing Baptism to be an absolute condition of Salvation. Mark i. 4: "John did baptise and preach the Baptism of Repentance for the remission of sins." Acts ii. 38: "Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of (your) sins." Acts xxii. 16: "Arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins." (See Note on page 10.)

On these is founded the Article in the Nicene Creed, "I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins." "All sins whatsoever any person has previously been guilty of, are remitted in his Baptism,"—Pearson, on the Creed; abridged by Rev. J. Gorle, M.A., page 372.

The followers of Campbell, an American Baptist, and the Christadelphians also, hold that the faith with which pardon is connected can be expressed only by submitting to immersion in water—thus making Baptism essential to forgiveness and acceptance with God. Thus in the "Declaration" issued by the Christadelphians and published by E. Roberts, of Birmingham, it is asserted that "Baptism . . . is only enjoined on those who have intelligence enough to believe the glad tidings of the kingdom of God, and the things concerning the name of Jesus Christ. To such it is the means of that present union with Christ, which is preparatory to perfect assimilation at the resurrection. It is, therefore, necessary to salvation." page 51.

As these views are acquiring increasing currency, an examination of the texts urged in their defence may be useful.

Mark i. 4. "John came, who baptised in the wilderness, and preached the baptism of repentance unto (eis) [the] remission (or forgiveness) of sins." R.V. This is a condensed narration of the ministry of John the Baptist, and must be explained in the light of fuller accounts,—Matt. iii.

1—12: Luke iii. 1—20. The grammatical construction of our verse suggests the true interpretation. "John came baptising in the desert, and preaching a baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins." He preached that sin should be repented of and confessed—probably *aloud* (*homologeō*). Repentance and Confession were therefore the pre-requisites of the remission of sins, Baptism, being the outward expression of Repentance. Mark says that John preached "a Baptism of (namely, which expresses) Repentance"—which, the Repentance not the Baptism, was "unto the remission of sins."

Acts ii. 38. "And Peter said, 'Repent, and be baptised, every one of you, in (upon) the name of Jesus Christ, unto the remission of [your] sins.'" As Baptism was the Divinely appointed expression of the Repentance enjoined by John, so Christ's Baptism was the prescribed expression of the *spiritual* Repentance which He imparts to the elect, (Acts v. 31; xi. 18.) The phraseology of Mark i. 4, amply explains Acts ii. 38. The Repentance of which Baptism was the sign—not the mere plunging into water—was the precursor of Pardon: and the sacred rite was urged that the Faith of these *penitent* sinners (verse 37) "might be led to Christ, who suffered and died for their sins, which He left in His grave, and rose again for their justification; all of which is, in a most lively manner represented in the Ordinance of Baptism by Immersion."—DR. GILL.

Mark xvi. 16. "He that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved," etc. Relied on by Ritualists to prove that without the sacrament of Holy Baptism none can be saved. It cannot, however, serve their purpose, since in the majority of cases, the subjects of *their* Baptism, being infants, cannot be said to *believe* and be *baptised*.

The words are also urged by Campbellite Baptists and Christadelphians. These hold that though there is nothing saving in the rite of Baptism itself, it is the Divinely ordained expression of the Faith that saves, and hence that all who believe in the Lord Jesus for salvation must be baptised in water, to make their Faith valid, effectual and availing. Accordingly, they baptise any persons without delay, who profess to have received the Saviour.

The text confessedly presents a difficulty, to meet which—

(1.) It is urged that in the Revised Version, verses 9 to the end, are bracketed, as most probably an interpolation, and therefore spurious: and that the words before us have not the authority of Inspiration.

(2.) Some have thought that *spiritual* and not literal Baptism in water, is here intended. Holding to the Inspiration of the passage, they conceive that what it records occurred before the incident related in Matthew xxviii. 16—20. *This* was at Jerusalem; *that*, in Galilee—and not till the latter was Water Baptism instituted by our Lord. Mark xvi. 16, therefore, it is contended, refers to the two great essentials of salvation, Faith and the Baptism or inward purification of the Holy Spirit.

(3.) Most Evangelical expositors, however, interpret it in the light of the analogy of Faith—the harmony which exists between all parts of the Bible considered as an inspired whole, and which must govern us in assigning a meaning to any portion of it. What is definite in one place must rule what is indefinite in other; what is obscure, be read in the light of what is elsewhere plain. Of this character is Dr. Gill's admirable exposition of Mark xvi. 16. The text represents Baptism as *important*. It must not, however, be pressed (standing, as it does, *alone*) as if it taught that Salvation was conditioned on this rite. "The thief on the cross went to Heaven without it; and Simon Magus went to hell with it."

John iii. 5. "Unless a man is born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

This verse is also relied on by sacramentalists to prove that the *water* of Baptism is essential to the production of spiritual life in the human soul.*

Evangelical writers whose views of Baptism are diametrically opposite to this, take different views of the verse before us. These may be divided into (1) those that regard the "water" here referred to as *emblematical*; and (2) those that think that *literal* "water" is intended.

(1.) It is by some regarded as *emblematical*. Thus Dr. Gill views this water as signifying the grace of God, as it elsewhere does, Ezek. xxxvi. 25; John iv. 14. Grace is the moving cause of the new birth. According to *it*, and not man's free will, men are regenerated and made new creatures.

Many, again, regard this water as a figure of the *truth* or the

*Hence the Book of Common Prayer refuses Christian burial to "any that die unbaptised." They may have died in any form of sin, and the privilege be extended to their mortal remains; but if they were excommunicate, or had laid violent upon themselves, or had not been baptised—no priest must bury them in consecrated ground, even if infants of a day old.

word of God. Sinners are "begotten again by the word of His truth," (James i. 18; 1 Pet. i. 23) not *efficiently* but *instrumentally*. In Regeneration the truth is the instrument; the Holy Spirit the Agent—and both are thus appropriately connected as effecting a sinner's birth from above. (A MANUAL OF FAITH AND PRACTICE. Page 132.)

(2.) Others regard it as *literal water*, and associate it with the Baptism of John which was almost certainly present to the mind of Nicodemus. "In common with all his countrymen, he had assumed that, be it what it might, come how or when it might, the Messianic kingdom would be one within which their very birth as Jews would entitle them to be ranked. This popular delusion John had by his teaching and by his baptism in some measure denied: but it was reserved for Jesus to state the full truth. Proselytes were baptised, and were said to be "*water-born*." Those whom John had immersed on a confession of their penitence—of whom it is more than probable Nicodemus had been one—were doubtless so regarded. Such then, *in this sense*, were born of water. But more was essential. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee," (not to men as composing the human race only, but unto *you*, a select member of the chosen people, verse 7.) "unless a man is born" not "of water" only, but "of the Spirit," he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."—It is common among you Jews to say that a Gentile needs to become a new creature in order to obtain the privileges of the Hebrew Commonwealth—and when you accept him as a proselyte he is baptised, and by this symbol of washing he shows that he is cleansed from his old heathenism, and adopted into God's family. Perhaps *you* were born of *that* water; but more—immeasurably more—is needed. A man must be born—not only of water, but—of the Spirit.'

This is substantially the view of Drs. Joseph Angus, John Edmund, James Hamilton, William Hanna, &c.

Titus iii. 5. "The washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." These words are by many regarded as proving that the water of Baptism effects the actual cleansing of the soul. It may, however, be questioned whether this rite is here referred to at all. Moral reformation, it is submitted, is what is intended by this "washing."

The subject is Salvation according to the mercy of God, which is stated to have been effected "through [the] washing of regeneration," &c. "Washing," it may be stated, *is* the right translation of the Greek word *loutron*, both here and in Eph. v. 26, the only other place in which it occurs. It does

not mean a laver or a vessel for washing in, "the proper word for which is *louër*," A. BARNES and J. N. DARBY. Much less does it stand for the Baptismal Font, as Sacramentarians contend. It therefore describes a process of cleansing effected in connection with Regeneration; and the relation of this process (whatever it is) to Regeneration is determined by the phraseology. "The washing of regeneration" cannot imply that the washing effects the Regeneration, but must mean that Regeneration brings about the purification.

The true exposition appears to be this. The Apostle, in verse 4, has instructed Titus to enjoin his congregation to show "all meekness to all men." (verses 1 and 2.) And for this reason. We, ourselves, were at one time no better than other people, but morally objectionable in the ways he particularises (verse 3). But after that (or when) the kindness and philanthropy of God appeared [to us] (in the revelation of His electing grace, redeeming love, and rescuing power) He saved us—bad, vicious, and degraded as we were. The sovereignty and freeness of His saving goodness are apparent in its glorious motive. It was not "out of works *done* in righteousness," (for the sake of the works that we should do, *after* our conversion, from righteous or holy motives), but according to His mercy, that He saved us. How He saved us is next particularised. He regenerated us—infusing new life into our souls. Then in the energy of this life, He enabled us to reform and amend our conduct, and become good, honest, chaste and consistent persons. This is the cleansing which follows Regeneration. The propriety of likening the reformation which attends the new birth and the renewing of the Holy Spirit to cleansing by water is evident. Water cleanses by displacing physical impurity: the truth cleanses by removing moral impurity. Thus in a parallel passage, 1 Cor. vi. 11, the effect of Divine grace on the character is comprehensively spoken of as a washing—the process being then described in detail, "ye are sanctified and justified." See A MANUAL OF FAITH AND PRACTICE, page 126. To emphasise the propriety of meekness and gentleness in heaven-born and converted men (which is the leading thought of the passage) the Apostle adds that this outward amendment resulted from an inward work of grace for which all the glory should be ascribed to the Holy Spirit. It was not merely an outward change, but resulted from His gracious renewing, so richly outpoured through Christ our Saviour.

BAPTISM: ITS SIGNIFICANCE.

NOTE 5.—A Christian rite is a spiritual object lesson—an

acted parable—a ceremony which, by emblematical objects and symbolical actions, suggests and illustrates Divine truths.

Baptism is in this way so expressive that what it teaches may be called an epitome of saving truth.....Baptism is a visible Gospel to the World.—R. W. Dale.

Its significance is, in our Article, expressed in three particulars. More fully, Baptism may be said to express—

1. That salvation effects cleansing from the defilement of guilt. This is the first and most obvious idea which the plunging of a human body into water would suggest. The "blood of Christ" "cleanses from all sin," 1 John i. 7; and "purges the conscience from dead works," Heb. ix. 14 and x. 2. To this fact Baptism symbolically witnesses, Acts xxiii. 16 (See Note, page 10 and page 155).*

2. It expresses that the Faith which saves is followed by obedience to our great saving and delivering Lord; and proclaims that the response of a heaven-born trust to the invitation of the Saviour should be attended by deference to His will. We are not baptised *because* the act is sublimely significant, but because He enjoins it. Were it wholly unmeaning, the obligation would be the same.

3. Baptism sets forth that religion is a personal matter. The sprinkling of the face of an unconscious infant on the ground of the Faith of its natural parents, or its god-father and god-mother, utterly fails to do this: for if the act has any significance, it *must* mean that the piety of one person can avail, in some way, to promote the salvation of another. The Baptism of a believer by immersion, however, enforces the truth that salvation is a matter wholly between his own soul and his God. He comes forward on his individual responsibility, and by his own voluntary act. *Alone* he steps down into the water. He is for a moment *alone* in the watery grave. He resumes his position *alone*, as one who has received Christ Jesus as His Lord, and given himself to Him.

4. Baptism indicates that true religion detaches and attaches. We are instructed to regard the water employed as a grave, in which the person is buried, Rom. vi. 3, 4. Literal death terminates all actual connection with the world. Our spiritual death, through union with Christ, terminates our

*Rev. i. is not here cited, because it is almost certain that it should read—not *lousanti* "hath washed," but *lusanti* "hath loosed."

moral and spiritual connection with it, considered as the sphere of selfishness and sin. "If any man is in Christ he is a new creature." The aspect and bearings of his surroundings have changed. "Old things have passed away." As far as he is concerned, "behold, they have become new."* Dead men are buried in graves. Those that have died in Christ are buried in Baptism, to show that their old relationship to the world has unalterably changed. (See page 155.)

Moreover, the same grace which detaches from the world, attaches us to Christ, whom we openly receive as our Lord, Col. ii. 6. When the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, Egypt was irrevocably left behind, and they followed Moses as their leader. Hence they are figuratively said to have been baptised unto (*eis*) him (1 Cor. x. 2.) Similarly we are baptised unto (*eis*) the living Christ, as having died for us, (Rom. vi. 3.) We thus witness that we attach ourselves to Him. Hence the propriety of the exhortations which follow, and which owe much of their point to the fact that they were addressed to baptised persons. "Reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin," [the principles, practices and pleasures of the Christless and sinful world,] "but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." "Yield yourselves to God," practically, (as you did professedly in your Baptism,) "as those that are alive from the dead—and as your figurative resurrection from the watery grave of Baptism sets forth.

Thus our death to the Law,† as far as its penal claims and its power to condemn are concerned—through the body of

*"Behold, they have become new," 2 Cor. v. 17, is not only the rendering of the R.V., but it has the support of the highest authority. It also accords with fact and experience. When a man is converted, the world is not changed, but he is changed to it. Hence old things become new things to *him*. Worldly pleasures lose their attractiveness, worldly honour loses its importance; worldly enterprises become secondary to heavenly pursuits; while "spiritual things" become paramount in our estimation. Matt. vi. 33.

†Rom. vii. 6, "That being dead" (*apothanontos*) *wherein ye were held*," is a translation of what is universally allowed to be a corrupt text. *Apothanontes*, "having died" is regarded as correct by all competent scholars. "Having died or being dead [to that] *wherein we were held*." Compare Gal. ii. 19, "But I by means of the Law have died to the Law, that I should live unto God."

Christ (what Christ endured "in His own body on the tree" for us,) and our death to the world through the influence of His cross on our hearts—and the newness of our life of liberty from condemnation and joyful love to Him, by which our former love to the world has been expelled from our hearts—are both set forth in vivid and impressive symbolism whenever a saved sinner is scripturally baptised.

5. Baptism symbolically testifies that Salvation is not of works, but of the free and unmerited grace of God through Jesus Christ. The person immersed comes forward as a ransomed sinner, and declares in a ritual way how he obtained Salvation. His folded arms, his closed eyes, his passive hands, his mute lips, all reiterate the words, "not of works, lest anyone should boast." The head, the seat of the intellect; the heart, the seat of emotion; the feet, the instruments of activity—all are buried to show that he that is baptised disclaims all dependence on what he has done or shall do; while, on being raised from the watery grave, he again moves of his own accord to testify to the activity in which he means, with God's good help to walk henceforth "in newness of life."

6. Baptism is a perpetual testimony to the existence of the three Persons in the blessed Trinity, and to our indebtedness to each for the salvation we thus profess to have obtained. (Matt. xxviii. 19) As God's children we bear witness to the sovereign love, the adopting grace, and the tender pity of the Father; as redeemed offenders and pardoned sinners we attest to the love of the Son, and the preciousness and power of His blood; as heaven-born and spiritual persons we acknowledge that we owe our life and our light, our faith and our hope, our liberty and our love, to the Holy Ghost, the Author of all vital and experimental religion. Hence we are baptised "unto (*eis*) the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Matt. xxviii. 19.*

7. Comprehensively, Baptism is designed to illustrate the radical character of the change by which the Christian

*The pronouncement of these words is essential to render the immersion of a believer valid Baptism. When we read of persons, being baptised "in the name of Jesus," Acts ii. 38; viii. 16; xix. 5) the meaning is not that the prescribed form was dispensed with, but that the rite of Christian Baptism was performed. Some of the Plymouth Brethren baptise (as they call it) "in the name of Jesus," but the validity of the act is certainly dubious.

life is inaugurated, and to present the leading features of this change in a striking and simple way, adapted to impress and instruct, not only the persons baptised, but also all thoughtful spectators.*

Before persons can become members of the vital church they must die and be raised from the dead—must be dissociated from “the first Adam” and be united with “the last Adam”—must be “delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son”—must cease to be under the dominion of the Law, as to its sanction and penalty, and be brought under the reign of grace. To these and kindred truths Baptism attests.

Popular religion slurs these facts over. Spirituality is too often regarded as a higher development of morality: the New Birth as an Oriental and figurative allusion to improvement in outward conduct: Conversion, once the watchword of an Evangelical ministry, is but little preached; and admission into the visible Church is divested of the seriousness and solemnity formerly associated with it. Baptism, rightly administered is, however, a standing testimony to the fact that between the Church and the world is a chasm so broad, deep and vital, that nothing but sovereign grace, and the power of the Holy Ghost through the blood of Christ can enable a sinner to pass it.

8. Lastly, From Baptism we learn that it is the will of God that as soon as people are conscious that they “have passed from death unto life” they ought to declare it in a public, unmistakable and final manner. Freemasons, Odd Fellows, Foresters, and Good Templars have their ceremonies of initiation, all designed to impress on their members the importance of the secrets imparted to them, and their obligation to keep these inviolate. Total abstainers insist on their converts signing the Pledge *at once*, while resolution is as yet young and ardent in the heart. These are wise, and manifest a just appreciation of human nature. So He “who knoweth our frame” has made Baptism the Christian convert’s

*The author submits that the *significance* of Baptism is a branch of the subject which has not received sufficient attention in our section of the Denomination. He is not acquainted with one published sermon or magazine article on the subject, save a paper in the Gospel Herald for 1880 from his own pen, and our late brother Shepherd’s first published sermon on “The Use and Intent of Ritual,” long (he regrets to say) out of print.

first business—a step to be taken at once. “Why *tarriest* thou?” Then henceforth, amid attracting influences, in spite of alluring voices, the young Disciple will (through grace Divine) be constrained to say, “I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back.” (Judges xi. 35.) He thus sets up a moral safe-guard, by which he may instrumentally save himself from his surroundings, as the converted Jews were enjoined by Peter to “save themselves,” by Baptism, from their own “untoward (or perverse) generation.”* (Acts ii. 40.)

Baptism: Opinions of Pædobaptists.

NOTE 6.—Few religious facts are more strange than the disparity of the views held by Pædobaptists as to the intent and significance of the rite of Baptism as they practise it.

1. **Sacramentalists** boldly claim that it is a *sacrament*, and, following their Prayer-Book, assert that when the water is applied to children in accordance with prescribed forms, and by a duly ordained priest—they are therein *made* members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven, (“The Catechism,”) and thanks are yielded to God “that it hath pleased Him to regenerate these infants with His Holy Spirit, to receive them for His own children by Adoption, and to incorporate them into His holy Church.” (Office for the “Ministration of Public Baptism of Infants.”)

Nothing is said concerning the symbolic teaching of Baptism *as such*, the only reference to the significance of the rite being based upon the unscriptural act of signing the child “with the sign of the Cross—in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the Faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under His banner against sin, the world, and the devil; and to continue Christ’s faithful soldier and servant unto his life’s end.”

2. The views of many Evangelical Churchmen are not

*While reading these pages in proof, I have met with “The Gospel in Baptism,” by my valued friend, Rev. F. A. Jones, so long of Islington, now of Ilford. Had I seen it before, this chapter would have been greatly better. I must, however, now content myself with commending it as a thoughtful, scholarly, and admirably written treatise on the spiritual significance and moral value of Christian Baptism. Its ability, candour, and savour entitle it to the high position in our literature to which I doubt not it will attain. BAPTIST TRACT SOCIETY, 16, Gray’s Inn Road, London. Price 2s.

widely different. Thus the Rev. T. Dale, when addressing "Children and very Young Persons" on the subject, refers to their godfathers and godmothers who had "promised and vowed three things in their names, etc. (Catechism). These having answered for them, that they would do this, "then," continues the Preacher, addressing each child personally, "and not till then, did the Minister sprinkle upon your brow the holy water, and give you the name which you now bear, and 'baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'" And when he had done this, you were made one of the Church of Christ, one of the lambs of Christ's flock, one of the children of God by Jesus, to be His, and to be His, first, while you lived, and that you might be His, and His alone for ever, when you died. And if you had died then, or if you had died soon after, as many children do; if you had been taken with a fit, or struck with a fever, or seized by some sharp and painful disease, you might have suffered pain and sickness and weakness for awhile, but had you died, you would have gone at once to God and Christ, because you had become your Saviour's; "because He lived, you would live also," yea, live with Him, and with good angels, and with God your Father for ever and ever."

3. The earlier Congregationalists, following the practice and sentiments of their Presbyterian brethren, baptised adult converts to Christianity in one of the three accepted ways—sprinkling, effusion, (pouring) or immersion; the latter rarely and with no very good will.

They also* baptised the children of professed Christians, requiring that one or both parents (generally *insisting* on the first only) should be members of the Church. This they did on the assumption that there was an almost perfect parallel between the religion of the Jews and the religion of Christians in this particular. God was the God of all the families of Israel. (Jer. xxxi. 1.) Male infants were therefore dedicated to Him by circumcision—and, by a parity of reasoning, it was contended that all the infants in godly homes should be baptised.

They also attached great importance to the recorded baptisms of households—insisting that, for instance, Lydia and the Philippian Jailor must have had infant children. Acts xvi. 15

*The (to us) apparent inconsistency of *two* Baptisms on principles so different, does not appear to have struck their acknowledged authorities.

and 33. The fact that the household of the latter believed in God was conveniently overlooked.

Another argument they based on 1 Cor. vii. 14, in which the question is discussed whether the conversion of one of a married couple necessitates their separation as man and wife. Paul decides in the negative, because their children would then be unclean or illegitimate; but that "now" were they "holy," being the fruit of lawful wedlock. By the word "holy" he thus evidently means that no taint of birth was associated with them.

These Pædobaptists, however, held Paul's meaning to be that the children of even one believing parent have a natural and birth right to the privileges of the New Covenant, and are actually "holy," though only in a federal, ecclesiastical, or some other vague sense. On this they based the duty of the Church to baptise such infants.*

These Christians, though they styled Baptism a Sacrament, (See Dr. Robert Halley on the Sacraments), did not hold with the Sacramentalists, (page 152) that it conferred saving grace, but considered that it put children into a position and condition favourable to the reception of the blessings offered in the Gospel, and entitled them to admission into the Church—without further Baptism—if they should accept Christ in after years.

They further held that it imposed on parents a new and solemn obligation to give their children a religious education, and to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," (Eph. vi. 4.) With them, the water was a symbol of Divine cleansing. They regarded the allusions to Baptism in Rom. vi. 3, 4, as referring to the Baptism of the Spirit,† and denied that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and our death and resurrection in and through Him, are set forth in this rite.

4. Other eminent Congregationalists of more recent years repudiated the term Sacrament, and were wont to speak of the *Ordinance* of Baptism, which they regarded as an act of dedication—a trustful giving up of infants to Jesus, in the spirit in which the Jewish mothers brought theirs to be touched

*See Burkitt's Commentary on the passage, and note the droll epithet he applies to Baptists—"duri infantum patres," unfeeling fathers of children.

†Hodge's "Outlines of Theology," New Edition, 1879, page 607.

and blessed.* They appear to have paid little attention to the symbolism of the rite, save that they recognised that the water was an emblem of purification, and that the whole ceremony set forth the grace and gentleness of Jesus. They also publicly named the child, with prayer for its salvation.

5. A view adopted by Congregationalists in recent years is advocated by E. W. Dale, LL.D., in his "Manual of Congregational Principles," pages 126 to 135.

This great writer styles the rite a Sacrament, denies that Faith is its essential pre-requisite, repudiates the idea that it is a Dedication on the part of the parents of children who are baptised; and contends that, without any restriction of birth or relationship, all babes should receive its benefits from the Church.

He bases his arguments on his Arminian, or rather Pelagian opinions. In Matthew xxviii. 19, he remarks that the Apostles

*Matt. xix. 13-15 : Mark x. 15 : Luke xviii. 15, 16. Much more than is warranted by the inspired records has been interpolated into this incident. Painters and poets invariably represent these children as having been brought by their mothers. This is pure supposition. The New Testament does not say so, and to base theological ideas on guesses is reprehensible. It is often supposed that all these children were babies—whereas Luke styles them "infants," or "babes;" Matthew and Mark, "little children"—indicating that some were carried, as unable to walk; and that others were boys and girls in the ordinary sense of the words. What the desire of those that brought them was "that He should lay His hands on them and pray," Matthew; "touch them," Mark and Luke. In response, "He laid His hands on them," Matthew; "took them in His arms and blessed them, laying His hands on them," Mark; saying, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, (these therefore could walk) and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God," Luke. Whether He saved them, there and then, or simply used them as illustrations of the operations of His grace, as He did the "little child" in Matt. xviii. 2, is not stated. If the former, it is remarkable that no subsequent mention is made of them. William Palmer inclined to the idea that they were diseased, and were brought to Jesus that He might heal them. It is certain that the Master did not baptise or christen them, (John iv. 2); and His words afford no proof of the scripturalness of the practice to which we, as Baptists, are opposed.

were commanded by Christ, on the ground of the universal authority which had been given Him, to "go forth and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you."

"All nations," he regards as the whole of humanity, "for whom Atonement has been made." "We belong to a race for which Christ died—not for believers, but for all men—without asking our consent, without waiting for our Faith. All men are now 'not under law, but under grace.' Every child born into the world belongs to a race for whose sins He has atoned;" and is therefore a subject of Christ. He is our King—not by our own choice, but by God's appointment: and by the rite of Baptism He claims His own. This he amplifies—

In Baptism, Christ claims us as His subjects.

In Baptism, Christ claims us, not only as His subjects, but as those whom He has redeemed.

In Baptism, Christ gives us the assurance that He loves us with an infinite love, and will do His part towards saving us, and bringing us to glory.

Thus, when a man, godly or ungodly, employs certain words, and sprinkles the face of a child, Christ Himself claims His own.

Much is made of the words "baptising" and "teaching." If a man will not be baptised, this is no reason for refusing to teach him; and though an infant cannot be taught, this is no reason for refusing to baptise it, etc.

To the phrase "making disciples of" our Author makes but one passing allusion. As a command, however, it has surely equal force with the other two. "Going forth, therefore, make disciples of all the nations," (as distinguished from Jews), and when any profess to be in loyal subjection to Christ, baptise them, and subsequently instruct them in the subjects named. Must not this be accepted as the meaning of the passage?

6. The Rev. Joseph Parker, D.D., who is competent to voice the convictions of his Denomination, writes thus in his "Wednesday Evenings at Cavendish Chapel;" pages 29 to 31.

"I encourage parents to bring their children early to the Temple; to lend them to the Lord before they can give themselves away; and what know we, but that the mother's loan may be confirmed by the man's own gift."

"There is an Argument for Infant Baptism which I have never known to be touched, much less shaken. I inquire, 'When does God's interest in human life begin?' When does