

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

THE BAPTISMAL QUESTION.
No. X.

HARMONY BETWEEN THE BAPTISM OF BELIEVERS AND THE NEW TESTAMENT DISPENSATION.

Part 3.

§ VII. The Foundation of the Church.

The Church of Christ is built up upon certain facts and doctrines—upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. That is, the truths announced by prophets and apostles, all centering in Christ, constitute the foundation upon which the church reposes. Of these truths Paul gives us this summary: "That Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures." In another place he speaks of "Jesus our Lord, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." These truths are cardinal ones. In them the whole Bible is comprehended. In subordination to them all revelation is arranged. Around them all providences revolve. They are the glory of the highest heavens. It will be the business of a beatified eternity to develop at once their nature and their application. Apart from these truths there had been no church—no Bible—no salvation—no mercy here—and no hope—no hereafter. But in them that great announcement is both included and fulfilled, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men; and he will dwell with them; and they shall be his people; and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." The fulness of their import can never be fathomed, and their importance can never be exaggerated. They revolutionize both heaven and earth by their might, while they confound the policy of hell. Their mystery surpasses the apprehension of angels; while "babes and sucklings" cling to them in their simplicity, and are gladdened by their mercy. Oh! these great fundamental truths! Have we not in them "the unsearchable riches of Christ?" Yes, God gathers his church to himself, alike from Jews and Gentiles, "to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Such is the Gospel; and such the Gospel dispensation, while for such purposes has that dispensation been established and perpetuated.

§ Believers' baptism directly contemplates these truths.

Now the baptism of believers immediately recognizes these truths, and distinctly and beautifully exhibits them. So we read, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.—Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." In these passages we obtain a farther insight into what the apostle means when he speaks of "putting on Christ" in baptism. It is to put him on in those peculiar aspects in which he is here exhibited. Not merely as our Teacher, our Example, our King; but also as our atoning Sacrifice, our Great High Priest, our risen, ascended, perpetual Intercessor. There can be no "baptism into Jesus Christ" apart from a reference to these grand gospel verities. Not that in baptism the believer appropriates Christ and his work. This is done by faith, and faith alone; as in the case of the penitent thief crucified with Christ, who was clearly never baptized at all; but who as clearly partook of all the benefits brought to men by the work of Christ: "born of the Spirit," born into the glory of "Paradise," though never "born of water." So then, for all saving purposes, baptism, apart from faith, is of no avail. But where the salvation of the Gospel has been realized, what more lovely, more pathetic, than this New Testament ordinance? in which the Saviour, and the benefits

flowing to the saved ones from the Saviour, come before us in solemn and impressive figure. So much, indeed, is there to attract the eye, and affect the heart in this ordinance, that multitudes who reject Baptist theories do yet own a deep scenic significance, at least, in our distinguishing practice. It is matter of fact, moreover, that in our rite, when duly administered, there is so much of Christ, and of conformity to him, that many have seen him there, as by a mental vision, for the first time; and have been led to give themselves to him by faith while witnessing the observance in which others have yielded themselves to him by profession. Thus it is that baptism too preaches Christ, and that not in vain; while the elemental water, "unstable" though it be in itself, when consecrated by this sacred rite, receives in its bosom the impress of the Lord, and reflects it on the eyes of beholders; and sometimes even traces that impress on their hearts.

§ VII. The Gospel and the Future.

The Gospel deals largely with the future. It abolishes death, and brings life and immortality to light. It lifts away the veil of thick darkness in regard to the future which heretofore hung over the whole Gentile world. It supersedes, by the lessons of its more advanced day, the twilight teachings of the Old Testament in regard to that same future. It leaves much, very much, yet to be known when we pass into the unseen world. But it has added immensely to the known even here in regard to the Christian's final and blessed home; and so enables every believer to march boldly up to the darkness which yet covers his future; assured that, when he reaches it, that darkness shall be dissipated, and he shall behold naught but light beyond. Especially it tells of "Jesus and the resurrection." It shews us Jesus now, at the right hand of God, as he fulfils his reconciling ministry. It inspires the hope of going to abide with Jesus when we die, and so springing at once to the loftier summits of holy bliss. It assures us, that one day we shall rise from the dead, clothed with bodies, "fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." Thus it triumphs where heathenism wholly fails, while it gloriously adds to what Moses and the prophets obscurely hinted as to the "inheritance of the saints in light."

§ The aspect of believers' baptism upon the future.

Here it is that the New Testament doctrine of baptism shines forth with peculiar lustre. It is the baptism of believers; of those who have enshrined in their hearts the magnificent teachings of the Gospel at which I have here glanced, and who hope one day to attain to the blissful realizations to which those teachings point. These believers take their stand by the baptismal waters, and make their grand confession. They own that they are sinners, and deserve to be forever plunged beneath the billows of Divine wrath which in emblem they see before them. But they gratefully rejoice in Him who was overwhelmed in a baptism of blood and woe in their stead. From that baptism they behold him victoriously emerging, as he awakes from his slumber in Joseph's tomb, and returns on high; to be humbled, to be afflicted, to die no more, but to live for ever, that he may impart eternal life to all that believe on his name. With him, in obedience to his own precept, and in conformity to his own example, they desire to die, to be buried, to rise again, to newness of life here, to perfected and endless felicity hereafter. And so they are "buried with Christ" in baptism; wherein also they arise with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who raised him from the dead. Thus they look back to Calvary. In solemn emblem they appropriate to themselves the benefits of the blood there shed, and evermore pleaded in behalf of our guilty race in the skies. While thus "baptized into the death" of Christ, with him still in emblem, they rise and reign even now; and anticipate the glad hour when they too, like their Lord, shall come forth from their graves, and see their Redeemer face to face, and enter with him into glory, and "sit with him in his throne, even as he also became, and is set down with his Father in his throne." So it is that, on the one hand, as heretofore shewn, the grand facts on which the Gospel reposes are emblematically exhibited in baptism. And now we have seen how the baptismal rite comprehends within its emblems the whole course and compass of the Gospel dispensation, so far as individual experience is concerned, from the moment in which a sinner is introduced into it by faith, along the whole of his career as a believer, to the grand consummation of the resurrection unto life eternal. From first to last that rite proceeds in parallel lines with the Gospel; never once in-

truding into its place, or pretending to share in its efficacy; although it beautifully shadows forth Christ's whole work for poor ruined man, and the believer's whole experience while he appropriates the benefits of that work, and makes them his own.

J. DAVIS.

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For the Christian Messenger.

Temporal Mores!

Mr. Editor,—

Nature has in some instances been prodigal of her gifts. We find in different portions of this mundane sphere, and at different epochs in its history, men, whose minds afford the strongest evidence of having been moulded expressly for the times.

We here and there find a master mind. And the mental calibre of a Bacon and a Pascal will ever command admiration, and will to the end of time, operate beneficially upon the minds and morals of men.

But Sir, such men are the exception, and like comets traverse extremely elliptical orbits. They are men who have received largely at the hand of Nature, and having developed and matured their natural endowments by a sound, unobscured education, have left evidences of their superiority, that the praises of men shall ever hymn, and which time in all its death dealing shall not be able to mar or obliterate. But again, such men as these are uniform in mind and manner. They don't preach a certain doctrine to day, and to morrow, practically strangle it. Much less do they attempt to play the agreeable, both to public opinion and private conviction, when these are at variance. Their precepts and their practice harmonize, and they will not stoop so low as to lend themselves the willing tools of any party or any policy, to the creed, and the whole creed, of which, they cannot subscribe. Moreover, they are, as a rule, modest men. They don't advertise their powers, but if they possess ability they allow it to bring them into notice. In a word, they are not obtrusive. And as a general thing you are obliged to *dig* for good metal, whereas dress is always making you aware of its presence.

Now Sir, it is an easy matter to write, but not so easy to write sound sense. It is not the work of a lifetime to begin, but some people on the inception of anything, appear at once reconciled to the idea of their task being endless. And some writers in propagating principles, which, not only in their nature, but in their diction are decidedly *sui generis*, manifest a Job-like patience in muzzling the Queen's English, and surfacing her loyal subjects with their creed and uncalled for dissertations. Alas that such scribblers should be found in the present day.

Now Sir, an article in the "Provincial Wesleyan" of the 7th Inst., under the Caption of "Baptism," I will match against anything, in the literary world for ridiculous incongruity. Of all people in the world, Wesleyans, should be reserved on the subject of Baptism; for, taking liberal, unbiased views of the teachings of Scripture in reference to the mode of baptism, they have entered the lists on the whole sale principle. As a body, I conceive them to discard the doctrine of baptismal regeneration and to recognize as valid, any of the modes—immersion, pouring and sprinkling. If this be true in reference to the creed, if this was true, in reference to Mr. Wesley himself, why is it, that the *minor sidera* of the body, are tolerated in disseminating heterodoxy and in accumulating the elements of present strife and ultimate secession. Why is it that G. O. H. or any other "Christian Minister," is allowed to parade his school boy productions, week after week, in the columns of the Wesleyan, much to the disgust and chagrin of a large proportion of the readers of that weekly. We have men who can write, and write what would be food for souls, let us have the bread then, and in the future discard all husks. Furthermore, to G. O. H., I would say, you appear to have got into the wrong ear. I am sorry you are so b, drop-ho, and I do not think you are under the proper treatment for the disease. Do not however imagine for one moment that you are about to decide a point on which the most learned Divines have differed. But if you must write, I pray you "Sanite materiam vestris acquam viribus, et versate die," &c. Finally if the Wesleyan Church recognizes any one of the three modes of baptism practiced, as equally valid, henceforth let no man be wounded in the house of his friends. But if not, I for one want to know it, that I may not be found identified with a church, the ordinances of which I have never partaken of.

A WESLEYAN.

Various Readings.

no. 2.

Dear Brother,

In my last I gave some examples of various readings of the Greek Text of the New Testament, adopted by Dean Alford. I now send you a few more. The first collection consisted of words or clauses to be omitted. The following list contains additions. The words in *Italics* are to be added to the text, according to the authority of the best manuscripts.

- Mark 1. 38. "Let us go *elsewhere*."
- Mark 3. 32. "Thy mother, and thy brethren, and thy sisters."
- Luke 12. 15. "Take heed, and beware of every kind of covetousness."
- Luke 15. 17. "And I perish *here*."
- Luke 16. 25. "He is comforted *here*."
- John 9. 9. "Others said, *No, but he is like him*."
- John 19. 35. "That ye *also* might believe."
- Acts 4. 27. "For of a truth in this city."
- Acts 13. 6. "And when they had gone through the *whole* isle."
- Acts 16. 7. "But the Spirit of Jesus suffered them *not*."
- Acts 20. 1. "Paul called unto him the disciples, and exhorted them."
- Acts 29. 23. "The Holy Ghost witness *th* to me."
- 1 Cor. 9. 20. "To them that are under the law, as under the law, *not being myself under the law*."
- Gal. 2. 16. "Knowing *nevertheless*."
- Ephes. 6. 9. "Knowing that *both their and your* master."
- James 4. 12. "There is one lawgiver and judge."
- 1 Peter 2. 2. "That ye may grow thereby unto *salvation*."
- 1 John 3. 1. "That we should be called the sons of God; and we are *so*."
- Rev. 8. 7. "And they were cast upon the earth; and the third part of the earth was burnt up."

It will be seen, I think, that in many of these instances the addition renders the text clearer. It is believed that the words so added formed part of the original text, as they still do in the best manuscripts, but were omitted in those manuscripts from which the common or received text was printed in the seventeenth century. It is important that they should be restored.

Let me add a few words of explanation. The Manuscripts are of course the ultimate authority for the text of the New Testament. There are two classes of them—the *Uncial* and the *Cursive*. The *Uncial* manuscripts are written in capitals; the *Cursive*, in small letters. But the *Cursive* mode of writing was not used for the sacred documents till about the eighth or ninth century. The manuscripts written in that character are therefore of less value than the others; for though the first of them were copied from *Uncial* manuscripts, the *Uncials* themselves must have been copied from still older ones, which have long since perished.

In all critical researches the authority of the *Uncial* manuscripts is regarded with peculiar respect. Six of them are especially distinguished;—viz, the *Vatican*, written in the fourth century; the *Alexandrine*, and the *Codex Ephremi*, in the fifth; the *Codex Beza* and the *Clement*, in the sixth; and the *Sinaitic*, ascribed by some to the fourth, by others to the sixth. When there are various readings of a text the first question always is, which of them is supported by the older *Uncials*. The authority of *one* of these will outweigh that of many of the later *Uncials*, or of the *Cursives*.

The Versions come to be considered in the next place. The New Testament was early translated into other languages—into Syriac, and into the old *Italic*, in the second century; into Thebaic, in the third; into Latin, *Memphitic*, *Ethiopic*, and *Gothic*, in the fourth; into Armenian, in the fifth. Other versions are of later date. All these versions were made from manuscripts held to be correct and valuable when the versions were executed. Their testimony is consequently of great importance, and their *concurrence* in any reading will generally turn the balance in its favour.

Another source of evidence is found in the works of the *Fathers*, or principal Christian writers, who were accustomed to illustrate or confirm their statements by citations from scripture. They quoted from such manuscripts as they possessed, or had the means of consulting, and their quotations may probably be taken as proofs of the state of the text, as received and acknowledged in their days. The only drawback to this is, that there was no authoritative