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HOPE AND HEAVEN.

BY REV. M. VICARY.

There is a bark, unseen, in which we glide
Above the billows of life's stormy sea,
As buoyant as the sea-bird on the tide—
Through dangers thickened round, from fear as free.

The winds may freshen, and the lightnings play,
At midnight, streaming on the briny deck,
Yet in this airy bark we speed away,
Certain of port, secure from rock and wreck.

She laughs at th' elemental war, and the wild wave
Dashes itself against the prow in vain;
A hand directs the helm that well can save,
And bid be hushed each dooming fear again.

There is a land, a fair and happy land,
Where all are welcome on her friendly coast;
No surges break upon that sunny strand,
But each dark care in pleasure pure is lost.

There sorrow's fountain pours no crystal store—
Grief has no sigh, the heart no gnawing pain—
The mind no torture, and the eye weeps no more;
There smiles the captive o'er his broken chain.

Such is the clime we seek, and such the soil;
For it, from home all willingly we're driven;
Guide us, thou friendly star! breathe, gentle gale!
For that fair bark is Hope—that land is Heaven.

Dublin University Magazine.

The Origin and Position of Modern Baptists.

Before the position and feelings of the Baptist brethren can be rightly appreciated, a few things must be considered relating to the origin of their churches. When Tertullian, about A. D. 200, wrote against the baptism of young people, and persons not duly prepared for that rite and its engagements, he rebuked the practice as a novelty unauthorized by Scripture or the practice of the early churches; but when the Protestant reformers bore their protest against it, the practice was very general, and supported by the highest ecclesiastical authority, formed a part of those religious errors which are now called Papal. The doctrine of sacramental benefits, without personal faith in those supposed to receive them, had grown to maturity; and, on its delusive influence, the most extensive and powerful religious usurpation had been erected. All through Europe the Reformation consisted in appealing to Scripture against the domination and edicts of this spiritual tyranny. The war began with indulgences, and the outworks of Papal superstition; but the conflict soon involved its central idea, the supposed power of sacraments to convey the grace of God to their recipients, and the absolute necessity of grace, supposed to be so conveyed, to the salvation of men. By this means, the doctrine of the fall, and of original sin, and the absolute depravity of human nature, became illustrated and exemplified, by being turned into essential elements of a traffic the most fascinating and gainful to its conductors. When once the Reformers had broken down its bulwark of anathemas, and assailed this vital part, the Papal power writhed with convulsion, as a monster struggling for existence. By appealing to Scripture, Luther sustained his doctrine of justification by faith only, and thereby repelled, exploded, and overwhelmed with obloquy, the Romish doctrine of justification by grace received through sacraments. In the hands of Wickliffe, Huss, Tindal, Knox, and the Protestant martyrs, the Reformation was the same; it removed the hope of man from grace expected through sacraments, to grace received through faith in Jesus Christ alone. Nothing could sustain this conflict but a wide circulation of the Holy Scripture, and a general and direct appeal to its authority. By this means, it was not only proved that justification by faith only came from God, and was his own act, but that, in his Word, only two such

rites as those now called sacraments are ever enforced; and that the use of these is justified by God in *believers only*; the baptism, to recognize their relation in the family of God; and the Supper, for their edification in its fellowship. It was by advancing this step, and giving a visible existence to this doctrine, that the reforming Scripture students obtained from their contemporaries the appellation "Baptists;" and, on the same ground, they are now designated "Baptist Brethren."

Should Providence, at any future time, lay open for our use the official records of ecclesiastical persecution, much greater information may be expected on the subject now before us. As the case now stands, it is with great difficulty determined, from their confessions, whether many Protestant martyrs were Baptists or no. It is often quite impossible. The conflict with the common enemy was so absorbing, and the common interests of the Protestants were so great, that, until the act of the National Reformation had transpired, the appellation "Baptists" was not forced into common use; and the previous existence of those who held this sentiment, is proved only by rare documents and incidents recorded indirectly, in England, indeed, till the time of Wickliffe; but, on the continent, to an earlier period—perhaps, to the age of Paul. But when the act of National Reformation took place, a vital question to be considered was, how the uninformed and unconverted masses of the people might be most peacefully transferred from a Papal to a Protestant government, and most effectually united under its rule? In determining this question, to every worldly politician it would appear, that the less change they introduced in the external ceremonies and popular rites of religion, the more their difficulties would diminish; because the change would thus become less obvious and painful to the subject. Hence, it is said that Luther, and the other Reformers, retained as much of the Papal ceremonies and sacramental doctrine as they could, with any appearance of consistence, defend. But the Bible was abroad, and others could not; they wanted the motive to cease from inquiry, when the legislative Reformers affirmed that they had learned enough. The Word of God became so sweet, that they would learn it all. There they found a religion that was personal, with everlasting hopes, that expanded to infinity, and whose action was as free as the praise of angels. The legislative Reformers had no design to leave religion to herself, her friends and God; they deemed her a home-born slave, and shuddered at the thought of her emancipation from their use and rule. Their subjects, therefore, went before them. They still kept reading, and claimed of the ruler what they found written in the word of God. It was then that in Germany the terms Baptist and Anabaptist became uttered with scorn; then, also, in the court of Edward VI., the men so designated were called "bloody murderers of infants;" and thus these students of the Holy Word, and their descendants, were loaded with the obloquy and griefs of a second Reformation.

A PASSAGE FROM BECON.

"The best and the chiefest baptism is given to the infants; and shall we deny them the inferior and baser baptism? God hath baptized them with the Holy Ghost; and shall we disdain to baptize them with water?"

* * * They that are led with the Spirit to God, saith St. Paul, 'are the sons of God.' The infants of the Christians are led with the Spirit of God, as we heard of the Prophet Jeremy, and of St. John Baptist; and St. Paul likewise calleth the children of the Christians holy and pure; therefore are they the sons of God. Now, if the infants of the Christians

be pure, and holy, and the sons of God, shall any man be so rigorous to take that from them which God hath appointed and ordained for his sons?

God hath instituted baptism as a most certain pledge of his love, mercy, and favour towards his people, and hath commanded it to be received of all that appertain unto him; and shall we contrary to the commandment and will of God, deny it to the infants whom Christ commanded to be brought unto him? whom Christ most lovingly embraced in his arms? whom Christ most graciously blessed? whom Christ pronounced to belong unto the kingdom of God? whose angels Christ affirmeth to see the face of our Heavenly Father? Who seeth not here, therefore, the madness of those apish Anabaptists which, contrary to the commandment and expressed will of God, forbid baptism to be given unto the infants? Our Saviour Christ saith, 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' What other thing, then, do the Anabaptists, by forbidding the water of baptism to be given unto infants, than utterly seclude and put away the young children, so much as in them is, from the inheritance of God's kingdom, and so to become for ever heirs of everlasting damnation? O most damnable sect! O bloody murderers, both of souls and bodies! As they are of the devil their father, so do these wicked Anabaptists satisfy the desires of the devil their father, 'which was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him.'—*The Catechism of Thomas Becon, S. T. P., Chaplain to Archbishop Cranmer, &c.*

The language here quoted from Becon is strong, but not abusive; it was intended, after the manner of that age, to define the reputed character of the persons to whom it was applied. By Cranmer, Becon, and the divines who formed the English Liturgy, and conducted the Reformation under Edward, the doctrine of the sacramental efficacy was holden and taught; and Baptists were condemned as murderers of infants, because they withheld from them a supposed benefit, without which it was deemed that their salvation was uncertain, if not impossible. Persons of this persuasion had united in separate church fellowship, and suffered martyrdom for their views, in Britain, as early as the reign of Henry VIII. From Becon's work it is quite clear, that the discussion of their sentiments on baptism had been conducted so as to include all the points now deemed vital in that controversy. Through the long and troubled interval from Edward VI. to the Commonwealth, with all its convulsions, the Baptists inherited their uniform portion of obloquy, persecution and martyrdom. The oldest church now known was formed in Wapping, in A. D. 1633; but no minister of that persuasion was found in the Assembly at Westminster, and that body of divines showed them no favour. Dr. Featley, who sat in the Assembly, and Edwards, have shown their existence and importance by the acrimony with which they treated their teachers and sentiments. Owen, Baxter, and others followed on the same side, and in the same spirit; but for the language of these, Lightfoot, and other authorities, the apology offered for Becon must be received. They had all to do with a national religion, and they taught, in modified forms, the doctrine of baptismal benefits without faith. The Baptists had to do with personal religion, and they knew of no right use to be made of baptism which did not suppose the previous existence of faith in its recipients; they have, therefore, been regarded and treated as persons withholding from unoffending infants an important spiritual benefit;

and their constancy has been sustained by their reverence for Divine authority, and their deep conviction that these supposed baptismal benefits, however taught, are specious delusions, diverting mankind from the only way of personal salvation.—*Christian Discipleship by Rev. C. Stovel.*

Immersion of a Lamb of the Saviour's Fold.

The Rev. W. Jones, in a deeply interesting memoir of his beloved daughter, Margaret Anne,* gives the following account of her public baptism. About two years afterwards this dear child fell asleep in Jesus:—"It was not long before her mother drew from her in private the state of her mind, and learnt that, amid many fears and a deep sense of her sinfulness, she had sought mercy at the Saviour's feet, and humbly hoped at times, her prayers had been heard, and that she was safe in Jesus. After this period, having now completed her tenth year, her peace became more and more established, and her experience informed; and it became naturally the wish of her parents that she should become publicly united to the church of Christ; but on account of her extreme youth, and the apprehension her health might suffer from excitement, it was thought best to defer, and even conceal from her this wish, till such time as her own desire should more decidedly indicate the path of duty. It was observed that on each Lord's day when the Lord's supper was administered, her feelings, while sitting by her mother, at not being a partaker in the memorials of the Redeemer's death, evinced distress, though chastened with the sweetest humility, as of one who could not hope herself worthy of the privilege she yet eagerly longed for. Thus she continued till September, 1847, when her father being about to remove from his charge at Sheppard's Barton, to Stepney College, and having to baptize for the last time before resigning his pastorate, she ventured, in reply to her mother's reference to the subject, to express amid many tears, her wish that she might be of the number of those who were thus publicly to confess the Redeemer. Confident as her parents felt of her genuine piety, for nearly two years previously, they could not but joyfully encourage this desire, while they committed the judgment of her piety to their fellow christians in the church in which she solicited a place. She accordingly appeared at the church meeting with other candidates, much older than herself, answered with intelligence and composure the questions proposed to her, and amid tears of grateful joy, was, with the other candidates, affectionately welcomed. Her age at this time was eleven years and six months! If the writer lingers over this scene and its sequel, perhaps he may be forgiven by those who can comprehend its interest, not only in itself, but as a scene separated by no long interval from the mournful occasion of this notice, the removal of this young disciple by the Head of the Church, to the Assembly of the Saints above. On Thursday, September 30, Margaret Anne and four other candidates were baptized; nor will even her placid lovely aspect be forgotten, nor her youthful figure attired in the dress she wears still in her resting-place, nor the firmness with which she ascended from the baptismal flood, nor the joy which beamed in her countenance that happy day. 'So happy, because,' as she said to her mother at its close, 'she knew she loved Jesus.' The Sabbath followed, and her admission to take her place as a member of the church of Christ, the last Sabbath of her father's pastorate at Frome. It was her wish to continue a member of Sheppard's Barton church, toge-

*Bap. Mag. Nov. 1847.