

WHAT DISTINGUISHES BAPTISTS.

By Rev. Dr. Williams, of New York, in his address at the division of the Hudson River Association. Dr. W. says:

What is, to use a favorite phrase of the age, the *MISSION OF BAPTISTS*—their special duty, to which they are peculiarly called and specially adapted? It is, then, evidently, in the first place, and beyond all comparison with other and minor obligations, their duty to urge onwards, with all their fellow disciples of other Christian sects who "hold the Head," the universal proclamation of Christ crucified.—This theme is the world's one hope, and Heaven's one gift and one law for the salvation of the race. The peculiarities that divide us from our evangelical brethren are not to be made the whole of our gospel; our shibboleth is not to constitute our whole creed and catalogue. But, on the other hand, those conscientious differences from other evangelical bodies are not to be surrendered at the demand of a spurious liberalism. We value them, not because they were doctrines and practices of our immediate fathers; or because they are the traditional heritage of our communion from past centuries; but we defend them, because we find them in Christ's Scriptures, and we believe that his infinite wisdom put them not causelessly there, and that the dereliction of them will not be found practically harmless, or even safe. We hold not, as the chief and most prominent of these our sectarian badges, the *mode of the ordinance*, though we see in this, indeed, a beautiful expression of the spiritual death which the convert professes to die to his old idols, and of the everlasting allegiance which he avows through his new-found life to a risen Redeemer. But our chief burden of testimony respecting this initiatory rite, relates to the *subjects* rather than to the *mode* of the ordinance. We deny not the duty, and we renounce not the blessed privilege, more than do our Pædobaptist brethren, of nurturing children in the admonition of the Lord.—But we see the foundation in the deepest philosophy of man's own spiritual nature, and in the elementary principles of the New Testament church and revelation, for those profound remarks of the mighty Pascal, where he deprecates the ill consequences brought upon the later church in its departure from the *primitive church*, by giving the baptism before the nurture and education, where the early Christians made the catechumen's education and spiritual nurture precede his baptism. We would have God christianize before we christen. We deny membership to the household, before penitence and regeneration have been shown in and by that household. For if we let in the *family* upon the church, we can then see no reason why, after the family grows into a *tribe*, and this tribe has expanded into a *nation*, we should, on this theory, shut out national churches, or refuse baptism to entire New England, on the faith of the Pilgrim Fathers. If the "seed" of the righteous are hereditary church members, they are as much so in the tenth as in the first generation; and after they have peopled a continent, as when they were all comprised in one nursery. Then the union of the church, the bride and wife of the Lamb, in a second, a bigamous and adulterous marriage with the Cæsar of worldly government, seems to follow as a necessary consequence. Now we would shut out the unconverted from the church, because the church is a spiritual society, whose membership is born, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God; and because the more of carnal and unregenerate membership you attach to this church, the spiritual body of Christ, the more you clog its life, cripple its disciplinary and aggressive energies; and the more you tend to expel that inhabiting Spirit, the Holy Ghost, who is the true vitality of Christ's church.

What is my business.

This is a question of importance. It requires consideration. It deserves an answer. Unless we know our business, we cannot attend to it, and unless we attend to our proper business, we cannot gain a good character. Certainly we were not intended to live in idleness. We were created for activity. We are placed in the world to get good and do good. What, then, is my proper business as

A MAN? It is to ascertain God's will, and do it. To learn what will glorify God, and aim at it. To live as in God's sight. To work for God's honour. To seek God's company. To reverence God's majesty. And to prefer God's will to every thing beside. It is my business to serve my generation, to try and benefit all around me, and to prove that I do

not love any one less than I love myself. In one word, to do all the good I can, and prevent all the evil that I can. Now, have I learned my business? Do I love my business? Do I follow my business? Am I a good hand at my business? Alas! few consider this their business, and the few that do often lose sight of it. We have all sinned; and in so doing, have come short of the glory of God. What, then, is my proper business as

A SINNER? It is to confess my sins to God, and seek pardon from God. Reconciliation to God, acceptance with God, and restoration to the image of God, should daily occupy our thoughts, engage our minds, and be the end of our pursuits. Our business is, to ascertain how man can be just with God, and obtain that privilege; how man can enjoy peace with God, and enjoy that blessing; how man can be fitted for the presence and service of God, and be prepared for the same. Our business as sinners is neglected or unfinished until we receive the atonement, have access to God with confidence, walk with God in holy fellowship, and find the presence of God our chief joy. Have we attended to this business?—Have we learned it? Are we reaping the fruit of it? If so, we are saints,—we are the children of God,—we are heirs of immortal life. What, then, is my proper business as

A SAINT? It is to admire, adore, and adorn the free and sovereign grace of God, which has distinguished me from so many around me. All are sinners. Only a few become saints. And all saints do not learn and follow their proper business as they should. What should a saint do? He should carefully copy the example of his Saviour, for Jesus has said, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done." His example is bright, beautiful, and perfect. It is just what God requires, and what the saint in his best moments desires to be. He should go about doing good. He should sympathize with human misery in every form and wherever discovered. He should aim to spread the knowledge of Christ, and endeavour to make every one happy by leading him to Christ. Every talent should be employed. Every opportunity for doing good, even upon the smallest scale, should be embraced. It is our business to "teach every one his neighbour, and every one his brother, saying, Know the Lord." To oppose sin, to banish ignorance, to relieve indigence, and to endeavour to introduce happiness into every circle and every place.—Every morning we should ask, Can I do good to any one to-day? Can I make any one happy? Can I spread the knowledge of Jesus? Can I lead a soul to God? Shall I not try? Ought I not to attempt it? May not God honour any feeble, well-meant endeavor to accomplish so glorious a work? But we are mortal, we shall soon die, we must exchange time for eternity. What, then, is my proper business as

A TRAVELLER TO ETERNITY? It is daily to keep the end in view. To live as one that must give an account, and who may be called very soon, very suddenly, to do so. My business is to keep short accounts, putting off nothing until to-morrow which I can do to-day, and daily getting my sins blotted out in the precious blood of Jesus. Never let me lie down at night with guilt on my conscience, or carry the guilt of to-day into the business of to-morrow. I ought to keep my loins girt, my lamp clean, my vessel full of oil, my evidences bright, and my affairs all in readiness for the sudden coming of the Lord. Dying will be found quite enough for the last day, without leaving anything to finish then. Let us, therefore, "die daily;" let us do every day's work in the day; "so an entrance shall be ministered unto us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour." Beloved, let us ask, "What is my business?" And let us attend to it carefully, cheerfully, and constantly; that so when the Master comes, he may say, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Removing the Offence of the Cross.

From the day of those Judaizing teachers against whom Paul wrote the Epistle to the Galatians, to the present time, the policy of those teachers has been cherished by a portion of teachers in the church. What those Judaizers wanted was, to make Christian doctrines less offensive and less objectionable to unregenerate minds. They wished to promote the more rapid spread of Christianity by expunging from Christian truth every principle that was offensive to the unconverted Jew.—So they sought to unite faith in Christ with the

Hebrew ritual, as joint conditions of salvation. A similar policy is now pursued by those theologians who labour the matter of making the Christian system less objectionable to the carnal mind than its Author has made it.—They seem to assume that it is the duty of the Christian teacher to present a theory of Christian doctrine that shall have to the carnal mind no repulsive features; to preach the cross in a way to show it not to be the cross—in such a way that it shall cease to be a stumbling block to the Jew and foolishness to the Greek. The plea which is invariably put in for the new modifications of Christian doctrine which are constantly offered, is, such a theory or such an exegesis as is needed to obviate this and that class of objections. But the question in such cases should be—Do these objections lie against errors, which men have grafted upon the truth, or against the plain doctrines of revelation? If the latter, the objector should be left to answer to the God of truth. We should always look with great jealousy upon this work of obviating objections; for it has been the parent of all heresies; and it overlooks the fact, that against the cross of Christ, against the truth as it is in Jesus, the carnal mind ever has been, and ever will be armed with objections.

The Judaizers, doubtless, had a high estimation of their own wisdom and prudence in obviating the world's enmity to the Gospel.—And when they had moulded their theology into such a shape as was suited to the conceits of worldly minds, and saw the determined enemies of the Gospel coming in to embrace it, they doubtless thought themselves doing a great work. But what had they done? They had gone over and joined the enemies of Christ in a warfare against his cross. They had erased those features of the Gospel which constitute its peculiar glory. They had made a plenty of baptised infidels, but brought none to the foot of the cross.

It is very true, that the offence of the cross is one thing, and the gratuitous offensiveness of the preachers of the cross is quite another thing. To irritate by our offensive manner or measures, is not to sustain the offence of the cross. We are required ourselves to give no offence, to be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke.

These elements of Gospel truth, which contain the offence of the cross, need to be guarded with jealous care. The rest will need no guarding. Respecting these, this word is applicable—Hold fast that thou hast; let no man take thy crown. As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him—rooted and built up in him—stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.—*Punitan Recorder*.

Serious Questions.

"I am clearly of opinion that many individuals, ministers, students, and private members of churches of various ranks who are stay-at home, ought 'to forsake all' and follow Christ as preachers of the gospel to the poor dying heathen. This is an awfully serious subject. It involves nothing less, so far as human agents are concerned, than the question, whether these millions upon millions of idolaters shall live and die, 'without Christ and without hope in the world,' or whether they shall hear the gospel and believe and be saved?" O what a tremendous responsibility rests with those who have the bread of life! I make no allusion to individuals. I have no particular body of Christians in my eye. But I cannot help thinking that I see in this want of real, practical, effective concern for the souls of perishing men—this want of zeal in spreading the gospel among the heathen—one reason why the faithful preaching of it is so little blessed at home. Is there not room to suspect that God may be looking with a frown instead of a smile upon the labors of a man, who, faithfully as he may be preaching the gospel to a congregation of professed Christians, is hiding in a corner among them, the talent that might have told with effect against the fabric of heathen idolatry? Is there no reason to suspect that he may here find the secret cause of his laboring from Sabbath to Sabbath, and from year to year, without seeing much, if any, actual fruit of his labors? Is there no reason to suspect that the church, sitting under its own vine and fig-tree, but, after the example of its pastor, little caring for others, should have little of the presence of God in their souls and little manifestation of

his blessing among them as a body? There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty. If they concern not themselves about sending food to them that are perishing of hunger, is it to be wondered at if God command the clouds that they rain no rain upon their vineyard; and that he withhold his blessing both from their basket and their store?—*Swan's Letter on Missions*.

One good word every day.

A good word is one which does some one good; it may be a word of teaching, a word of warning, or a word of comfort; always a word of truth and love. Speak one such word at least every day.

Our days are few at best; certainly no one of them should pass by without an opening of the lips for God. Who can tell the effects of a single sentence, uttered with faith and prayer. It may reach to thousands; it may reach into eternity. As wave moves wave in the ocean, so one work of grace may reach from mind to mind, and thus be producing effects long after the tongue which uttered it shall have turned to dust. Never despair of being useful so long as you have the gift of speech. If you can say nothing else, you may at least repeat some blessed text of Scripture; this may save a soul. That child, that servant, that visitor, that stranger, may praise God in heaven for the truth heard from you. "Let your speech be seasonable with salt." Keep the heart full, and you will have something to say. "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh." Every day the ungodly are uttering fatal words, kindling bad passions, and destroying souls. Every day, therefore, all Christians should be saying something for Christ. Many a time, through grace, a single saying has been blessed to the awakening of a soul. Pray for help to devise and utter such things every day of your life, as may lead those who hear you to faith in their Redeemer.—*Am. Messenger*.

Backsliders.

There are a multitude of professors who are backslidden in some degree, and are doing injury to the cause of religion. There are different kinds of backsliding.

Some are backslidden in practice, and they entertain an inward intention to do right, and a vain wish to enjoy more of religion. Yet they do not, and the great reason is, they do nothing. They are backsliders in practice.

Others are backslidden in heart. This class are always ready to keep up a sort of form of religion; they abound in externals, but it is a mechanical formal, stiff manner of getting along. There is no life, power, or animation in their worship. These are very common and dangerous too.

There are others who are backslidden in doctrine. These are often warm-hearted, active Christians; but they have imbibed such fatal errors in doctrine, that, if carried out, they would overthrow all their own enjoyment, and yet almost all of this kind of backsliders wonder why they do not enjoy more, and see more of God's work. But they need not wonder; the cause is in themselves, and they alone can remove it by returning from their backslidings.

How necessary it is that the churches be aroused from this backslidden state. Let each member examine and see if he is not indulging in some fatal error in doctrine, or neglect in practice, or loss of the soul-inspiring first love.—*Morning Star*.

Be Contented with Little.

I once knew a man who had thousands and thousands, but the desire to get more hindered him from enjoying what he had.

I knew a poor woman, also, who had but half a dollar a week in the world to live upon, and yet she was cheerful and happy. She had always a little money by her to assist those in distress, and instead of praying that God would add to her store, she was praising him for what he had so graciously bestowed. So that we see, a little with God's blessing, is better than a good deal without it.

The Bible.

What is the use of having a crop of corn, if you never reap it; or a well if you never draw the water? And what advantage can there be in having a Bible, if it be never read? The Bible tells us how to obtain living waters, and the bread of eternal life; we cannot love it too much, nor read it too seriously.