

### IMPORTANCE OF BAPTIST PRINCIPLES.

All Christian principles derive their importance from their connection with Christ.—Baptism is no exception to this law. Baptism is nothing to a true believer but what Christ makes it.

The importance of Baptist principles will be found to depend on the following considerations. 1. The Practical Nature of the Ordinance. 2. The place given it in the order of the Great Commission. 3. The clearness of Christ's command, illustrated by his Example. 4. Our obligations and responsibilities to Him. 5. Its particular connection with the great doctrine of Justification by Faith. 6. Its tendency to teach the true Nature of Christianity, and to bring the Soul into Spiritual Communion with Christ and his People. 7. Its connection with the Economy of Grace in Christ, (which it exhibits as *elective*, rather than hereditary, thus giving a right direction to Parental Hopes and Duties.) 8. Its relations by Consequence to the Constitution and Character of the Christian Church, the Worship of God, and the Administration of Discipline. 9. Its connection with the principles of Religious Liberty. 10. Its relations to the progress of real Religion in the World.

He who will calmly and deliberately trace out the difference between Baptist and Pedobaptist principles in all these connections, will see ample reason why we should "keep the ordinances as they were delivered to us" from the Head of the Church, without innovation or deviation. All Christians of every name, we must love for Christ's sake, "with a pure heart fervently;" but if we thus love them, we must deplore their errors on this important subject. Men who would blame this as bigotry, betray a melancholy blindness to the teachings of Scripture, the facts of History, and the warnings of Experience.

### Progressive Tendency of Error.

Originally Christian baptism was the immersion of a believer in Christ. This beams on the face of Scripture. It is also confirmed by all the standard Church History. It is conceded in every Scientific Encyclopedia.—It may be assumed, therefore, as a fact settled among scientific men.

Let us now mark the gradual progress of *innovation and change*. The first error in regard to Christian Baptism appears to have been, confounding it with Regeneration.—This infects the language of even the second century. Why should this surprise us, when Paul, in predicting the Great Apostasy, informs us that even in his time "the mystery of iniquity did already work," turning men away from Christ to outward forms. The second step of Error, in regard to Baptism, was but a consequence of the first, namely, insisting upon its absolute Necessity to Salvation. The third was, magnifying the efficacy of the Form, apart from Faith in the recipient. Hence, in the third century, Baptism is familiarly termed by Cyprian, "the Grace of God?" Then came (of course) the Baptism of Infants. Then Pouring, as the substitute for Baptism, of the Sick. And, lastly, in the course of ages, Sprinkling—which, (especially when applied to those who are not believers,) is really something entirely different from Christian Baptism—bearing no resemblance either in subject, mode, design, or effects.

Thus Error began by exalting Baptism over Faith, (the sign over the thing signified,) and ended by actually abolishing Baptism altogether. Nothing remains but the ancient name; the thing it originally signified is gone.

### Baptist Principles most favorable to Christian Communion.

We may have true Christian fellowship with many, whom from other, as well as local causes, we cannot join in Church fellowship; and those Churches are to be regarded as having most truth and piety that have the most extensive fellowship and real love for Christians, as such, apart from the name they bear. Take those denominations, beginning at the Roman Catholic, who are the most proud, the most selfish, the most contemptuous of others, and those are the sects, and those the Churches, that have the least of the life of religion. Men of the world, the mass of Christians even, do not go into niceties, but they can easily see the spirit that is manifested. If it is a spirit of love for those who love Christ and bear his image as such, it is a good, a Christian spirit. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one towards another."

How far as Baptists we may have actually attained to the practice of this grace, it is not for us to say; but that our principles are more favorable to its developments than those probably of any other denomination, admits, we think of demonstration. We never baptize any persons, until we first believe them to be true Christians. Hence we are obliged, in each instance, to keep Christian and Church fellowship distinct, and to have the former kind of communion with them prior to, and apart from receiving them to the latter. Pedobaptism tends rather to destroy this distinction of feeling. Especially is this the case when baptism is supposed to confer Christian character.

It is the want of this kind of spiritual interchange of affections among the different congregations and denominations in our towns and villages, it is the scheming and selfishness, the grasping sectarianism, trying in every way to get the advantage, and regarding all others as in antagonism, that cuts at the root of true Christian fellowship and real communion, such as we all feel with the saints in glory, and hope to enjoy in eternity with every Christian. This is the spirit which makes infidels rejoice, and angels blush.

There is, it is true, a momentary success which seems to attend all this grasping.—Strenuous exertions will produce a certain effect. But the motive will soon be discovered, and the means rejected as an imposture.—The mass of the people never yet could be convinced that such is the spirit of Christ.—Curtis on Communion.

### Principle, not Emotion.

How valueless would religion be, did it consist merely in a class of feelings buried in the heart! How exalted it is, coming forth in an animated and visible form—speaking the words of truth and righteousness, and displaying itself in acts of justice, mercy, and love! Religion is pure, feeling and upright action. These must go together; from the last we infer the existence of the first.

Though religion is essentially an active principle, it may, and often does, exist as a passive feeling. In this state its character is doubtful. It may be genuine, or it may not—the point will be determined by the issue. If genuine, it will soon pass from the passive state into the active; if not genuine, it will remain merely passive, and when the mind has become exhausted by its high-wrought sensibilities, it will give place to secular feelings.

When God, in the splendour and loveliness of his attributes, is brought before the mind; when all his wonderful works and ways become the subject of thought; when he is seen in the different forms and the benign ordinances of nature—in the beautiful and sublime scenery, where valley, and mountain, and flood, and native wilderness, and cultivation, all mingle in the landscape—in the amazing constitution of the world, its magnitude, force, and harmony—at the midnight hour, when the moonlight sleeps upon the earth, and seems to cover it with a veil of holy mystery, and the starry heavens appear in their glory, and lead the eye away into the depths of ether, and give it a sublimity of vision as if it were about to catch a glimpse of the gates of heaven;—on many occasions, in a world so full of God, high emotions are awakened; the soul seems purified, and the glory of the Deity, in whose presence-chamber it seems to stand, overwhelms it.

In the recorded events and in the revealed prospects of religion, also, there is that which is calculated to call into existence deep and ineffable sensibilities—to elevate and carry away the soul by a sort of tragic effect. The revelations of prophets; the wonders of miracle; the incarnation of the Son of God; the humiliation, the life of love, and gentleness, and purity; the sacred dignity of his character; the last scene of agony and death; the attesting movements in nature; the triumph of the ascension; the disinterested and active love, the heroic fortitude of the apostolic martyrs; the progress of Christianity; its eventual triumph, and the scenes of the future; the coming of judgment, with the throne of glory and the awful Judge, and the opened books and the assembled multitudes; the sentence and the final issue; a region of despair where the damned eternally lament; a kingdom of light whose blessedness is depicted by precious gems, and unclouded light, and founts of living waters, and "the harping symphonies" of unnumbered myriads of perfect and rejoicing spirits;—amid all this, in nature and revelation, the mind becomes enraptured; emotions of the sublime, and awful, and lovely, all com-

mingle and swell its ecstasies. There is indeed poetry in religion, and poetry, too, of the highest order.

Now, the good man may have all these contemplations, and may become lost amid all these forms of glory and love, and experience their full poetic effect.

But then, this does not constitute his religion. He does not mistake poetic sensibilities for active duties. His mind will return from these high excursions to the simple language of the precept, and the rational and ordinary business of life. He will not deem his religion perfected, and his obligations discharged, by a flight of fancy and a dream of light. The duties of honesty, and justice, and faithfulness, and love, and kindness, to his fellowmen; the exercise of humble penitence and sober faith, and the multiplied duties incumbent upon him as a soldier of the Cross, will occupy his thoughts, and mark his life, and constitute the ground of his evidence. I am a Christian, he will say, not by what I have felt, but by what I am doing. I find that I love God, because I delight to keep his commandments.

In this case the prevailing of genuine love is proved by the result. The contemplative stage merges into the active.—Evangelist.

### "They have no Changes."

Not that the wicked experience no changes whatever. For undoubtedly some do suffer in many ways. Hope flourishes for a time, and then is followed by despondency. There are darkness and light, sorrow and joy in varied succession. But when the wicked are thus dealt with it is because they are not abandoned. It is the discipline which may yet be the means of bringing them to God.

Still that significant expression of the Psalmist is truthful as a description of a large proportion of the wicked. They have no changes. Life possesses such an evenness of tenor that they are not disturbed. They have health, they have prosperity, they have friends, they have children born to them, and spared to them to enjoy in their turn maturity and prosperity and honor. To such persons how undisturbed is the sea of life. No fierce storms sweep over it. It suffers no wild commotion. It throws up no heaving billows.

And yet who that knows its penalty would be willing to live such a life? "Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God." It is a fearful indication that God has forsaken us. There is an education, important beyond all other, which changes, sad changes, alone can furnish. We would not call down maledictions upon ourselves, nor suffer self-inflicted pains, but there are chastenings from the Lord. There are changes that come not by mortal bidding. There are sufferings which bear no human impress. There are writings on the wall, seen to come from the hand of the Unseen.

How much we need these chastenings, these changes, these sufferings, these admonitions, no one knows, perhaps no one can adequately conceive. They attack and demolish every fabric of happiness of which God is not the foundation. They suddenly dry up every spring of joy of which God has not sweetened the waters. And would we willingly construct such a fabric? Would we willingly draw waters from such a fountain? If so, God will probably interpose no means to destroy and to dry up. He will allow us to fill up the measure of life, the measure of earthly enjoyment, and the measure of materials for retribution, before much change will come, though come it ultimately must as an armed man. But as the subjects of an all-wise and beneficent Governor, it becomes us to submit, and submit cheerfully, to such a chastening, as he shall judge suitable. We little know where or how much reproof we need. There may be many things in our character that are the beginnings of ruin; carried a little farther and these tendencies become realities, these dangers become ruin itself. Is it not most foolish thus to forestall? If the curtain were for a moment lifted from the future we might see but a few steps forward a yawning chasm, while in our ignorance we now complain that some impassable barrier has checked our progress.—Zion's Advocate.

### I am never alone.

An old man sat in his easy chair. He was alone. His eyes were so dim that he could not read—he had long ceased to hear any common sound, and it was only in broken whispers that he could hold communion with his friends. Often hours passed by in which the silence of his thought was unbroken. He

had outlived his generation. One by one the companions of his boyhood had been laid in the grave. To those to whom the future is one bright path of hope and happiness, and social love, how unenviable seemed his condition, how cheerless his days!

I have said he was alone. A gentle and thoughtful child stole into his silent room, and twined her arms lovingly around his neck.

"I feared you would be lonely, dear grandfather," said she, "and so I came to sit with you. Are you not very lonely here, with no one to speak to, or to love?"

The old man paused for a moment, and laid his hand upon the head of the gentle child, "I am never alone, my child," he said. "How can I be lonely? for God is with me; the Comforter comes from the Father to dwell in my soul, and my Saviour is ever near to cheer and instruct me. I sit at His feet, and learn of Him; and though pain and sickness often warn me that this earthly tabernacle is soon to be dissolved, I know that there is prepared for me a mansion, the glories of which no tongue can tell. The love of God is like living water to my soul. Seek in your youth this fountain, my child. Drink deep of its living waters; and then when your hair shall be whitened for the grave, when all sources of earthly enjoyment are taken away, you too can say, 'I am never alone.'"

Let this testimony of an aged and devoted servant of Christ sink deep into the heart of every one who reads these lines. Seek the source of that consolation which can be your joy in sickness, in trial, and in solitude—your stay when all earthly helps have failed. Then will it be your blessed privilege to say, "I too, am never alone."—Christian Citizen.

### A Nestorian Pastor.

Rev. Mr. Stocking, a missionary among the Nestorians, gives the following account of "John, the first Nestorian pastor" of modern times. The aid now rendered in the work of evangelization abroad by native helpers, constitutes an era in the history of missions.—Of this new Nestorian pastor, Mr. S. says:

John, as a spiritual watchman, is unwearied in his labours, often preaching three times a day during the week, and performing other duos and self-denying duties; going from arthouse to house for religious conversation, visiting the sick, and speaking the word at funerals. We are often constrained to admire the grace of God as developed in his devoted piety, discreet zeal, and indomitable perseverance; and wonder at his ability, even physically, to endure the arduous labors of his office. Beside the daily religious services in the church, he meets several evenings in a week, Christians unable to read, and holds a Bible class with them. After reading and explaining a portion of Scripture, he asks them questions on the doctrines, duties, or facts, contained in the portion. In this way his audience is kept wakeful and much interested, and their piety and knowledge are greatly invigorated and strengthened. His spirit and practice may be inferred from his language in public on one occasion, as follows: "Meet the truth like men, for we shall not cease to pursue you, wherever you are, with the sword of the Spirit. If you come to church, you will meet it here. If you stay in your houses we shall reach you there. If we find you go to your fields, we shall go after you there. If we find you in the streets, there we shall address you, and if you are in your stables, thither also shall we go to reclaim you to God. Since then there is no escape for you, meet the truth and yield yourselves to God."

His study is a small chamber, about five feet by eight, entered by a ladder, built of mud and plastered on the inside with the same material mixed with straw, and having two small windows, covered with paper instead of glass, to let in the light. On the floor is one coarse-woollen rug, with no chair, as yet, to set in. His library is neatly arranged on a rude, elevated shelf, extending from one side to the other, being protected from the loose earth and dust which would otherwise fall from above, by sheets of paper passed under the roof; and consists of a copy of the Syriac, Hebrew and English Bible, with a few volumes of Barnes's Notes, the Comprehensive Commentary, the Scripture Manual, a dictionary, and a few other choice books, lent to him, or given to him by friends in America. Through these books and the English language, which he has acquired, he derives much valuable assistance in his preparations for his pastoral duties. It having become known to his