

GOD'S REST.

It is the evening hour,
And thankfully,
Father, thy weary child
Has come to thee.
I lean my aching head
Upon thy breast,
And there, and only there,
I am at rest.
Thou knowest all my life,
Each petty sin;
Nothing is hid from thee,
Without, within.
All that I have or am
Is wholly thine;
So is my soul at peace,
For thou art mine.
To-morrow's dawn may find
Me here, or there;
It matters little, since thy love
Is everywhere.
—Evening Post.

Visitor Pulpit.

THE DUTY OF BAPTISTS TO TEACH THEIR DISTINCTIVE VIEWS.

SERMON BEFORE THE AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY, AT THE ANNIVERSARY IN INDIANAPOLIS, MAY 19, 1881, BY JOHN A. BROADUS, PROFESSOR IN THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, LOUISVILLE, KY.

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.—Matt. 28: 20.

The things he had commanded include the internal and the external elements of Christian piety. Of the latter, they include ethical instruction, and directions as to the conduct of Christian societies. These directions were afterwards supplemented by the inspired apostles, giving instruction as to the constitution and government of the Christian societies, or churches, and the characteristic ceremonies they were to observe. These matters pertaining to the Christian societies are certainly not so important as the internal and spiritual elements of piety, or as ethical principles and precepts, but still they are important. We may be sure they are, from the fact that Christ and his apostles gave direction concerning them; and we can see why they must be important. It is impossible to maintain mental health if the body be abused or neglected, for bodily conditions react upon those of the mind. And the externals of piety are the natural expression of its spiritual essence, which cannot be healthy if they are disregarded, exaggerated, or perverted. The tendency of human nature is usually not to neglect religious externals, but to exaggerate or pervert them. The New Testament gives in a very simple pattern in these respects—simple organization, simple government, simple ceremonies. But men early began to magnify their importance, and to change their character and application.

EARLY JUDAIZERS AND THEIR SUCCESSORS.

Did you ever consider what became of the Judaizers who gave Paul so much trouble? When we last observe them in the history, in connection with Paul's latest recorded visit to Jerusalem, they are really beaten, but still numerous and active. When in the second century we again get a clear view of the early Christians, the Judaizers seemed reduced to a mere handful. But has the tendency really disappeared? Nay, it is beginning to strike through and through the Christianity of the day, and from that time on, a painfully large portion of Christendom has had only a Judaized Christianity. When men began to exaggerate the importance of externals, they would soon begin to change their character. Coming to believe that baptism brings regeneration, and is indispensable to salvation, they would of course wish to baptize as early in life as possible, and to make baptism practicable for the sick and the dying. Beginning to fancy that the bread and wine really become the glorified body and blood of the ascended Saviour, they not unnaturally look to the withholding the cup from the laity, lest their awkward handling should spill some drops of the sacred fluid, which would have been profanation. And in addition to these tendencies, the institutions of imperial Rome, and the Roman genius for centralized government, led the Christians to think it necessary that societies should have a stronger government.

THE BAPTISTS OPPOSED TO JUDAIZERS INFLUENCES.

In opposition to all this, Baptists insist on holding to the primitive constitution, government, and ceremonies of the Christian societies or churches—and this on the principle of recognizing no religious authority but the Scriptures themselves, and of strictly observing all that the Saviour has commanded. Now the Saviour says in our text that in connection with disciplining men to him, we must teach

them to observe all things whatsoever he commanded. These commandments include the matters just mentioned, concerning which the people who allow themselves to be called Baptists differ widely from large portions of the Christian world, and are persuaded that their own views are more Scriptural, more in accordance with the Saviour's commands. They must therefore feel themselves required to teach these things as well as others. Hence, the text lays upon us the duty of which I have been requested to speak, the duty of Baptists to teach their distinctive views.

DISTINCTIVE VIEWS OF BAPTIST CHURCHES.

It may be well to state briefly what I understand to be the leading distinctive views of the Baptist Churches. The fact that certain of these are more or less shared by others, will be remarked upon afterwards.

(1) We hold that the Bible alone is a religious authority; and in regard to Christian institutions the direct authority is of course the New Testament.

(2) We hold that a Christian Church ought to consist only of persons making a credible profession of conversion, of faith in Christ. These may include children, even comparatively young children, for God be thanked that these do often give credible evidence of faith in Christ. But in the very nature of the case they cannot include infants. The notion that infants may be church members because their parents are, seems to us utterly alien to the genius of Christianity, not only unsupported by the New Testament, but in conflict with its essential principles; and we are not surprised to observe that our Christian brethren among whom that theory obtains are unable to carry it out consistently—unable to decide in what sense the so-called "children of the church" are really members of the church, and subject to its discipline. The other notion that infants may be church members because so-called "sponsors" make professions and promises for them, seems to us a mere legal fiction, devised to give some basis for practice which arose on quite other grounds. Maintaining that none should be received as church members unless they give credible evidence of conversion, we also hold in theory, though our practice often falls sadly short of the theory, that none should be retained in membership who do not lead a godly life, that if a man fails to show his faith by works, he should cease to make profession of faith. Some of our own people appear at times to forget that strict church discipline is a necessary part of the Baptist view as to church membership.

(3) We hold that the officers, government, and ceremonies of a Christian society or church ought to be such and such only as the New Testament directs. As to ceremonies, it enjoins the very minimum of ceremony, for there are but two, and both are very simple, in nature and in meaning. We insist that baptism ought to be simply what Christ practiced and commanded. We care nothing for the mode of baptism, the manner of baptizing, if only there is a real baptism, according to the plain indications of Scripture. As to the significance of the ceremony, we understand it to involve three things. The element employed represents purification. The action performed represents burial and resurrection, picturing the burial and resurrection of Christ, and symbolizing the believer's death to sin through faith in Christ, and his resurrection to walk in newness of life. And performing the ceremony in the name of the Lord Jesus, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, makes it like an oath of allegiance, a vow of devotion to Jesus Christ, to the Triune God. The early Roman Christians had a good word for this idea, if only the word could have remained unchanged in use. They called it a sacramentum, a military oath. As the Roman soldier in his oath bound himself to obey his General absolutely, so in baptism we solemnly vow devotion and obedience. But alas! the word sacramentum, like many another word in Christian history, has come to be employed in senses quite foreign to its original use. As to the second Christian ceremony, we hold that not only the bread, but the cup also, should be given; urging, as all Protestants do—and Baptists are Protestants in one sense, though in another sense distinct from Protestants—that our Lord commanded us to do both, and no one has a right to modify his commands. And the significance of the bread and wine are understood by us to be, not transubstantiation, nor consubstantiation, nor real presence in any sense, nor even according to the Calvinian view that a special spiritual blessing is by divine appointment attached to the believing reception of these elements, but simply according to the Zwinglian view that these are mementoes, remembrances of Christ, and that tak-

ing them in remembrance of him we may hope to have the natural effects of such remembrance blessed to our spiritual good. And as to the order of the two ceremonies, we believe the New Testament to indicate that the second should be observed only by those who have previously observed the first, and are walking orderly. This is in itself not a distinctive view of the Baptists, for they share it with almost the entire Christian world in all ages. The combination of this general Christian opinion that the New Testament requires baptism to precede the Lord's Supper with our Baptist opinion as to what constitutes baptism, leads to a practical restriction which many regard as the most marked of all our distinctive views, which for us it is only an incidental, though logically inevitable, result of that principal which we share with nearly all of those from whom it ceremonially separates us.

(4) We hold that these societies called churches were designed, as shown in the New Testament, to be independent. They have no right to control each other. Ample warrant there is for co-operation in benevolence, and for consultation as to questions of truth and duty, but without assuming to legislate or in any sense to rule one another. And they must be independent of what we call the State as to their organization, faith, worship, and discipline, while, of course, amenable to the State if they violate those moralities which are essential to public welfare; nor must they suffer themselves to be dependent on the State in the sense of receiving from it pecuniary support.

Now I repeat that we do not consider these externals to be intrinsically so important as the spiritual or even the ethical elements of Christianity. But they are important because they express the spiritual and react upon it healthily or hurtfully, and because the author of Christianity in person or through his inspired apostles appointed and commanded them. And we think it a matter of great importance that they should be practiced in accordance with, and contrary to, his appointment—that, in the language of the text, his disciples should observe and conserve (for the word includes both ideas) all things whatsoever he commanded us.

We are glad that as to one or another of these distinctive views, some of our fellow Christians of other persuasions agree with us, more or less. We welcome all such concurrence, and it is not now necessary to inquire whether they hold those opinions with logical consistency. For ourselves, we do not claim to be fully acting upon these views, but we aim to do so, acknowledge ourselves blameworthy in so far as we fail, and we desire notwithstanding our shortcoming in practice to hold them up in due prominence before ourselves and others.

REASONS WHY BAPTISTS OUGHT TO TEACH THEIR DISTINCTIVE VIEWS.

1. It is a duty we owe to ourselves. We must teach these views in order to be consistent in holding them. Because of these we stand apart from other Christians in separate organizations, from Christians whom we warmly love and delight to work with; we have no right thus to stand apart unless the matters of difference have real importance; and if they are really important, we certainly ought to teach them. We sometimes venture to say to our brethren of some other persuasions, that if points of denominational difference among evangelical Christians were so utterly trifling as they continually tell us, then they have no excuse for standing apart from each other, and no right to require us to stand apart from them unless we will abjure, or practically disregard our distinctive views. But all this will apply to us likewise, unless we regard the points of difference as having a substantial value and practical importance, as a part of what Christ commanded, and in this case they are a part of what he requires us to teach.

And this teaching is the only way of correcting excesses among ourselves. Do some of our Baptist brethren seem to you ultra in their denominationalism, violent, bitter? And do you expect to correct such a tendency by going to the opposite extreme? You are so pained, shocked, disgusted at what you consider an unlovely treatment of controverted matters, that you shrink from treating them at all. Well, the persons you have in view, if there be such persons, would defend and fortify themselves by pointing at you. They would say, "I am complained of as extreme and bigoted—look at those people yonder, who scarcely ever make the slightest allusion to characteristic Baptist principles, who are weak-kneed, afraid of offending the Pedobaptists, or dreadfully anxious to court their favor by smooth silence—do you want me to be such a Baptist as that?" Thus one extreme fosters another. The greatest complaint I have against what are called "sensational" preachers is not for the harm they directly do, but because they drive such a multitude of other preachers to the

opposite extreme, make them so afraid of appearing sensational in their own eyes or those of some fastidious hearers, that they shrink from saying the bold and striking things the myriads say and ought to say, and become commonplace and tame. And so it is a great evil if a few ultraists in controversy drive many good men to avoid sensitively those controverted topics which we are all under obligations to discuss. The only cure, my brethren, for denominational ultraism is a healthy denominationalism.

2. To teach our distinctive views is a duty we owe to our fellow Christians. Take the Roman Catholics. We are often told very earnestly that Baptists must make common cause with other Protestants—the aggressions of Romanism. It is urged, especially in the localities, that we ought to push all our denominational differences into the background and stand shoulder to shoulder against Popery. Very well; but all the time it seems to us that the best way to meet and withstand Romanism is to take Baptist ground; and if in making common cause against it we abandon or slight our Baptist principles, have a care less we do harm in both directions. Besides, ours is the best position, we think for winning Romanists to evangelical truth. Our brethren of the great Protestant persuasions are all holding some "developed" form of Christianity—not so far developed as Popery, and some of them much less developed than others, but all having added something to faith or simplicity. The Roman Catholics know this, and habitually taunt them with accepting changes which the church has made, while denying the church's authority; and sometimes tell them that the Baptist alone are consistent in opposing the church. We may say that there are but two sorts of Christianity, church Christianity and Bible Christianity. If well-meaning Roman Catholics become dissatisfied with resting everything on the authority of the church, and begin to look towards the Bible as authority, they are not likely if thoughtful and earnest to stop at any half-way house, but to go forward to the position of those who really build on the Bible alone.

Or take the Protestants themselves. Our esteemed brethren are often wonderfully ignorant of our views. A distinguished minister, author of elaborate works on Church History and the Creeds of Christendom, and of commentaries, etc., and brought in many ways into association with men of all denominations, is reported to have recently asked whether the Baptists practiced trine immersion. A Senator of the United States from one of the Southern States, and alumnus of a celebrated University, was visiting about twenty years ago, a friend in another state who casually remarked that he was a Baptist. "By the way," said the Senator, "what kind of Baptists are the Pedobaptists?" Not many years ago a New York gentleman who had been United States Minister to a Foreign country, published in the New York Tribune a review of a work, in which he said (substantially): "The author states that he is a Baptist pastor. We do not know whether he is a Pedobaptist, or belongs to the strictest of Baptists." Now of course these are exceptional cases; but they exemplify what is really a wide spread and very great ignorance as to Baptists. And our friends of other denominations often do us great injustice because they do not understand our tenets and judge us by their own. "As to 'restricted communion,'" for example, Protestants usually hold the Calvinian view of the Lord's Supper, and so think that we are selfishly denying them a share in the spiritual blessing attached to its observance; while with our Zwinglian view, we have no such thought or feeling. These things certainly show it to be very desirable that we should bring our Christian brethren around us to know our distinctive opinions, in order that we may at least restrain them from wronging us through ignorance. If there were any who did not care to know, who were unwilling to be deprived of a popular accusation against us, with them our efforts would be vain. But most of those we encounter are truly good people, however prejudiced, and do not wish to be unjust; and if they will not take the trouble to seek information about our real views, they will not be unwilling to receive it, when fitly presented. Christian charity may thus be promoted by correcting ignorance. And besides, we may hope that some at least will be led to investigate the matters about which we differ. Oh that our honored brethren would investigate! A highly-educated Episcopal lady, some years ago in one of our great cities, by a long and patient examination of her Bible, with no help but an Episcopal work in favor of Infant Baptism, at length reached the firm conviction that it is without warrant in the Scriptures, and became a Baptist. She afterwards said: "I am satisfied that thousands would inevitably do likewise, if they would only examine."

But why should we wish to make Baptists of our Protestant brethren? Are not many of them noble Christians, not a few of them among the excellent of the earth? If with their opinions they are so devout and useful, why wish them to adopt other opinions? Yes, there are among them many who command our high admiration for their beautiful Christian character and life. But have a care about your inferences from this fact. The same is true even of many Roman Catholics, in the past and in the present; yet who doubts that the Romanist system as a whole is unfavorable to the production of the best types of piety? And it is not necessarily an arrogant and presumptuous thing in us if we strive to bring honored fellow Christians to views which we honestly believe to be more Scriptural and therefore more wholesome. Apollon was an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, and Aquila and Priscilla were lowly people, who doubtless admired him; yet they taught him the way of the Lord more perfectly, and no doubt greatly rejoiced that he was willing to learn. He who tries to win people from other denominations to his own distinctive views may be a sectarian bigot; but he may also be an humble and loving Christian.

3. To teach our distinctive views is a duty we owe to the unbelieving world. We want unbelievers to accept Christianity. And it seems to us they are more likely to accept it when presented in its primitive simplicity, as the apostles themselves offered it to the men of their time. For meeting the assaults of infidels, we think our position is best. Those who insist that Christianity is unfriendly to scientific investigation almost always point to the Romanists; they could not with the least plausibility say this of Baptists. And when an honest and earnest-minded skeptic is asked to examine with us this which claims to be a revelation from God, we do not have to lay beside it another book, as determining beforehand what we must find in the Bible. Confessions of faith we have, some older and some recent, which we respect and find useful; but save through some exceptional and voluntary agreement we are not bound by them. We can say to the skeptical inquirer, Come and bring all the really ascertained light that has been derived from studying the material world, the history of man, or the highest philosophy, and we will gladly use it in helping to interpret this which we believe to be God's word; and we can change our views of its meaning if real light from any other sources requires us to do so. There is surely in this freedom no small advantage for attracting the truly rational inquirer. But while thus free to search the Scriptures, Baptists are eminently conservative in their whole tone and spirit; and for a reason. Their recognition of the Scriptures alone as religious authority, and the stress they lay on exact conformity to the requirements of Scripture, fosters an instinctive feeling that they must stand or fall with the real truth and the real authority of the Bible. The union of freedom and conservatism is something most healthy and hopeful.

4. There is yet another reason—one full of solemn sweetness. To teach our distinctive views is not only a duty to ourselves, to our fellow Christians, and to the unbelieving world, but it is a duty we owe to Christ, it is a matter of simple loyalty to him. Under the most solemn circumstances he uttered the express injunction. He met the eleven disciples by appointment on a mountain in Galilee. Probably the more than five hundred of whom Paul speaks were present also. "And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and disciple all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The things of which we have been speaking are not, we freely grant, the most important of religious truths and duties; but they are a part of the all things which Jesus commanded; what shall hinder us, what could excuse us, from observing them ourselves, and teaching them to others? The Roman soldiers who had taken the sacramentum did not then go to picking and choosing among the orders of his General; shall the baptized believer pick and choose which commands of Christ he will obey, and which neglect, and which alter? And observe, I did not quote it all. Go, disciple, baptizing them, "teaching them to observe, all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Shall we neglect to teach as he required, and then claim the promise of his presence and help and blessing?

To be Continued.

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