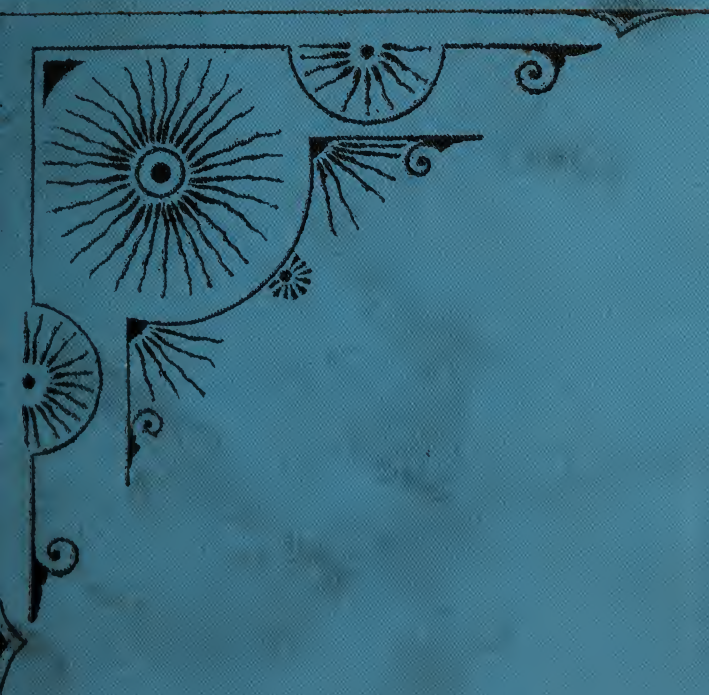




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SERMONS.



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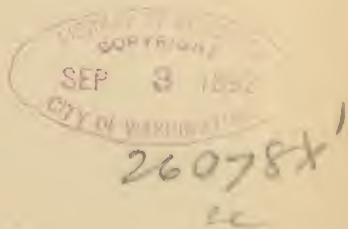
JOHN S. SWEENEY.

WITH A SKETCH OF

THE AUTHOR'S LIFE,

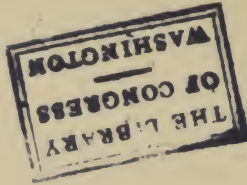
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AN INTIMATE FRIEND.



NASHVILLE, TENN.:
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PUBLISHERS' PREFACE.

Christianity came from God by revelation through inspired men. "Holy men of God" who taught the Christian religion to the world "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." The teaching of those inspired men of God has come down to us in the holy scriptures, and our province is simply to learn and to follow what is set forth in the Bible. In the very nature of the case, therefore, we are disciples, or learners, in so far as we are anything at all in matters of religion.

There are no privileged orders in Christianity. We are all equally near to God and the Bible. No class of men have any right to stand between any other man or class of men and the Bible as authoritative expounders or interpreters of the holy scriptures. No man is under any obligation to accept another man's understanding of the Bible as the basis of his religious action. Every man is at liberty to state what he understands the Bible to teach on any subject, but no one else is bound by such statements, in respect to his own faith and action in religious matters.

"Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God," and every man should study the word of God for

himself and formulate a faith of his own. Every man's faith, when thus formed, is binding upon himself as the rule of his own action in matters of religion, but is not to be imposed upon any one else. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth;" "for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

In this book of sermons the reader will find a clear statement of what the author understands the scriptures to teach on several vital points of the Christian religion. Mr. Sweeney has made the scriptures a special study for many years, and his recognized ability and reputation as a preacher entitle him to a patient hearing. We bespeak for him the attention which his talent and experience and the importance of his themes should command. All that can be asked for him, however, is that his positions be carefully considered in the light of scripture teaching. Every reader is conceded the right and urged to exercise the privilege to accept or reject each position the author takes according as it agrees with or departs from the teaching of the holy scriptures.

The publishers assume all responsibility for the name, or title, of the book. The author felt disinclined to put forth the volume under the name of "Sweeney's Sermons," but it was our preference and he gracefully yielded. We make this explanation cheerfully because it is due to him. GOSPEL ADVOCATE PUBLISHING CO.

Nashville, Tenn., April 15, 1892.

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SWEENEY'S SERMONS.

LIFE OF JOHN S. SWEENEY.

IT has been most truthfully said that "the life of a great man in a great period of the world's history is a subject to command the attention of every thoughtful mind."

The subject of the present sketch is undoubtedly a great man by whatever standard of true greatness he may be measured.

Physically, he is a perfect specimen of the highest type of the race. Exactly six feet high, weighing 220 pounds, without any adipose tissue whatever to burden him, he is a modern embodiment of the old Greek idea of strength, which found its expression in Hercules. Intellectually, we find in him the crystal luminosity of the brilliant, all of which is subordinate to a deeply religious and moral nature that has always been the ruling principle of his life.

That he has lived in stirring times and has been a leader in one of the grandest of moral revolutions, cannot be gainsaid by any one conversant with the moral and spiritual history of the race.

Each generation seems to be endowed by the Almighty ruler with some special mission. At one time it is to offer up itself a sacrifice upon the altar of persecution; at another, to stand firmly against some great and growing heresy that threatens the life and liberty of the church, or to bring out of obscurity and restore to its original place some lost sight-of truth or principle. To another, it is given to cry out against an unholy alliance with the state

or the world, to call into exercise the latent forces of a rich but indifferent church by proclaiming the duty of a world wide evangelism.

The special work of the disciples, or Christians, under God, was to call the religious world back from the traditions of men to "the law and the testimony;" to urge the prompt and hearty observance of everything taught as necessary to the salvation of the sinner, and the development of the Christian, and jealously guard against the enforcement of anything as a test of fellowship that did not have either an apostolic precept, example or necessary inference. It was an attempt to exalt Christ above party, and his word above human creeds; to illustrate the practicability of Christian union upon New Testament faith and practices; to build a church of Christ without denominational name or other barrier to Christian union, whose terms of fellowship should be as broad as the conditions of salvation and identical with them; to lead alien sinners to Christ in the clear light of New Testament teaching and example; to work with all other Christian workers as far as possible in extending Christ's reign among men by seeking to promote the union for which he prayed. With such a cause and such a champion, the world might readily expect the noble Christian life of which the following pages are but a very imperfect portrayal.

John Steele Sweeney was born near Liberty, Casey County, Kentucky, September 4th, 1834, A. D. His father, G. E. Sweeney, was, as his name indicates, of Irish descent—his grand-father, Job Sweeney, being brought to America when only a few years of age. Both his father and grand-father have been preachers in the great work of the restoration from its earliest incipiency. His mother, Talitha Campbell, was of Scotch descent, her

father, John Campbell, coming to this country when only a few years of age from near Aberdeen, Scotland. She was a woman of limited education, but possessed a very strong and vigorous mind, a woman of rare beauty in her youth, and endowed with the sterling qualities of her Scotch ancestry. She was largely instrumental in shaping the character and destiny of young John, and much of his manhood and moral worth is due to the training of her loving hand. Deeply religious in her nature, she instilled the same spirit of veneration for, and love of the truth, into his young soul.

She was, moreover, very affectionate and strongly attached to her children, and her serene old age has been made bright with the reflection that she brought all her children through the perils of youth to honorable and useful manhood and womanhood without a single "black sheep in the family fold."

John was educated in the common schools of his time, which then were very common indeed, and meagerly supplied with the appliances of the present day, but grand training fields for the development of the two great principles of self-reliance and respect for others taught upon the play-grounds of the log cabin universities of that day. He was a great reader, and studied the few books of his time with much eagerness, making a specialty of the study of the meaning and use of words, and to-day, he has few equals, and probably no superiors in effective and proper handling of the words he uses. He spent his time out of school in the hard toil of the farm life to which he was bred, lightened by the simple recreations of his time, such as fishing, gunning, fox-hunting and the like.

THE "MOSE" STORY.

Although the Baptists and Methodists were numerous,

and the notion of getting religion suddenly and almost miraculously, at what was called the "mourner's bench," was very prevalent during his boyhood and early manhood, our subject never had any faith in that way of becoming a Christian. He, however, often attended the revival meetings of the time, and was a close observer of what was taught and done on such occasions. This writer has several times heard him tell of one of these revivals at which his cousin, Moses Sweeney, got religion. He and "cousin Mose," as he called him, went to the meeting together. It was a Baptist meeting. It had gone on some time, and the excitement was running high. A great many young people had got religion, and many were seeking. His cousin was, as he said, "a Baptist, dyed in the wool." He saw the prevailing feeling was working on him. When they had been attending the meeting two or three days, Mose took him aside one day and said, "John, I believe if you will take care of the horses," (which were hitched in the woods surrounding the meeting house) "I'll try for it to-night." John assured him that he would, so Mose went forward. Mose was as honest as the days were long, and John watched the matter with a good deal of interest to see how he would come through. The preachers and workers all came round by turns and talked to and prayed for Mose. Every time he was asked how he was getting on for the first and second sessions, his answer was, "Well, I am doing no good, sir." After awhile there were several came through all around Mose, with a great shout, Mose's sweet-heart among others, and Mose was greatly affected by the feeling that was running high and wild. One of the preachers came up and slapping him on the back, asked, "Well, Mose, how are you feeling now?" "Better," said he, "in fact, I believe I am

about through the worst of it." In a few minutes Mose arose, smiled, looked better, but was not so demonstrative as many others. John, of course, congratulated him, and afterward, seeking his opportunity, he asked him, "Mose, do you think I could get it?" "Nothing in the world to hinder you, once you get to the point where you can just entirely give way to it," said Mose, confidently. Some time after this, Josiah Waller, a preacher of the restoration, visited Liberty, and preached two or three weeks. During this meeting, our subject confessed the Savior and was baptized in Green River, that runs hard by the little town. It was in August, 1850 or 1851. "Cousin Mose" was among the first to congratulate him, saying: "That way looks to me entirely too simple and business like, John, but no doubt it is all right, if you have given way to it."

He began teaching in the common schools of the neighborhood, and displayed great capacity for governing, even triumphing over the universal tendency at that time to "turn the teacher out" at Christmas time. It was during one of these seasons that he first manifested his great ability for discussion. It was very customary then to hold weekly public debates upon some simple proposition, generally of an entirely theoretic nature. On one occasion the subject was: "Which has the greater right to complain of ill treatment at the hands of the white man—the Indian or the negro?" It so happened that young Sweeney was upon the side of the negro, and his treatment of the question was of such a vigorous nature as to arouse both the indignation and fears of the slave holding population. Many attempts were made to induce him to retract his sentiments, but this he sturdily refused to do and it was months before the stormy scene had subsided. Even the poor slaves got hold of some of the brave words he had

spoken in their behalf, and for a long time the whites had fearful visions of an uprising among the blacks.

About this time, being about 19 years of age, he entered Hancock Academy at Columbia, where he studied law and at the same time pursued his academic course. During his stay here, occurred an incident which at the same time illustrates his love of the weaker side and his propensity for good humor, that has characterized his whole life. There was a large "bully" of a boy working in the neighborhood of the play ground, who generally found it convenient to visit it when the pupils were at play. It was not long till it was generally observed that he seemed to have a spite at one of the pupils, a boy much smaller than himself, and he took every occasion to gratify it by shaking, striking or otherwise annoying him. This had run to some length, when John, with another young man, determined to come to the rescue of the weaker boy. They contrived their plan, and to carry it out, secured an old-fashioned horse-pistol, and loading it to the brim with red berries of the plant known to botanists as *Phytolacca decandra*, but better known to the boys of the play-ground as "poke berries," they hid it in a stump on the play-ground, and instructed their small companion how to use it, promising to see him through. The next day the bully was on the ground as usual, and as usual, insulted the boy again, who at once drew himself proudly up and informed his overbearing neighbor that this conduct must stop, or there would be trouble. At this assertion the bully bore down upon his little enemy, threatening dire punishment. The little fellow retreated till he came to the stump, and then halted, and grasping the pistol, leveled it at his adversary and spat-tered him from head to foot with the "poke berries."

The cowardly fellow, seeing the red spots made by the juice of the berries, concluded that he was mortally wounded, and sank down at once, exclaiming that he was dead. This was the opportunity sought and the two boys who knew about the berries, ran at once with protestations of great sympathy, and, carrying him to the old wooden pump, gave him a thorough drenching under the pretense of washing away the blood. The cold bath had the effect of so reviving the fellow that he sat up and began looking for his wounds. To the surprise of all who were not in the secret, it was found that he had none. The fellow left with a dim impression that somehow he had been victimized. Years after, when Bro. Sweeney was engaged in a discussion in the State of Missouri, a gentleman came forward and spoke to him familiarly as "John." Bro. Sweeney could not place him even by name, and the gentleman drew him aside and said: "I am the fellow that was shot with poke berries. I am deacon of the church here, have a fine farm and nice family, and think I enjoy the esteem of this community. You may tell anything in my previous history but the poke berry story. That would ruin me even now." Of course Bro. S. assured him, and they were friends.

In the fall of 1854, he removed to the State of Illinois and began the practice of law at Greenfield, Green Co. Beginning the battle of life poor and friendless in a strange community, at a very early age he was enabled by his fixed principles of honor and rectitude, to occupy a leading position at the bar, and it was not long until he had won the confidence of the new community and established himself as an important factor in its future growth and prosperity. He was tireless in the pursuit of information concerning his cases, and would explore every field

that seemed to promise illustration or information. Although very positive in the statement of his case, he was always a gentleman and treated his colleagues in such a manner as to soften the bitterness of their defeat, by his good humor, power in speech, and generous open handed manner of conducting his cause. Thus prepared and with his power as an advocate, and wisdom as a counsellor, combined with a remarkable elocutionary and histrionic force, he bade fair to stand in the front rank of the ablest lawyers of the West, which he would have undoubtedly realized, had not Infinite Providence been planning another pathway for his feet to travel, and another crown for him to win in life's great conflict.

The community at this time was very much disturbed by the teachings of Alexander Campbell. That great divine had recently made a tour through Illinois and all the pulpits of the various sects were ringing with reviews of Campbellism. Mi-representations were flying thick and fast through the religious atmosphere. The disciples were few and weak in the community, and, having no preacher to champion their cause, the other preachers had a comparatively easy time killing Campbellism. Bro. Sweeney was living with Judge Short, a prominent member of the M. E. body, and a man of rare mental and moral qualities. He was particularly noted for his firmness of disposition, not only in his official capacity, but in all his private affairs.

Nothing had passed between them to indicate Bro. Sweeney's faith, and no one in the community dreamed that the rising young lawyer was tinctured with the dangerous heresy.

One Saturday evening, Judge Short informed him that the M. E. preacher was going to review Campbellism the

next day at a point not far away, and invited him to go with him to hear the discourse. The invitation was accepted, and they went. The preacher was an uneducated, unscrupulous, noisy fellow. In the course of his harangue, he informed the audience that Mr. Campbell had said that he "could take the vilest sinner into the water and bring him out a saint." At the conclusion of the sermon, the opportunity, usual at that time, was given for any who had questions to ask, to propound them. Bro. Sweeney rose and quietly asked the preacher, where in his writings had Mr. Campbell ever made such a statement. The minister glowered at him a moment and asked, "Have you come here to break up my meeting?" "No, Bro. Powell," instantly replied Judge Short, "it is a fair question and one I should also like to know." The preacher promised to produce it at another time, and that was the end of the controversy. Immediately after the benediction, Bro. S. was surrounded by the few discouraged, but loyal disciples of the community, who said to him, "Bro. Sweeney, you are a member of the church of Christ?" "Certainly, brethren." "Well, you must answer this speech." "I am not a preacher, brethren." "No matter: the cause of the Lord and his truth demands that we be properly set before this community." It was a trying hour for the young man. He was in a most flattering situation from a worldly standpoint, with a prospect of great popularity and a lucrative business before him. The entire trend of religious thought and teaching was with the popular denominations; while on the other hand, there were a few poor, uninfluential disciples with a New Testament in their hand and the trumpet call of duty in their mouth. He is brought to face the question, "Christ or Diana?" The silver tongue of self-interest pleaded

with a loud uproar, "Diana and the Ephesians," the still small voice of sanctified chivalry whispered, "Christ," and Christ it was.

The school-house was procured and an immense audience assembled to hear the popular young orator take up the accursed cause—a glorious gospel sermon upon the kingdom of heaven to which a number yielded. Peace and joy reigned that night in the hearts of God's children—rage and indignation in the popular heart, but the destiny of the young man was forever decided. God had set the plow before him, his hand had been put to it, and from that day no backward look has been thrown by him.

A meeting followed soon after the discourse in the school-house, held in an unfinished building in the neighborhood, in the course of which one hundred persons were baptized, including several, if not all, the children of Judge Short. On one day during the meeting, eight men were led into the water together, seven brothers and one cousin. During the first year of his ministry thus begun, five hundred persons became obedient to the faith under his preaching. The violent opposition he everywhere met soon provoked him to discussion. Riding along one day, he saw a large audience assembling upon the banks of Apple Creek, where he had baptized the converts of his first meeting and, turning aside, he found that it was a baptism they had come to perform. The preacher was a Mr. Johnson of the Free-will Baptists, who, while teaching immersion, were great sticklers for "mourners' bench religion." The preacher seemed very fearful that some one would misunderstand their design in the baptism, and in his speech previous to the baptism, he laid particular stress upon the fact that they had not brought the candidates to that place to receive remission of sins.

They had already received it at the mourners' bench. Neither had these candidates come there to be born again. He thanked God that all "Baptist converts were born again on dry land." Bro. Sweeney was listening carefully and at the conclusion requested permission to ask one question. It being granted, he said, "I should like to ask if Baptist converts are all 'born of water' on 'dry land.'" The only reply was, "Sir, you are a Campbellite and desire to disturb our meeting." All the events following occurred within five years of evangelizing. No diary being kept, exact dates and precise order cannot be gained. He was called upon by the little church in Franklin, Morgan Co., to represent it in a discussion with the M. E. church, the latter having chosen the Rev. Mr. Pallet as its champion.

THE "PREPARATION" STORY.

This discussion was confined to a single proposition—"That we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort," Rev. P., of course, affirming.

Mr. P. read his opening speech from manuscript, which was an effort to prove justification by faith without the deeds of the law. Bro. S. in his reply, admitted that Mr. P. had done about all he had in his speech undertaken to do, but that he had not come up to his proposition. He then in a few words showed the difference between justification by faith, on the one hand, and justification by faith *only* on the other. Made his attack upon the "only" in the proposition. Asked his opponent if he meant by "only" to exclude from justification "the deeds of the law" or "works of righteousness" in which the Jews trusted, and which Paul excluded from justification? or

did he mean to exclude the obedience of faith—such as the confession, baptism, etc.

This, of course, confused his opponent, as he was not prepared to meet the real issue. He began to flounder. Bro. S. held him to the issue of denying all obedience to the gospel.

About this time, Mr. P. discovered that he had lost his "preparation." A search of tables was made for it, but in vain. The debate went on for two or three days, Mr. P. in every speech apologizing for his manifest failure by referring to his lost "preparation," insinuating more and more plainly as the time went on, that it was "somewhere above ground," that somebody "knew where it was" etc. etc. until it became apparent he was endeavoring to make the impression that somebody had stolen it. Finally Bro. S. grew tired of such insinuations, and suggested that Mr. P. should say outright it was stolen, or leave off his insinuations to that effect. Whereupon Mr. P. came out boldly and accused him of taking the "preparation" from his table while he (Mr. P.) was reading his opening speech, and proved it by one of his brethren. The witness was cross-examined pretty severely. It was brought out of him, that two days before, while Mr. P. was making his opening speech, witness saw S. take the "preparation," (had seen it before and described it,) from the table in front of the pulpit and hand it to one elder Geo. Owen. who was sitting by Mr. S., and said that Owen put it into his own pocket. He couldn't be mistaken as he knew the "preparation" and knew Owen and had known him for years. Quite a sensation was created, of course. At the noon adjournment following this scene, Bro. S. announced that there would be some further developments of the matter in the afternoon, and

that if the people would come together a half-hour before the time for beginning the debate, they might see somebody in tribulation. The matter was much discussed and with much feeling during the recess, and fully half an hour before time for beginning the discussion, the house was literally packed full. Bro. S. called the matter up. Mr. P.'s witness stood his ground. Bro. S. called attention to the fact that said elder Geo. Owen was not in the house at all while Mr. P. was making his opening speech; that he was in Jacksonville, and came to Franklin in the afternoon of that day. All of which he proved by Mr. Owen, by the young man who had brought Mr. Owen to Franklin, and by others—all of which the people knew when they came to reflection. Then there was intense excitement in the audience. Bro. S. gave out that there would be still further development of the case that night. But that night Mr. P. came forward to settle the matter, and reported that he had found his "preparation" at home in his trunk, and that it had never been in the church,—about that he had made a mistake. Apologized and hoped the matter was at an end, to the satisfaction of all parties. Bro. S. said he was satisfied except on one point: He was a little curious to know what Mr. P.'s witness had to say for himself. Said witness would say nothing only he was "disgusted with Campbellite impudence." Bro. S. said he would conclude the case by advising the witness to make sure, the next time he proved a falsehood for a brother, that it was one who would not give him away in a close place, to save himself. Whereupon witness proposed there and then to flog Sweeney, and a large burly fellow, theretofore unknown in the case, rose and proposed himself to take Sweeney's flogging, asserting his entire readiness and willingness to do it. Bro. S. proposed

that there was no time then for flogging anybody, as the time had arrived for the discussion to begin. This motion prevailed, and the discussion was resumed.

The denominations seemed determined that the "heresy of Campbellism" should not get a foothold in the "Prairie State." Young Sweeney had fully committed himself to the cause "everywhere spoken against," and had selected for his field of operations, a large scope of country in which there were only a few disciples and only three or four who ever tried to defend the cause in public, and they were comparatively without education, except that they knew the New Testament, but determined to make the best possible fight for it; so the work went on.

In the year 1859, he held a discussion at Whitehall with Rev. J. B. Logan of the Cumberland Presbyterian church. That gentleman was a very able representative of his denomination, being at that time editor of their leading church paper, published at St. Louis. He was in the very prime of life, being about 45 years of age, while Bro. Sweeney was then only about 25 years old.

He was, moreover, a candid and able disputant, and that debate, which was published, still stands in the front rank of the published debates upon the baptismal question.

The Presbyterian church in Whitehall was strong and influential, while our people could be counted upon the fingers of one hand, without organization or house of worship. As evidence of their weakness, there was no proper place for Bro. Sweeney to stop, and he was compelled to board at the village hotel during the debate.

The spirit of the book is high toned and fair, just what might be expected as the result of a contest between two honorable and fair-minded men, though it was frequently enlivened by sallies of wit. At one

time Dr. Logan was laboring to show that *baptizo* meant to dip or put under, but did not include the idea of bringing out, and therefore to baptize according to that word meant to put under and leave there. "Now," he says, "there is just one clear case of such baptism in the Bible, and that is where the devil entered into the swine and they all ran down into the sea and were drowned." Bro. Sweeney answered by calling attention to the fact that his opponent could see without difficulty how in case of the devil and the swine, "down into the sea" meant what it said, but in the case of Philip and the Ethiopian, "down into the water" meant almost anything else than what it said. "But," said he, "I am glad the gentleman admits even that the devil immersed the swine. That, however, was his last immersion. He lost his *bacon* and determined there and then to change the mode. He has ever since contended for a less dangerous mode." As a result of the discussion, our people began to grow in numbers and influence until we had a large and flourishing church, while the opposite result marked the history of the Presbyterians. It was that discussion that attracted the general attention of our people to Bro. Sweeney as an able polemic, and since then he has held seventy-five or eighty debates, generally against his will. He was never fond of it and it was only his transcendent ability that caused our churches to force him to represent them so often. During the next few years, he made his home in the bosom of the church and was continually holding meetings, during which time he encountered many strange characters and passed through novel experiences. When we consider the rude and uncultivated condition of the public mind at that early period, it would be passing strange if such a man, pressing such an unpopular cause,

did not. He was holding a meeting near Bunker Hill, and during the meeting a young lady came forward one night and confessed the Savior. She was the daughter of an old German known all through the community for his cleverness and stubbornness. The old man was highly outraged and swore in his wrath that "dese Gamellites shall not pabdize mine gal." The next day when they assembled at the water's edge, the old gentleman and some of his friends assembled and called to the girl to come out and see them. A long and excited conversation was held in German, and at its close the girl returned and informed brother Sweeney that her father not only threatened her own life, but also the life of anyone who dared baptize her, saying "They would never come out alive." Bro. Sweeney told her to decide the case for herself. She looked at him and said, "Can you risk it?" "I can," was his reply. "Then so can I," she said, and they both started down into the water, the young lady singing between sobs, "Jesus, I my cross have taken." Her father stood for a moment and then turned blubbering and crying, and ran with the fleetness of an antelope till he was clear out of sight. Some years after Bro. Sweeney received a letter from the young lady, informing him that her father had greatly softened, was kind and devoted to her, and often spoke of him, and she believed that if he could make them another visit, he would himself obey the gospel.

THE SPRINGFIELD PREACHERS' CONVENTION.

It was during this period of five years that Bro. S. was evangelizing that there was an event occurred in the state, which attracted considerable attention in and even from without the state, in which he was called to figure somewhat conspicuously. There was a preacher in the state,

living in Springfield and belonging to the congregation there, who had preached over the state a good deal and was pretty generally known to the brethren, whose name was Brown—familiarly known as “Billy Brown.” He was a man of considerable but not very compact learning, considerable oratory of the old fashioned top-loftical sort, of great personal magnetism, and hence of great power with the masses. But for some reason—some said because he was a bad man, others said because he was a very popular man—he was unpopular with a good many of the preachers. Charges had been preferred against him, and he had been tried and retained in the church at Springfield. A good many of the preachers thought he should be silenced, and even excluded from the church. A scheme was concocted by preachers in and close around Springfield to call a council of preachers to meet in that city to consider and act upon the matter. Circulars were printed signed by John F. Rowe, now editor of the *Christian Leader*, and others and sent to the preachers over the state, inviting them to Springfield on a named day to consider matters of vital importance to the cause. The time came, and in considerable numbers the preachers came. An organization was effected. The object of the meeting was never, and never has yet been, fully explained. It was apparent, however, that there were a good many preachers there after Billy Brown’s scalp. They didn’t seem to know exactly how to go about getting it, but evidently that was what they had come for. This writer has several times heard Bro. Sweeney describe the meeting as composed of three classes of preachers. (1) Those who were ready to go into a regular Episcopal organization, to scalp Billy Brown and anybody else that might need scalping in the future as he did then.

(2) Those who didn't believe in any such high church business, but still were rather anxious in some way to scalp Billy Brown. (3) Those who were opposed to all that kind of scalping business, and all such unnecessary organization without any reference to Billy Brown's case. A committee was appointed to try Brown. He came before the convention and asserted his readiness to give account of himself to his own congregation, as he had done, but denied the right of that body to adjudicate in the case. Then followed a vast amount of discussion as to proper tribunals, etc. etc.

The committee appointed to try Brown proceeded to hear the evidence against him, and reported against him to the convention, and the convention was asked to approve the committee's finding, without hearing the evidence, and to depose Brown from the ministry whether or no. This was too much for brother Sweeney, and many other brethren who were there. They protested, but in vain; the majority had come there to scalp Brown, and they did it. Bro. S. told them in a speech on a motion to adopt the report of the committee, that, allowing the authority of the preachers present to do what they proposed, he would never vote for the adoption of the report of a committee to ruin a brother without hearing the evidence for himself. That such a proceeding was an outrage upon justice and decency, saying nothing about the spirit of Jesus. But he denounced the proceeding also as flagrantly opposed to the congregational independency, for which the disciples had always contended—the congregationalism of the New Testament—and told them with an emphasis that none of them who are living have forgotten that they were making a record of which in their old age they would be ashamed, and if they were not their

children would be after they were dead, and that as to the effect on "Billy Brown," their proceedings would only give him more largely the sympathy of his friends, right or wrong, in the matters of which they charged him. Sure enough, after the convention adjourned, nobody defended its action.

In the fall of 1859, he held a discussion at Glasgow with a Universalist preacher, Mr. Whitesides, and though that gentleman held out firmly during the discussion, he took ill shortly after and at once sent a messenger for Bro. Sweeney to come to him. It so happened that Bro. S. had gone to the state of Wisconsin and could not be present with him; but Mr. Whitesides ordered all his Universalist books and papers to be destroyed and recanted all his preaching as a Universalist and died.

During the five years of his ministry as an evangelist, he baptized about 2,000 persons. Two of the five years referred to he was associated with Elijah Craig, as editor of the *Bible Advocate*, published at Jacksonville, a monthly paper advocating the principles of the restoration, and which finally evolved into the *Christian-Evangelist*, now published at St. Louis, Mo. He never was fond of editorial work, but consented that he might help the cause in one of its most trying hours.

Our people felt that we needed a college and decided to establish one at Jacksonville and named it Berean College. Bro. Walter Scott Russell, a graduate of Bethany, and who was connected by marriage with the Campbell family, was called to be its president and also to preach for the church in Jacksonville. He was a man of ability and deep piety, to which were added much learning and a high decree of culture. He was a sincerely good man, but a mystic of the Samuel Taylor Coleridge

school. Coleridge says of himself, that he became so absorbed in abstract speculations, that history facts and even poetry became insipid. So absorbed did Russell become in Coleridge, that the Bible as a revelation of God became insipid to him, and he taught that the soul must have direct spiritual illumination from God. All his teaching both in the college and pulpit, was subordinate to this one idea, and it was not long until a large part of the church and college were imbued with the same teaching, and many of our leading preachers were open advocates of the new doctrine, while others were hesitating. It was a perilous hour for the cause of the restoration. The great body of our brotherhood were loyal to the scriptures, but they lacked leadership. Bro. Craig was always faithful, but he was not a man fitted to form and lead public opinion. Among the preachers openly avowing their faith in the new inner light theory, were such men as T. J. Melish, I. N. Carman, Frank Apperson, a brilliant young Englishman, and W. W. Happy, a veteran preacher and at that time president of the State Missionary Society, soon to convene at Eureka.

EUREKA STATE MEETING.

The state convention was entirely in the hands of the sympathizers with Russell. Happy, in many respects the most influential man in the state, was the president, and had been from the beginning. Samuel Callaway was the treasurer and P. Lucas, professor in the college under Russell's presidency, was secretary, and they were all in full sympathy with the new movement, which they seemed to believe was to reform the reformation on the basis of the inner-light theory advocated by Russell. The *Christian Sentinel*, the only organ the disciples had in the state, under the control of I. N. Carman, was publishing with endorsement

the articles and addresses of Russell. Many of the leading preachers of the state, especially the college mates of Russell, were either approving the movement or halting in their minds, awaiting the further developments. Many seemed not to understand the matter. The brotherhood generally (aside from preachers) were true to the old faith for which they had labored and suffered persecution, but felt unable to resist the influence against them, and were greatly agitated, perhaps alarmed would not be too strong a word to express their state of feeling. The state meeting came on at Eureka. Two addresses had been made evidently leaning to the new movement. Bro. Sweeney, busy in the fight with the opposition without, as we have seen, did not reach Eureka until the second day of the convention. His fame as a successful preacher and debater had gone all over the state. How he stood as to the new movement was not fully known. Both sides were claiming him. He had only a few weeks before, been at Jacksonville and preached in Russell's pulpit, and it was claimed that he was Russell's friend and sympathizer. But the brethren through the state refused to believe it. They would not until they had it from his mouth or pen. They had not heard him on the matter and he had written nothing. President Russell had taken the ground that the gospel was the "letter" in the Pauline sense of the word, and that it was powerless without the personal and immediate work of the Spirit; that whatever was in the scriptures predicated of the Spirit, that he did in his own person, unless it was explained that he did it by instrumentality; that he convicted sinners of sin, of righteousness and of judgment in his own proper person and by internal working; that the preaching of the gospel was a mere circumstance, and by no means a necessary one at

that; that men could do more effective missionary work by praying the Lord to send the Spirit to enlighten the heathen than they could by preaching the word to them, the word being powerless without the additional inner light of the Spirit. He had even contrasted the whole personal ministry of our Lord with the day of Pentecost, arguing that the reason our Lord converted so few during his personal ministry was that he only preached the word, the "letter," which while it might kill could not give life; while the conversion of the thousands on Pentecost could only be accounted for by the personal presence and inner light of the Holy Spirit; that the testimony of Peter upon the occasion was a mere tip or pointer to what was being done by the Spirit in his own person in the hearts of the sinners present. Of course the denominations were delighted. The restoration was not only being reformed but was being made altogether orthodox. Everybody was happy but the really true and loyal disciples. They were discouraged and chagrined. All their educated men seemed to be drifting from them. On the second day of the convention, J. S. Sweeney arrived. He had never before visited this part of the state and was unknown by face to many of the disciples, though not by name. The committee reported that he would preach that evening. Now what would he have to say? Was he with Russell, notwithstanding the many battles he had fought in the good work of the restoration? Would he ignore the issue? Could he do that? Would he draw the old Jerusalem blade and let the light shine on it again? *What* would he do? He dined with Happy, Russell, and others. Did that mean anything? That was a mere circumstance.

The hour came for preaching. The house was literally "packed and jammed" to use a Western phrase. The text

was, "For he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he shall tell you the things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine and shall tell it unto you."

The first remark was that the Holy Spirit didn't come into the world to preach himself, and that he doesn't do so now. Men who are guided now by the Spirit do not preach the Holy Spirit much, but Christ; that when men find themselves most of the time preaching the Holy Spirit or some theory about the Holy Spirit, they may pretty safely take the fact itself as sufficient proof that they are not directed by the Spirit—that they are off.

Secondly, the Spirit didn't come to take possession of and guide all men into the truth; that the promise of such guidance was to his chosen ones, and that they and only they were guided; showed what the admission of universal innerlightism even of all Christians would lead to. He then took up the Pentecost matter and showed that the wonderful effect, in the way of conversions, produced on that occasion was to be attributed to what was preached; that the work of Christ during his personal ministry was not a failure, as some assumed, but was preparatory to the subsequent work of the Spirit through the apostles. "What success" he asked, "suppose you, would have attended the preaching of the apostles even after the coming of the Spirit, but for the previous and preparatory work of Jesus? What did the apostles preach on the day of Pentecost, speaking as the Spirit gave them utterance, that reached the hearts of the people and yielded such grand results? *Was it not what Jesus had before done?* Jesus by what he did, taught, and suffered, laid the foundation for the success of the gospel afterward preached by the apostles by the inspiration of the Spirit. The apostles

on the day of Pentecost and thereafter preached by the Holy Spirit facts which Jesus did not declare in his personal ministry, facts which had not in fact transpired, and it was the effect of these facts now for the first time declared that was seen in so many conversions on Pentecost." In conclusion he restated with tremendous force and effect the importance of Pentecost as the beginning of the proclamation of the gospel, the power of God unto salvation. It has been said by some who heard him on that occasion and have heard him often since, that it was the master effort of his life. The effect was magnetic, and beyond description. At the conclusion of the discourse an old fashioned song was sung. The brethren broke over all bounds of custom, and by scores rushed forward to grasp the hand of the young preacher, with tears in their eyes and many amens upon their lips. The "reformers of the restoration" stood erect and looked straight down their noses, evidently feeling that the new movement was not moving on so swimmingly as they had seemed to suppose.

This was the beginning of the end. The new movement was put upon a course of ultimate and rapid extinction. Within a year the state convention was under a new administration. The whole Russell regime went—Happy and all.

Russell died. The church in Jacksonville, was sometime after reunited. Happy, Carman, and Callaway went to the Baptists, Lucas went to the law. The college went to ruin—Melish to the Baptists, then to the Episcopalians, and is still going. Only Happy ever returned.

LAST MEETING WITH HAPPY.

In the summer of 1871 or 1872, after brother Sweeney had moved from Chicago to Paris, he made a visit to Win-

chester, the home of his wife's people, and having to pass through Jacksonville, his abiding love for the old soldier, induced him to call at his home, in that city, to see him. The old man was not at home, and he did n't see him. On brother Sweeney's return, however, he met him on the road, a few miles out of Jacksonville on his way, in a buggy, to preach the next day in a country Baptist church, which fact, brother Sweeney had learned from some source. They halted in the road and after recognitions, salutations and a few questions and answers, the following dialogue substantially took place between them.

S. "Well, Bro. Happy, for whom and what are you preaching nowadays?"

H. "For whom and what are *you* preaching?"

S. "For the Lord, and the old Jerusalem gospel."

H. "That's my ticket exactly, so, you see, you and I are in harmony again."

S. "Are we in full harmony as once we were before the war?"

H. "Well, I am in somewhat different harness now, but am working for the same Master, and doing about the same kind of work."

S. "Does your harness fit you as well, and are you working as easy in it, and are you *Happy*, as of old?"

H. "Well, John, to be frank, I must admit that the harness rubs me in places, and I don't feel perfectly easy in it. But I guess I'll have to stand it for my few remaining days."

S. "Wouldn't you like to be with us again—to be easy in the harness?"

H. "I don't know where to find you."

S. "Do you know where you left us?"

H. "I know where we *parted*."

S. "Well, there you can meet us again. But I am in a hurry and I presume you are too. I don't know that I could do you much good anyway by talking to you, but I think I know one that could set you all right again if you would consult him. You could see him almost anywhere and at almost any time."

H. "Who is he?"

S. "His name is Knockunder—Mr. I. W. Knockunder. Do you know him?"

H. "Well, I have heard of him, but, I must confess, I have no intimate acquaintance with the gentleman."

S. "Possibly, if you will see him and cultivate his acquaintance, he might put you in the way to become altogether *Happy* again."

H. "Ha! Good-bye, John, God bless you."

S. "Good-bye, Bro. Happy."

In the early fall following the foregoing interview, Bro. Happy returned to the church. He attended the state convention at Bloomington and made a public statement on which the brethren present gladly gave him the hand of fellowship. From that convention Bro. O. A. Burgess went to Paris, Ky. to hold a meeting with Bro. Sweeney, and Bro. Happy said to him, "Tell John I found his friend, "Knockunder," and he has been of great service to me."

In the fall of 1861, Bro. Sweeney removed to Lincoln, Illinois and took charge of the church at that place, staying with them two years, at the end of which time he was chosen state evangelist of the Illinois Christian Missionary Society. During the time he filled this position, the State Board sent him to Chicago to assist our brethren at that point in a meeting. It was a small band meeting on the West Side, and then known as the Monroe Street Christian church.

It was ministered to regularly by Bro. W. F. Black, at that time but a "boy preacher," but who is, after a lapse of nearly thirty years, the popular preacher of the large and flourishing church on the South Side. The meeting was quite a successful one and as Bro. Black was preparing to leave them, the congregation at once extended a hearty and unanimous call to Bro. Sweeney, which he accepted. Under his ministry the church rapidly prospered and soon began to attract public notice as a factor in the moral history of the city.

In the year 1866, he was called to and accepted the pastorate of Smith and Mound streets, now Richmond street, church in Cincinnati, Ohio, succeeding Bro. T. D. Garvin. He only remained one year, but long enough to pass through one of the saddest of his life experiences, and one from which it took him years to recover, viz: the death of his only son, Walter Scott, which occurred from cholera, which terrible plague was at that time decimating the city. This so set his heart against the city that he desired to leave it, and his old congregation eagerly called him back to Chicago to what had then become the Sixteenth and Wabash Avenue congregation. Shortly after his return, he baptized two young ladies, Misses Bertha and Ida Honore, daughters of Bro. H. H. Honore. They have since become famous for their many excellent qualities of heart and brain; the former, now Mrs. Potter Palmer, Lady President of the World's Fair Committee, the latter, Mrs. F. D. Grant, wife of our present Minister to Vienna, Austria. He also immersed Mr. Palmer and married him to Miss Honore. At that time the little congregation on Wabash Avenue contained some of the most influential of Chicago's citizens and bade fair to become one of the most prominent and powerful in the city. Its

after history is a sad comment upon the evils of internal dissensions among the people of God.

It was during his last pastorate at Chicago that he had some of the most celebrated debates for which he has been noted. Bro. Sweeney often relates as one of the most interesting, and at the time, exciting episodes of all his experience in debates, one that occurred at Atlanta, Ill. in 1868, during a discussion between O. A. Burgess and one Dr. Burrows, a Spiritist-infidel. Bro. Sweeney was present at Bro. Burgess' invitation and put in charge of everything excepting the debating.

Dr. Burrows represented a society of Spiritists at Atlanta that embraced quite a number of men and women, and several of some prominence, socially and otherwise. They had made themselves conspicuous for disregarding and scoffing at what they called the unreasonable requirements and exactions of Christian customs, especially Sunday observances and social intercourse of the sexes. They all believed in what they called Women's Rights. They would go fishing on Sundays when Christian folks were at church, and in the little stream would go bathing, both sexes together, and had managed to get up a good deal of talk about themselves. In fact some scandals had been whispered about them. Burgess had heard how they behaved themselves generally to show their defiance for Christian sentiments, but there was one scandal of a more serious nature, implicating a man or two, and a woman or two, and a doctor or two, of which he had not heard. During the debate the question about the incarnation of our Lord came up, and Dr. Burrows made an attack upon the virtue of the mother of Jesus, insinuating about the darkest surmises of an evil mind, which of course Burgess resented with severity and indignation, among other

things saying that such evil surmises would very naturally arise in the minds of such persons as so far disregarded propriety and decency as by indiscriminate bathing and other things to make themselves offensive to the whole community. This was a fire brand. It meant more in the community than Burgess knew, and was generally taken as an allusion to the scandal of a most serious nature. This occurred just before noon adjournment. Bro. Sweeney said he noticed the effect of the allusion when it was made, and that as soon as the audience was dismissed it was all on fire, and soon the town was on fire. The prominent gentlemen went off nodding significantly and cursing audibly.

As Bros. Burgess and Sweeney were going to their room, one of the insulted gentlemen took Bro. Sweeney aside and read the riot act to him. He told him that Burgess had intentionally referred to a low mean scandal that had been whispered around the town to the injury of certain ladies and gentlemen; and that they meant to hold him personally responsible for it; that nothing short of retraction and apology could prevent effusion of blood; advised Bro. Sweeney to induce Burgess to so retract and apologize that afternoon in his first speech. Bro. Sweeney told the irate gentleman that he didn't see that Burgess owed any one an apology and he should not even ask him to make one; that while Christians didn't believe in settling questions by fighting, they were not all necessarily cowards; that they had the privilege of suffering and even dying bravely; that he might think it worth while to mention the matter to Burgess and he might not. There the interview ended. Bros. Burgess and Sweeney had scarcely reached their room, when callers began to arrive with reports that were on the town. There was

blood on the moon. Burgess declined to talk about the little side matter and referred the callers to Bro. Sweeney who answered all alike, "Let's not get excited; but keep cool, it will all end right."

When the people came together that evening the most intense excitement prevailed among all sexes and ages, and something desperate seemed to be expected generally. Some of the men who demanded an apology and made threats were considered dangerous; and it had gone forth that no apologies or concessions would be made. The house was packed full and the yard was full and excitement was on tiptoe before the time for the meeting; and a fearful silence reigned in and out of the house. As soon as Bros. Burgess and Sweeney came in and were seated they began receiving notes from persons in the audience: "What shall we do?" "What are you going to do?" "What is the programme?" "We are with you," etc. etc. Dr. Burrows had the first speech that afternoon, and seemed perfectly cool and self-possessed until his notes brought him to the offensive allusion in Burgess' forenoon speech. Then he said he was somewhat trammelled by the rules of debate, and would himself pass the gentleman's unworthy allusion to a local scandal. He couldn't, however, answer for the others implicated. He rather thought they were disposed, as they ought to be, to hold the gentleman personally responsible. And as for himself, he wished then and there to serve notice on the gentleman that if the allusion was repeated he "should bring upon him a hasty retribution a thousand times hotter than all the hell in his Bible." The audience was breathless and the speaker paused that his remark might have the emphasis of silence. Bro. Sweeney looking the speaker in the face said, so as to be heard all over the house, "pooh." The speaker proceeded

as if he didn't hear it. In a few minutes his time expired. And as Bro. Burgess was about to arise to reply Bro. Sweeney put a little piece of paper in his hand with these words on it: "Keep perfectly cool, but score him, we are all here—J. S. S."

Burgess proceeded to review the speech pretty much in the order in which it was delivered; but not half his hearers knew what he was saying, such being their anxiety for him to reach the point that had given offense. What will he do? Will he retract? Will he apologize? Will he pass the matter entirely without notice? or what will he do? And then what will the other party do? and then what will the whole congregation do? When Burgess came to that point in his speech, he repeated the threatening language of his opponent and said "Bah!" And after a pause, said, "Ladies and gentlemen, I take this my earliest opportunity to repeat with all possible emphasis every word I said in my former speech; now come on with your hot stuff." Then after a short pause there was a general relaxation in the feelings of the audience and a general laugh. Thus ended one of the most exciting of all the scenes I ever witnessed at a religious or any other kind of a debate.

In the spring of 1869, Bro. Sweeney was called to Salem, Indiana to discuss with Prof. Pike, of Boston. For some months that gentleman had been lecturing in Southern Indiana, and like Goliath of old, he was marching and parading in front of the hosts of Israel and defying them to battle.

No one could be found in any denomination to enter the lists and matters were getting quite serious for the cause of Christianity. Finally it was decided to have Bro. Sweeney meet him. The writer of this sketch

attended the debate, joining Bro. Sweeney *en route* to the scene of action at Greencastle, Indiana. The infidels had industriously circulated the report that "Sweeney dare not come and there will be no debate."

As our party came into the borders of Southern Indiana, and being on the last train previous to the opening of the discussion, great crowds assembled at each station curious to know and eager to ask, "Is Sweeney on board?"

As the reply "yes" was returned a shout of gladness went up from the hearts of God's people which grew in volume and power as we reached the scene of action. At Salem, the excitement was at fever heat, and more than two thousand persons were at the station.

Our arrival was greeted by cheers from Christian people and a surprised but scornful look by the infidels. The debate began the next morning Bro. Sweeney opening on the proposition, "The Christianity of the Bible is a Divine Institution" in a masterful effort of one hour, in which he carefully discriminated between the Mosaism and Christianity of the Bible. He clustered all his arguments around Christ as the center of Christianity. He then proceeded logically to show that Christians lived and died with Christ. If Christ was divine, Christianity was divine. If Christ rose from the dead, he was divine. This of course, forced the debate to turn upon the resurrection of Christ—the last place in the world Mr. Pike was prepared to meet Christianity. Seeing his inability to meet the argument, he began his reply by stating that the reply to Mr. Sweeney's speech was written out but he had left it in his trunk at the hotel. Whereupon he commenced reading an old lecture, rehashing a number of bishop Colenso's objections to the Bible. He never recovered from the obvious failure. The plain Hoosiers could not understand

how Mr. Pike could be prophet enough to understand before hand what Mr. Sweeney would say, and then write a reply. Above all, if he were astute enough to do so before hand, they felt that he ought to foresee *when he would need it* and not leave it in his trunk at the hotel. This opening episode was but of a piece with the entire discussion. He was not a debater and while he had some force as a lecturer, it was only when there was no opponent to reply.

The result was a complete vindication of Christianity in general and also of the vantage ground we occupy as a people in our views of the relation of Christianity to the Old Testament, and many a sectarian was freed from the bondage of the old covenant before the discussion closed.

As a further result of this discussion, infidelity had no further use for Mr. Pike's lectures, and he sought Ohio as a greener pasture. It was not long till the church at Salem, Ohio, asked Bro. Sweeney to meet Prof. Pike again, which he did with the following result: Mr. Pike quit challenging Christians for debate henceforth and confined himself to lecturing strictly upon scientific matters, even going so far as to write a book in opposition to some of the collaterals of infidelity. In conversation with the writer of this biography a few years later, he admitted that he quit infidelity because there was "*No comfort in it, if true!!*"

During the progress of the above discussion a very amusing episode occurred.

There was an infidel there who had control of some kind of factory, over the door of which in large letters was, "NO SABBATH HERE," and Bro. Sweeney had seen it or heard of it. During the debate he pressed Mr. Pike to tell what he proposed to give the people instead of

Christianity, telling him if he had anything better and would introduce it, Christianity would give way, as darkness when light comes in, or as the cold when heat is introduced. Mr. Pike said that infidels could not do anything on account of Christianity; that it was in their way, and that when they got it out of the way, then they would give the world something better. Bro. Sweeney said, "Well, go where there is no Christianity, and try your hand; go to the Fiji Islands, for instance, and set up; and if you don't get eaten up before you build up large factories, you will not need to write over the door, "*No Sabbath Here*;" you can begin there where you will have no Bible hindrances and work out to Christendom. It might improve the society both *here* and there, if infidels were to do any good there!" Whereupon the old factory man rose up and started down the aisle towards the stage whereon Bro. Sweeney was standing—they were in the opera house. The people became very much excited, and were nearly all on foot, and some of the women began to cry out. Bro. Sweeney said, "Friends, please sit down; the gentleman can't get here with you all standing in the way." The man wanted to know if he was ready to fight when he insulted gentlemen. "Well, no; Christians don't fight, *you know*; but they have been noted for dying game; so you can come on, my friend."

At the steps going upon the stage the old man met a gentleman with a star on his breast, and walked off with him, and the debate proceeded without blood-letting.

In the summer of 1870, Bro. Sweeney was called to Kentucky to meet Rev. Jacob Ditzler, the champion debater of the M. E. Church South, who was diligently pressing the disciples for a discussion. It was held in the town of Carlisle, the county-seat of Nicholas County.

The debate held over two weeks, occupying the day only, while each party had preaching at night. During the first week there were several confessions at the Christian church, and it was announced on Saturday that they would be baptized on Sunday. Whereupon it was announced that there would also be baptizing at the Methodist church on Sunday. This raised some anxiety among the people as to whom they were going to baptize; there having been no professions at their meetings during the week. Their meeting was attended on Sunday by some to see what was done. Sure enough they had found a boy some six or seven years old, whose mother had recently died, having, while living, successfully opposed his baptism in infancy. The boy was left at her death with his paternal grandfather, who was a zealous Methodist. He and the preachers had arranged to baptize this boy, as an infant. The service was read up to the last prayer, and while that was being said, the boy broke, the grandfather following him down the aisle. A gentleman present who sympathized with the boy in the race, stepped into the aisle between the boy and the grandfather, and the boy made good his escape, and they never got him. Bro. Sweeney got the whole matter from responsible parties. On Monday the discussion was resumed, Bro. Sweeney opening up on the design of baptism. Ditzler followed with a tirade about water, water, as usual, accusing the disciples of making entirely too much of water. Bro. Sweeney in reply admitted that his brethren attached considerable importance to baptism as the Lord's appointment, having upon it the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. "I love," said he, "to see penitent believers baptized, but you never catch me chasing little orphans out of the house trying

to baptize them *by force*, because death has deprived them of the protection of their mothers." The Methodist moderator raised a question of "order," but the Board sustained Bro. Sweeney and he added, "I would advise you, Bro. Ditzler to provide yourself a water gun, that will throw water some distance, and then you can take on the wing such as are able to flee. If you had been thus provided yesterday, you might have got that boy." This little incident was a thorn in Ditzler's flesh in all his subsequent debates with Bro. Sweeney who didn't often tell it, but would frequently threaten him with it, when the Dr. would get to talking about "water, water;" and it would always check him. Some think this is one reason why the Dr. doesn't much like to debate with Bro. Sweeney. However, I think the Dr. and Bro. Sweeney have always been the best of personal friends.

Returning from this discussion he was pressed by the Paris church to preach one discourse, which he did, and it resulted in a call from that church, which he accepted, believing Kentucky, at that time, a good field for the exercise of his ability.

He removed to Paris in the spring of 1870, and will enter his twenty-second year in the coming spring.

It would be difficult to estimate the extent of his influence during this long pastorate. It has been an example for many others to imitate, which they have done. Many a church in the brotherhood owes its prosperity to the devotion of its pastor, which he has caught from Bro. Sweeney. Probably no preacher in Kentucky is now looked upon by all the brotherhood of that great state as always so reliable, firm, free from sectarianism and loyal to the great cause, as Bro. Sweeney. They all feel that

the cause is at all times and under all circumstances safe in his hands. This is by no means confined to Kentucky, but extends to wherever our people are known. As to his influence at home, we can perhaps better let the following extract from the leading paper of the Blue Grass Region speak. The Paris Kentuckian speaks thus of his long pastorate:

“Possibly of the 1,300 members of the Christian church in Paris, there is not to be found in this broad commonwealth, or elsewhere, a more united, devoted, moral and religious body of people. They are noted for their generosity, hospitality, refinement and culture; the church in Paris gave \$15,000 to the cause of education (Kentucky University) in the adjoining city of Lexington, more than any other one in Kentucky.

As to Sweeney, it is enough to say that his people for whom he has preached almost *the fourth of a century*, are satisfied with him. During the twenty-three years that he has been preaching the glorious gospel of Christ here, with a power and eloquence and pathos rarely equaled, he has never repeated a single sermon.

He preaches for the restoration of New Testament Christianity and for the union of all God's people in the greatest cause in all this universe, impressing upon his hearers that their loftiest ambition and aspirations should be for a virtuous life, and a glorious and blissful immortality.”

Bro. Sweeney is now, and has been for several years, President of the Board of Curators of Kentucky University, located at Lexington, and now in a prosperous condition. His connection with this institution, and what led to it, contain a lesson. Shortly after he went to Paris to live, there arose a considerable trouble among the

friends of the University as to its management and control. It was clearly the property of what, to speak rather loosely, was called the "Christian Church in Kentucky." I say, to speak rather loosely, because in fact and strictness of speech there is no such thing as the Christian Church in Kentucky, that is, no such thing in a corporate or legal sense. The charter of the University, therefore, put the ownership and control in a Board of Curators, two-thirds of whom are to be members of the Christian Church in Kentucky, thus putting it as nearly in the possession and under the control of the brotherhood in the state as was practicable consistent with the nature of the church. John B. Bowman, since dead, was Regent, and the Board of Curators was a self-perpetuating body. The trouble came up between Mr. Bowman, on the one hand, and some of the prominent brethren of Lexington on the other. The dissatisfaction with Bowman grew and spread over the state until nine-tenths of the brethren were opposed to Bowman and his policy. Bowman looked after the self-perpetuation of the board, and took good care that a majority of the members should be his supporters. So the matter ran on for years, the brethren complaining, Bowman ruling, and the University languishing. Bro. McGarvey, a professor in the University, who was opposed to Bowman and sympathized with the brethren, was expelled by the Executive Committee for talking and writing as he felt. This, of course, made a hero of him, and put him at the head of the opposition to the Bowman regime. But what was to be done? The University belonged to the brotherhood in the state, but Bowman, sustained by a majority of the Board, was running it to suit himself, and not to suit those to whom it really belonged and in whose interest it ought to have been conducted. But what could the brotherhood

do? The University property was theirs, and yet it was not controlled as they would like to have it. It was not run in the interest of the people who had established it, but was being diverted from them against their will. An appeal was made to the congregations in the state to express themselves by vote as between McGarvey, who had been expelled from the faculty, and who, it was claimed, represented the wishes and feelings of the brotherhood, on the one hand, and Bowman on the other, who, it was claimed, misrepresented the brotherhood of the state. The vote that was taken showed that an overwhelming majority of the members of the churches voting were opposed to Bowman. This voting scheme Bro. Sweeney opposed on the ground that it would cause divisions in the churches and settle nothing at last, and that it was opposed to the congregationalism of the New Testament. And so it turned out. Bowman and the majority of the Curators, who sympathized with him, paid no attention to the votes of the churches, but pursued their own policy. Brother Sweeney, on account of his opposition to the voting scheme, was by many set down as a sympathizer with Bowman in disregarding the wishes of the churches; and even Regent Bowman so construed his position, and he was shortly after elected a Curator by Bowman's friends. He accepted the curatorship. The Curators sustained Regent Bowman and disregarded the voice of the brotherhood. Another plan was adopted. A convention of the brotherhood of the state was called. It met in Louisville, and was perhaps the largest convention of the brotherhood ever held in the state. It was proposed at this convention to so centralize and organize the churches of the state, and to procure such legislation as would enable the "Christian Church in Kentucky" to own

and control its own educational institutions. Bro. Sweeney was the only man who stood up in the convention and opposed the plan. He told them that the inauguration of the proposed scheme would be the beginning of a career of ruin; that it would be directly in the teeth of all the disciples had contended for from the beginning of the movement for the restoration of New Testament Christianity; that it was directly opposed to the congregationalism of the New Testament; that they might better sink the University to the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico than to go into such a centralization business; that it would open the way for all the school and college difficulties in the state to run into and distract and divide and ultimately ruin the Christian church in Kentucky. He argued that the simple congregationalism of New Testament Christianity, especially when we consider the time and conditions in which it was established, was the strongest proof of its divinity. It displays the divine wisdom, while ecclesiastical centralization and consolidation display the foolishness of men. Many who heard him on that occasion will readily recall one of his illustrations. Pointing to one of the large windows in the room, he asked, "Why so many panes of glass in that window instead of one? The answer is simple. If there were just one, and that one were to be broken, it would be a large break, while if one of those panes were broken the break would be comparatively small. "Humanity," said he, "is not strong enough yet for such centralization as you propose. True, you do not propose to make a creed; but you can centralize and consolidate upon property as well as upon doctrine, and then divide and break up easier about the property, and get further apart about it, get madder and stay mad longer about it. And how shall we stop when we have

gotten the ownership and control of our educational enterprises? Shall we not soon take charge of our newspapers and publishing enterprises, and for the same reasons? Then we must for the same reasons take charge of all our missionary enterprises. Why not? And it will not be very long until our 'Christian Church in Kentucky' will be a big thing. Then we may look out for storms—equinoctial storms.

“Every congregation of disciples united on Christ and walking in him, is a divine thing, and we must not bind to it or lend it to any mere human expedient or enterprise. If you ask me how about these human expedients? Shall we have them? and who shall own and control them? I answer, we may have them, but let them be owned and controlled by individuals or stock companies, and not legally or ecclesiastically associated with the churches of God, so as to bind them together and then burst them asunder.”

The convention, of course, did what it was called to do, as most conventions do. It resolved to make the “Christian Church in Kentucky” a corporate and legal body—a body organic, with head and mouth and hands, etc., so that it could take hold of and control its own colleges, schools and universities, like other corporate bodies with proprietary powers. And it appointed a committee of twenty to go before the Legislature and procure the necessary legislation to enable them to carry the scheme into effect. A meeting was appointed for the committee in Lexington, before going before the Legislature, to get its work well in hand.

The news of the action of the convention spread over the state rapidly, and the brethren began to fall into line promptly, and to make ready to turn over other

educational enterprises in other parts of the state to the "Christian Church in Kentucky." To this end the trustees of Midway Orphan School resigned, and the trustees of Columbia College, making haste to be ready to turn over all such enterprises to the "Christian Church in Kentucky." Meantime the members of the committee did a good deal of talking and thinking, and when the time came for its meeting, it invited other brethren to meet with it, among them Bro. Sweeney, and after some deliberation and discussion in the right spirit, the committee resolved to abandon the centralizing scheme and adjourned *sine die*. In the deliberation of the committee of twenty, Bro. Sweeney told them he believed that if they would abandon the scheme, in less than a year the difficulty could be overcome in the Board of Curators, and the University would be under the control of men who would conduct it to the entire satisfaction of the brotherhood.

Shortly after the adjournment of the committee and the abandonment of the consolidation scheme, Bro. Sweeney and other conservative members of the Board had a consultation, and arrived at the conclusion that the time had come for something to be done for the salvation of the University, and that the only way to do it was for Bowman to resign, or in some other way be forced out of control, that his continued vindication by the Board would be the loss of the University. Accordingly he was conferred with and informed that the time had come for him to resign the Regency; that whether he had been right or wrong in his difference from the brethren, he had lost his influence with most of the brethren of the state, without whose co-operation he could never conduct the University successfully, as it was originally intended to be conducted.

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Bowman refused to resign. At the next meeting of the board the Regency was abolished. That let Bowman out entirely. Bro. Sweeney was elected President of the Board, and has been its President ever since, and all is peace and prosperity.

Of course I have not written of this matter to reflect upon any one who was connected with the University troubles, but for the lesson that was in the matter. How shall our newspapers, publishing concerns, educational enterprises, etc., be owned and controlled? This is no unimportant question, and it is well to consider it when we have no particular difficulty on hand.

Bro. Sweeney has been all his life consistently opposed to any kind of consolidation of churches, and to associating our churches together by any kind of property interests as well as by any statement of doctrines. He has always been admired, not only for his wonderful ability, but for his firmness and candor in stating the position of those with whom he differed. Discussion has always been to him a serious inquiry for truth. In his preaching he never sets up a "man of straw"—to use a common phrase—for the purpose of knocking it to pieces. Nor was it ever customary for any fair opponent to complain that Bro. Sweeney misrepresented his teaching and practices. He has received many very high compliments from the best men of the nation. The late President Garfield once said of him: "I would not fear to see Bro. Sweeney enter the arena against either Mr. Blaine or Mr. Conkling [who at that time were in the height of their popularity as public speakers], but I should be sorry to learn that he had abandoned the ministry for a seat in Congress." Hon. G. W. Cooper, member of Congress from the Fifth Indiana District, once said of him: "In listening to preachers—

especially those who have had no polemic training—I often feel that much could be said on the other side of the question, but when Mr. Sweeney is done with a subject, I feel that the best has been said on both sides and the issue fairly made. In short, no gaps have been left down.”

But the limits of this sketch will not permit the introduction of hundreds of such remarks. Because Bro. Sweeney has been the hero of so many public discussions, many who are not personally acquainted with him form an idea that he is somewhat bitter, cynical and belligerent by nature. Such a judgment does him great injustice. While he may rise under great pressure to cyclonic force of speech and feeling, yet his natural temperament is one of great kindness, full of tender pathos and deep sympathy. No man exhibits less of acrimony in ordinary sermon than he. While primarily his appeal is to the highest intelligence of his auditors, it never stops short of the profoundest awakening of the conscience and deepest penetration of the heart.

Because of his prominence and reputation as a debater, I have asked him to give me in a short article or letter his views of debates and of the issues between our people and others that are likely to be discussed in the future, and how they should be stated. I here insert his answer, that younger preachers may have the benefit of his experience :

MY DEAR BROTHER :

Your questions cannot be satisfactorily answered in a few words, but my respect for your judgment prompts me, nevertheless, to try to comply with your request. There are two kinds of debate or contention. One kind is wrong and the other is right. It may be said that debating is wrong, and it may also be said with equal truth that debating is altogether right and proper. Debating simply for its own sake, for the

sake of contention, for the sake of strife or variance, and about matters of indifference or of little or no practical importance,—debate simply for the sake of asserting one's self or one's opinions, or to gratify one's morbid desire for controversy—is certainly reprehensible. And this is the kind of debate the Bible condemns. This is the kind I have tried not to do much of. I frankly confess, however, that I have not always succeeded in entirely satisfying myself with my effort to avoid debating in this wrong and reprehensible sense. There is a good deal of contrariness in human nature, although it is not totally depraved. On the other hand, debating in the sense of contending for the truth, for important truth; in the sense of contending for matters of practical importance, is as evidently right and commendable as the other is wrong and reprehensible. As long as we differ about matters of practical importance, and have earnest, brave, aggressive people left, we shall likely have debates, and I think rightly and properly so. And this will be the case in all fields of thought and activity. The religious field will not be an exception. I see no reason why it should be. It is our duty to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints," as much and as truly as it is to "live peaceably with all men." When the faith is assailed—whether it be its fundamental proposition concerning Christ, or any of its precepts or promises—anything of any practical importance connected with the faith—it is the duty of the Christian who can do so to defend it. It is the duty of the soldier of the cross to stand by his colors and never to let the banner trail in the dust if he can hold it up. So I have believed, and have tried to act accordingly. I know there is a morbid sentimentalism, or it might be called a maudlin pietism, that unfits minds afflicted with it, or disposed that way, for any very positive or aggressive work in the church of God, or anywhere else, that is opposed to all debates. Persons thus afflicted or disposed are opposed especially to religious debates, and I have no doubt they think their opposition is grounded in superior piety or deep religious feeling. They often speak disparagingly of debating and of debaters. Such persons generally occupy, or are on the hunt for, positions of ease and

profit made for them by the more earnest and aggressive labors of those they flippantly and ungraciously and ungratefully disparage. Had it not been for the earnest contention and bold discussions of their predecessors, these complainers, many of them, would never have been heard of. The churches founded by the bold and heroic apostle Paul were soon full of sentimental, indolent and compromising teachers, who desired to rival that apostle in the esteem and affections of the disciples, while at the same time they gave way to Judaizers and Paganizers, and allowed the churches to be corrupted and many of them destroyed, rather than earnestly contend for the faith that had been delivered to the saints. It was thus that what is called episcopacy and papacy, and the many heresies of the early centuries were brought in and the minds of the disciples were corrupted from the simplicity that was in Christ. This very thing, more perhaps than his bonds, burdened the earnest soul of the great apostle to the Gentiles in the later years of his life. And there are those even now in churches modeled after New Testament churches, who, for want of better understanding it may be, or for love of popularity possibly, or who may consider a kind of peace cheap at such a price; anyhow, there are those, I am sorry to know, who are not earnestly contending for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints, but are rather compromising the truth by giving way to all sorts of schemes and movements popular among the denominations and outsiders; seeming to think it displays greater piety to compromise than to debate; seeming to think they have gotten upon a higher spiritual plane than have such persons as sometimes engage in public debates.

Our people are not likely to have as many debates in the future as they have had in the past. There are not now, and not likely to be, the same reasons for our having joint debates that have existed in the past. We are getting to be better understood than we were years ago. And we can now, in most parts of the country, get a hearing without joint debates to bring the people out. When I was a boy our preachers could not get the ears of the people. The preachers misrepresented us and kept the people away from our meetings. Our preach-

ers resorted to joint discussions to get the people to hear. That necessity is not upon us now. While I have had a good many discussions in my life, I have of late years declined a good many. Where our people have access to the people of a community it is better generally to have preaching than to have debates, and I make it a rule to so advise them whenever and wherever I feel free to give my opinion.

Still, we shall have debates; perhaps fewer in the older states and portions of the country, but more especially in the West; and where they are conducted by wise, capable and good men, the cause of truth will be promoted by them, as it has been in the past.

He who wants the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth has nothing to fear or lose from public discussions—conducted in the right spirit, of course.

WITH WHOM SHALL WE DEBATE?

Well, we shall likely have to contend with unbelievers, and they are of many types and shades. Of course, we cannot profitably notice all their petty differences among themselves. Let them discuss such differences themselves, as Christians discuss their differences. But it is a noticeable fact that unbelievers generally have nothing to offer the world, nothing to present, nothing to urge, nothing to defend. Their work is for the most part a negative one. They are objectors. They question almost everything and affirm nothing. We should not undertake to discuss with them everything they question. Should we undertake to do so, our discussions would be endless and fruitless. We should discuss with them only the vital issue between us. Christianity rests upon one fundamental proposition, "That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God." If this is true, Christianity is true; if this should turn out to be false, then the whole system built upon it is also false. Only this issue, therefore, needs to be, and only this should be, discussed with unbelievers. The issue might be more clearly made for such as may not understand just what is meant by "the Christ, the Son of the living God," by our simply affirming the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. This involves the truth of what we mean by his being "the Christ, the Son of the living

God," and is the vital and fundamental question of difference between believers and unbelievers. It is the only question that it is worth while for us to debate with the unbelievers. No matter about incidental points of difference. They will go with the fundamental question about Jesus.

THE EVIDENCE IN THE CASE.

We should decline to discuss with unbelievers any question about the inspiration of the scriptures. That is an inside question, and even as such none of us may perfectly understand it. We have the right to use the scriptures in debate with infidels as they use the writings of the ancients. We need only to show that the scriptures are as credible as the testimonies they use. We need only to show, for instance, that the writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Paul are credible histories; and to show this, just as they establish the credibleness of the writings of Josephus and Tacitus. We are under no obligation to make our historical evidences better or more credible than historical evidences they use. Upon these testimonies and others we can use, we should establish the fact of the resurrection of Jesus. This done, we shall hold the ground in dispute between us, and can afford to rest our case, as to historical and external evidence. Skeptics generally seem more anxious to discuss side issues or incidental questions, but we should not allow them to lead us away from the real and fundamental question of difference. There are a great many questions incidental to this fundamental one about which much can be said *pro* and *con*, and which possibly neither believers nor unbelievers understand perfectly, or ever shall. Let us carry the main position and every other truth will go with it.

WITH ROMAN CATHOLICS

we should discuss only the fundamental question of church authority. It is altogether useless for us to undertake to discuss any other question with them till this one is settled. In fact, they will not discuss many of their doctrines, traditions and practices in the light of the Bible. They cannot admit the Bible to be an infallible and an all-sufficient rule of faith and practice—a standard by which all alleged religious truth is to

be tested. We can admit no other. The infallibility and authority of the church, therefore, is the vital question between us, and the only one it is worth while to discuss. They are in the affirmative. We should hold them strictly to this question. The Bible is our only standard of religious truth; but it is not worth while for us to appeal to that to prove or disprove anything to people who have another standard—one we cannot recognize. Let them establish it first of all. This is the only question we can discuss with Roman Catholics with any profit to the truth.

WITH THE PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS.

While there are practical or even important doctrinal differences among us, we shall likely have debates with the Protestant parties. With what are known as Pedobaptists we differ on at least four questions of more or less importance—two of them practical and two doctrinal:

1. *The Action of Baptism.* By Pedobaptists there are three different actions performed, and each one is called baptism—immersion, pouring, and sprinkling—while we practice only immersion, and believe that only that is the action of baptism. While this difference exists on this practical question there will be discussion—and there ought to be. Discussion will be irrepressible. The issue should be sharply defined, so that the real point of difference may be understood and only that discussed. We teach affirmatively that immersion is baptism, as to action, and practice only that. Our relation, therefore, to immersion is an affirmative one. If anybody denies this, and there is to be a debate about it, we are logically and fairly in the affirmative, and should so appear in such a debate. And when we affirm simply that immersion is baptism, this is the extent of our affirmative teaching and covers our practice. This, therefore, is the extent of our affirmative relation to this question. Our affirmative teaching and our practice are generally conceded to be scriptural and right, and consequently there is not likely to be, and ought not to be, any debate on this question with us logically and fairly in the affirmative. But as to any *other* action for baptism, we are doctrinally and practically in the negative. We deny it and refuse to practice

it, no matter what it is. Every one sustains logically an affirmative relation to his own practice. An intelligent and fair-minded person can hardly deny this. Pedobaptists generally, while admitting the validity of immersion, practice also both pouring and sprinkling. Their relation, therefore, to pouring and sprinkling is an affirmative one. And I have noticed that always when the question as to the proper action of baptism is discussed, no matter what the *proposition* may be, the *debate* is always about pouring and sprinkling. Yet immersion is generally admitted to be valid, while pouring and sprinkling are questioned. What, now, is our proper relation to such a debate? And what is the proper relation of those who practice pouring and sprinkling to such a debate? Ours is manifestly wholly negative, while theirs is manifestly affirmative. And I insist that in our future debates on this issue we should demand the right to stand in our proper logical relation to the point of difference, and should make this right a condition of our future discussions. This is a matter of more importance than will at first appear to persons without experience. I think I have learned the lesson of its importance. For several years I have refused to discuss this issue without a statement fair to my cause. I offer to *affirm* simply that immersion is baptism, or to *deny* that anything else is, and by this demand for fairness and justice to my cause, I have nearly gotten out of the debating business, at least as respects this issue. Other brethren who debate, not seeing this matter just as I do, or not feeling its importance as I do, or at any rate not acting upon it as I do, are getting into debates of this issue, while I am getting out. The men of large experience in debate on the other side want no better thing than to debate two or three days about *their practice* of pouring and sprinkling, with an immersionist in the affirmative, and hence in the lead, with nothing to do themselves but deny. Such a debate as this makes glad the heart of the old and experienced Pedobaptist debater.

I am aware that in the past, immersionists have accepted propositions unfair to themselves and unjust to their cause; it may have been for an opportunity to get the ears of people they could not get without discussion, possibly for want of a

proper understanding of the issue and the logical relations of the parties to it; or it may have been in some cases on account of too great anxiety to get into a debate; no matter for what reason, we should quit it. We should not put our cause at such a disadvantage for the sake of public debate. We can get a hearing now without joint debate, and we can afford, so long as our opponents will neither deny our practice nor affirm their own, to let the matter go thus before the people—our practice unquestioned because unquestionable, theirs questioned and crying out in vain for some one to defend it. This ought to be a logical situation satisfactory to us.

2. *The Proper Subject of Baptism.* Here again our difference from Pedobaptists is a practical one, and so important that it is likely to be, and ought to be, and will be, discussed while it exists. Indeed, the difference is about as important as any difference about baptism could be, and a practical difference about baptism is as important as a difference about any positive religious ordinance, and we may not minify the importance of any ordinance of divine appointment.

But now as to the relations of parties to the issue. We teach that penitent believers in Jesus Christ who have not been baptized are scriptural subjects of the ordinance, and we conform our practice to this teaching. If any one denies this, and thus takes issue with us, that puts us in the affirmative. But Pedobaptists will not so deny. Hence, we can fairly have no discussion of this issue, with us in the affirmative. And here again our affirmative teaching and our practice stand unquestioned. But Pedobaptists go further, and affirm that infants are proper subjects of the ordinance, and practice accordingly. It is clear that the relation of Pedobaptists to this issue is an affirmative one, while ours is wholly negative; and we should require that the issue should be so stated and so discussed.

3. *The Design of Baptism.* This issue is rather doctrinal than practical. Still it is important. Disciples teach with great unanimity that in its proper place baptism is for the remission of sins, in the sense of an appropriating condition, and this is generally denied by the popular Protestant parties of the day and of this country. Our relation to this issue is,

therefore, properly affirmative. We should not allow a false issue to be made in the discussion of this question. We do not hold that baptism is for the remission of sins in the same sense that the blood of Christ is. We see in the love of God the prime and moving cause, in the life and death of Jesus the procuring cause, and in the sinner's faith, penitence and obedience the appropriating cause of remission. It is only in this sense that we teach that baptism is for remission. On this issue we are in the affirmative, logically, and in our debates with those who deny this teaching we should be willing to stand in the affirmative.

4. *Influence of the Spirit in Conversion of the Sinner.* We are all agreed that the Spirit does influence the sinner in his conversion. We agree as to the *fact*. But as to how that influence is exerted we differ from the denominations generally. That the Spirit influences the sinner through and by means of the truth of the gospel we all agree. But the denominations generally go further, and affirm that the Spirit also operates *immediately* upon the sinner's mind and heart. This we deny. To the extent that we affirm the denominations agree with us. But they affirm further than we can agree with them. When it is affirmed that the Spirit operates *immediately* upon the sinner's heart in conversion, we deny it; and that is the issue. To it, manifestly, the denominations sustain an affirmative relation, while we as manifestly sustain a negative one. Anybody can see, that whatever the proposition may be, the *debate* will always be about an influence that others affirm and that we deny. We should, therefore, always insist upon our right to be in the negative in the discussion of this point of difference.

Do you ask me what is to be gained by being thus particular to have the issues clearly stated? There is a good deal to be gained by it. In the first place, the man who affirms a negative, or affirms on an issue to which he practically and logically sustains a negative relation, always puts his cause at a great disadvantage in the debate. All experienced debaters understand this. And in the second place, we ought to insist upon occupying our logical relation to all points in dispute to show *how*

little we teach and practice that is really disputed. I have had men of large experience and great ability as debaters to insist on my affirming in a discussion of their practice, just that we might have an equal number of affirmatives in a proposed debate. I shall never do that again (I have done it), without my mind undergoes a very great change. He who has most disputed teachings and practices has logically most affirmatives. He who teaches and practices little that is questionable has little to affirm. And there is where our people stand to-day. What are our questioned practices? What are our disputed teachings? The fact is, that practically we occupy undisputed ground. Our debates with our religious neighbors are generally about *their* practices, not about ours. The single doctrinal point that baptism is for remission of sins, is about the only disputed position we hold.

Of course you will understand that I have only aimed to call attention to the important issues that have been discussed by our people and that we are likely to be called upon to debate in the future.

Very truly yours,

J. S. SWEENEY.

Bro. Sweeney's sermons are characterized by wonderful knowledge of nature and human nature. He does not read many books, but he has the wonderful faculty of discerning whether a book is worth reading before he has read half a dozen pages in it. He has no time to spend upon a book that is not a really valuable one. His library is in outward form rather a motley one. His books are not in *sets* or series, but if there is a rare book in morals, theology, science, or lighter literature, it is pretty apt to have a place on his shelves.

Among his people he is not a remarkably wordy man. His pastoral visits are not marked by much conversation nor demonstration, but his presence and spirit seem to throw over the sick or afflicted a benison of peace and rest. They cannot recall much that he said, but the fact

remains with them that he has been with them and they are better.

It may not be amiss in closing this sketch, to present a brief estimate of his character by one of the deacons of the church at Paris, prepared at the special request of the writer of this sketch :

“The Christian Church in Paris, Ky., twenty-three years ago was without a pastor. The undersigned was one of a committee appointed to secure a competent preacher to take charge of the congregation, who would instruct them in the sacred duties and doctrine of the Christian religion. Elder John S. Sweeney, then on the bright, sunny side of life, and in the full maturity of a splendid and vigorous manhood, had some years before emigrated West, expecting to identify himself with her people and ‘grow up with the country.’ At the time of which we speak, he had already won fame and distinction, not only as a great logical debater and reasoner, but as a preacher of wonderful power and pathos, among the brotherhood generally. Passing through Kentucky, he was invited to preach for us. We then extended to him a cordial and unanimous invitation to become our pastor. He hesitated about resigning the fine position he was then holding, and did not give us an answer for some weeks. Chicago was then booming, and every indication clearly pointed out that she was soon to become one of the most populous cities of the world. These facts were all commented upon, and he had intended to make some small investments. Had he remained there and carried out his original intention, he would have been one of the millionaires of to-day; but having dedicated himself to preach the glorious gospel of Christ, and throwing aside every other ambition (abandoning the profession of the law, with all its

alluring fascinations and prospects, that was soon to waft his contemporary friend and brother preacher, James A. Garfield, into the presidential chair), he decided to return to his own native and beloved Kentucky. Paris, with its beautiful and romantic streams running through the city limits, together with the surrounding scenery and her bright, sunny skies, has been his home.

Kentucky's political history has been well illustrated by Clay, Crittenden and Breckinridge, and the Christian religion by the beloved and venerated Stone, Johnson, Gano and Rains. These great men, with their superior excellence and wonderful endowments, have been succeeded by their peers in all respects.

Nature occasionally at long intervals produces a great man, a born leader among men.

A man of great erudition, culture and intellectual skill, an original thinker and possessed of broad and liberal ideas, it has never been any trouble for Bro. Sweeney to get up and impress them with ease, facility and volubility. Preaching for twenty-three years in the city of Paris to a congregation of more than eight hundred members, in all respects as well cultivated, educated and intelligent a people as can be found in the Commonwealth, he has never made a repetition of a single sermon, a thing unprecedented in the preaching world, in my opinion. He preaches with great eloquence and pathos the power and beauty of the primitive gospel, as did the apostles of Jesus, and for the restoration of New Testament Christianity and the union of all God's people upon the greatest and noblest cause in the universe; and impresses upon the people that their loftiest aspirations should be for a glorious and blissful immortality.

As a bold, fearless and intrepid debater, he is ever ready

to break a lance with any respectable opponent for the great cause he holds so dear; and in this respect he ranks with Mr. Campbell himself.

His social life, with all his geniality and mirthfulness, has ever been the delight of his friends, embellished as it is with all the graces which a benevolent heart, a playful temper and happy imagination impart to his discourse and conversation.

During the rapid and ceaseless flight of these many years, a whole generation has passed and gone, carrying with it many of the purest and noblest Christians of earth.

At the nuptial altar, at the baptismal waters, and at the grave, he has ever been the same efficient, devoted and faithful Christian minister.

A DEACON OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, PARIS, KY.

SWEENEY'S SERMONS.

SERMON I.

THE SIMPLICITY THAT IS IN CHRIST.

“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ,” 1 Cor. xi : 3.

IN making our estimate of the gospel, if we would be well guided, there are two or three things we should constantly hold in mind.

1. That it is the power of God for saving men from sin. This is simply a scripture statement, and needs not to be argued. Paul says (Rom. i : 16.) “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth: to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” It is the power by which God proposes to save Jews and Gentiles individually. That’s the meaning of “every one.” It is distributive. It means the gospel is the power of God to save each individual of the race. It is God’s power as method and as means. And if he will ever save any one by any other means, he has not revealed to us his intention to do so, and we cannot therefore know the fact. The gospel is the only means known to men, and the only means we can have anything to do with, for the salvation of men from sin.

2. Our Savior, when he had done the necessary preparatory work he had to do in his own personal ministry, gave Commission and Commandment to his disciples to

“preach the gospel to every creature.” (Mark xvi : 16.) They were not to preach the gospel to kings, or governors, or priests, for the people; but to every individual. Every creature means the whole creation distributively, individually. Now, he knew the capacity of men; what they were capable and what they were incapable of understanding. He knew the ignorance of men generally and particularly; their incapability of grappling with and comprehending profound and abstruse questions, of law, of philosophy, of science, of theology. And yet he commanded his disciples to preach the *gospel* to every creature.

3. We should also observe the fact that when his disciples went forth to preach the gospel, when they preached it and where they preached it, the people did, on hearing a single presentation of it, understand it so far as it was necessary that they should, and believe and obey it, and did receive and enjoy the salvation it brought; in some instances hundreds and possibly thousands in a single day; in some instances on the public highway; sometimes at their houses; sometimes in the day time, and again at midnight; they heard a single presentation of the gospel, understood, believed and obeyed it, and rejoiced in its salvation the same day, and even the same hour of the night. All this we learn from Acts of Apostles. From these facts, unquestionable as facts, there comes to my mind, with irresistible force, this conclusion: The gospel of Christ, preached by the first disciples, was a very simple something; something suited well to the capacity of the people, the unlearned as well as the learned; something they could readily understand and receive. Is not the conclusion a necessary one, from the facts named? Not only so, but it seems to me eminently reasonable that it should be so. There are questions of philosophy, ques-

tions of science and questions of moral casuistry that are very profound, very abstruse, and even very mysterious; quite enough so for the greatest intellectual exercise and highest culture, and severest mental training of men and women; enough so for their life-long intellectual development. And this seems to me well and wisely so. It seems to me to be right that there should be questions for men and women to study and work on for generations. This is a necessity for the intellectual and moral development of men and women. God has made wise provision for us thus in the constitution of nature and its adjustment to the wants of our nature. There are many questions one may study all his life and even then know comparatively little about them. But the gospel of Christ is not one of these. It was not intended to be of such a character. It is God's appointed means of salvation from sin, and the sinner is not required to carry his soul, burdened with sin, and his conscience with guilt, through a life-time, because he is unable to understand and appropriate the means of relief.

While I do not believe the popular doctrine of total depravity, yet I must confess that there is a perverseness about human nature in all its individualizations with which I have had to do, or of which I have had much knowledge; a sort of proneness to be contrary and to go wrong. Almost all men and women seem more disposed to know what they can not and ought not to know than to know what they can and ought to know. Hence it is that almost all men and women have a fondness for finding out secrets, for fathoming mysteries, for seeking after impracticable knowledge, for knowing unrevealed and unknowable things; as if such things were of greater value and importance than the simple things that may and ought to be

known and understood. Many seem more disposed to know all that other people know, and to attend to other people's business, than to find out what they ought to know and to attend to their own business. They would always rather know what God has not revealed than to study and profit by what he has revealed. They think all wisdom comes from afar, clothed in clouds and mists. We are slow to believe that a man is really wise or great whom we have known all our lives, and just because we have so known him; but one coming from afar, of whom we know nothing, he may be great and wise, and just because we know nothing about him. And just so about doing, as well as about knowing. Men are disposed to do what they cannot and ought not to do rather than what they can and ought to do.

A few years ago the people nearly all went wild over the hypothesis of evolution. It seemed to many people full of beauty, wisdom and importance, just because they knew nothing about it, and nobody could know anything about it. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," and "created man in his own image," are statements that have very little beauty or wisdom in them for some people, just because they are revealed things, and can be understood tolerably well.

Of course we lay all this perverseness and contrariness in our natures to the fall in Adam. I do not desire especially to be heterodox, any more than I would go out of my way to be called orthodox, but I have not a single doubt about the fact that we have laid entirely too much on Adam and Eve. We ought to practice quitting it a while. It is not magnanimous. It is cowardly. Besides, we cannot get rid of all our sins in that way, and should not try to.

The crookedness in our nature, of which I have been speaking, is traceable beyond the "fall," as we call the sin of our foreparents. Our mother Eve had it before she ate the forbidden fruit. It was here she tripped, just as here thousands of women have tripped since—and men, too—I mean no cowardice. It is contemptible. Let us see how it was: "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God's, knowing good and evil; and when the woman [thought she] saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat." There it is! the whole story! The woman thought it better to "be as Gods" than to be simply a woman; better to know what "God doth know" than to know what he had revealed; better to "eat" what was forbidden than what was permitted; better to have her "eyes opened" to the forbidden than to behold all the beauties of Paradise; and she went wrong. Paul knew this weakness and perverseness of our nature, and he knew also the cunning of the serpent, and hence his well grounded fear: "I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

But let me not be misunderstood. When I contend that the gospel of Christ is very simple, and brought down to the capacity of all responsible persons; so that the unlearned, as well as the learned, may understand it so far as it is necessary that they should, and believe it, and obey it, and be saved from their sins, I do not mean that there are no mysteries in the Bible, or even none in the gospel itself. Certainly not. On the contrary, I am free to say

that there are a great many things in the Bible I have never been able to understand; mysteries I have never been able to fathom. To me there are some mysteries about the gospel that I have about concluded I shall never understand in this life, and probably not fully in the life to come. This is especially true as to the *reason* of things. There are in the Bible seeming discrepancies; even things that, with all the light and knowledge I have, look like contradictions. There are things God is said to have done, and commanded to be done, that if they are right according to our commonly received standards, I am unable to prove it to the satisfaction of objectors, or even to my own satisfaction. I don't doubt that they are right. I believe they are. But I believe it because God did or commanded them, and not because I see their rightness myself. There are curious persons of little knowledge who suppose that if they can find something in the Bible that the preacher can not explain to everybody's satisfaction, they have accomplished something very wonderful, and set up a sufficient excuse for rejecting the book altogether. But this is a prodigious mistake. We should not expect to be able to understand all the ways of God; to be able to see the reason in his mind for all he does, or even for all he commands us to do. No doubt there is in his mind a good reason for all he says and does, whether recorded in the Bible or in nature; but it is certain that we cannot, in all cases, see the reason. Our scope of vision is very much limited as compared with the infinite. God does everything he does, and orders every thing he orders, in full view of and with reference to every thing else in the whole universe, in all time and eternity. If we could take so much within our visual plane, then we might see the reason for all he does. God is necessarily a mystery to us,

just as a man is a mystery to a little child, and for the same reason. A child cannot comprehend the reasons that may be in the mind of a man for his conduct. The wisest ways of a parent are often mysteries to his own child, just because the parent sees more than the child can see, as a child. Were this not so, a child would not need parental government. If it could comprehend all the reasons in the mind of the parent, it could just as well govern itself. The larger scope and superior knowledge of the parent is the ground and reason for faith in him on the part of the child. Just so, and more so, is it necessary that men should walk by faith in reference to God. He is infinite, we finite. He governs all worlds; we cannot govern one—or a state, or a county, or a city, or ourselves, or even our tongues. And shall we demand a reason that we can see for all he does or commands? Preposterous! impudent! wicked!

Men do not require so much of God in nature. We do not understand nature any better than we do the Bible. It is full of mysteries even to the wisest men. Why God created nature as he did? why this and that law? why he governs as he does? These are questions we can never answer, even to our own satisfaction. If we could create and equip and stock a world, and were going to do it, we would beyond doubt leave out a great many things we find in this, with our present knowledge; yet I have no idea that, on the whole, our effort would result in an improvement upon the world we have. None of us believe we could successfully run this world if the reins were given into our hands. We would wreck it.

What we call nature, then, and the Bible, are very like each other in that they are both full of mysteries to men. We cannot know a great deal, it is true, but

we can and ought to be consistent, and we must be if we would convince even ourselves that we are honest. We ought not to accept nature as it is, without complaint, and fall in with its laws, and get a living out of it, full of mysteries as it is; and then turn about and demand that there shall be no mysteries in the Bible, another book by the same Author, or we will reject it. We ought to deal fairly with the Bible. If it be of God, mysteries in it are to be expected. In fact, it may be said they are a necessity, because he is infinite and his ways are past finding out to the finite mind.

I remember once, on my way to Texas, falling in with a very sprightly and very loquacious Secularist, I think he called himself. There were some fifteen or twenty of us on the same palace coach all the way from St. Louis into Texas. Our Secularist friend was a great reasoner, as nearly all talking skeptics are. He seemed very determined in his mind on demolishing the Bible, and very zealous in his work; much surprised that some one had not turned aside to brush it out of the way of thinking people long ago. He attacked nearly every one on the coach. In fact he bored us. The discrepancies, contradictions, and horrid inhumanities of the Bible, made up his theme. Most of the passengers avoided him. It is well to avoid such persons, as a general thing. There is not much to be made by reasoning with them. It is not the remedy for their ailment. An epidemic of cholera or yellow fever will reach their cases quicker, as these strike them where they live. But our friend kept up the fire. Now, there was a poor consumptive aboard, going South for a pinch of life, as most people will do in that condition. We all sympathized with him, and gave him constant little attentions, as people generally will do in Christian countries.

But, in course of time, our skeptical friend attacked the poor, sick man, and was coming down on his Bible, which the sick man had with him, with a torrent of emphasis. I remember he read from the Bible the passage in which God said to Saul, "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass;" and, when he had read this, he slammed the book with one hand against his other hand with a great noise and much seeming indignation, denouncing the passage as "unworthy of God or civilized man." I was not far from him, and my mouth went off. I couldn't help it. I asked him what he knew about God, and where he got his information. He was ready. Nature was his book, he said, loudly, and the only book that reveals God. Now just a few days before, there had been a great earthquake somewhere east, that had ruined a considerable city, swallowing up, of course, "both man and woman, infant and suckling;" and we had hardly got done reading about it. Of course I thought of it, and, of course, called his attention to it, and wanted to know if that was his God, and if it didn't look a great deal like smiting the Amalekites—"man and woman, infant and suckling." And from this I went on to notice a good many other things in nature that seem hard, and inconsistent, and contradictory, and mysterious, just like some things in the Bible; and insisted that he should try his hand on these passages in his Bible. I pressed, and he faltered. Of course he did. That was not the kind of work he was best at. Skeptics are generally better at finding fault with things than in explaining things; better at destruction than construction—and I have known even some Christians so. In fact, it is easier work for anybody. I plied him with the difficult passages

in his book until he got to fretting so in the harness I had to quit. But I have related this incident to show that there are as great difficulties about explaining the mysteries of the book of nature as the mysteries of the other Book. No doubt earthquakes, cyclones and other natural occurrences that destroy property and kill "both man and woman, infant and suckling," are all right and necessary in their times and places, and that there are reasons for them, though we may not always be able to show the reasons. They are often too deep, or too high, for us. They are clean out of our scope of vision. No doubt there was wisdom in and a reason for the smiting of the Amalekites, "man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and ass," though we may not be able to make all men see them especially unwilling men, or even to see them for ourselves. There was a reason for it within the scope of the infinite, though we may not reach it for several billions of years yet. We explore the universe slowly.

It seems never to have occurred to some people that where in the works of God they can see no reason, it is because of their short-sightedness. But they think that where they can *see* no reason there is none! What a wonderful being is man, specially in his own estimation, and more especially if he only has a trifle of skepticism about him!

There is another important respect in which the Bible and nature are alike. While, as we have seen, they both have mysteries in them, they both have a simple side. In each case the side of mysteries is God's side, and the simple side is man's. Of course that is just as it should be. There are no mysteries to God; and man is the simple party, though, it must be granted, that some men are so wise in their own conceit, as not always to see it that way.

Who understands perfectly the simplest of what we call the sciences? For example, who understands the science of agriculture, the most practical of them all? Of course there are many who know a good deal about it, and all of us know more or less about it; but that is not the question: Who understands it perfectly? Who can explain all its facts and phenomena? Who can fathom all its mysteries? Well, the fact is, that nobody will profess thus to understand it—unless it be possibly some young man recently pulled or paid through a scientific course. Who can tell why the same grain and grass and water will produce wool on a sheep, hair on a pig and feathers on a goose? Oh! it is something in the nature of the animal, one may say. Correct. But what is that something in the nature of the animal? All the animals are made of pretty nearly the same material, are they not? Then why the difference? There we stop. There we have to stop. It is enough for my purpose to say what has to be admitted, that one side of even the most practical of the sciences is mysterious all along the line. But then there is a simple side also. The old negro that doesn't know one letter of the alphabet from another—that couldn't say agriculture to-morrow, after hearing it said a half dozen times to-day, if a fortune depended upon it—that old negro can plow and plant, sow and reap, thresh and grind, cook and eat, and live. He can know enough of the simple side of nature, the side God has turned toward us, to catch on, and get a living out of it; and he has sense enough to do so, too, without bothering his head greatly about the other side, the upper side, the side of mysteries, God's side. He can plow and plant, and let God make to grow. And so we all have to do. Who is so silly as to refuse to sow until some one explains to him all the mysteries of germination, growth,

and reproduction? We have all found out that we can run the simple side in nature, while God runs the other side—we the lower side and he the upper side—and thus out of the co-operation we get our living.

Then, again, we all know how to eat. That's one little matter in the essentials of which men generally agree. We all eat, the learned and the unlearned, black and white, male and female. Even the greatest cranks eat. Our side of that matter is very simple, though so important to the building up and the sustenance of our bodies. But who understands the other side even of the simple science of eating? Who understands all about how it is that what we eat is digested, distributed and assimilated, so as to build up in equal and proper proportions all the parts of an animal body? Portions of what we eat go to make bones; other portions, muscle; and other portions, veins; and other parts, blood; other parts, skin—white, black, red. Other portions, hair—black hair, brown hair, red hair—other portions make ears; other parts, eyes—black, brown, blue, gray—other portions still, make brains, more or less, and of different degrees of fineness of texture! Who understands all this? Who can explain all the mysteries of this wonderful work? Of course we may and we ought to learn much about this wonderful work of God in building our bodies. But there are many things about it we are not very likely to ever know, and that it is not essential we ever should know. On the other hand, our side of the matter, the side we have to see to and operate, is so very simple in its essential particulars, that the unlearned almost as well as the learned can work it. And, by the way, it is a noticeable fact that often, if not generally, the unlettered negro succeeds in making, in many fundamental respects, a sounder and stronger body

than does the most scientific man or woman—better stomachs, and eyes and teeth. Especially does he have better success than most hygienic cranks.

But, now, who is so silly as to refuse to eat until some one explains to his satisfaction and comprehension, all the mysteries of body-making; and, then, all about the connection between bodies and spirits? Such a person would be apt to starve out, would he not? All of us eat; spiritists and materialists, evolutionists and creationists, educated and uneducated—all eat, and without waiting to understand all about both sides of the business of body-making. All this is true, and all this I mean to say, without in the least disparaging education, or the deepest possible scientific research.

Now all I have said of nature, and body-building and sustenance, is just as true of the Bible, and of soul-building and sustenance. Here, too, we have simplicity on one side, the under side, our side; and mystery on the other side, the upper side, God's side. All that men have to do or see to in the matter of their soul's salvation here and hereafter, is all so simple that any responsible person can understand it.

1. What mystery is there about faith? Believing is one of the most natural and one of the most common things men ever do. We believe from childhood to the grave. We pull up out of the cradle, and on to manhood, by faith. Nor is there anything mysterious about believing in *Jesus Christ*. He came to us in our nature, a babe, a boy, a man; eating, drinking, sleeping; hungry, thirsty, weary; joyful and sorrowful; making wine at a marriage and weeping at the grave, having the experiences of life in common with us. He came as close to us as we can get to one another; came alongside of us, in

all our sad and sorrowful experiences; tasting sorrow and grief, suffering and death, as we do, and because we do. He died for us. God raised him up and exalted him to his own right hand in heaven, where he lives for us. What is more simple and more reasonable than that we should believe in him? The wonder is that any poor sinner who ever heard of him should not believe in him, and love him.

2. What is more simple than *repentance*. Every one, anywhere between childhood and old age, knows what it is. There is no experience we know better.

3. How simple and reasonable that we should openly *confess* Jesus Christ. We all understand confession. Children know what it is and even know something of its philosophy. But we do not *have* to know its philosophy. It is our duty, our privilege, to confess him before men, and how it is that in confessing him we make all the confession God requires of us as sinners, we may not understand, but so it is; and how simple it is.

4. We can be baptized in his name. That, too, is a most simple thing. All who are capable of obedience at all can do that. We are not required to understand all about the reason or the philosophy of it, but simply to be baptized in his name and because he bids us do it.

5. And then a life of faith, hope, love, obedience, prayer and trust in him is the simplest, easiest, happiest life one can live on earth; ever learning of him, and leaving out of our lives what he forbids, and taking into them what he bids, as best we can, trusting him for all the rest—that's all. We may not understand just how God answers prayer. We do not have to. Nor do we have to understand how he works in us by his Spirit, in the use of the means he has appointed and furnished, to build us up

and sustain us spiritually, any more than we have to understand how he makes our bodies to grow, and sustains them. We have only to learn and do our duty, as in nature, and he will do all the rest for us as he does in nature. There are many questions about which we give ourselves needless trouble; such as how God answers prayer, how he works in us to make us grow, how he will raise the dead, how he will judge the world, how he will make us happy in heaven? All this is his side of the work, and it will be done in greater love and wisdom than we can conceive.

And this is "the simplicity that is in Christ." But what has he who "beguiled Eve by his subtilty" been doing since the apostle expressed his "fear" as in our text? Was Paul's "fear" groundless, or well grounded? Has not the enemy been trying to corrupt our minds from this simplicity in Christ? Has he not been trying to pervert our minds from what is revealed, and send us off after what "*God doth know*?" Has he not in a large measure succeeded in shutting men's eyes to a simple life of obedience and trust, and opening them to the mysteries of the Godhead, and the mysteries of God's side of the work of our redemption? Men have been led to suppose that it is all important that they should understand all about the trinity of persons in the unity of the Godhead; and that there is vastly more wisdom and religion in such a statement as that there is "God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; yet not three Gods, but one God, for there is unity in trinity and trinity in unity," than in all the simple statements of Jesus and the apostles. Also that it is all important that they should know all about the "foreknowledge," "secret counsel" and decrees of God; as well as just how God and Christ and the Holy Spirit

dwell in men and work in them. Many have gotten clean over on God's side of the business of saving souls, and are fighting above the clouds, or at least in the clouds. Preachers have taken the lead and the people have followed them away from the simplicity of duty and trust into the mysteries and mazes of speculations about the Godhead and the divine methods. About all the difficulties with which men are tussling, as well as the objections men urge against Christianity, as excuses for not doing their duty, are brought over from the upper side, the God side, of the question; and not from the side God presents to us, the side of human duty.

Men have allowed the devil to practice a huge fraud upon them, to make them act inconsistently and foolishly, and to pass judgment of condemnation upon themselves; as well as to open up such vast fields of theology to be studied, that it takes people a whole lifetime to learn how to become Christians, and many never learn the lesson.

Now, here is the inconsistency. Men do not deal with God in nature as they do with him in the Bible. They do not deal with their pockets and stomachs as they do with their souls. When asked to obey the gospel of Christ, they will at once fall back upon foreknowledge and divine decrees; will tell you that God foreknew all things that do, or ever will, come to pass; that the end was present with him from the beginning; that he foreknew whether they will be saved or lost; that if he foreknew that they will be saved nothing can hinder it; if he foreknew that they will be lost, they will be lost; that, in a word, they can do nothing to change what God foresaw from all eternity; that he foresaw all things that come to pass, from all eternity, and that therefore there is nothing they can do in the matter; they are afraid to attempt to do any-

thing, lest they might be found fighting against the divine decrees. But when it comes to questions about the body—about the pocket and the stomach, the very same men act quite differently, and it is presumable that they reason differently, if they reason at all. They look after the wants of the stomach and of the body generally, notwithstanding the end was present with God from the beginning. They work, provide, and eat, notwithstanding God knew from all eternity whether they would starve or have plenty. There are men in this country—growing scarcer as the years go by—who preach foreknowledge and foreordination, and man's utter inability to do anything in the matter of his soul's salvation, parting their hair in the middle that they may stand plumb on this line: and after so preaching all day Sunday, will go home on Monday and go to work, and put all hands at it, to provide for the wants of the body! Why this inconsistency? Is it because men will not hear the enemy when their stomachs pinch them? Or is it because they do not consider him orthodox on questions about the body? Or, is it because he is willing to allow men to feed and pamper the body, provided only that they will neglect the soul?

The problem of God's sovereignty and man's free agency is one that most likely we shall never be able to solve to the satisfaction of all. It is logically and theologically an impossibility, there being in the problem too much that is unknown and unknowable. In temporal matters almost all men are content to exercise their free agency and refer the matter of sovereignty to God himself. This is the best we can do. But we should be consistent, and in spiritual as well as in temporal matters use our free agency, and refer the matter of sovereignty, and the harmony of the two, to God. This side is ours.

That side is his. In doing thus we may return to "the simplicity that is in Christ," as preached by the inspired apostles and acted upon by the first disciples. And may God help us.

SERMON II.

THE THREE SIDES OF CHRISTIANITY.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” (John iii : 16.)

CHRI**STIANITY** is three-sided, and the passage of scripture just read presents all three sides; one wholly divine, one partly divine and partly human, and one wholly human. Or, to use another figure, there are three chapters of Christianity—one treats of what God has done and does; another, of what Jesus has done and does; and the third, of what man himself does, in the matter of his salvation. Of course I do not mean to say that, in the scriptures, the subject is always presented as so divided, but that it is so divisible, and such a division of it will be helpful to us in studying it.

We have, then, presented by the passage we begin with, (1) the love of God for the world; (2) the mediation of Jesus Christ, and (3) the faith of the whosoever would have eternal life—that is, the agency of man. These have been called very properly three different causes of salvation—the love of God the prime cause; the death of the Son the meritorious cause, the agency of the individual the instrumental cause.

1. Then, let us look at the prime cause, the love of God. This is back of all other causes and instrumentalities. It is the moving cause. It moves all other causes and instrumentalities. This, too, as I have already said, is wholly divine. It is something which God alone did, and which only he could do. As a cause it existed and moved

before the incarnation and work of the Son, before what we call the atonement—before everything in the whole matter of redemption. God did not and does not love the world because Jesus died for it. Rather, Jesus died for the world because God loved it. I suppose God loved the world as much before as after the death of Jesus; that is, with an infinite love. The atonement made by Jesus Christ, whatever else is in it, was not meant in any sense to affect the mind of God favorably towards the world. It was not meant to appease the divine wrath. It was not meant to reconcile God to men. Just along here the prevailing theology of the past blundered. It brought the notion down through the ages and centuries that the sufferings and death of Jesus were necessary to placate the wrath of the Father, which theretofore was burning with furnace heat against all men for the nature in which they were born into the world; that Jesus, the second person in the Godhead, died to reconcile the Father, the first person in the Godhead, to his creature man. This egregious error has no doubt made more skeptics among thinking people in the past than all the books of unbelievers. How could it be otherwise! No one, it seems to me, with educated mind and heart could welcome it. It makes division in the Godhead. It makes the divinity a wrangle; one part trying to save men, and the other crying out for their damnation. Away with all such theology! It came from Africa, and has caused only trouble and bitterness among the children of God for ages and centuries past.

“God so loved the world”—the whole world—the whole race of men—“that he gave his Son.” God loved the world always, and ever with an infinite love. This is true, whatever else may be false. And whatever is inconsistent with this great and fundamental truth is false.

One may be ready to ask, if this be true, that God loves all mankind with an infinite love, then why not Universalism?—why not all be saved? Well, I have no doubt but if the salvation of sinners, and their present and eternal happiness depended simply and wholly upon God, that all would be saved; all would be happy here, now and forever, for he willeth not the death of any. His will as respects his creatures can only be benevolent. But man is not so made as to be saved in that way; that is, simply by the benevolent desire of God. Were he so constituted, no doubt he would be good and happy now. Indeed, it is difficult to see how he ever could have sinned and suffered as he has in this world, if the love of God is the only factor in his happiness. It is a fact, however, that man is not so made. It is the power of choice between good and evil that constitutes him man. Could not God have made him otherwise? made him incapable of going wrong and bringing in so much suffering? I suppose not. He might have made some other creature so; but that other creature would not have been man, but in respect to the difference, would have been more like a planet, or a comet, or a moon.

2. But this brings us to another side of the matter; that side which I have said is both human and divine; the mediation of Jesus Christ, the atonement. What is the atonement? Well, that's a pretty hard question to answer to the satisfaction of almost anybody, to say nothing of satisfying everybody. But what I mean is, that Jesus died for sinners; died that sinners might be saved; died that whosoever believes in him might not perish, but have everlasting life; died that God might be just and the justifier of him that believes in Jesus. About the truth of all this there can be no question among people who believe the

Bible. Among such believers there can be no question about the fact or the necessity of the sufferings and death of Jesus in order to the salvation of sinners. But over different *explanations* of the fact there have been bitter controversies from the second century down to the closing decade of the nineteenth. Of course, one has not time in a single discourse to discuss the various and conflicting explanations of the atonement. But we may spend a moment with them.

One of the most popular, and most unpopular, explanations; that is, most generally received by orthodox believers, and most generally opposed by the heterodox and unbelievers; makes sin a *debt* and the sinner a debtor, and the vicarious sufferings and death of Jesus the satisfaction or payment of the debt. This makes Jesus to have suffered for the saved all they would have justly suffered for their sins and Adam's sin had he not died for them; that is, Jesus suffered in his short life and death the eternal torment that must have been suffered by those he saves, had he not paid the debt for them. Then, again, among those who hold this theory of the vicarious sufferings of Jesus, there are different and conflicting opinions as to *whom* the payment was made; that is, as to whose claims he settled by his sufferings. Some say that it was the devil, whose claims upon the sinner were satisfied; that he had captured the world by the overthrow of man, and that the sinner was his by right of conquest; and that Jesus suffered for him, "in his room and stead," paid the debt hanging over him and took him in. This is a pretty hard theological pill to swallow. But some gulp it down, nevertheless; others get over it like Dr. Cheney, of Chicago, was said to get over the word regeneration in the ritual for the baptism of infants—*coughed* over it. Other advocates

of the debt theory tell us that God, the Son, paid the debt to God the Father. But this looks too much like an alteration in the Godhead; and is about as hard a pill for some to swallow as the devil theory. Still other advocates of the debt theory tell us that the payment was made to infinite justice. This, at a glance, looks less objectionable. But on a closer examination, it appears to some to be an evasion. Unless infinite justice can be clearly separated from God, it differs little if any from the theory that the payment was to God the Father. It implies a difference, almost a wrangle, in the Godhead. The trouble with the debt explanation of the atonement comes of carrying a scripture figure too far. Nearly all the parables and figures of scripture have been in the same way abused. Of course there is a point of resemblance between a sinner and a debtor, and the atonement and surety, that justified the use of that figure by the Spirit, but not the abuse of it by the uninspired fathers. It is one of the easiest things imaginable to make an unwarranted extension of a good figure, and thus to plunge into an abyss of error and confusion.

Another explanation of the atonement makes the whole life of sacrifice and suffering, and death of Jesus, only an exhibition of God's love for men, intended to subdue the rebellion of their hearts and remove their needless fears, unto which they were held in perpetual bondage. Of this rather unpopular and heterodox explanation, I have this to say, That what it affirms of the suffering and death of Jesus is certainly true, though it may possibly not affirm the whole truth in the case; and the explanation may thus be defective. I am much inclined to think it is.

But what I wish to say, and to say with emphasis, is, that it is safest to follow no explanation of the matter; but

to stop with and rest in the simple scripture statements upon the subject. Unbelievers and doubters have waged their war chiefly upon the explanations uninspired men have made of the atonement, rather than upon the simple statements of the Scriptures. No man has ever been able fully to explain the sufferings and death of Jesus; and, possibly, the mystery may remain unsolved for all time. Then let it be called a mystery. That the just should have to suffer and die for the salvation of the unjust, is a mystery, turn it any way you will. It is better to allow that it is beyond human comprehension, than by attempted explanations to make it only more incomprehensible and objectionable. But is the doctrine to be rejected simply because it is a mystery? Is the fact that it is incomprehensible sufficient proof that it is false? Are we to reject as false everything that is to us mysterious? This will hardly be affirmed by the most rationalistic among us. For there is a great deal in nature as well as in grace that is full of mystery. Whoever attempts to bring all the ways of God within the comprehension of the human mind will ultimately find his attempt futile.

There are not only mysteries in nature wherever we look with our eyes open; but mysteries very much like that of the just suffering for the unjust, as taught in the Bible. All nature suffers, bleeds and dies for man. Turn where we will, we see this. The very bosom of the earth has to be ripped up, and torn open, and scratched about all the season, that man may be blessed—that he may live. Without this chastisement she yields only thorns and thistles, and noxious weeds. The seed, too, must be threshed and smashed, and put to death, before it will re-produce itself for man's life and comfort. And somebody must toil and sweat, and hunger and thirst, and be worn out—and

this is generally vicarious suffering—in producing the harvest. And when, after all, the harvest of grain is gathered, it must be threshed and mashed, and bolted and baked, before it becomes a blessing for man. Then the tree and the vine must be pruned and bled that they may bear their fruit, and then the fruit must be mashed and squeezed to death that we may enjoy the juice or wine. Then, too, the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, and the fish of the waters, are continually bleeding and dying that man may live. In fact all good comes to us through toil and labor and sufferings. All life comes out of death. Every being comes into existence through pain and suffering of other beings. The man, therefore, who goes through this world with his eyes and ears open, looking upon the writhings, and listening to the wails of nature for man, ought not to stumble and fall over the sufferings and death of Jesus for the salvation of sinners. Explain vicarious sufferings we may not even to our own satisfaction, but see it we must.

Somehow, and this should be enough for us, somehow Jesus died to save sinners. It is God's plan. Is not that enough? Suppose we say, that he could not be just and save the sinner in his sins, just as he can not be just and bless the sluggard in his indolence and laziness; that he could not be just to the *sinner himself*; and that it was, in his wisdom, necessary that Jesus should live, and suffer, and die, to reach and reclaim him; should not even this view—imperfect and heterodox, as many would call it—inspire our hearts with love and gratitude? The sufferings of Jesus, *as they relate to God*, in the scheme of redemption, we may never understand; but, as they relate to us, we can see and feel a power in them. We can understand that the heart that feels something of the power of

the sufferings and agony of Gethsemane and Calvary will be made a better heart for this world. Have not those scenes touched and tendered millions of hearts and made them better? Who will suffer willingly for the good of men, like those who believe the story of Gethsemane and the cross? As it relates to us, then we can see wisdom and power in the cross. As it relates to God and other beings in the universe, we may never fully comprehend it. The cross of Christ has turned thousands of hearts in streams of love toward sinners, that, before they felt the power of the love of Jesus, were like stones. But to conclude this side of our subject: If we can be content and satisfied with the simple New Testament statements on this subject, we shall avoid a great deal of unnecessary and bitter internal controversy, and have less external opposition.

3. "That whosoever believeth in him." This introduces the human side of the subject. Notwithstanding the infinite love of God manifested in the gift of his only begotten Son; and the sufferings and death of Jesus, in all their unfathomed depths of meaning, for us, there remains something for each individual sinner to do to be saved and to have eternal life. The love of God for the sinner, though infinite, will not of itself save him from his sins. The death of Jesus, though *in some way*, possibly beyond human comprehension, a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, will not in itself, or as it relates to God, save a single sinner. Both together will not save one man. Men were not made to be saved in that way. God will not save a sinner in spite of himself, nor without his own willing co-operation. He will not, by divine violence, break down the dignity of his own image, even to save him. Each man must for himself accept the salvation

which the love of God offers in Christ, or remain in his sins, notwithstanding the love of God and the death of Jesus. God says to all, "Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with me." (Rev. iii: 20.) Each man has the key to the inner chamber of his own soul. Its precincts are sacred. Demons can not, and God will not, invade them without permission. God, who created all things, and moves all worlds and suns simply by his power as he wills, stops at the door of the human heart, and says, "Behold I stand at the door and knock." Man's part is to open the door. He is an acceptor. He purchases nothing. He can do nothing that is intrinsically meritorious. Still, acceptance and appropriation are necessary on his part, just as necessary as in nature eating is. He is so constituted that he cannot be saved and made happy without his own consent. He lives in this world by his own consent, and not without it. The power of life and death is in an important sense, within his own power. The power of choice with which he is endowed is the ground of his happiness. Of course God could destroy him, or make something else of him if he were to determine to do so; but he could not save him and make him happy *as man* without his consent. Man compelled, in the absolute sense of the word, is man unmanned. Let it be understood, then, that all the sinner does in the matter of his salvation, here or hereafter, is receptive and appropriative. He provides nothing, pays for nothing. He receives. But he must receive and appropriate to himself the salvation that is in Christ for all, or be condemned, or rather remain condemned forever. Man is just so wonderfully and fearfully made.

I do not understand "believeth" in the text to mean

simply a conviction of the mind or heart, however strong. It means more than any psychological condition; it means a willing and hearty reception of Jesus, with the salvation that is in him—a reception of him in *his* way. Anything that may be called faith that in no way actualizes and expresses itself, but is content to remain in the mind or heart, is not the faith that receives Jesus Christ. Faith in Christ must be faithfulness to him. Faith that will not speak out and act out is dead—or is yet unborn. Such a faith never reached a blessing; never accomplished anything worth naming. Faith that receives and appropriates salvation must be a real, actual, living faith, that lays hold of Christ and pulls up. No lazy, indolent, lifeless, cowardly faith will do. God never blessed a person since Adam sinned for a faith kept in the heart. It must come out. Beginning with Abel and coming down to the last believer mentioned in the Bible, there is nothing to be found that countenances the doctrine of justification by faith only; and this is especially and conspicuously true when by “only” the advocates of the doctrine mean to exclude the obedience of faith—mean to exclude those very acts in which, under the gospel, faith actualizes and expresses itself.

We have, in the New Testament, a conspicuous example of the kind of faith I am condemning. Here it is: “Nevertheless even of the chief rulers many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God.” (John xii: 42.) Such a craven, cowardly faith is contemptible, and is fitted only to add to one’s misery here, to crush him in death, and intensify his sufferings in hell. We want a faith that will speak out and act out, even if it carries us over the devil’s danger line. That is the

faith that receives and appropriates Christ. And in this sense every one's salvation depends upon himself—that is, every one must receive Christ Jesus for himself. In this sense every one must save himself, and in this sense only can he do so. Hence it was that on the day of Pentecost, when Peter had preached Jesus to the people, and they had heard and were pricked in the heart, and asked what they must do, and he had told them, that “with many other words he testified, and exhorted them, saying, *save yourselves* from this untoward generation.” They could only save themselves by receiving Jesus Christ by faith. How could they do this? The words following show how they did it: “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized.” (Acts ii: 38–41.) That was what he had told them to do, “for the remission of sins.” That was what he was authorized to tell them. That was in accordance with the commission under which he was acting: “Preach the gospel to every creature; he that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” (Mark xvi: 16.) Being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ was an exercise of faith in him. It was the actualization of their faith. In that act of obedience to the authority of Jesus, their faith came out, and became a real, living faith, taking hold of him, putting him on; receiving him, and hence receiving the salvation that is in him. If their salvation did not thus depend upon their action, there would have been no sense or propriety in Peter's exhortation. Indeed it would be difficult to find a place for exhortation, with sense and propriety, anywhere. But Peter did exhort his instructed hearers to save themselves by obeying his instructions; and they did so save themselves. The exhortation and the manner of heeding it were both right and proper then; and it would, I think, puzzle any one to show why, under such

circumstances, such teaching and exhortation, and such obedience would not be right and proper now. Thus we see how persons save themselves. It is by faith. "Who-soever believeth in him" is thus illustrated and explained. And our salvation is to be carried to completion or perfection by continued faithfulness to Jesus Christ, who is said to be the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him.

But one is ready to say, That is salvation by works. Certainly not. Obedience of faith, or acts of faith; that is, such acts as express or actualize faith, are never called works, or classified with works that are excluded from justification. Indeed, nothing that is in any sense of *the gospel* is ever rightly classified with works in the Pauline sense of works.

Thus we have seen the three sides of Christianity as suggested by the passage with which we started out. 1. The love of God, the prime cause. 2. The work of Jesus, the meritorious cause. 3. The faith of the individual, the receiving cause. In the first of these divisions belong all those passages that predicate salvation of God; in the second, all those that predicate our salvation of Jesus and his work; and in the third, all those that predicate our salvation of faith or any of the acts of faith. And just here is where we see the necessity of the servant of God studying to show himself approved of God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing (or handling) the word of truth.

SERMON III.

THE CHURCH OF GOD—ITS FOUNDATION.

“When Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.” (Matt. xvi: 13-20.)

WHAT is called by our Lord his “church” in this passage is not always so designated in the New Testament. It is variously called the “church of God,” the “kingdom of God,” the “kingdom of heaven,” the “house of God,” the “temple of God,” “God’s husbandry,” “God’s building,” “One body,” the “body of Christ,” etc. These are all descriptive titles of the same thing, each one of some particular phase or feature of it. All of them together pretty fully describe what we commonly call the “church.”

That we may have a pretty comprehensive view of it let us notice briefly each one of its phase titles.

The name “church” is from a Greek word that means “called out,” primarily, and by consequence, “called together.” It has in it no religious idea necessarily; but, on the contrary, it could be, and was, by the Greeks, applied to any body of people called together, irrespective of the purpose for which they were assembled. The rather up-

roarous assembly in Ephesus of which we have an account in the nineteenth chapter of Acts of Apostles, "called together" by Demetrius to consider the interests of the craft of the silversmiths endangered by the preaching of Paul, is three times designated by the word from which we have church, but there translated "assembly" in verses 32, 39, 41. True, things took something of a religious turn in that "assembly," but not Christianly so, or after a godly sort. Again, Stephen, in Acts vii: 38, calls the children of Israel, who had been called out of Egypt, the "*church* in the wilderness." The Greek word rendered church in the New Testament, as these instances sufficiently illustrate, meant simply an assembly or congregation of people; a body of people called out and together. And that's all it meant. The character of any particular assembly of people, and the purpose of the assembly, must be learned from other descriptive titles, or circumstances, if learned at all

"Church of *God*" means an assembly of people "called of God." "My church," in the mouth of our Lord, meant the people he was going to call out of the world. The "church of God," "church of the Lord," and what Jesus calls his church, all, of course, in the New Testament mean the same thing; and is that body of people called of God, called of our Lord, "called," as says Paul, "by our gospel."

The church of God is not a body of people, however, called together literally and physically, as was the assembly in Ephesus referred to, or as were the children of Israel in the wilderness called "the church in the wilderness." It is a spiritual body, and its members are called out or separated from the world in a spiritual sense, and associated together upon a spiritual basis, and by spiritual

bonds. Those who believe in Christ Jesus, obey him, and trust in him, are, by such faith, obedience and hope separated spiritually from unbelievers and associated together. The call is a spiritual one, and the dissociation and association are spiritual. So that the church is a spiritual body. And the word translated church in the New Testament only describes this *spiritually called out* feature of the body of Christ.

“Kingdom” means authority, dominion, government. “Kingdom of God” means government of God. “Kingdom of heaven” is only another form of expressing the same idea. And these designations of the body of Christ are meant to express the *government* feature of it. The people God calls in Christ Jesus are to be governed, but the government is to be divine and not human—“not of this world,” but of heaven.

What our Lord in one verse of the passage under examination calls his “church,” he in the next verse calls “the kingdom of heaven,” by church expressing the *called out* feature, and by “kingdom of heaven” expressing the *government* feature of the same thing. “The church of God” means the people called out and associated together of God; and “kingdom of God” means the divine government of the same people.

The phrase “house of God” describes another feature of the same thing: the *family* feature. The church of God is a family. God dwells in it, and is the Father of all. Jesus dwells in it, and is the elder brother. And all the members are brethren and sisters.

“The temple of God” describes the *worship* feature of the same thing. God dwells in his holy temple, and is worshiped there. It is a spiritual temple. It is not one made with men’s hands. It is not made of stones. It is

not one like that at Jerusalem, grand as that was. It is not like that at Ephesus, built of magnificent stones, all covered with dust and cobwebs, in which the bats hid by day and the crickets chirruped by night; but it is a spiritual temple, made of living stones—believing, hoping, trusting, loving hearts—in which he dwells by his spirit.

There are several descriptive names by which the church is called that emphasize the *work* feature of it, such as “vineyard,” “building,” and “husbandry,” or farm. The church is not meant simply for the saved to live in and be happy. It is meant for that, but for more than that. It is the place in which to work. None of us are called out to do nothing. Whom the Lord calls he puts to work, in his vineyard, upon his building, on his farm. They are all co-workers with God. They must be helpers with him in saving others, and thus work out their own salvation; that is, carry out to its completion their salvation already begun.

What is so frequently called the church is also called the “body,” “the body of Christ,” “one body.” And this name brings to the forefront the idea of *fellowship*. The body is not a physical or material, but a spiritual one. It is a “man,” “one new man,” but it is a spiritual man. We understand something of the intimacy of the relation of all the members of the body of a man. There are many members, but one body, one man. Every member of a living body lives in virtue of its union with the body. Union is the organic law of all life, mineral, vegetable, animal, intellectual and spiritual. It is often said truly that “in union there is strength;” that “united we stand, divided we fall;” and it may be just as truly said, “in union there is life,” and that “united we live, divided we die.” We can see how true this is of the members of the human

body. It is just as true of a spiritual body—the body of Christ—and for the same reason—in virtue of the same law. “There is one body, and one spirit” in that body. “For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body; and have all been made to drink into one spirit.” So intimate is the relation of the members of the body of Christ one to another, that the pain of one is the pain of all; the pleasure of one is the pleasure of all; the honor of one is the honor of all, and the life of one is the life of all. There is “one body,” “one spirit,” “one Lord,” “one faith,” “one baptism,” and “one God and Father of all.”

To understand, therefore, the various descriptive names applied in the New Testament to what we generally call the church, is to have a pretty comprehensive view of that divine institution.

In the second place, we learn from the scripture in hand that, at the time our Lord used this language, his church was not yet founded in the world. This follows manifestly from the expression, “Upon this rock I will build my church.” “*Will* build” is in the future tense, put simply beyond question by “will” the sign of the future. When any one says I *will* do this or that thing, he means by will to put the accomplishment of the thing after the expression in point of time. This is so manifestly true that one feels like he was saying what is hardly worth while when stating it.

But we are sometimes told by those who contend for what they call the identity of the church under the Old and New Testament dispensations that the Savior meant by “will build” no more than that he would *continue* to

build up that which already existed in an incomplete state, as one might build higher or larger a house already in existence. But it is perfectly clear to any one not blinded by a theory, that our Lord was not speaking of building in any such sense. Notice he said not simply, "I will build my church," but "*upon this rock* I will build my church." He was speaking not of continuing a building, but of fundamental building—of building upon the foundation.

While the expression "I will build" is in the unlimited future, and fixes no time for its fulfillment; while, for anything there is in that simple expression the founding of the church might be in the very near or very distant future; still there is a circumstance mentioned in the context that fixes the time in the not very remote future. That circumstance is, that the Savior said to Peter; "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven (meaning by "kingdom of heaven" the same thing as by "my church," with the government feature in front) and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." This clearly means that Peter was to have power at the door of his church, to bind and loose. It is difficult to make it mean less. Some make it mean more. There is a notion entertained by some, grounded upon this promise, that Peter keeps gate to the kingdom of glory. This may or may not be true. But our Lord was not talking of anything of the kind. He was talking of something Peter was to do "on earth." He was to bind and loose *on earth*. It is a fair inference, then, that the church was to be founded while Peter was yet living *on earth*. And this accords perfectly with our Lord's words in the last verse of our chapter; "There be some standing here which shall

not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." Let us follow this matter up a little further. Six days later we have the transfiguration scene upon the mountain, as recorded in the next chapter. Peter, James and John were there with the Lord. Moses, the giver of the law, and Elijah, the chief of the prophets, appeared and talked with him on the most momentous event in the history of the world, soon to transpire in the city of Jerusalem. Moses and Elijah appeared, it would seem, chiefly to *disappear*. They disappeared, leaving in sight of the three apostles "Jesus only." And God said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him." This meant the coming exaltation of Jesus. It meant the approach of his reign. It meant what Jesus meant when he said a few days before: "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it;" when he said, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven;" when he said, "There be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kirgdom."

A short time after the transfiguration scene, as we learn in the eighteenth chapter, after that there had been some disscussion as to who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven, "Jesus called a little child unto him and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. xviii: 2, 3) This shows that still the church or kingdom is not founded; or, at any rate, that the disciples were not in it. Peter had no keys yet.

Let us follow on until after the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord; and in the first chapter of Acts we learn

that when Jesus and the disciples "had come together they asked him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? [That was their idea of the coming kingdom—that it was to be a restoration of dominion to Israel.] And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." (Acts i: 6-8.) Now this "power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you," is evidently just what our Lord meant by "the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and here the time of the fulfillment of the promise is fixed by the expression "after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Then, after the ascension of our Lord, when the day of Pentecost had come, the Holy Ghost did come upon them—"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts ii: 4.) They were now "endued with power from on high." That day, "after that the Holy Spirit had come upon them," Peter preached Christ crucified, buried, risen, ascended and made Lord and Christ in heaven, for the first time it had ever been done. Many heard and "were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. . . . Then they that gladly received his word were baptized. And the same day there were added about three thousand souls." Acts ii: 37-41.) Here we find Peter speaking with power and authority from heaven. This is the meaning of the symbol of "the keys of the kingdom of heaven," and of binding and loosing on earth,

with authority and sanction of heaven. Here, too, the first church was constituted. That is the meaning of "and the same day there were added about three thousand souls"—not added "*unto them.*" There is no "unto them" in the text. Those words were supplied by the translators to make the passage conform to their understanding of the matter. Three thousand souls "added" means simply three thousand souls *associated together*. This was the first church in the local sense, and the beginning of the church in the general sense. This was the constitution of the first church: three thousand persons *called out* from the world by faith in and obedience to Jesus Christ, and associated together upon the rock. After this, obedient believers "were added to the church." So that here at Jerusalem, on the first Pentecost after the ascension, we find the church was founded and Peter received the keys; that is, power to bind and loose on earth.

3. In the third place, What is meant by the rock? When our Lord said, "Upon this rock I will build my church," what did he mean by "this rock?" This is the fundamental question of our passage. It has been answered, and is answered by Romanists, and some others agreeing with them, that our Lord meant Peter himself. And they attempt to sustain their view by arguing from the meaning of the word translated rock and from tradition. They render the passage thus: "Thou art named Peter, that is, stone, and on that very rock I will build my church." Not only do Romanists believe Peter was the rock on which the church was built, but they believe that every succeeding Pope of Rome has in his turn succeeded, in some way, in getting under the church and becoming its foundation stone, as Peter was in the beginning.

Another view, and the only other, is that by "this

rock" the Savior meant what Peter had just said. It will be remembered that the disciples had been out preaching among the people and had returned, that the Savior had asked them as to public opinion about him. They had answered. He had also asked them directly, "Who say ye that I am?" Peter had answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Then Jesus answered, "Blessed art thou Simon, son of Jonas; for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church;" that is to say, *upon the truth he had uttered*. Those holding this view understand the Lord's meaning to be about this: "Thou art Peter [a *stone*], and upon this rock [not simply a stone, but "*rock*;" that is, this truth Peter had just expressed, which had not come to him by flesh and blood], I will build my church." So that is the issue. One party says our Lord, by "this rock," meant Peter himself; the other says he meant the divine and fundamental truth Peter had just expressed, when he said, "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*" This much may be said without the alarming specter of philological criticism worrying us much, namely: There is just the difference between the meaning of Peter's name in Greek, and the meaning of the word rendered "rock" in the passage, that there is between a "stone" and "rock," in the sense of the solid ledge, rock, or cliff. And then they differ in gender, one being masculine and the other neuter. And that is difference enough for much controversy. Mere verbal or philological criticism is all very well in its place, and that is where we are shut up to it. But when we are not so shut up, too much can be made of it. We can lose time on it, and it sometimes causes us to lose sight of common sense, one of God's best gifts to man.

Let us try common sense on this much disputed question. To begin with, it will be granted by both parties to the controversy, that by "this rock" our Lord either meant Peter, or the truth Peter had just expressed, one or the other. Indeed, it is difficult, in the light of the passage, to find anything else he could have meant. We can have an agreed case that far; that is, that either Peter himself, or the statement he had just made, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," was meant by "this rock." Now, let us try common sense in seeking an answer to the question, which?

Whatever the "rock" is, it is the foundation on which the church was to be built. That will not be disputed. And now, is it not a fair presumption that when the apostles go forth to found and build up the church, they will give some prominence to the foundation, whatever it may be? They will hardly ignore it entirely, and make conspicuous other matters not at all fundamental or essential to the church, will they? We may reasonably presume not. Well, when they went forth to found the church, did they preach Peter wherever they went? Did they ever preach Peter to anybody, anywhere, that we know of? Did they ever require anybody to believe in Peter in order to come into the church? Did they require any one to confess Peter? Did they baptize in the name of Peter, or into Peter? Certainly not. Are we right certain that one-half the persons brought into the church, founded upon the rock, in the times of the apostles, ever knew that there was such a person as Peter? What did the thousands of persons brought into the church by the ministry of Paul, for instance, ever know about Peter? In preaching to sinners, and bringing them to salvation and into the church, no prominence was given by the apostles to

Peter over others. Is not all this very strange if Peter was the rock on which the church was built? Is it not, in fact, unaccountable?

Now, let us try the other view, that by "this rock" our Lord meant the truth Peter had just expressed; "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Did the apostles, in founding and building up the church, give any prominence to this truth? Did they preach this to anybody? Did they not preach it to everybody wherever they preached? Is not this statement an embodiment of their preaching, so far as we have any record of it in Acts of Apostles? Did they not upon this truth make the issue between God and men? Did they require any one to believe this? Was not this precisely what they did require all to believe? And was not this *all* they required persons to believe in order to come into the church? For what purpose were their testimonies written? "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." (John xx : 31.)

Did the apostles require of believers any verbal confession, and what was it? Was it not this same truth again, which was not revealed at the first by flesh and blood, but by the Father in heaven? And in what name did they baptize believers? Was it not "in the name of Jesus the Christ?" And were not believers "baptized into Jesus the Christ," the Son of the living God? And did they not teach persons who thus "put on the Lord Jesus the Christ," to "walk in him?" To ask these questions is to answer them, to every one even moderately well acquainted with the New Testament scriptures. And does not this look very much like the truth, that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," was made the foundation of the church?

Let us notice a few passages from the writings of the

apostles bearing upon this question. First, we will hear Peter: "To whom [Christ, the Lord] coming, a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence." (1 Pet. ii: 4-8.) In this passage the apostle teaches that Jesus, the Christ, is the living stone, the rock, unto whom coming, believers are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God. This is the church of God, called a spiritual house, built on Christ, the Rock. Notice that believers are the lively stones of which it is composed.

Paul says in his epistle to the Ephesians, who were before their conversion, mostly Gentiles: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints; and of the household [or church] of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, [because they laid it] Jesus, the Christ being the chief corner; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. ii: 19-22.) How could persons believe in Peter, and come to him, and be fitly framed together upon him as the foundation, who never knew anything of him, who never heard of him, that anybody knows of? As we have already said, no doubt hun-

dreds and thousands of the Gentiles were brought into the church without ever having heard of Peter. No doubt hundreds and thousands of them lived and died in the church of God without knowing anything of that apostle. But, on the other hand, wherever the gospel was preached, no matter by whom, it was made known that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God." Nobody came into the church without hearing and believing this. This, then, is the rock. This is the foundation, the creed, of the church of God. Hence the language of Paul in his epistle to the church that was in the city of Corinth: "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon; for other [sufficient] foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus the Christ." (1 Cor. iii. 10, 11.) This brief passage teaches several things expressly, bearing upon our subject: It teaches that the foundation of the church "is Jesus the Christ"—of course, as declared to be "the Son of God." It shows *how* this "is the foundation of the apostles and prophets." They "*laid* the foundation"—of course, by preaching "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God." The passage also teaches that there is no "other" sufficient foundation—no other on which persons can safely build.

4. Let us briefly consider the question, Why did our Lord call the statement of Peter—"thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"—a "rock?" Of course, it was not a rock, literally. Neither was Peter a "stone." The one was called a rock and the other a stone by a figure of speech. And a figure of speech of the kind this is, is simply the calling of one thing by the name of another in

some respects different one. Figures of speech are very common in the scriptures, as in almost all languages. We all use them, and generally to give force and emphasis to our thoughts more readily and beyond what we are able to do by the literal use of words. The truth we are considering was called a "rock" no doubt for the same reason that Peter was called a "stone." Rock is solid, lasting, unyielding, especially as a foundation on which to build. Our Lord had before this called him a wise man who builds his house upon a rock, and him foolish who builds on the sand. He means by the use of this figure, in our passage, to say with greater emphasis than he could in literal language, that the truth Peter had just expressed was the comprehensive and fundamental truth of Christianity; that it was the truth, revealed not by flesh and blood, but by the Father Himself, on which men might build all their interests for time and eternity; that it would stand all the shocks of time, and that the gates of hell should not prevail against it.

Peter was called a "stone," by our Savior, no doubt, to indicate his firmness *as a man*, as "flesh and blood;" and, as compared with others of his fellowmen, as measured by men, he was a man of great firmness. Peter was a "stone" among *men*, but he was not a "rock" large enough and solid enough to support the church of God. Peter was human—"flesh and blood"—as other men are. And so have been all his alleged successors—some of them intensely so—down to the present alleged incumbent. But the foundation of the church of God is not "flesh and blood" nor anything constructed or "revealed by flesh and blood." It was not even revealed by Jesus himself in the flesh; but by the Father who is in heaven." The fact is the church was not even built on Jesus the Christ, the

Son of God, while he was in flesh and blood. The foundation of the church of God is divine and infallible. Peter, firm as he was as a man, failed signally after what our Lord said to him as recorded in our passage. And for the matter of that, faltered even after his conversion and inspiration. But "Jesus the Christ, the Son of God," fails not under any test. It is the foundation God has laid. It is His own comprehensive truth. It will stand until the last battle is fought between truth on the one hand, and all the allied powers of earth and hell on the other.

In conclusion: What is the meaning of that phrase in our passage, which says, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it?" And, first "against" *what?* the Rock? or the church built on it? We need not stop here, however, to exercise ourselves in grammar, or to display a bit of critical acumen. It is evident our Lord meant to teach that the gates of hell should not prevail against either the Rock or the church built on it, that for the reason the one should stand, the other should also.

But what is the meaning of the "gates of hell?" This phrase can be most easily and naturally understood in the literal sense of the words. "Gates," then, are places of entrance, places of ingress and egress; as, for example, we enter a walled city, or any inclosure, through the gates. When heaven is represented as a walled city, it is said that those "who do his commandments," may enter in through the *gates* into the city." And the word translated "hell" meant to those acquainted with the Greek language, "the realm of the dead," "the common receptacle of unembodied spirits." And it is the judgment of the best Biblical critics that it should never be translated "hell," as that English word has a popular meaning altogether different.

“Gates of hell,” then, meant simply “entrance to the state of the dead.” This is the most literal and natural sense, and, no doubt, the one in which our Lord used it. This accords with his use of the word Rock in the same connection, and brings prominently forward the most sublime view of the glory and worth of the church of God. From this point of view we may see it towering in matchless beauty and glory above all other confederations of men; eclipsing in power and splendor all earthly kingdoms, empires, and republics, based upon the Rock of Divine truth, while they are founded in the sands of human wisdom and philosophy, and supported only by the arm of flesh. None of the governments of this world have or claim any power beyond the gates that open into the realm of the dead. Loyalty to one’s civil government is a commendable trait of character. What we call patriotism seems almost a natural thing; and in the present condition of the world is a necessity. We should not disparage civil government. But, after all, what it is to us and for us it is only in and for this world—on this side the gates of death. It cannot follow us through. It does not propose to reclaim us from the prison of death. It does not even knock at the door when its subjects pass through. At the dark gate of death the proudest government on earth surrenders all claim to its subjects. It abandons them there forever, as they pass through. When her distinguished men enter the realm of the dead she lowers her flag and drapes her public buildings, and, at least seems to mourn them a few days, and then bids them farewell forever, and sets about filling their places, often with envy, bitterness, and strife, and sometimes in blood. Not so the government of our Lord. It is founded upon the Rock. It stretches its proud and mighty wings over

all worlds. Its banner waves over the subjects of the King even in the valley of the shadow of death. He must reign till all enemies are subdued. He will destroy death itself. He says: "I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold, I am alive for ever more, Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death." He says unto his subjects: "Because I live ye shall live also." His subjects, standing on the Rock that towers high over the wrecks of time, can serve him in this blessed hope, singing as the days go by:

"Some build their hopes on the ever drifting sand.
Some on their fame, or their treasure, or their land;
Mine on the Rock that forever shall stand,
Jesus, the Rock of Ages."

SERMON IV.

THE WORD OF TRUTH.

“Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth.”—(2 Tim. ii : 15.)

WHEN the apostles in their epistles, as Luke in Acts, speak of “the word of the Lord,” “the word of God,” “the word of truth,” “the word,” they generally, if not always, mean the gospel. When the Old Testament word of God is meant they call it “the Scripture,” “Scriptures,” “Holy Scriptures.” In the passage I have quoted “the word of truth,” no doubt, means the gospel—or “the word of truth” which came by Jesus Christ.

We believe in the Old Testament and the New; that it is all the word of God. But “diligence” is still necessary, upon the part of the preacher, in handling, or dividing, this word. This shall be the subject of our discourse.

1. And, first, as to the Old Testament and the New. Are they of equal importance and authority with us, who live in the Christian dispensation? Certainly not. Let us see: “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.” (Heb. i : 1, 2.) God spake to the Jews by the prophets—and, no doubt, Moses was meant to be included among “the prophets.” By “his son” and the apostles he now speaks to us—both Jews and Gentiles. “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if

the word spoken by angels was steadfast and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him." (Heb. ii: 1-3.) "The word spoken by angels" means the law. That the angels co-operated with Moses, in some way, in receiving and giving the law is not merely a rabbinical tradition, but is taught in the Old Testament and the New. For example, Stephen, the martyr in his memorable speech for which he died, speaking to the Jews, said: "Ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not." (Acts vii: 53.) Just how the angels co-operated in giving the law we may not know, but it is none the less a fact; nor is it any the less a fact that the law was given by Moses; "for," we read, "the law was given by Moses; but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

It is important for us to understand also that the law was given *to the Jews*. It was meant only for them. It was never made obligatory upon the Gentiles, in fact, it was that which separated the Jews and Gentiles; and was as a middle wall of partition between them. Hence Paul says of our Savior: "He is our peace who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition having abolished in his flesh the enmity, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace." (Eph. ii: 14, 15.) Nor are we to understand the apostle by "law" as meaning simply the "ceremonial law," as is sometimes assumed by those who would be at least partly under the law. Such an assumption is in the teeth of Paul's uniform style. He never says "the law" without including the

whole law. He who draws a line between what men call the moral and the ceremonial parts of the law, to make it appear that only the latter was done away in Christ, not only makes an unauthorized survey, but an egregious blunder as well. Let us hear the apostle in another place: "Who hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, [that is, the law of Moses,] but of the spirit; [that is, the gospel of Christ,] for the letter [law,] killeth, but the spirit [the gospel] giveth life. But if the ministration of death [the law] written and graven on stones was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance, which [the law] was to be done away; how shall not the ministration of the spirit [the gospel] be rather glorious. For if the ministration of condemnation [the law] be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness [the gospel] exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away [the law, written and graven in stone] was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious." (2 Cor. iii: 6-11.)

It cannot be denied, certainly with both intelligence and candor, that the apostle here teaches that the law, the whole law, was done away in Christ. He so particularizes as that he cannot possibly be interpreted as speaking only of what was ceremonial in the law—"the law written and graven in stones," as only the decalogue was. That whole ministration then, together with its purpose, was only parenthetical and intended, when it was given, only to serve until Christ should come to his throne. And this is saying no more than Paul in another place says as plainly as anything can be said. Hear him: "Wherefore then serveth

the law? It was added [to the promise God made Abraham concerning Christ] because of transgressions till the seed should come to whom the promise was made. * * * But before faith [the gospel] came we [Jews] were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come we are no longer under a schoolmaster." (Gal. iii: 19-25.)

According to this teaching, when Christ, the promised seed, came to his authority, the law that was added to the promise, expired by limitation, having served its time and purpose.

Principles, truths, absolute right, will never perish—can never be abolished—and all that there was of these in the law of Moses, we have in the gospel. But the old code is gone. We "are not under the law, but under grace." We are under no obligation to do anything simply because it was in the law of Moses. And yet, whatever there was in the law, right in itself, morally right, right before it was put into the law; whatever was in the law because it was right, and not made right by being put there; is, of course obligatory upon Christians; but not because it was contained in the law of Moses. We are under Christ.

While, then, the Old Testament is true, and profitable to us, as containing the history of creation and of God's dealings with men in former times; because it contains many promises and prophecies, some of them fulfilled, and others being fulfilled, in Christ; because it is full of types and shadows of which Christ is the antitype and the substance; because it affords many illustrious examples of victorious faith in God, and of heroic virtue among the ancients; because it is a great

store-house of devotional matter; still it is no longer *authoritative*, as the New Testament is.

Jesus the Christ has "all authority in heaven and on earth," at least so far as humanity is concerned. This he claimed himself when he had fought the last great battle, in the valley of the shadow of death, anticipating his ascension and coronation in heaven. This was the meaning of the transfiguration scene upon the mountain; of Moses and Elijah, representing the law and the prophets, appearing and *disappearing*, leaving none save Jesus only; and of the voice from heaven saying. "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye *him*." "Jesus only" is the "one Lord." We should, therefore give no heed to men who preach the law of Moses as in any sense essential to salvation. We will hear Paul again, and somewhat at length on this point:

"As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him; rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. 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; for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the God-head bodily. And ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and power. In whom ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; 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. And you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses, blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against

us, [Jews] which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in himself. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath, which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." (Col. ii: 6-17.)

Evidently there was some effort being made to bring the disciples at Colosse under the law; to induce them to be "circumcised" and submit to "the handwriting of ordinances"—the "law written in stones," and to observe the legal regulations about "meats" and "drinks," and "holy days," and "new moons" and "sabbath days." But the apostle teaches them that they had need of none of these things; that they had been "circumcised with the circumcision of Christ"—that is, they had that of which circumcision under the law was a type; that Christ had "blotted out the handwriting, of ordinances," "nailing it to his cross;" and that as to "meats" and "drinks," and "holy days," and "new moons," and the "sabbath," they were all only shadows of things that were to come after, and had served their time and purpose in the legal and typical dispensation; that they had Christ himself, and with him the substantial blessings typified by all those times and observances.

It may be remarked appropriately just here, that the effort to fasten the sabbath of the law upon Christians is directly in the teeth of these plain words of the apostle. The legal sabbath is in no sense obligatory upon Christians. It went with the law. It passed away with the shadows at the rising of the Sun. We have now *rest* in Christ. We shall have perfect *rest* after awhile.

The Lord's day is a different day with an entirely differ-

ent signification. It commemorates the resurrection. Those Christians who will be under the law of Moses, at least the decalogue, have had no little trouble hunting for authority for changing the sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week, upon the demand of the Sabbatarians. Error always brings trouble with it, or in its wake. They are akin.

Now, all I have said was intended to prepare the way for this statement. While, as already said, the Old Testament is true, is full of divine wisdom, and profitable for all Christians, yet we are not under it; but under the New Testament, which contains all things necessary to salvation, and is the Christian's only *authoritative* book. No doubt hundreds and thousands of Gentiles became Christians in the first century, and lived and died in the church of God, without ever having heard of the Old Testament. And so it might be now.

HOW TO HANDLE ARIGHT, OR RIGHTLY DIVIDE, THE NEW TESTAMENT.

And, first, let us notice that division, or portion, of it commonly called the gospels; that is, the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. In these records we have the ministry of John the Baptist and the personal ministry of our Lord himself.

John the Baptist was a prophet of God and his mission was to the Jews only, and was fulfilled while the law of Moses was still in force. He was therefore a prophet under the Mosaic dispensation. His preaching is summarized by Matthew in this brief sentence: "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He baptized the penitent Jews who came to him "confessing their sins," requiring them to believe on him who was to come, who, said he, "is mightier than I." He came to prepare the

way of the Lord thus by preparing a people to receive him. He baptized our Lord himself, upon his demand, and seeing the Spirit descend and abide upon him recognized him as the Messiah, and proclaimed him "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." He then said, "he must increase but I must decrease," thus gracefully accepting a state of things that few great men accept without murmur or complaint. The praise of this grand man and prophet of God is set down in our Lord's own words: "For I say unto you, among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

Our Lord's personal ministry was also restricted to the Jews; and, like John's, was fulfilled under the law of Moses. They lived in the evening of the Mosaic dispensation; but in their preaching we can easily see the gray dawn of the new and better day. It was the time of twilight.

It was evidently not the intention of the Lord to teach the people generally, as to the nature of his coming kingdom, during his personal ministry. He instructed his disciples, it will be remembered, when he sent them out to preach during his earth-life, to preach just what John the Baptist had preached: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." It was manifestly his purpose to do just what he did—to call about him certain persons, to instruct them in the nature of his kingdom as far as it was possible on their part, and to qualify them to "teach all nations" when the time should come. To the multitude he spake of his coming kingdom only in parables. From the multitude he often retired with his disciples, that he might better instruct them in the things which the time

and conditions had not come for preaching to all the people. Even the sermon on the mount was intended to be heard by his disciples only, as the Lord withdrew from the multitude before beginning it. These disciples he was preparing to be his apostles to the world—his witnesses and ambassadors. He was instructing them, that, as the Father had sent him so he might send them. He said many things to them for which the public was not ready yet. Hence he said to them: "What ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops." (Matt. x: 27.

Upon one occasion, it will be remembered, his disciples asked him: "Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, because it is given unto you to know the mysteries (things theretofore unrevealed) of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." (Matt. xiii: 10, 11.) It was impossible yet for him to instruct the masses even of the Jews, as to the nature and scope of his kingdom; and he chose to avoid saying anything that would give his enemies any advantage of him before the unlearned, or precipitate the issue with the Jews that was to come in its time. He did not even allow his disciples to preach that he was "the Christ the Son of the living God," until after his resurrection from the dead. (Matt. xvi: 20, and xvii: 9.) And he had said so little about this before the multitudes in literal language, that nothing, as to his claim to be the Christ the Son of God, or as to the nature of the kingdom he proposed to establish, could be proven on his trial, except by himself. He "was born of the seed of David according to the flesh," and "was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Before his resurrection, therefore, his Messiahship and divine Sonship were not

preached. Before his resurrection his enemies could not and would not have understood him, had he spoken of his own nature fully, and that of his kingdom. In fact his disciples, even, to whom it was given to understand these things, failed materially to understand him on these questions before the resurrection. Jesus never lost anything by haste. He had a preparatory work to do, and could do that, awaiting his "time," his "hour," of exaltation and glory.

The chosen apostles of Jesus, to whom the proclamation of the gospel to all nations, and the establishment of the church of God, were committed, after the resurrection, were the extraordinary men of the new dispensation. They received an extraordinary education under the great Master himself. They received, after the resurrection and ascension, an endowment of extraordinary power, by the Holy Spirit. Their work thereafter was largely an extraordinary work. These men were dissociated from the world and all its cares and concerns, and associated with Jesus, during his personal ministry, in an *extraordinary* sense. They must abandon the world's business entirely—let the dead bury their dead, even—and follow the Master. They were to be his witnesses to the world. They were to "take no thought" for the things of this world. They were to be provided for in an extraordinary manner. They were to receive the Holy Spirit, who was to bring to their minds what they had heard the Master say, who was to show them things to come after the Master left them, and who was to guide them into all the truth, in the extraordinary work assigned them just before the ascension of the Lord. Now, he will be certain not to "handle the word of truth aright," who does not understand that to these *extraordinary* persons many things

were said that are not applicable to *ordinary* men and women; that promises of special providence and special divine guidance were made to them that are not in the same sense to be applied to ordinary men. For want of observing this fact many a preacher has had unnecessarily to tug and tussle with such passages as, "Take no thought what ye shall eat, or drink, or wherewithal ye shall be clothed," "Take no thought what ye shall speak," "Let the dead bury their dead," "He shall guide you into all the truth," etc. etc. The preacher will always have difficulties who tries to make a general application of these special instructions and promises.

JESUS TO THE APOSTLES, THE APOSTLES TO THE WORLD.

Jesus himself said about the same, just before his ascension. Hear him: "Peace be unto you. As the Father has sent me, even so send I you." (John xx. 21.) He sent them, educated and qualified, endowed with power from on high, to preach to the nations what he had taught them, and more, what the Spirit should afterward reveal to them. To know what to do to be saved, and what to do as a saved person, one need go no further than to the apostles of our Lord. We can learn a great deal from the recorded discourses of our Savior, and from the recorded instructions he gave his apostles; but we are not compelled to go further than the apostles to learn all things necessary to our salvation. We do not have to interpret his parables. There is no such necessity upon us. Nor do we have to interpret, "Born again," "Born of water and of the Spirit," "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth," etc. etc. All he meant by all his parables, and by all the figures he made use of, we have in Acts of Apostles and their Epistles to

the churches, in unparabolic, or *literal* language. Absolutely *all!* Besides, there has been a good deal of error brought into the church and into the world, by persons going beyond the ample, literal teaching of the inspired apostles, to the uninterpreted figures, parables and prophecies of our Lord. It may be set down as certain, that whenever the curious preacher gets any doctrine or authority for any practice, or ground for any hope, out of any parable spoken and not interpreted by our Lord, or out of any figurative language used by him, which can not be found in the literal teachings of the apostles, he gets *too much*, and hence something erroneous, and, of course, more or less mischievous.

The gospels also record some of the *miracles* our Lord did. While many of them were publicly performed; that is, in the presence of multitudes of people; they were all, or generally, performed "*in the presence of his disciples.*" In this respect, too, his apostles were to be "his witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth." They were to bear witness to what they had seen him do, as well as to what they had heard him say.

While his miracles, with possibly one or two exceptions, had obviously a beneficent character, they were designed primarily to prove that he was the Christ, the Son of God. The apostle John summarizes the matter in a few words, thus: "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book, but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." (John xx. 30, 31.)

In accordance with what we have seen of the character of the gospels they all record the fact that our Lord, after his resurrection did commission his apostles to go and

make disciples of all the nations, committing to them the way and the means of salvation for every creature. They were to begin at Jerusalem. They were to tarry in that city to be clothed with power from on high. They were not only to "make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," but, after discipling persons, they were to teach "them to observe all things whatsoever" the Lord had taught them.

And now we have already anticipated that portion of the New Testament called,

ACTS OF APOSTLES.

This book while it does not purport to be anything like a complete record of all that the apostles did under the commission to disciple the nations is yet sufficiently full to show what they preached and what they required sinners to do to be saved, as well as how they constituted churches. It is not a record of, and should not be called, *the Acts of the Apostles*, as if it contained all the acts of all the apostles, or even all the acts of any of the apostles. It is simply "Acts of Apostles;" that is, some acts of some apostles. The writer as a matter of fact, confines himself mainly to some acts of Peter and Paul, the latter being called and constituted an apostle after the ascension, and whose mission was more especially to the Gentiles. This is, then, the portion of the New Testament in which we learn especially how the apostles made disciples; in other words, what they required Jews and Gentiles to believe and do to become Christians and members of the church of God. The apostles were directed into all the truth by the Spirit and acted in Christ's stead in propagating Christianity.

THE APOSTOLIC EPISTLES

were addressed to Christians and evidently intended

mainly to instruct them in the duties, privileges and hopes of the Christian life. In these Epistles we may learn how the apostles carried out the second chapter of their commission—"teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Besides these practical lessons there are in the Epistles many references and allusions to other matters from which we may learn many good and profitable lessons. But the fundamental design of the Epistles was mainly to furnish and equip the disciples for the Christian life. Information therefore of this practical character can be found in this portion of scripture suited to every Christian's condition in almost all conceivable circumstances. As we should consult "Acts of Apostles" to learn how Christians are made, so we should consult the letters of apostles, to learn the duties of Christians already made. And when we find that which is doctrinal and not simply practical, and allusions to things pertaining to the conversion and primary salvation of the saints, in these epistles, we should not forget the fact, in our interpretations, that Christians and not aliens are addressed by the apostles.

THE APOCALYPSE.

This book in respect of its contents as well as its date, too, most likely, very appropriately closes the New Testament canon. It is the only strictly prophetic book of the New Testament. Its prophecy too is of a peculiar character. It expresses itself almost wholly in symbolic visions; and it is not every man and woman that can read and talk who can be confidently relied on as a safe interpreter of its symbolism and visions. Of all the books of the New Testament it is perhaps most explained and least understood by the critics and commentators. Cranks have far less trouble in understanding and explaining it

than scholars do. It may be safely said, however, that many of its prophecies have been fulfilled and many remain to be fulfilled yet in the future. Its visions evidently reach forward to the end of the reign of Christ and of the present state of things. The name of this book means revelation, discovery, disclosure; and this is its peculiar feature. It reveals a glorious future for the church after the time of battle and of trial. It has escaped the notice of few observing people that the minds and hearts of old believers turn with especial fondness to the disclosures of this book. It is studied more by the old than by the young. The worn and weary soldier of the cross, who feels that his battle is fought, that his work on earth is about finished, finds more in it for his comfort while lingering upon the brink of the river than he did while actively engaged in the battle of life. Its bold and varied symbols have for him now that he is about to lay off his armor forever, a peculiar significance. By its light he sees the city, the home, the rest, the bliss for which his weary soul sighs within him—the city that has everlasting foundations, the sinless, painless, tearless, sorrowless, deathless, and now no longer “far away” home of the soul—and he says: “Let me go; my soul is weary.”

SERMON V.

OUR AIM.

THE aim of that religious people known willingly as “disciples of Christ” or “Christians” is the subject of this discourse.

If their distinctive aim is not a good and worthy one, then there is no sufficient reason for their existence as a religious people. That they have such existence in considerable numbers and influence, especially in the United States, is a fact; but, unless by such separate existence they aim to accomplish some good work not as likely to be done without them, they are likely only to be the cause of a useless and an inexcusable disturbance in the religious world. Every person, every association of persons—in fact, every thing—should have some good reason assignable for its existence. There are already quite enough churches, quite enough denominations, among the professed followers of Christ; and there can be no valid reason given for an attempt to create and maintain another; simply another denomination of Christians. It is believed by many that denominationalism is the greatest internal foe, and some would even say the bane, of Christianity to-day. The disciples generally hold this view of it. To build up another denomination of Christians and add it to the long list already in existence, therefore is not the aim of the disciples. And if they ever do so it will be in spite of a much worthier aim with which they started out. On the

other hand, candor requires the acknowledgment, that their fundamental purpose is in its very nature hostile to all denominations, as such; not, of course, to Christians among the denominations, but to denominationalism itself. To build up and maintain a mere denomination, however superior to those already in existence it might be, is not within the scope of their purpose.

To aid us in getting at what is the exact and distinctive aim of the Disciples it is important that we should have before us the state of things existing in what we call the religious world, in view of which their work was begun. And to aid us in getting a correct view of the situation we will suppose a case. It shall be one fairly supposable; one that might occur. We will take a young man twenty years old, and call him Jones, and locate him in Chicago. He is well educated for one of his age. He is not a church member, and has never even made a profession of religion; but has in common with us all a religious nature, and believes, in a general way, as most young men in Christian countries do, in the Christian religion. He is more than ordinarily an independent thinker; takes a pride in thinking for himself on all questions in which he feels an interest. He determines in his own mind to become a Christian and a member of the church of God. He means to act intelligently in the matter or not at all. He is not going in this way or that, or to join this church or that, because somebody else did; but is going to investigate and understand the matter for himself—how to become a Christian and a member of the church of God, the true church founded by Jesus and the apostles. He is going to take nothing second-hand, but is going to the bottom of the whole matter that he may understand it for himself. With this purpose he begins his investigations. And at

the outset he meets a Roman Catholic priest, ready to enlighten him. The priest tells him, of course, that his church is the true church of God, the one founded by Jesus and the apostles, the only true church and infallible; that in his church he may be a Christian; out of it he will be a common sinner or at best a heretic. The priest preaches the church and presses its claims till he convinces young Jones that it is at least respectable: respectable for its antiquity, for its large membership, for its wealth and for its learning; claims that it is the very identical church which Jesus and the apostles founded on the Rock, of which Peter was the first Pope. After patiently hearing the speech young Jones decides that in pursuance of his purpose he must at least make himself acquainted with the church of Rome and pass judgment upon her claims. But before beginning the investigation he chances to meet a representative of the Eastern or Greek church, who claims that his is the true, the orthodox, the infallible, the only church of God: that in it, one can be a Christian; out of it, only a sinner or a heretic. After hearing his speech young Jones decides that he must also study and pass upon the claims of the Greek church. This enlarges the field of investigation considerably. And while the young man is indulging some reflections upon the field of study opened by these two churches with their antiquities, their doctrines, traditions, customs, ceremonies and infallibilities, he is approached by an Anglican of the city, anxious to enlighten him as to the English church. He too is a clergyman, a rector of one of the parishes of the city. He tells young Jones about his church. It is not Roman Catholic, or Greek Catholic, but English Catholic. He preaches against popery, but for apostolic succession: has a good deal to say about the church, the ministry, the

fathers, the councils of the church, its prayer-book, its orthodox creed, its fasts and feasts, days, moons and seasons, pompous rites and ceremonies, its prayers and praises, suited to all climes and seasons—not exactly the work of the apostles themselves, but much the same thing in English, that of their direct lineal successors—almost infallible, if not quite. He tells him of all the learned and distinguished persons who have been born and died in this church, and especially among the English speaking people of the world. Young Jones hears the Anglican patiently and concludes that he must also weigh his church and decide upon its claims. And while he is considering the question where to begin and in what order to proceed in his theological and ecclesiastical investigations he meets a Protestant clergyman of the city, who, having heard of the enquiring turn his mind had taken recently, had come to enlighten him upon the great subject in which he was interested. He finds young Jones in some mental worry and confusion about true Christianity and the church of God: and undertakes at once to relieve him of his burdens by preaching Protestantism to him. He tells him, to begin with, that all the Catholic churches so called, the Roman, the Greek and the English, are only human, and in many respects very human; that their claims to infallibility are simply preposterous—three of them, at war among themselves, and yet each claiming to be infallible! He preaches Protestantism; tells him about the great reformation, about Martin Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, Calvin etc, etc., tells him that the Bible and the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants; tells him of the great doctrine of justification by faith only, of personal regeneration, experimental religion, of conscience etc, etc; and concludes that the way to be a Christian is to seek and

obtain an experimental knowledge of regeneration and forgiveness of sins by faith in Jesus Christ; and that the matter of church membership is of minor importance comparatively. True, he continued, every Christian should join some church; but as to what one was in his judgment largely a matter of individual taste. In fact, while he thought every Christian should unite with some evangelical church, he did not hold church membership to be in any sense essential to salvation. Every one should be allowed to join the church of his own choice. He thought it well, if convenient, for young people to go into the church of their parents. Particularly he thought it looked well for husbands and wives to belong to the same church. He, of course, thought his own church the most scriptural of all in its faith and practice; and he supposed every Christian thought about as he did about the particular church of his choice. Mr. Jones at this point interposes a question as to how many churches there are. The clergyman did not know exactly as to that; in fact he thought there was but one church of God, and all the so called Protestant churches are but so many branches of that one church, each one claiming to be most scriptural and evangelical in its doctrines and practices, and that this was a question about which Christians differed, and, he held, had a right to differ. Some thought, and he strongly inclined to that opinion himself, that it was a wise providential arrangement that there were so many evangelical denominations, so that every one could find one suited to his own taste; and he thought there should be no angry discussions of the matter, but the fullest inter-denominational fellowship and communion of all evangelical Christians.

As young Jones had set out to understand for himself

the way to become a Christian and a member of the church of God, the views of his Protestant friend added somewhat to his confusion. They were entirely too indefinite for him. In fact there seemed to him something in them bordering on the haphazard, especially in reference to the matter of church membership. It seemed to him that one might miss the church of God entirely if it be a thing so wholly undefined and with so many branches—so many evangelical branches. Of course evangelical was meant to distinguish certain branches from others unevangelical. And, again, allowing that there were so many evangelical branches and that one could certainly distinguish these from the unevangelical, there comes up the difficulty of deciding as to which of the evangelical branches is the most evangelical, the most scriptural in its teaching and practice. He seemed to be getting into greater difficulties and deeper confusion for every lesson he took. So he concludes to retire and review the whole matter. He does so and finds himself in about this predicament: Here are three churches, the Roman, the Greek, and the English, each claiming to be Catholic, each claiming to be the church of God, each claiming to be the only true church, each claiming more or less stoutly to be infallible; and each one opening up before him a field of investigation that would require years of study. Then here is Protestantism with its innumerable evangelical denominations, and denominations unevangelical, each having its creed and customs, and each claiming to be most scriptural in its faith and practice. Now must he go all over this vast field, must he investigate all these churches and denominations, and decide upon all questions of difference between them, before he can become a Christian and a member of the church of God? And is he

certain that, should he live long enough to explore this vast field, he will in the end find a place where his soul can rest in certainty and peace? He is completely dazed—not exactly that, for that implies light: he is overwhelmed in confusion; and begins seriously to study the spiritual meaning of the word Babylon, as he had never done before.

Many an honest soul with earnest desire to understand what Christianity is, what and where the church of God is, has been lost in that confusion in which for a time we must leave young Jones. Some alas! have never come out. Others in their disappointment and despair have fallen into unbelief and denounced all religion as a fraud and a failure.

But that we may still further and more fully get the situation before us; that is, the state of things in the religious world in view of which the movement in which the Disciples are engaged was begun; we will resort to another supposition. We will suppose a convention of all Christians—a pan-Christian convention, in Chicago. All churches, and all branches of all churches, fallible and infallible, evangelical and unevangelical; all are represented in this convention. This is a supposable case, although it must be granted that such a thing is not likely to occur any time in the very near future. It is simply our supposition. That's all. We will suppose the representatives from all Christendom convene and an organization is effected without difficulty—another unlikely thing! But it's our supposition. And if something marvelous should follow such a convention, it need not be a cause of great surprise. So we will suppose, and escape the imputation of irreverence, we hope, that the Apostle Paul appears in the meeting. He succeeds in satisfying

all present that he is the Apostle Paul returned from the dead. He informs the brethren of the convention that God has sent him back to the world to serve him here awhile again; that he instructed him to come back and take his position in the church to which he belonged when here before, to preach the same gospel, to labor for the propagation and spread of the same Christianity for the spread of which he labored when here before. He asks the brethren, Where is the Christianity he planted, and where the church to which he belonged? What would the convention do with him? Would it undertake to comply with his request? And should it undertake to do so, how far would it be likely to go without difference, discussion and division? Would the representative of the Roman Catholic church say that Romanism was the Christianity Paul preached and that he belonged to the Roman Catholic church? And if he did so claim, what would the other delegates say? And if they were to agree to it, which they certainly would not, what would Paul himself say? Would he not say—would he not be compelled by truth to say that he never in all his life heard of the Roman Catholic church, or of Roman Catholicism? Paul a Roman Catholic! Just think of it! Was there any such thing as Roman Catholicism in Paul's time? We have the history of his time. The New Testament itself contains a history of Paul and his time. Is there anything in that about the Roman Catholic church? It seems almost like ridicule to ask the question. To speak of Roman Catholicism or of the Roman Catholic church in Paul's time is a palpable anachronism. And what is true of the Roman Catholic church in this respect is equally true of every church and denomination represented in our supposed pan-ecclesiastical convention. Paul in all his lifetime never heard of one of

them. The history of his time is as silent as the grave about them all. Did Paul ever hear of the Greek church? Did he ever hear of the English church? Did he ever hear of any of the Protestant churches? To ask these questions is to answer them in the negative, as every one acquainted with the scriptures knows. No intelligent and candid person will claim that any one of these churches existed when Paul was here. It can be claimed and it is true that each one of them holds and teaches some things taught by the apostle. This will not be questioned. But the fact that each one of them can maintain such a claim only complicates the matter more and more. It is claimed that each one with its creed and customs has been evolved from what the apostles taught. But this cannot be true, for they do not agree one with another. They clash and are at war with each other. But what we wish to emphasize is the fact that no one of them, as a church with its creed and customs, existed in the time of the apostles. This must be admitted by all of them. Some of these churches are very old. This will be granted. But as churches they have all been born since Paul lived and died. Hence our supposed convention cannot answer the question for the apostle as to the church he belonged to when in the world. There is absolutely no hope that any such convention could ever settle that question.

We are brought then to this conclusion: that the Christianity preached by the apostles, and the church they founded in the world and of which they were members, are older than all the creeds and churches and denominations of the present day. Christianity and the church of God are older than all the creeds and denominations now in existence.

Now the question arises, Do we desire to find that prim-

itive Christianity and church? Are they better than the denominationalism we have? We answer, yes. Yes, a thousand times over. In this conviction we are settled.

Well, can the New Testament Christianity and the New Testament church be eliminated from the creeds and churches of to-day? We think not. Every effort to do so will be a failure. In fact, every Protestant creed and church are but the result of an effort to do that very thing—to get back to Jesus and the apostles—to get back to primitive and New Testament Christianity. And every such effort has only increased and complicated the difficulties of the situation, by adding one more creed and one more denomination to the number theretofore in existence. Here are the mazes in which young Jones was lost.

Christianity and the church of God were before all the creeds and denominations of to-day. The Christianity and the church of the New Testament were established by the apostles. They were in the church and were Christians without knowing anything about the denominations and parties of our time. They were not Roman Catholics. They were not Greek Catholics. They were not English Catholics. They were not evangelical Protestants. They were Christians. They belonged to the church of God; not to a branch of it but to the church itself, the body of Christ. Their Christianity and the church to which they belonged were divine.

Can we find that primitive Christianity and church? We have decided that we can, and that by the help of God we will direct all the people of God and the world to it. We believe that it is to be found in the New Testament and only there. This is generally conceded when the New Testament is said to be an all-sufficient rule of faith and practice. Then we must return to the New

Testament; not through the creeds and churches, but directly. We will never get back if we undertake to go through all the creeds and churches in the order in which they came into being. Never in the world. The way to get back is to let go all creeds and parties, all humanisms, and go back. Let go just now, and right where we are, and return at once. That is the only way it can be done. Cut entirely loose, and at once, from all human creeds and parties, and return and take our stand with the apostles and first Christians. Can we do it? Certainly. The New Testament will afford us all the necessary light and means. If not, then it is not an all-sufficient rule of faith and practice. But we believe that it is, and to return to its teachings for our faith and practice, to make it, and it only, authoritative in all things essential to salvation. *This is our fundamental aim.*

We do not believe that we are the only people who desire primitive Christianity, while all others prefer denominationalism. Nor do we believe we are the only people aiming to return to the church of the New Testament. We are aiming to accomplish what is almost universally desired by Christians. The advantage we claim is in the *method* we propose. The efforts Protestants have made heretofore have failed because their method was wrong. Every Protestant party has aimed to get back to New Testament Christianity by offering to Christians a better and more scriptural human creed than any that had been tried before; and instead of getting back to the New Testament the creed only made a new party or denomination. If we wish ever to get back to apostolic Christianity we have got to put an end to the whole business of creed making. Instead of making better creeds than former ones we must get rid of them all. They must all go. If

we would return to the New Testament, and if we would understand it when we go to it, we must not be trammelled by our human creeds.

There are persons who can see no way of serving the Lord without a creed, a human creed. Such persons should have something put down to their credit for their education; but they are greatly in error. They think that every body of Christian people should write out its faith; should formulate a creed and publish it to the world; that common honesty and fairness require this. We sometimes hear such persons reason, as they suppose, in this way: "Nobody believes and is governed by the Bible itself, but by his understanding of it, whether written or unwritten; then why not write out his understanding of the Bible that all may see and know what it is:" They often say to Disciples: "We have a written creed and you have an unwritten one, and that's the difference between us, as to creeds." This is rather specious. Let us look at it. Let us suppose that we cannot believe and be governed by the New Testament, as we propose, but only by our "understanding of it" as asserted; and that we ought to write out our "understanding" that everybody may know what it is. Well when we write out our "understanding" of the New Testament, can we then believe and be governed by that, or by our understanding of it? Only by our "understanding" of it, of course: and must we not write that out for the same reason that we wrote out our first "understanding?" Then we will have written our "understanding" of our understanding of the New Testament! And so we must proceed perpetually, unless at some time we succeed in doing what the Holy Spirit through inspired men could not do, namely, in writing out something in which we can believe and be governed by without

having to write out an "understanding" of it! Can we hope to do what the Holy Spirit could not or did not do? We think not. It is better not to begin the endless business of writing out interpretations or understandings of the New Testament.

Do parties who have their written creeds succeed any better with them in stopping the mouths of false teachers, in getting rid of heretics, than we do without such creeds? That's a question we might do well to consider. The fact is, human creeds only increase the troubles they are made to prevent, or to rid the church of. And this because, as interpretations of what the Spirit of God has said, they interpret too much. They make more essentials to salvation and more conditions to Christian fellowship than the Holy Spirit has made. The difficulty generally with men as lords is that they lord too much. The fundamental difficulty with all human governments is that they aim to govern too much; and hence in nothing govern very well. In religion we should not try to contract the wide margin God has left for individual freedom of thought and conduct.

But it is objected, again, that if we abandon all creeds, churches, and denominations and return at once, as we propose, to the New Testament we shall fail of "succession," "apostolic succession:" That is, we will thereby fall out of the line of succession. With some people that would be a great matter. Many are depending upon apostolic succession for their salvation. But the fact is, that apostolic succession in the sense of an unbroken series of ordinations from the apostles down to their alleged successors of to-day—that is, a succession of official men all through the Christian dispensation—is simply an ecclesiastical figment. The Roman Catholic church claims it stoutly.

So does the Greek church, but perhaps a little less stoutly. So does the English church. And so also the Syrian, the Coptic and the Armenian churches, the Protestant Episcopal church in the United States, and various Protestant denominations. But so long as there can be nothing found about it in the teachings of Jesus and the apostles, we care but little about it. Let it go along with all the other rubbish we must lose in returning to the New Testament. The succession we want is that of the *truth* and not of men. We want the truth the apostles had and preached. We can find that in the New Testament, and only there.

If we believe just what the apostles believed, confess just what they confessed, and do just what they did—if, in other words, we *believe* what they required people to believe, *confess* what they required them to confess, and *do* what they required them to do, and are content to *be* what they required people to be—will not that reproduce apostolic Christianity? That is the succession we want. All the claims to a succession of ordained men from the apostles down to the present are simply preposterous.

There are many who admit the all-sufficiency of the New Testament as a rule of faith and practice, and that a return to it as the only authoritative creed is desirable; but deny that we have succeeded or are likely to succeed in doing so. In other words, they admit that our aim is a good one, but claim that our effort to carry it out has been and is a failure. They deny that we are any more apostolic in our faith and practice than others who hold on to their human creeds, denominational organizations and names. They think they see and are able to show that we are no nearer New Testament Christianity and the New Testament church than when we abandoned denominationalism. They think we are as much a sect as any of the sects our

fathers left and against which we have been inveighing these seventy years past.

We are fallible. Mr. Campbell and his co-adjutors were all fallible men. This we admit. But we claim confidently that our aim is a good one, but admit that we may not have been entirely successful in our effort to carry it into effect. We need the help of all such persons as can show us wherein we have failed. They can be of great assistance to us. And all such persons as believe our aim is good but our effort a failure ought to be willing to help us. Better that, than misrepresent and abuse us.

But now let us take a brief look, and as impartial a one as we can, at what the Disciples have accomplished. There are in the United States alone, we will venture to say, not less than eight thousand churches or congregations of them, aggregating a membership of little if any less than seven hundred thousand. They have established several universities, a good many colleges and a great many schools. They have published a great many books and tracts, and are sustaining quite a number of newspapers; and are nearly all preachers: all advocating a return to the New Testament in all things essential to salvation or to fellowship and communion in Christ Jesus. And all this has been done without a human creed, without any denominational organization or centralization, and without any party name; simply as disciples of Christ or Christians. There is no uninspired writing to-day that is in any sense authoritative among us. This all well informed and candid persons will admit. Others have sometimes said that some of the writings of Mr. Campbell are authoritative over us. It is sufficient to say simply that this is not true.

Our congregations are getting on quite as peacefully and

prosperously, too, as any of the denominations do with their creeds. We find quite a sufficiency in the New Testament to believe, as well as for our government. We are learning, too, to have opinions without forcing them upon others; and to allow others to entertain opinions to which we cannot subscribe. We are learning that there are many things even in religion that none of us are able to explain to the satisfaction of all others. We believe that God will hold us responsible only for what he has plainly revealed to us; and as in other matters he leaves us free, we ought to be willing to leave each other free. We should not want to bind each other where God has left us all free. Naturally men are tyrants; the more ignorant, the greater. We are learning to allow others to be free as ourselves where God has not bound us. Nor do we have to receive and countenance every false teacher that comes along simply because we have no human creed. We can let go such when it becomes necessary with as great facility as the parties who have creeds, made and adopted for that very purpose.

The Disciples, then, have demonstrated the feasibility of Christians getting on together without any creed but the New Testament, which fifty years ago Protestants almost universally proclaimed an impossibility. We have succeeded in getting back of all the creeds, and in this respect, are standing just where the Christians did when the apostles were here. Not only so: we have lived to see human creeds, once held to be so necessary, all certainly and rapidly going into decadence; falling into desuetude. It is only a question of time with them. The knell of their doom has been sounded.

And now, coming to the New Testament as the only authority in matters of Christian faith and practice, we

have to be careful. There must be no deviation from our method either to the right hand or the left.

What must a sinner *believe* in order to salvation and membership in the church of God? Our answer must be just what we can put our finger upon in so many words in the New Testament. All that the apostles required we must require, and no more. And we must accept their own statements of the subject matter of belief, and not substitute our explanations of them. Our explanations will not make them plainer. And then, again, the explanation business once begun will prove interminable. For instance, when the apostle, speaking of the written testimonies of his gospel, says: "These are written that ye might believe, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." (John xx. 31.) We must be satisfied with that simple statement; and require persons to "*believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.*" No light needs to be thrown upon this simple apostolic statement other than that derived from other statements of the subject matter of belief to be found in the New Testament. If we require sinners to believe just what the apostles did, no more nor less, we will succeed in carrying out our aim in this respect; will we not?

As to the verbal *confession* we require of those who would come into the church, we must be able to put our finger upon that also in the words of the New Testament. There will be great temptations to make slight departures. It will be so easy, so orthodox, and so compromising, to add a little to "the good confession" of the New Testament! But we must stand firm.

And so as to what sinners are to *do*, we must stand upon the words of the commission and of the apostles in their preaching under the commission. What the apostles re-

quired persons to do to be saved, that and all that, and only that, we must require. We have in Acts of Apostles their instructions to sinners in all conceivable conditions: to such as had not heard the word of the Lord and believed; (Acts xvi. 31.) to such as had heard the word and had believed; (Acts ii. 38.) and to such as were penitent, praying, believers; (Acts xxii. 16.) and we must closely track these instructions, in telling sinners what to do.

And in respect of what must be *believed*, what must be *confessed*, and what must be *done*, by the sinner in order to salvation, it may be claimed, fearless of contradiction sustained, that the disciples have returned to and do stand upon apostolic precept and precedent. If any one thinks not it is a matter easily tested. We are willing to be tried. Let him who thinks he can, show that, in respect of the belief, the confession and the obedience required of sinners by the apostles, we require more or less than they did. A fair and an honest trial will convince intelligent doubters. It is true that in the creeds and customs of the churches and denominations there is so much, along here, wholly unknown to the New Testament and with which the people educated in such creeds and customs have become familiarized, it is difficult to draw the line between truth and error and make them see it readily. With many, custom is as potent as plain scripture teaching.

In the formation of churches, in our public observances and devotions, and in all that we call church government and discipline, we have to be equally careful to make nothing essential to fellowship or anywise authoritative, but apostolic precept and precedent. This we are aiming to do. And if in anything we are yet wrong, a strict adherence to our rule will assuredly bring us right. Only

let us be sure not to go into the business of legislating and making rules of government. We shall have some differences and discussions; and there is nothing alarming about that. We are not all dead people. Creeds do not put an end to discussions among those who adopt them. If differences and discussions are evil, human creeds are not a cure for them. Our differences and discussions do not grow out of the fact that we have no human creed; but out of the fact that we are mortal men and women, and fallible like other folks. Is it not a fact that no association of men and women has ever existed for any length of time in this world without differences and discussions? And are we sure that dead calms are always and everywhere desirable? The winds put a rough surface upon the waters, stir up their depths, uproot trees, tumble down houses, and often destroy life; but they do more good than harm nevertheless. While they make themselves often very disagreeable it is however better to have them blow occasionally. And spiritual stagnation is not always the best thing to have. Why, the very thought even of a spiritual state of things in this world that allows of no liberty of opinion, no differences and discussions is perfectly suffocating! But *this* can be said of the Disciples: That in all those matters made essential to salvation and membership in the church of God by the apostles no people are characterized by more perfect accord and harmony—that is, no living, free people.

Of course, in carrying out our purpose, quite a revolution will be wrought in all our nomenclature. We shall have to call New Testament things by New Testament names; and this will throw us out of accord with the churches and denominations. In speaking of the body of Christ in general, and of the churches in different locali-

ties, and of the disciples or Christians as such, we must apply only New Testament names.

It is just at this point that we meet the fiercest and most determined opposition from the denominations. It is almost an impossibility for many among them to understand us, it would seem, and when they do, the more bigoted among them most stubbornly resist us. They insist that we ought to take upon ourselves some party name—some unscriptural name—as they have done; so that in speaking of us they can do so without applying to us New Testament names. If we would only meet in convention, or in some other formal way, adopt a name not once applied to the disciples by the apostles—no matter though we did it under guise of a convenience for the census bureau—we would at once be generally recognized as an “orthodox denomination of Christians.” As it is, however, we are called “Campbellites,” “New Lights,” “Reformers,”—anything but a New Testament name. We are accused of arrogance, in appropriating to ourselves the names that all Christians in all churches are equally entitled to—as if we were the only “Christians” or “disciples of Christ” in the world! But however arrogant we may seem in the eyes of such as do not understand us as well as we understand ourselves, we must stand firmly on our line here. Surrendering here we surrender our principle, and surrendering our principle we surrender all. There is no arrogance in our position. It only seems so to such as do not see what a huge wrong and departure denominationalism is. Do not those who refuse to call us “Christians” themselves profess to be “Christians?” Do they not profess to be “disciples of Christ,” at the same time they refuse to so designate us? They certainly do. Then where is our arrogance? Really, what parti-

sans have against us is not simply that we profess to be "Christians" or "disciples of Christ," but that we will not profess to be something *else*; that we will not profess to be partisans. They would be willing for us to profess to be "disciples of Christ" or "Christians," and make no complaint about it, if we would only take a name meaning something outside of the New Testament, for them to call us by. But we cannot do it. The New Testament believed and obeyed makes Christians and not partisans, and when all professed followers of Jesus return to the faith and practice of that book, partyism and denominationalism will disappear. Then where will be our arrogance?

Finally, we are told that our position unchristianizes all others but ourselves; that is, in accepting only New Testament names for ourselves and for our congregations, and in calling the body of Christ at large only by New Testament designations we dechristianize all who wear party names. We, however, fail to see the matter so. We dechristianize nobody. Does our professing to be Christian unchristian anyone else? Surely not. Well, does our refusing to be or be called, anything else, unchristianize others? Certainly not. How, then, do we dechristian all but ourselves? Does our wearing the Christian name logically imply that nobody else is a Christian? It certainly does not. As a matter of fact the Disciples have ever held from the beginning of their effort to return to primitive Christianity, and do hold, that every Christian whether identified with any of the denominations or not, not only has the right to be, but ought to be, simply a Christian and to wear only New Testament names, as we ourselves are aiming to do. We claim no exclusive right to anything in the New Testament. We claim for all that it contains primitive, apostolic Christianity; that we all

can learn from it what the Lord would have us believe, and do, and be, and hope ; that it may be as easily understood as any of the human creeds ; and that if all Christians, and all who would be Christians, will turn away from human standards to this divine one, they may get rid of all that is human and false and be united upon what is divine and true ; and that thus and only thus can all Christians be united in one body.

SERMON VI.

REGENERATION.

REGENERATION is the subject. The word regeneration is much used in our theological literature and has a current and popular meaning quite different from its meaning in the New Testament. The word occurs only twice in the New Testament, used once by our Lord himself and once by Paul. This is true both of regeneration and the Greek word of which it is a translation. Its New Testament sense is much more comprehensive than that in which it is now generally used. It may be well for us to notice briefly in this discourse the use of this word in the sacred writings before proceeding to a general discussion of the subject.

It is used by our Savior (Matt. xix: 28,) as follows: "And Jesus said unto them, verily I say unto you that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." In this passage "the regeneration" means about what we mean by the Christian dispensation, or the reign of Christ. The Lord meant to tell his disciples that when he should come to his power and glory in heaven they should receive power on earth. He entered upon his reign when he ascended to heaven, and they received power and authority when, a few days later, the Holy Spirit descended to earth. Then began the regeneration, the reign of Jesus, the restoration, the Christian dispensation. It was to this regeneration Peter referred when he

said, (Acts iii: 21.) “Whom the heaven must receive until the times of *restoration* of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets which have been since the world began.” And Paul, (1 Cor. xv: 24, 28.) “Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power For he must *reign* till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death. And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected unto him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all.” This “reign” “until the restoration of all things”—till “all things have been subjected unto him”—is “the regeneration.” Hence our Lord himself says, speaking of the same thing, (Rev. xxi: 5.) “Behold, I make all things new.” The reign of Christ is one of restoration, of subjecting, of renewal, and is therefore appropriately and significantly called the regeneration.

The only other occurrence of this word in the New Testament is in Titus iii: 5, where Paul says, “He saved us through the laver of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit.” The word is, I think, here used in the same comprehensive sense as in the other passage just noticed; that is, in the sense of the Christian dispensation. The apostle means to call baptism the laver of the new dispensation. Under the former dispensation the laver was a vessel of brass containing water for the priests to wash their hands and feet before offering sacrifice, and stood in the court between the altar and the door of the Tabernacle. So baptism is the laver of the new dispensation; the laver of the regeneration.

In this comprehensive sense of renewal—of the minds and

hearts, lives and bodies of men, and of the earth and the heavens—regeneration is now seldom used. The word is now generally used in a limited sense, of that spiritual change that takes place in the conversion of a sinner, a sense in which the word is not used in the New Testament. Let me be understood here. The fact of this spiritual change now almost universally called regeneration, and the necessity of it in order to salvation, were both clearly taught, by our Savior himself and by his apostles. But they taught this change by the use of other words rather than by the more comprehensive word regeneration.

What is this spiritual change, and how is it effected? This duplex question opens up a vast field on which many theological battles have been fought since the time of the apostles. It may be well for us, before noticing the teaching of the Scriptures upon the subject, to take a look at the popular theories of the case.

What we now call the calvinistic theory has been very prevalent since the beginning of the third century, when the doctrine of original sin was brought in by Origen and other church fathers. And that we may make no mistake in the statement of this theory of regeneration we will read it from one of the orthodox confessions of faith: "A confession of faith, put forth by the elders and brethren of many congregations of Christians (baptized upon profession of their faith,) in London and the country, adopted by the Baptist association of Philadelphia, September 25, 1742, and by the Charleston in 1767. Printed by E. Temple at the Primitive Baptist office, 1850." pp. 27 and 28. "Man by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will, to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good and dead in sin, is not able by his own

strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto." "Those whom God hath predestinated unto life he is pleased in his appointed and accepted time effectually to call by his word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ." "This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, nor from any power or agency in the creature, co-working with his special grace; the creature being wholly passive therein, being dead in sins and trespasses until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it and that by no less power than that which raised up Christ from the dead. Elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth; so also are all other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word. Others not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit; yet not being effectually drawn by the Father, they neither will nor can truly come to Christ; and therefore can not be saved."

Such is the calvinistic theory of regeneration; according to which the sinner in a state of nature can will nothing, can do nothing, but to resist all that is true and good, until he is regenerated; and God regenerates him by his Spirit, without his co-operation, without his consent; in spite of him, in fact. He regenerates him just as he created Adam out of the ground, just as he raises a dead body out of the grave; the sinner being just as passive in the matter as the dust was out of which Adam was made, or as the dead body in the grave. And when God regener-

ates him it is done so effectually that he can never be lost. He recreates him better and stronger than he created man in the first place. In short, God regenerates every sinner in spite of himself, and then saves him finally in spite of himself and everybody else, all to the praise of his glorious grace. And the non-elect he damns to hell forever in spite of himself, "to the praise of his glorious justice." That's the Calvinistic theory of the case. It is pretty hard, but it has one merit: It can be understood. It is just as simple and plain as falling off of a log.

The Arminian confessions deny the doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation; but stultify themselves by teaching the doctrines of original sin, the total depravity of the race, and the necessity of the immediate operation of the Spirit in regeneration. Whoever teaches the doctrine of total depravity must, to be consistent, teach unconditional regeneration—or universal damnation.

With both Calvinists and Arminians *infants* are regenerated. With some, all infants; with others, all baptized infants; with others, elect infants; and with still others, elect infants dying in infancy. What do they mean by regeneration? It is very difficult to tell. Any how, it is something that is wrought in the soul of the regenerated, without any knowledge, without any faith, without any love, without any volition, without any conscience—without anything more than was in the dirt out of which Adam was made. Our Baptist friends sometimes accuse the Pedobaptists of teaching water-regeneration, because they teach and practice infant baptism, so called; but there is between them only the difference of a few drops of water upon a few pounds of utterly depraved matter. They both teach infant regeneration, the Pedobaptists having

the advantage of a few drops of water in the process, as a means of grace.

Both Baptists and Pedobaptists, sometimes berate the Disciples, whom they call Campbellites, for teaching water-regeneration, whereas if I understand the Disciples, and I think I do, they teach the necessity, in all cases, of faith in Jesus Christ in order to that spiritual change called regeneration; and, moreover, they are the only people that do so teach. The denominations hold the doctrine of original sin, of the utter depravity of human nature; and by so teaching they make what they call regeneration necessarily precedent to faith, or any thing else in the sinner. For if, as they all teach, the sinner is spiritually as dead as was the body of Lazarus in the grave, how can he hear, believe, repent, pray, or do any thing else until he is made alive, or regenerated? Thus they make regeneration not only precedent to faith but necessarily unconditional and irresistible. How could the dead body of Lazarus resist the power that quickened it? Or, how could the dust of which Adam's body was made resist the power of the Creator? The doctrine of infant regeneration, held by both Calvinists and Arminians, fixes this consequence upon them. For how can infants either ask or resist the power by which it is alleged that they are regenerated? Their regeneration, if there be such a thing, is as unconditional, and as irresistible, and about as physical as the resurrection of a dead body from the grave. And regeneration is regeneration. What is necessary to effect it in one case, that, and only that, is necessary in all cases.

Now, as I have said, the Disciples teach that in all cases faith is necessary to that spiritual renewal called regeneration. And they are the only people who do persistently and consistently so teach. They are accused of teaching

baptismal regeneration, whereas, with them baptism without faith in Christ is nothing. Baptism with them is what it is because it is an act and an expression of faith in Jesus Christ. Neither have they any trouble about infants. They have rooted out that noxious African thistle—the doctrine that infants are *guilty* of Adam's transgression. With them, infants are in no sense guilty of sin, and are in no need, as they are incapable, of that spiritual change necessary to a sinner's conversion and salvation.

We are now ready to read some of the passages of scripture bearing upon our subject, that will furnish the answer to the question, what is that spiritual change called regeneration, and how is it effected?

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away.” (1 Peter i: 3, 4.)

“Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God which liveth and abideth.” (Ibid i: 23–24.)

“Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.” (James i: 18.)

“For though ye should have ten thousand tutors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I begat you through the gospel.” (1 Cor. iv: 15.)

These scriptures relate to our subject; and properly understood afford the answer to our inquiry, what is regeneration and how is it effected? First. It is the effect of the soul's apprehension and reception of Jesus Christ by faith. It is Jesus Christ in the soul of the believer. Believing is seeing the unseen. Faith looks not at the

things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen. Faith in Jesus Christ risen from the dead opens up in the soul of the believer the resurrection of the dead, the spiritual and immortal life, heaven, the incorruptible and unfading inheritance. It wakes up the soul to the new life and fills it with spiritual impulses and immortal aspirations. It beckons him to a new and higher life impossible to him before the new light that faith in Jesus Christ has kindled in his soul; impossible to the unbeliever because unseen by him. He is a new creature; new in all the springs and impulses and aspirations of his soul. His soul is filled with the light of life; while by his side the unbeliever walks in spiritual darkness, seeing only the seen; the one not only a new creature, new in all the reasons and motives of his actions, but, for this very reason, a mystery to the other. The regenerated person is even now a mystery to the mere worldling. It was more so with the first Christians. Unbelievers have learned something about the children of God that was not known in the beginning. The apostle refers to this ignorance on the part of unbelievers as to the new life in Christ Jesus when he says:

“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called children of God; and such we are: For this cause the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.” (1 John iii: 1.) The world knew not the children of God because the children of God saw the unseen by faith, and were walking by faith, while the people of the world were walking simply by sight—that is, living simply and wholly with reference to the things that are seen and temporary. Even now we call persons sane only when we can see a reason, a reasonable motive for their conduct; but when we can see no reason,

no motives, for their manner of life, we call them insane. Upon this principle the first Christians were by the world judged insane. Our Lord himself was by many no doubt looked upon as crazy. Even his mother and brothers and sisters, before they received the light of life, esteemed him "off," as we would say of an insane person. Jesus was never understood by a single man or woman before his resurrection from the dead. He was in the world but the world knew him not. He went through the world thronged by multitudes on every side, and yet a stranger to all. In respect of real spiritual life he was alone. This was because there was in him the light of life, while the world was in the darkness of death. Nobody knew him. It is common for people to say, that when Peter said in the time of trial, "I know not the man," he lied; and I think he did; but I think he told the truth in the same sentence. Peter did not yet understand him. He was still in darkness. Peter was still looking at the things that were seen and temporary. He was seeking an earthly kingdom, an earthly inheritance, earthly glory and honor. He had not yet fully realized hope in Christ beyond this life. His faith failed in the death and his hope perished in the grave of Jesus, as was the case of all the disciples, male and female. True they all expected him to be a king; but David was their highest idea of a king. They expected him to be a king in the flesh, and in Jerusalem. To the blessing and honor and glory of such a kingdom they were aspiring. True; Jesus had told them before that he would die and rise again, but they had not understood him. True; the prophets had foretold his death and resurrection, but they, like the prophets themselves, had not understood the meaning of the Spirit. They were too "slow of heart to believe." They were looking for a restoration

of power to Israel under the Messiah and were contending and striving among themselves as to who should be greatest in his kingdom. Upon one occasion, even after the transfiguration, when the disciples had been contending and disputing about the places of power and honor in the coming kingdom, "Jesus called a little child and set him in the midst of them and said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. xviii: 1-3.) They no doubt believed Jesus was the Messiah, but they had no just conception of what the Messiah was to be. They believed he would be a king, but had no true conception of the nature of his kingdom. They all needed to be converted—they needed to be regenerated—before they could enter into the kingdom of heaven. Indeed they had to be born again—born from above—before they could see the kingdom of God. (John iii: 3.) Their minds and hearts must be lifted higher than earth and "earthly things." They must see something different from a mortal man, king in Jerusalem, something grander than a kingdom in Palestine, something transcending an inheritance in the land of Canaan. Their hearts must be lifted above the things on earth to things in heaven where Jesus now sits at God's right hand. Their eyes must be opened and they must be turned from darkness to light. Their understandings must be opened that they may understand the scriptures and the power of God. They must "look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen." All this is involved in regeneration. This could not be until the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Faith in Jesus Christ risen from the dead, therefore, was and is essential to regeneration; that is, I mean regeneration in the sense of the renewal of the

mind and heart. Without such a faith there can be no such regeneration. It was for want of such a faith that the disciples of Jesus, before his resurrection, needed to be converted before they could enter into the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven is spiritual, and must be spiritually discerned; must be discerned by faith; and that faith must be one that takes in the resurrection, the spiritual and immortal life. Such a faith is faith in Jesus Christ *risen from the dead*. Faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, necessarily takes in the resurrection of the dead; for he was declared to be the Son of God, "by the resurrection from the dead." (Rom. i: 4.) Peter, the foremost of the disciples, had not this faith before the resurrection; and hence it was the Lord said to him only a little while before his death, "when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren." (Luke xxii: 32.) The first passage I cited to show what this regeneration is throws some light on our Lord's meaning in these words addressed to Peter here and to all the disciples a little while before. "Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy *begat us again* unto a living hope *by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*." This passage tells *when* Peter was begotten again and *by what means*: Being *by* the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, it was, of course, after that event, and by faith in it. Peter had a light in his soul when he wrote these words that was not shining there when our Lord said to him, "when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren." Nor did he have this light of life in him when he said, "I know not the man." He had been converted, meantime; had been renewed in his mind, regenerated, begotten again. Before the resurrection of our Lord he was striving for place and honor in an earthly kingdom; now he sees

the kingdom of God, and is striving for an "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven" for him. This fixes the beginning of the regeneration after the resurrection, when the Son of man ascended to "the throne of his glory."

Some persons are very anxious to find the church of our Lord on earth before the resurrection, particularly before the day of Pentecost; and to such I wish to say that when they find a church before "the regeneration"—before the resurrection of Jesus Christ—the membership, if it be of men and women, will be unregenerate. It will be a membership without faith in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and with no idea of the nature of his kingdom.

But now let us notice the teaching of the passages of scripture already cited on the second part of our question; that is, how is regeneration, so far as it consists of a spiritual change in the sinner, effected? The answer can hardly be misunderstood. Here it is:

"Begot us again unto a living hope *by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*"

"Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, through the word of God."

"Brought us forth *by the word of truth,*"

"I begat you *through the gospel.*"

It is worth while to notice the fact that where the regeneration of the apostles themselves is spoken of Peter puts it in this form—"Begot *us*, by the *resurrection* of Jesus Christ from the dead." Nothing is said of "through the word of truth." The apostles *saw* him after he arose from the dead; and hence the regenerating power did not come to them "through the word," or which is the same thing, "through the gospel," as to others who received it by the preaching of the gospel. The resurrection of Jesus, and

the power of his resurrection, reaches the souls of all who did not see him after he was risen, through faith, and faith comes by hearing the word of God; and thus they are begotten again through the word of God.

When the time shall come for the completion of the regeneration by the renewal of the body, and of the earth and the heavens, as that will not depend upon the willingness and co-operation of men, as does the renewal of the souls and lives of men, it will be accomplished "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." Then the regeneration will be complete. "And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him, that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all." Amen.

SERMON VII.

ACTS OF APOSTLES.

THE Disciples of Christ have within the present century, by their preaching, in their controversies with the various denominations, and in their investigations among themselves given special conspicuity to the book of Acts of Apostles. This is owing to two facts. First, that the Disciples are aiming to return to New Testament Christianity, and, secondly, that that book is the only record we have of the preaching and the conversions of apostolic times.

If I were going to write a title by which this book should be known it would be simply, Acts of Apostles—not the Acts of the Apostles, as it has generally been called, as if it purported to give all the acts of all the apostles. The acts of the apostles is a good deal more than this book purports to be. It records only some acts of some apostles. It is now very generally conceded that Luke, the author of the Third Gospel, wrote the book. It is apparent even to the casual reader that he confined himself almost exclusively to Peter and Paul, and only gave a brief abstract of a few of their sermons and a meager account of the results; intended only to be sufficient to afford the reader a knowledge of what was preached and what the people were required to do to be saved and enter into the church of Christ, and thus to give a brief but sufficient account of the origin and propagation of Christianity in the world. It is this that gives the book its importance in our investigations as to primitive Christianity—as to what was made

essential to salvation and church membership when the church was founded in the world. It is the only record we have of acts of apostles in carrying out the work assigned to them by our Lord in the commission. Jesus himself in his personal ministry restricted himself almost exclusively to the Jews. And it is evident further that he did not aim to preach to the multitudes even of the Jews. It was his purpose to call and instruct and qualify a few disciples, and after his personal work was done, after his resurrection, to send them to preach the gospel to the whole creation. To the multitudes of the Jews he for the most part spoke in parables, especially when speaking of his coming kingdom and the things pertaining to it. What he meant by these parables he explained only to his disciples, and some of these explanations we have in the gospels. He intended his disciples, however, when the time should come, to preach in unparabolic language all things pertaining to his kingdom. And as the apostles were to preach literally to both Jews and Gentiles all that was couched in all the parables and figures used by the Lord when speaking to the multitudes, the book of Acts is an interpretation of the parables and figures of the gospels; an infallible one, and therefore the only safe one.

In studying this book, if we would be well guided, we should constantly bear in mind that it is the record made by apostles in carrying into effect the great apostolic commission. The commission and Acts are therefore correlated. The commission throws light upon Acts and Acts is the best interpretation of the commission. The commission requires such a record as we have in Acts and Acts demands for its explanation such a commission as we have in the conclusion of the gospels.

Let us, then, first briefly notice the commission under

the provisions and requirements of which the record of Acts of Apostles was made.

(Matt. xxviii: 18-19.) "And Jesus came and spake to them; saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

(Mark xvi: 15-16.) "And he said unto them, Go ye, into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

(Luke xxiv: 46-47.) "And he said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Here, as throughout the gospels, we have harmony in variety. Each of the writers gives prominence to some particular feature of the commission, while as to the facts there is perfect harmony. A synthesis of the records gives us the whole commission. We should in dealing with these records exercise the same common sense and common fairness that we would as jurors in dealing with the testimony of different witnesses in a case in our courts. I have heard persons, apparently because their doctrine and practice cannot be reconciled with the commission in the words of Mark, contend that his record is wholly irreconcilable with that of Matthew; and magnify a small circumstance into a sufficient cause for rejecting it, without knowing anything about the matter except that the words of Mark's record were apparently irreconcilable with their doctrine or practice, or both. But really I never could see the slightest

want of harmony between Matthew and Mark. On the other hand they seem to me to most perfectly harmonize. There is one fact, however, it is well to note. That is, that Matthew in his record of the commission seems to have especially in view the duty of the disciples whom the Lord was sending forth; that *they* were to *teach* and baptize the people; while Mark more particularly had in view and emphasized the duty of the persons taught; that it was *their* duty to *believe* and *be baptized*. And this is by no means an uncommon thing. In fact it is a most common thing for different persons to emphasize different features or phases in describing the same thing. This fact observed, and there is no difficulty in seeing the most perfect accord of all the records of the commission; and especially of those of Matthew and Mark, the two fullest. Let us see: "Teach all nations," as by Matthew, means nothing different from "preach the gospel to every creature," as by Mark. The phrases mean precisely the same thing. Then, again, Matthew says, "teach all nations, *baptizing them*"—that is, of course, the persons taught were to be baptized—while Mark says, "Preach the gospel to every creature; he that *believes* and is baptized." Mark mentions faith expressly; while Matthew says nothing of baptizing any one without it, but says what clearly enough implies it. Then, Mark says, "shall be saved," and Matthew does not expressly; but he says, "baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," which implies as much.

Luke gives especial prominence to the doctrine and duty of repentance, and to the fact that the apostles were to *begin* their work at Jerusalem. And what is there in this that may not be perfectly harmonized with the other fuller records? And all the variety there is in the case is in per-

fect accord with any reasonable and defensible theory of the inspiration of the writers. But this is sufficient as to the commission for my present purpose.

The writer of Acts begins by recording the facts, that the apostles went to Jerusalem, after the ascension of Jesus, pursuant to his instructions, and remained there until the Holy Spirit came upon them as Jesus had promised, "and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts ii: 4.) What I wish now especially to emphasize is, that the apostles were in their preaching and official procedure limited and bound by the terms of their commission. They could preach what it authorized them to preach, and only that. They could offer salvation to the people only upon the terms therein stipulated. We must not allow ourselves for a moment to suppose that they would preach what they were not authorized to preach, or offer salvation to the people upon any other terms than those prescribed by the Lord in the commission. They would not, and, guided as they were by the Spirit, they could not transcend their authority. If, therefore, in any case recorded in Acts the details of their preaching and instructions are not full, but only a general statement made, we must interpret such general statement in the light of the commission. Otherwise we may do the apostles themselves injustice, besides falling into error ourselves and misleading others. In interpreting apostolic preaching, then, in any case recorded in the book of Acts we should always do so with an eye on their commission; for we may be sure that their preaching, and their instructions to sinners as to the way of salvation, and their official procedure generally, will accord with its provisions. Not only was it their duty to be governed and

directed by it as their divinely given rule in discipling the nations, but they were infallibly guided by the Holy Spirit in their apostolic work.

In Acts ii, we have an account of the first preaching of the apostles and of the first conversions made to Christ under the great commission. Peter was the preacher and Jerusalem the place, and the Pentecost following the ascension was the time. After giving a somewhat detailed account of the sermon the writer gives the apostle's summary statement in these words: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye crucified both Lord and Christ." Then, after giving a pretty full account of the sermon—quite sufficient to inform his readers as to *what* the apostle's doctrine was—the writer proceeds to report the *effect* of the sermon, in these words: "Now when they heard this they were pricked in their heart and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, men and brethren what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that received his word were baptized; and the same day were added about three thousand souls." (Ibid 37-41.) When we get all of the commission; that is, all its provisions and specifications, and then bring along side of it this report in Acts we see the most perfect correspondence. One thing might be noted as a seeming exception; that is, that in the report there is no express mention of *faith*, that is, of the persons discipled being

commanded or said to believe, as in the commission; but it is evident that faith is so clearly implied as to make it wholly needless to mention it expressly. The hearers being "pricked in their heart" implies that they believed. Their asking Peter and the other apostles what they "must do" also clearly implies that they believed. Peter's answer to them also implies that they believed and he knew it. Would he have commanded unbelievers to be baptized? Was he authorized to do so? Certainly not. His commission said, "He that *believes* and is baptized shall be saved;" and therefore we must conclude that they did believe and that Peter knew it when he commanded them to repent and be baptized.

And, by the way, we have here the best interpretation of the much controverted phrase, "for the remission of sins" as connected with baptism. Did Peter promise those persons remission of sins before and without baptism, as some contend? Or, in other words, did they *come* to remission before baptism, and did Peter when he told them to "repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," mean that they were to be baptized *because* of remission, as some suppose? Or with reference backward to remission? What was Peter's instructions in his commission touching this point? "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." Now, with these words in his commission did Peter mean to tell those sinners at Jerusalem to be baptized because their sins were already remitted—because they were already saved? Surely not. Here, then, we have "shall be saved" following baptism in the commission, and "for remission of sins" following it in Acts, as explanatory of each other. In other words we have "shall be saved" in the *rule*, and "for remission of sins" in the work under the rule. This,

to my mind, is a more satisfactory explanation of "for remission of sins" than can be made by any criticism of prepositions. I am not as staunch a believer in dying hard on prepositions as some people, although I prefer to be on the safe side even of them. But whenever we get to fighting right hard over the meaning of prepositions in Acts we are apt to get both eyes diverted from the commission; whereas to be safely guided in our interpretations of Acts we should always keep one eye on the commission, under which and in accordance with which the record of Acts was made.

But I wish now to emphasize the fact, that Acts ii, contains not only the first, but the *fullest* report of apostolic preaching and of details generally of making disciples to Christ, to be found in the whole book. And how very natural, and how very reasonable, that, being the first, it should also be the fullest; that is, that in this report of the opening meeting of the campaign the writer should enter more into the details of the preaching of the apostle, of the effect of the sermon, of the instructions of the apostle to enquiring sinners, and of the whole matter of making disciples to Christ under the great commission. When an important political campaign is to be made in any of our States, for illustration, the reporters for our papers usually make full reports of the speeches of the standard bearers of the parties *opening the campaign*, and thereafter in the campaign only make brief and general statements. They understand that they are reporting in the opening of the campaign and thereafter during its progress *for the same readers*, for the most part; and that, having at the beginning reported fully the statement and discussion of the issues in detail, it is useless thereafter to make their reports so full. It would be a needless repetition. Now,

Luke, the writer of Acts, was a reporter, and wrote the whole book for the same reader, or readers—not some meetings and sermons for one class of readers, and other meetings and sermons for other readers. Like other sensible reporters he made his first report, at the opening of the great apostolic campaign, as to the sermon, as to its effect and results, as to what sinners were told to do and what they did to be saved, a pretty full one; and thereafter contented himself, when reporting meetings and sermons, with abridged and general statements. Let me be understood here: I do not mean to say that Peter did not preach the same things, and give precisely the same instructions to sinners as to the way of salvation, at other places and on other occasions, that he did at Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost. On the other hand, I suppose he did. What I mean to say and emphasize is, that *Luke in reporting him* on subsequent occasions and at other places did not make his report as full of details as he did “at the beginning,” and this, obviously, because it was unnecessary. In a few instances, after the “beginning at Jerusalem,” the writer gives pretty full abstracts of the sermons, as that of Peter’s first sermon to the Gentiles, (Acts x,) and Paul’s masterly assault upon idolatry at Athens, (Acts xvii,) and this because the occasions and circumstances were notable; the former as opening the campaign among the Gentiles, and the latter as beginning the war upon idolatry and image worship. In other instances only the fact that the preaching was done, without any details, is reported; and a very brief statement of the result. In some instances it is reported that the apostles told the people to “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ;” in others that they told them to “repent ye therefore and be converted (or turn about) that your sins may be blotted out.” In

some cases we are told simply that persons "believed;" in others that they "turned to the Lord;" in others that when they "believed they were baptized, both men and women;" then, again, that they, "hearing, believed, and were baptized."

Now, by what rule shall we be governed in studying and interpreting this book? Shall we interpret the full, circumstantial, detailed report, made in the beginning, by the subsequent abridged reports? Or, shall we interpret the subsequent abridged reports, destitute of details, by the first full report detailing all the particulars? Shall we interpret the full by the incomplete, or the incomplete by the full? Which shall be our method? What says common sense? What would be our method if we were studying a political campaign? If the campaign were opened by a full and particular statement and discussion of the issues involved, fully reported; and then followed by short abstract reports noticing briefly sometimes the discussion of one and at other times that of another of the issues; would we interpret the full report by the subsequent abridged ones? Who would? We have a case at hand. How are we to understand the political teaching of Major McKinley or Gov. Campbell, the standard bearers of the two great political parties whose campaign in Ohio is just now on in good earnest? Each has "opened his campaign," the one at Niles, the other at Sidney. Each opened out with an elaborate statement and discussion of the issues. Their opening speeches were fully reported and published in the papers of the State. Since the opening they have made many speeches at many places, covering of course substantially the same ground taken at the beginning. But these subsequent speeches have not been fully reported, the reporters noticing sometimes one and

sometimes another point made, but publishing nothing fully. Now, shall we interpret their fully reported opening speeches by the subsequent abridged and partial ones? Or, shall we allow the full reports to explain the partial ones? To common sense the question answers itself. Well, that illustrates the point I am aiming to enforce. In studying Acts of Apostles every general statement of the doctrine preached, and of instructions given to sinners, must be allowed to include all the essential particulars elsewhere given. Then again, in all cases, the preaching and instructions given by the apostles, as well as the conditions of salvation, must be allowed to conform in all essential particulars to the requirements of the commission under which they were preaching.

For want of observing these simple rules of interpretation, dictated by common sense, and required by common fairness, many blunders have been made and great confusion created. I have now in mind a notable example. Dr. Ditzler, of Syriac notoriety, and a distinguished champion of the doctrine of justification by faith only, when called upon to look the second chapter of Acts full in the face—where we have reported what the apostle preached; and that when the people heard “they were pricked in their heart,” and asked Peter and the rest of the apostles, “what must we do?” and how Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins;” and how “with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation;” and how “they that received his word were baptized;” all these details, and so perfectly conformable to the commission—the doctor instead of facing this record, starts on a wild career through the book of Acts, citing every general report that

does not contain all these details, particularly such as make no mention of baptism, interpreting the full report of the second chapter down to subsequent abridged statements. Thus he arrays an incomplete report against a fuller one, and also makes the apostles unfaithful to their commission, by preaching salvation to sinners upon other terms than are therein prescribed.

The advocates of the doctrine of justification by faith only, that is, by simple belief in the heart, all adopt the same method. Instead of explaining general statements by particular ones, they explain away particulars by general statements.

For instance: They will take up the case of Cornelius the centurion, (Acts x.) and try to show that he was not commanded to do as were the persons at Jerusalem in the beginning; that Peter preached to him salvation by faith only. This passage in the report of Peter's sermon on that occasion will be quoted with all possible emphasis: "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (v. 43.) Now let us give attention to this case. In the first place, do we know that Luke's report here contains all that Peter said? Certainly not. The words are Luke's report of him, correct and true no doubt, but not full: that is, a general statement of what he preached as all that was necessary, a more particular and circumstantial one having been given "at the beginning." But suppose we take this report as being a full one, as containing all Peter said, and as meaning that "whosoever believeth in Jesus"—simply believes in the heart without any sort of confession, or expression, or action of that belief, without doing anything else, without the obedience of faith—"shall receive remission of sins:" then what? Why,

then we have Peter at Cæsarea preaching salvation to Gentiles on shorter terms than he did at Jerusalem to the Jews; have we not? There certainly is a difference if we take both reports as full and complete. There certainly is a difference between telling sinners that whosoever believes simply in his heart shall receive remission of sins, on the one hand; and in telling sinners already pricked in their heart and asking what they must do, to "repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," on the other hand. Considerable difference. What shall we say then? Take both these reports as full and exact, and thus make Peter preach one way at Jerusalem and another way at Cæsarea? Or, one way to Jews and another to Gentiles, thus making a difference where God "put no difference?" Did his commission direct him, or authorize him, to preach salvation in one way to the Jews and in another way to the Gentiles—in one way at Jerusalem and in a different way at Cæsarea? Certainly not. It sent him under the same authority with the same gospel, the same salvation, on the same conditions precisely, to be preached to "all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." But suppose we adopt the crank method, and interpret the first full report of Acts ii, by the subsequent brief general statement of Acts x; then what? Why then we have Peter doing what he had no divine authority for doing; that is preaching salvation by faith only under a commission that says, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Does that language justify even an apostle in preaching salvation in the name of Jesus Christ upon the single condition of belief in the heart? Certainly not. It authorizes nobody to so preach, either to Jew or Gentile, either at Jerusalem or Cæsarea, or anywhere else. We should not adopt a method of inter-

pretation that at once outrages all common sense and involves a defamation of the apostle.

We are told, moreover, that when Peter uttered the words about belief at the house of Cornelius "the Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the word" as an *evidence of their pardon* before they were commanded to be baptized. Well, the report says, most certainly, that the Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the word. There is no question about that fact. Yes; and he came upon them as he did upon the apostles "at the beginning;" came in the extraordinary manner of the Apostolic times; came conferring miraculous powers. "And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit; for they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God." And it was after this that Peter "commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." But Peter did not say that the extraordinary bestowment of the Holy Spirit upon them was an evidence that those persons were already saved before "he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." Nor did Luke. Nor does any body else that knows. Who, then, is authorized to put such a construction upon that extraordinary circumstance as to make Peter contradict himself, and to preach salvation upon terms shorter than those prescribed by the Lord in his commission; as to make him preach that whoever simply believes in his heart shall receive remission of sins before and without being baptized as an expression of that faith, notwithstanding he had before preached to sinners who had heard the word, and been pricked in their heart, and asked what they must do, to "repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for

the remission of sins ;” and notwithstanding his commission said, “he that believeth *and is baptized* shall be saved.” This extraordinary outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the first Gentile converts, whatever may be its meaning, was not intended to, and must not be so construed as to set aside the gospel.

It is better and safer to allow this shorter report in Acts x, to harmonize with the first and fuller one in Acts ii, and to allow both to harmonize with the commission.

Again ; the case of the salvation of the jailer at Philippi is often brought forward as a conclusive proof of the doctrine of salvation by faith only—all because the apostle Paul is reported as saying to him “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house.” Well, let us read and examine the report given of that case : “And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God ; and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken ; and immediately all the doors were opened, and every ones bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison, awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, drew out his sword and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, do thyself no harm ; for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved ? And they said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his straightway. And when

he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house."

Now if we interpret this brief report so as to make Paul and Silas preach to the jailer that he could be saved upon the one single condition of belief in his heart, will not that make it conflict with the fuller report of Peter at Jerusalem at the beginning, as well as with the Lord's commission to the apostles? It certainly will. And we are not obliged to so interpret it. Did Paul and Silas tell the jailer to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, simply in his heart, without in any way expressing it, without the obedience of faith even begun, and that he should then and there, without doing anything else, be saved? Certainly not. There is no necessity upon us to put any such meaning upon this report as to throw it into conflict with other reports in Acts, as well as into a defiance of the commission. And moreover, had Paul so taught, it would have been clearly contrary to his own experience in coming to remission of sins. For was he not instructed in accordance with the commission and with our report of Peter in Acts ii, after that he had seen the Lord with his own eyes, and heard his voice with his own ears, and believed; after that he had acknowledged him Lord, and asked "what wilt thou have me to do;" after that he had prayed and the Lord had heard his prayer; was he not after all this told to "arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins calling on the name of the Lord?" (Acts ix: 18-19, and xxii: 16.)

Paul and Silas told the jailer to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ;" of course they did; as the commission required. And they did not wait for him to ask any question about Jesus Christ, or about how he could believe; but at once "they spake unto him the word of the Lord,

and to all that were in his house." This discourse here is not reported at all, Luke, the writer, having before reported what it was to preach "the word of the Lord," especially "at the beginning." Then what? why, "he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized he and all his straightway; and when he had brought them unto his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house?"

Why all this? There is nothing in the report here given, of what the apostles said, about baptism. Not a word. But had there been as full a report made here as was made of Peter at the beginning, we would see in the record why this man was baptized the same hour of the night. We would see also what I am laboring to prove we ought in all fairness to infer; that is, that the jailer was taught to do, just what he did do, just what the people at Jerusalem were by the apostle Peter taught to do, and did do. And when he had so done, then, and not till then is it recorded, that "he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." And this no doubt reminded Paul again of his own experience. (Acts ix: 18, 19.)

In conclusion, let me say, though it may be a repetition, and seem even tedious, that the report of every case of salvation recorded in the whole book of Acts, as well as every thing said upon the subject, can with a little attention be made and seen to perfectly harmonize with the first and fullest report in the book, as well as with the provisions of the commission under which the record of Acts was made.

SERMON VIII.

THE MORE EXCELLENT WAY.

“But covet earnestly the best gifts : and yet shew
I unto you a more excellent way.” (1 Cor. xii: 31.)

THE way of faith, hope and love is the more excellent way ; and the apostle called it more excellent than the miraculous gifts in the church of Corinth, and that were in the churches generally in the first century. It will be proper for us in this discourse, before noticing the more excellent way, briefly to consider the miraculous gifts referred to.

Now, a miracle means a mighty work, so mighty that people wonder at it ; so mighty as to be superhuman and hence attributed to God by theists, and to be considered a sign of his presence with and approval of the person by whom the mighty work is performed. So that in the New Testament the same phenomenon is at once a miracle, a wonder, and a sign. In fact the same Greek word is thus variously translated.

Most of the miracles wrought by Jesus were simply effects produced in an unusual way, in a way the people were unused to ; and hence in what may be called a supernatural way. We call that supernatural which is not brought about by or in accordance with the regular operation of the laws of nature as we understand them. It may not be amiss for us to notice a few of the New Testament miracles.

1. Jesus converted water into wine. This, I believe,

was his first recorded miracle. Now the mere fact of making wine of water is nothing to cause a great wonder. All wine is made of water. We have some adulterated stuff called wine, made largely of unwholesome drugs—and even that is not made without water. But not to speak of that. All pure wine is made of water. And we are so familiar with the way God ordinarily makes wine of water that we see it done every year and never stop to think of it. We know how the rains fall upon the ground, and the water is filtered through the soil, up through the roots of the vines, and on up through the vines, and is bottled up and hung out in clusters of bottles on the branches of the vines. We have only to break the bottles and squeeze out the wine. And we are so used to see this work going on that we stop not to think of it; but call it perfectly natural. But when Jesus spake the word of command only and the water became wine at once, the method of doing the thing was so new, and one with which the people were so unfamiliar, that they called it a wonder.

2. Jesus fed a multitude of five thousand men besides women and children with five loaves and two fishes, and twelve baskets full of fragments remained, after they had all eaten and were filled. This was a miracle, a wonder, a sign of God's presence and power. Now the thing done in this case was not so much a wonder as the way in which it was done. For does not God feed all the multitudes? He certainly does. But we are so familiar with the way he does it ordinarily that we never stop to wonder at it—or even to think of it as much as we ought. He increases or multiplies a few grains and a few fishes up to a sufficiency to feed a multitude right before our faces every year; does he not? Yes. But when Jesus caused the growth or increase of a few loaves and fishes to take place

almost instantly, and in the hands or mouths of the people; that was an unusual and an extraordinary way of doing the thing, and we call it a miracle, a wonder, a sign. The *way* in which the thing was done was the miracle.

3. Some people have been wondering and staggering along the ages at the Mosaic account of the creation of man. That God should by a direct exertion of his power make a body out of the dust of the earth, and put life into it, is a thing the like of which we have never seen. And so men stagger at the Scripture doctrine of the resurrection. But, as a matter of fact, does not God make all bodies of the ground, and put life into them? Certainly. The work of body making out of the ground, and of life giving too, is going on before our eyes—in fact, in us—every day and hour. But the way we are somewhat familiar with, and call it natural. And, so it is. God brings our bodies out of what we call the original elements, and gives to all life and breath; but he does not do it in the way he created Adam and gave him breath and life, or in the way he will raise the dead to life again. The *way* in which he created Adam of the ground, and the *way* in which he will bring all our bodies out of the ground again, is the thing we wonder and stagger at, rather than the *thing* done, itself. I repeat, then, the creation of a thing, or the producing of an effect, out of the usual way, is a miracle, a wonder, and a sign of the power of God, above what we call nature—nature being simply what we are used to, and the supernatural what we are unused to.

Now, the order of things we are used to we call the law of nature. We are not living in an age of miracles. It is better to admit this freely. It is most likely that all alleged miracles of this age are frauds. Of course, even in our day we come across many strange and wonderful

things ; but strictly speaking they are not miracles. We are not needing miracles. If we were we should no doubt have them. We are living in an age of law, and we ought to be glad of it. But law is not God, although some people do deify it and worship it, if they may be said to worship at all. Any way, law is all the God some people have. But law creates nothing, *originates* nothing, *ends* nothing. Such persons as are everlastingly prating about law as relentlessly and unchangeably governing all things, can have no creations, no origins, whatever in their faith. All of them who have intelligence enough to be consistent deny creation outright. They are logically compelled to do so. Law creates nothing ; but law is their only God ; therefore there is no creation with them. Again ; creation is a miracle ; but law, as known to us, performs no miracles ; therefore miracles are in the teeth of their God. They, hence, very consistently, deny all miracles. They believe nothing, admit nothing the like of which they never saw. They put it this way ; our experience teaches that the laws of nature are uniform and uninterrupted in their operations ; but our experience teaches that human testimony is sometimes false ; therefore human testimony can not prove a miracle. And this is specious. It looks like an argument and sounds like a syllogism. But of course it is defective. One of its premises has in it an uncertain clause, so to speak ; a clause of doubtful meaning. " Our experience " is a clause of entirely too doubtful meaning to go into a syllogism, and especially a syllogism meant to settle so important a question. Since the voice of all history, profane and sacred, is in favor of miracles, what can be the meaning of " our," in the phrase, " our experience teaches " ? Whom does it include ? But not to make too much of a trifling defect in a syllogism, let us pro-

ceed to examine the subject for a few moments aggressively.

Now, because I never saw a miracle, or anybody else that ever saw one, or anybody that ever saw anybody else that ever saw a miracle does it follow that no miracle ever was? Suppose it to be granted that there has been no miracle wrought within the last twelve or fifteen, or even eighteen centuries, does that fact lessen the probability that there were miracles wrought at *some* time in the past? Well, let us see? Let us see if we are not compelled to believe in some things the like of which we never saw? Are not—as already intimated in this discourse—are not all *beginnings* miracles? Let us take the case through the courts of nature. It will be admitted that nature has three realms, or kingdoms; the vegetable, the mineral, and the animal, to say no more now. First, then we'll go into the vegetable kingdom; and we'll take a tree, and it shall be an oak tree. Now, there are some people in the world who deny all objective existence, even their own. We will leave such behind in this inquiry, and take with us only such as believe in objective existences. There stands our oak tree. There it is in most of the five zones of earth. Whence came that oak tree? From the acorn, we are told. Correct. Oak trees grow from acorns. All oaks do. That's a law, so to speak, to which we know no exception. "Our experience" teaches that all oaks grow out of acorns. But whence came the acorn? From the oak tree, we are told. Correct again. All real acorns grow on oaks. It has been said that the Yankees can make wooden nutmegs. I doubt that. Anyhow, they can't make acorns, real, live acorns, such as will produce oak trees. They grow only on oak trees. That's another law, to which we know no exception. "Our experience" teaches that all acorns grow on oaks. Oaks

grow out of acorns, and acorns grow on oaks. Oaks grow out of acorns and acorns grow on oaks; and so we go, in a circle. *Law* knows no *beginning* and promises no *ending* to the process. *Law* must say; so it has always been, and so it must be evermore. But reason revolts at this beginningless and endless process. This is itself something "the like of which we never saw." It is harder to believe than all the miracles of the Bible. What then? Why, either the oak tree or the acorn, one or the other, was first. And, no matter which, it was a miracle; was it not? It would be no more difficult to raise a dead body out of the tomb, or create a new body out of the dust of the earth, than to make an oak tree without an acorn to begin with, or an acorn without an oak tree to begin with. Which was first, the oak or the acorn? Say the one, and it is a miracle; say the other, and that's a miracle. Turn it either way, and you have a miracle at the *beginning*.

The same is true in the mineral kingdom so-called, everywhere you go. There is the lake, a large body of living, moving, breathing, murmuring waters; whence came it? From the rivers, from the brooks, the rills, and finally from the springs, we are told. Right. All lakes are thus made and supplied. But whence came the springs in the mountains? From the lakes. Yes; by evaporation the water is taken from the lake, and by certain atmospheric conditions clouds are formed, and the rains and snows fall, and the waters fill the pockets of the rocks; and thus the springs are made. All springs are made and supplied in this way. The lake makes the springs, and the springs make the lake. In a circle again. Which was first, the lake or the springs? One or the other was. Which? Well, no matter which, it was a miracle; was it not?

The same, it only need be mentioned, holds true in the animal kingdom. Take the bird for example. Which was first the bird or the egg? One or the other was first. No matter which we say; it was a miracle. "Our experience" knows nothing of any such bird or egg—that is, of a bird before there was an egg, or of an egg before there was a bird? So that we must either deny all *origins* or admit miracle. Agnostics, that know almost all things, and all avowed atheists, have failed so far to propound any theory or even any hypothesis that can account for origins. Evolution which, of course is nothing more than an hypothesis, fails to reach the origin of life or of species. It assumes, but confesses its inability to prove, even the transmutation of species. So that, after all, there is nothing more reasonable than the simple old Mosaic account: "In the beginning God *created*"—created everything with its "seed in itself." This simple statement has stood a good deal of rubbing, and to-day is the most reasonable and most satisfactory account of origins we have—in fact it is the only account we have.

The laws of nature are God's laws, by which he rules the natural world. Miracles are results of exertions of his power over and above nature. If God would manifest himself to men otherwise than through nature, as the God of nature, that manifestation must be a miracle. Christianity is, in an important sense a creation, and creation is a miracle. It is a revelation and revelation is a miracle. Revelations could be confirmed to men only by miracles; that is by displays of God's power over and above nature—outside of the laws of nature. This is the office Jesus and the apostles assigned to supernatural works. Jesus himself said to the unbelieving Jews: "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye

believe not me, believe the works [done] that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him." (John x: 37, 38.) Again, in the Hebrew letter we read: "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will." (Heb. ii: 3, 4.)

The age in which Jesus and his apostles and prophets lived was the formative period of Christianity, and hence the age of miracles and extraordinary things. The gifts that were in the first churches; "apostles," "prophets," "teachers," "miracles," "healings," "helps," "governments," "tongues," etc., etc., were necessary for the revelation and establishment of Christianity in the world, but not intended to be abiding as they were not generic to it. They were to "cease" when the formative period was passed.

When that which was intended to be perfected by their use was come they were to be "done away." Hence says the apostle: "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." That is, the partial or unfinished state of things existing when the apostle wrote, in which they knew Christianity only in part and prophesied in part, should pass away, when that perfect "system of religion" then being revealed was brought in.

A thing is "perfect" in all its parts. Christianity was not so revealed when Paul wrote to the Corinthians, but we now have it so in the New Testament. The miracles of the beginning have not come down to us, but that which is perfect has.

"Now abideth faith, hope and love; these three,

and the greatest of these is love." The apostle did not mean by "now" in this sentence to mark the then present tense, but rather the point at which he had come in his narrative. He had come to the time when the perfect had come and the partial was done away; to the time when revelation was complete, and all tongues and interpretations of tongues, and prophecies had ceased—"now," at this stage in the great drama, "abideth faith, hope and love." Miracles have not come down to us. We have no particular use for them. We shall likely have no more miracles until the "time of the end." Endings are miraculous as well as beginnings. Law ends nothing. God will one day break up the present order of things. I should be glad to see it. The thought of being eternally in and a part of what we call the order of nature—which like a great wheel is to revolve just the same forevermore—is to me perfectly suffocating. But meantime we shall need faith, hope and love. Well, let us see:

1. We shall need faith certainly while we live in the flesh; while we are in this state of being. We may need it forever. I incline to think we shall. We shall need the *Christian* faith until our regeneration and redemption are complete. And then possibly afterward we shall always believe in God. It seems to me that faith in him is a necessity to our happiness, growing out of our inferiority and dependence; and therefore if we shall never rise to a level with him and fully comprehend his knowledge and wisdom, we shall always need to believe in him. God will not cease to be our Father nor we to be his children even in heaven. But this is further on than revelation was meant to afford us light. We must live in one world at a time.

Here, in this life, we need faith. This we know. Faith

is the apprehension of the unseen, and hence the unknown. We can apprehend God only by faith. Limited as we are by our frail and dull mortality we cannot see him, we cannot know him. In our apprehension of him, in all that we do in reference to him, and in our enjoyment of him, we are shut up to faith. Just as a little child cannot know the mind of its parents and comprehend the reasons in their minds for its training, restraining and constraining, so we cannot know the mind of God and comprehend the reasons in his mind for what he does and requires us to do in our training and government.

We apprehend God by faith. We come to him by faith. We walk by faith. Our life in Christ is a life of faith. Our warfare is a fight of faith. We are the children of God by faith. And, as children, when trouble and sorrow overtake them, lean upon the lap of the parent and cry away their grief, so we lean upon the strong arm of our Father and weep our sorrows away; but sorrowing not as those who have no hope. Orphans oftentimes weep to the pitiless winds. Who ever saw an orphan weep and was not sad himself? The man without faith in God as his father, in this world of sin, and sorrows, and uncertainties, is an orphan in the severest sense.

Jesus said to his disciples when they were disappointed and sorrowful. "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God; believe also in me." This he says to all his sorrowing disciples. Faith in him and in the Father is our cure for all the ills of this life. This dissipates the clouds that would hide our sky. This drives back the dark shadows that would come over our hearts and lives—faith in God, our Father; faith in Jesus, our Savior.

But faith in its Bible sense means more, on the believer's part, than mere apprehension, or even trust. It means

more than any mere condition of soul. It means *faithfulness*. When it does not include this it is dead; or as a thing unborn. You, if a parent, want your child to believe and trust in you; and you want it to be faithful to you. Its faith in you does not count for much in your estimation unless it includes faithfulness to you. Does it? So our faith in God and in Jesus, so long as it is a mere conviction, no matter how strong, so long as it is a mere subjective condition, so long as it is a mere apprehension of God as the Father and of Jesus as the Savior, amounts to nothing profitable to us, nor is it well pleasing to God. It must include faithfulness and trust. Then it is a real, living, actual faith; and becomes the ground, the confidence, the support of hope, the confidence of things hoped for.

2. HOPE. We shall need the hope of the gospel through this life—until we cross the dark river, and reach the bright home beyond. We are all the time saved by hope. It is hope that sustains the mind in the trials of life. Without it the mind would be a wreck. Hopelessness is insanity. Blighted hope fills our insane asylums. All sane persons hope; but not all who hope have the hope of the gospel. Hope is the mind laying hold on something beyond to pull through the trials of the present. The wicked man, the godless man, hopes in something. He says, "there is a better time coming;" "by and by, it will be better with me;" "it will not always be thus dark;" and thus he pulls on through the trials that would crush him without something, real or imaginary, for his mind to take hold of.

The hope of the gospel is the good hope, the hope that will not fail us, or disappoint us; the hope that maketh not ashamed. It is the glorious hope. It is the stay of

the Christian's soul in his terrific warfare in this life. It reaches beyond all our trials and troubles, beyond the river of death, beyond the valley of shadows. It lights up life, death, the valley and the glorious hill-tops beyond. Hope is our soul anchor, sure and steadfast, reaching clean over this life, and death, into that within the veil, whither for us Jesus our fore-runner has gone. Hope speaks to us in our times of sorrow, when the heart is sick and the soul is sad, when we lay down the flowers on the new made grave of our most loved one of earth, and says in sweet accents: "In the sweet by and by."

3. LOVE. "The greatest of these is love." Love in the broadest sense. Love for God and humanity. Not a mere sentiment. Not a mere enjoyable condition of soul. That, but more. Not in word only, but love indeed and in verity. Love that fills and moves our souls, and moves us all over—moves us Godward and manward. This love is generic to Christianity. Love never fails. It is eternal, immortal, because it is of God. We cannot conceive of God as believing, or hoping, but God is love.

This love is what the world most needs. There is more in it for the world than there is in miracles. The lack of it, and the possession of its opposite, is what's the matter with the world. Love does no one evil. Love thinks no evil. It may be compelled to see evil, but it is not on a hunt for it. It is full of pity, compassion and mercy. It's search is for opportunities to do good, to relieve distress, to wipe away tears, to bless, to save. Instead of love the people of the world are full of envy, hateful and hating one another. Envy is full of eyes to see, and of ears to hear, and of tongues to speak evil. Envy thinketh all evil. It construes everything in the darkness of its

own blighting shadow, while love interprets all things in the light of itself.

Let a young man make a misstep and go wrong. Too many people were "looking for it." It was "just as they expected;" and they love to talk about it now that it has come as they expected, and possibly predicted to some confidential friend—"just between you and me," of course. But there was one who was not looking for this evil; and it is not just as she expected. Neither does she love to talk about it. She even thinks about it with a heavy heart and many deep sighs by day, and dreams under its awful shadow by night. That one is his mother. She loves him. She explains, construes and interprets every point in the case in the light of her own undying love for her child. The world may turn against him; the companions of his earlier and more prosperous days may forsake him, as they are very apt to do; the jury may find him guilty, if he has no money, and the judge may pass sentence against him, and the sheriff may execute it; but his mother will follow him to the prison or gallows. The world may say he ought to die, and he may die; but his mother will stick to him till the last minute; and then at least *one* earnest prayer will follow his poor, naked, shivering soul as it is launched into the shoreless ocean. And should that soul go on down the dark slopes of despair to all eternity it will not likely be because a mother's love failed her child. She will not give him up when he is dead; but will keep him in her heart, and his picture in her own drawer, and will go on through life explaining, and interpreting, and construing in favor of her child. She would not allow herself to believe her child was really at heart a murderer. No, no! Some demon had gotten possession of her child, and ruined him. The demon was

the murderer. And, somehow—she may not be able to make out the case right clearly to outsiders as it is in her heart—*somehow* she will hope, though it be hoping against hope, still she will interpret the love of the Father by the love of the mother, and hope. Love “hopeth all things.”

Love then, love that fills and warms our souls toward God; that fills and warms our souls towards all men; that goes out in loving obedience to God; that goes out toward all men as it has opportunity, in deeds like itself: this is what the world needs, now, more than tongues, or prophecies, or all miracles. “*Now abideth* faith, hope and love, these three, and the greatest of these is love.”

This is the “more excellent way.”

SERMON IX.

PAUL'S ANSWER TO KING AGRIPPA.

"Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadedst me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether—such as I am except these bonds." Acts xxvi: 28, 29.

IT matters very little in what spirit or with what meaning King Agrippa said, "Almost thou persuadedst me to be a Christian;" whether he was really almost so persuaded, and, therefore, gave an honest expression of his state of mind, as some suppose; or, as others suppose, spake in irony, meaning to belittle the apostle and his cause, and call attention to his own greatness—to minify the apostle's speech and magnify himself. Anyhow the apostle was in earnest. If, as a great man to start with, Paul was one thing more than another, he was an earnest man. Earnestness characterized his whole life from the first we hear of him to his last word and act. Such was the apostle's manifest earnestness in this answer before King Agrippa that the governor, who had heard him before, "Festus, said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad. But he said, I am not *mad*, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and *soberness*." Such was the soberness, the earnestness with which the apostle spake that Festus thought he was mad.

We shall not concern ourselves then in this discourse with the language of Agrippa, but rather with the apos-

tle's reply, in which he owned that it was his aim and his pleasure to persuade men to be Christians; not simply one king, but all who heard him: not to be almost but altogether Christians, such as he himself was, excepting his bonds.

The first thing suggested by his reply that we shall notice is that there is such a thing as being partly and yet not wholly a Christian.

1. Some persons are called Christians because they were born, and reared, and educated, and live, in a Christian country; because they have been used to Christian civilization, customs and usages; because they date their letters "in the year of our Lord," and if profane, as Christians in this sense often are, swear by the name of Jesus instead of that of Mahomet, or Jupiter, or Buddha, or that of any other founder of a religion. That is, they are Christians only in the sense of historic or geographical classification; as one must be a Jew, or a Christian, or a Mohammedan, or a Pagan, or be left out entirely. There are more Christians in this sense than there are such as Paul was. Col. Ingersoll would be called a Christian in Arabia! In this sense persons are called Christians without being Christian in any sense worth speaking of.

2. We have many persons in all Christian countries, and possibly in some others, who are Christians simply in judgment; that is, persons who in their own minds have decided in favor of Christianity as against all other religions; persons who even believe the Christian religion to be true, right, divine; who really believe it is right to be a Christian; who have promised themselves, time and again, when sick, or otherwise alarmed, that they would try to become such, and expect at some future day to do so, but have deferred a practical consideration of the

matter. There are many such persons in all Christian countries; of good education and intelligence in secular matters, persons in high places who consider themselves too busy with matters of state, matters of commerce or trade, and of the general interest and welfare of the country, to give the matter of becoming a Christian their personal attention; and many who seem willing to commit the interests of their souls to the priests, the preachers, or the churches, or to the Lord—anybody who will take it, so that they may be excused from a personal consideration of the matter. They send their children to Sunday-school, and are glad even to see them join the church; pay their wives' church subscriptions, and even go with them to church on Sundays and holidays. But such persons lack a good deal more than his "bonds" of being Christians such as Paul was.

3. Then, again, there are many persons who no doubt are Christians at heart, as we often say; that is, they are not only convinced in their minds that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and the Savior, but they love him; their feelings and desires are all on the side of Christianity. They hear and think of the story of Jesus only with pleasurable interest. But they go no further. They have been mistaught, it may be; or they may not have been taught at all as to their further duty. They have been taught, it may be, to look for something they have never been able to see, or to listen for something they have never been able to hear, or wait for some experience they have never had. They are waiting, in consequence of such teaching for some mysterious and wonderful change, more than faith in the Son of God and a sincere desire to be a Christian, that will be to them an evidence of sins forgiven and of their acceptance with God.

They have not the imagination that some have, and cannot have the experience that some have supposed they had, and they suppose that they are not sufficiently converted to take any further step in the matter. And they are waiting for something they know not what; but something nevertheless. They may have been taught there is nothing they can do; that if they belong to the elect, God will make it known to them in his own good time, and if they are not of the elect, why, then they are not; and they really fear to try to do anything lest they should be found fighting against God. And they wait. Many no doubt thus honestly wait all their lives, and die waiting, Christians at heart. No doubt it is better to be a Christian at heart than not to be. No doubt God will judge rightly all honestly misguided persons. But these honestly mistaken, misguided Christians at heart are not Christians such as Paul was.

Then, a great many people who are Christians at heart are confused by foolish preaching and the jargon of the creeds. The preachers instead of telling the simple story of Jesus of Nazareth and teaching the people the duty of faith, obedience and trust, have been preaching about the Godhead, the Holy Trinity, the fore-knowledge of God, the divine decrees, unconditional election and reprobation, etc. etc., and the people have failed to understand them. The fact is the preachers themselves have not understood them. They have been preaching these profound doctrines, as they doubtless suppose they are, because they are in the creeds of their churches, and because the preacher must believe and preach them in order to be orthodox, and because one who is not orthodox is heterodox, and it has always been and always will be a terrible thing to be heterodox. The consequence is that many honest

souls, Christians at heart—made so by the simple story of Jesus which they have gotten in spite of the creeds—are left in utter confusion upon the whole matter of further duty, and of becoming Christians, such as Paul was.

4 Then there is such a thing as being a Christian *in fact*. This is more than birth, education, country; more than the convictions of the mind and decision of the judgment; more than sympathies, desires, feelings, or a Christian at heart. One becomes a Christian formally and in fact by publicly confessing Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and by putting him on in his appointed way—the way he appointed when he committed the gospel to his disciples and sent them to all the nations to preach it. Let us see; “Go ye, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (Matt. xxviii: 19.) “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” (Mark xvi: 16.) This is the Lord’s appointed way; and it’s right or it’s not right. Which shall we say?

Some persons have been taught that there is nothing in *forms*—and therefore there is nothing in becoming a Christian *formally*—that baptism is a *mere form*, and in no sense vitally connected with the matter of becoming a Christian. Well, it is true that baptism is a form—not a “*mere*” form, but a form—the baptizing of an infant is what might be called a *mere form*. It is true, also, that by being baptized the believer *formally* becomes a Christian, formally puts on Christ, is formally initiated into the body of Christ. Who is authorized to say that there is nothing essential in *forms*? God did not leave the earth “without form and void,” but he “*formed* the

earth." Is there nothing essential to the earth in its form? God "*formed* man of the dust of the ground." Is his form essential? "God formed every beast." His "hand formed the crooked serpent." Yea; he "formed all things" that were made. Things are distinguished by their forms. Jesus "took upon him the form of a servant" and was in the fashion of man. We have in the New Testament a "form of doctrine," a "form of sound words," a "form of godliness." True, a form without power, without life, without utility, without beauty, without anything but form would be only a form, "a mere form." But God has no such forms. Forms are necessary to power, and even to life itself. And so God has appointed that men shall be Christians in form—shall become Christians *formally*.

By the way, that is just what's the matter. Presumptuous and ignorant men have *deformed* Christianity. They have deformed the very simple God-appointed form of becoming a Christian; and with many the whole matter of becoming a Christian is "without form and void." Hence the confusion upon the subject, and the many Christians at heart who know not how to become Christians formally and in fact.

Yes. The confession of Christ, the good confession, is a form; and baptism is a form, too; and by making the confession and being baptized the believer formally becomes a Christian. That's exactly it. Nor is this form unnecessary simply because it is a form. Things are distinguished one from another by their forms. By this divinely appointed form we can see persons become Christians, and believers can see themselves become Christians. The Lord has made no unnecessary appointments. A form may be just as necessary as anything without a form.

Baptism is associated with faith and repentance, and sustains the same kind of relation to the body of Christ and salvation that they do. Let us see: In the commission, (Mark xvi. 16.) "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Belief and baptism are associated by "and," and alike related to salvation. Peter in answer to the enquirers on that noted Pentecost, (Acts ii: 38.) said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." Here he associates repentance and baptism, and by the same word connects both with remission of sins. Again; Paul so associates faith and baptism (Gal. iii: 26, 27.) in these words: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." And all this notwithstanding baptism is a form. Associated with belief, and put in the same relation with it to salvation; associated with repentance and put into the same relation with it to remission of sins; associated with faith and made *initiative* to Christ, to his body, to his church; and still baptism is a form. The difference between it and "mere" forms, needless forms, non-essential forms, is that it is God's form, while all "mere" forms are men's forms. When the Lord prescribes a form and puts upon it the "name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," "mere," or "needless," or "non-essential," is no proper adjunct for it.

Some persons make much ado over the fact that in the Greek Scriptures persons are said to "believe *into* Christ;" and we are asked how that can be and yet persons be "baptized into Christ." Simple enough. Both expressions are Scripture, are they not? that is, both "believe into Christ" and "baptized into Christ." And

if we believe one because it is Scripture we ought to believe the other for the same reason, ought we not? Both are true. I believe both. How can both be true? Are persons initiated into Christ twice? Once by belief and once by baptism? Certainly not. Well, then, are some persons initiated into Christ by faith and others by baptism? Certainly not. How, then, can both statements be true—"believe into Christ," and "baptized into Christ?" Why, because, as we have already seen, belief and baptism are associated in bringing sinners into Christ. The end, "into Christ," may be predicated of both; or it may be predicated of *either one*, when that one is the subject of the conversation, just as in case of the association of two or more men in the accomplishing of a given work. A person may be brought into court by the sheriff, the jailor, and a guard. The bringing of the man in may be predicated of either one of the officers named, if we are speaking of that officer and wish to magnify his office. Whether in strictness of speech it is correct or incorrect, it is a liberty taken by writers in all languages, and common-sense has no difficulty in the interpretation of it.

A believer, then, is made a Christian formally by the *divine form*: that is, by confessing Jesus Christ with the mouth, and being baptized in his name. People generally have no difficulty in understanding this, and the necessity of it, in reference to anything else than Christianity. Take Free Masonry, for instance: Is one a Mason simply because his father was? Is he already a Mason because he believes Masonry to be a good thing—because in his judgment he has decided in favor of it? Is he a Mason *in fact* simply because he is a Mason at heart? May not one be a Mason in judgment, and at heart, and yet not one in *fact*? And is it not true, that he is not a Mason

in fact because he has not been *formally* made a Mason? because he has not taken the steps? because he has not been formally initiated?

People have no difficulty in understanding this matter in case of American citizenship. Is a man an American citizen in fact just because he is in judgment, or even at heart? Certainly not. We all understand that. A foreigner may be ever so thoroughly convinced of the greatness of America, and of the advantages of American citizenship; and he may be an American at heart; but all this does not make him a citizen in *fact*. To be a citizen in fact he must be formally made one.

We all understand this matter as it relates to *contracts*. Is a man a husband in fact because he has contracted marriage with a certain woman? Certainly not. No matter how much he may love the woman, at heart; and how well suited to be his wife he may believe her to be, he is not her husband until he is *formally* married to her. And, as I have said, this is true of becoming anything, or a member of any order or association, or a citizen of any country, or subject of any government; and yet some people seem to think that one can become a Christian, a member of the body of Christ, a subject of his kingdom, *in fact* without any form; and this, too, notwithstanding the divine form taught all through the New Testament, both by our Lord himself and by his apostles. One passage here from Paul, (Rom. vi: 17,) is too fitting to be passed: "Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you; being then made free from sin ye became the servants of righteousness." And it is almost impossible not to understand the apostle here by "that form of doctrine" to allude to what he had just before said: "So many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ

were baptized into his death. Therefore we were 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," (verses 3, 4.) Dr. Macknight says in his comment on this 17th verse. "The original word, [translated *form*] among other things, signifies a *mould* into which melted metals are poured, to receive the form of the mould. The apostle represents the gospel doctrine as a mould into which the Romans were put by their baptism, in order to their being fashioned anew. And he thanks God, that from the heart, that is most willingly and sincerely, they had yielded to the forming efficacy of that mould of doctrine, and were made new men, both in principle and in practice."

But let us notice in the next place, "Such as I am except these bonds." Paul was no mere Christian at heart—or in judgment and at heart. He was all that, and more. The point at issue, or point of difference, as to belief, between Paul prior to his conversion and the disciples of Jesus, was one as to the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. When the Lord appeared to him on the way from Jerusalem to Damascus and he believed that it was really Jesus of Nazareth risen from the dead and alive, the point of difference was decided against him at the bar of his own judgment; and just like the brave and honest man he always was, he surrendered. There is often the grandest heroism in surrender. Paul at once acknowledged Jesus Lord, and asked what he would have him to do. Let him tell the story in his own style: "And I said, what shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me. Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led

by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus. And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight; and the same hour I looked up upon him. And he said, the God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that just one, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth; for thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts xxii: 10-16.) And in another account of his conversion we learn that when Ananias had so instructed him as to the things "appointed" for him to do, Paul at once "arose and was baptized." (Acts ix: 18.) And thus he, as he himself said, "put on Christ." (Gal. iii: 27.) He was not the kind of man to be satisfied with being "almost" a Christian, with being a Christian in judgment, and at heart merely, Paul was an "altogether" sort of man. Whatever he was, that he was "altogether." When he became a Christian he became "altogether" one. And when he persuaded men to become Christians he persuaded them to become not only almost, but altogether such as he was, except his bonds. That is, he persuaded men to be Christians not merely in judgment and heart, but *in fact*—outwardly, openly, actually, formally, as well; and both in the profession and in the practice of Christianity.

"Persuadest me to be a Christian." Paul *persuaded* men to be Christians. This he confessed in his answer to the king; and this he taught elsewhere, both in his preaching to the sinner and in his epistles. He *persuaded* men. God doesn't persuade stones, rocks, or seas; worlds, suns

or comets; but he persuades *men*. He governs the world of matter by sheer force, or power; but not so men. He reasons with men; persuades, exhorts, entreats, and warns men. While he rules the material universe, all worlds and suns, by his own almighty power, he stops at the door of man's heart, and knocks for admission. He says, (Rev. iii: 20.) "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." No divine violence here. God respects his own image in man. He will not break down the dignity of his own image even to save man from eternal ruin. Man is so wonderfully and fearfully made that he may choose sin and death here, and hell forever hereafter. If man's salvation were merely a question of divine power, or will, or sovereignty, as some suppose it is, there would be no sense in standing at the door of man's heart and knocking, or in reasoning with him. Persuading men would be mocking men. If man were the mere machine that popular theology would have us believe that he is, utterly unable to be or do otherwise than God has decreed from all eternity that he should be and do, then all talk about suasion is nonsense. Why persuade men, if indeed they can do nothing but what God foreordained from all eternity that they should do, and are compelled to do that, just as the earth is to sweep round his circles? But God persuades men, notwithstanding the jargon of the creeds that have come down to us from the darker ages.

Again: Paul persuaded men to be *Christians*. Only Christians. His plea could be readily understood. The issue he made with men was single and simple. To be or not to be a Christian; that was it. I think it is to be regretted that it is not so now. There is some confusion

about the issue we are making with men now. We have questions about churches, denominations, parties; and about creeds and ecclesiastical polities. The priests and preachers now have to do a good deal of persuading, arguing, and debating about matters of difference in their creeds and churches; and when they get men persuaded to be Christians their work is only fairly begun. Many men are to-day standing out in the world, never having made any kind of public confession of Jesus, although entirely willing and anxious to be Christians—because they are confused by the many creeds and churches we have in the world, whose claims are being pressed upon people, more than the simple story of Jesus and his love. This ought not to be. There have been very grave mistakes made by somebody, since Paul's time; so that the simple issue he made with men has been almost lost sight of in the wars of churches and conflicts of creeds. If Paul was right we have got wrong; and have brought upon ourselves unnecessary labor and trouble. How shall we go about getting right again? I can see but one way: Let the creeds and the parties they have made go. Let them go entirely. We shall not make the difficulties less by trying to alter and amend them, and adjust them to our advanced civilization. Let them go. Then let us persuade men to believe in Jesus, and confess Jesus, and put on Jesus in his own simple and appointed way, and to walk in Jesus; and be simply *Christians*. Men can be Christians without the creeds and parties of our day—Christians such as Paul was, except his "bonds." We have no need of the bonds with which men bound Paul; nor of the "bonds" with which men have sought to bind all the children of God. Let all the bonds go!

Finally. With Paul, it was not enough simply to

become a Christian—a Christian in belief, in heart, and in fact—to be saved, and to feel happy, and be taken to heaven on flowery beds of ease. No, no! With him, to become a Christian was to become a soldier; and having enlisted, to fight the good fight of faith; to fight on until death should release him. Hear him: “So fight I, not as one that beateth the air; but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away” (1 Cor. ix: 26, 27.) Again, near the close of his earthly career: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also which love his appearing.” (2 Tim. iv: 7, 8.) And to those left behind he says: “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.” Let us try to be Christians such as Paul was.

“I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.”

SERMON X.

ACTION OF BAPTISM.

IN the history of baptism a great many questions have come up for discussion concerning it, three of which have assumed considerable importance and attracted considerable attention.

1 What is baptism as to action? In other words, what is the act performed in baptizing a person?

2 Who may be scripturally baptized? This we call the question as to the proper subject of baptism, and involves what is called infant baptism.

3 What is the scriptural design of baptism? In other words what are proper persons baptized for?

I propose in this discourse to confine myself to the first of these three questions. What is the proper action of baptism? It is a matter of general knowledge that there are three different actions performed and called baptizing; immersion, pouring and sprinkling. In the discussion of this question, there are three sources of proof resorted to by Protestants—Catholics generally have no use for proof—the philological, the scriptural and the historical. The first relates to the meaning of the word baptize, the second to the scripture use of it, and the third to the history of the ordinance. I propose in this discourse to confine myself mainly to the scripture argument, and the text shall be: “I indeed baptize you with water”—(Matt. iii: 11.)

I have selected this passage to begin with because I believe

it is more generally relied on by the masses of those who believe in pouring and sprinkling for baptism than any other passage in the Bible. They believe that "baptize you *with* water" implies the application of the water to the subject, and that pouring and sprinkling being such an application, it answers the demands of this passage better than immersion does. Of course the better educated among the advocates of aspersion do not so much rely on the argument drawn from this passage for the satisfaction of their own minds as on some others. The masses rely on it, and the better educated use it among the masses. This is no reflection upon the educated. At least, I do not mean it as such. It is legitimate and proper in advocating what one believes to be true to use such arguments in its support as are deemed best suited to those sought to be convinced, though one may not himself rely upon them with most confidence for the satisfaction of his own mind. And the reason that the argument derived from this passage is not and cannot be so forceful with the scholarly as with the uneducated is that every scholar knows that the passage might just as well if not better be translated "baptize you *in* water;" and, of course, that takes all the force out of it. In this discourse, however, I propose to address myself mainly to English speaking people who believe in pouring and sprinkling; and I propose to admit everything that any one can possibly claim as to the translation of our passage. But before proceeding with the argument on that line, justice demands, it seems to me,—justice both to the truth and to those I am to address—that I should make two or three statements.

1 The preposition translated *with* in the passage occurs nine times in this same chapter, and is in the common

version of the scriptures six times translated *in*, once *within*, and twice *with*. It is translated *with* only in the text—"with water and with the Holy Ghost." Let us run through the chapter and note its occurrences. It occurs twice in the first verse in the phrases, "*in* those days," and "*in* the wilderness;" once in the third verse, in the phrase, "*in* the wilderness;" once in the sixth verse in the phrase, "baptized of him *in* Jordan;" once in the ninth verse in the phrase, "say *within* yourselves;" twice in the eleventh verse in the phrases, "*with* water and *with* the Holy Ghost;" once in the twelfth verse in the phrase, "whose fan is *in* his hand;" and once in the last verse in the phrase, "*in* whom I am well pleased." Such is the use of this preposition in this one chapter. Comment is not needed or intended, but simply a statement of the fact.

2. A second fact is that the revised New Testament, while it has "with" in the text, following the common version here as elsewhere as nearly as possible, has "in" in the margin; thereby recognizing that as a good translation, if not the best. Thus we have all the weight of scholarship represented by the revised New Testament for saying that the text might very well be translated, "baptize you *in* water."

3 A third fact is, that the American committee of revisers, of the revised New Testament, preferred and had their preference recorded, that in our passage *in* should go into the text and "with" in the margin. And thus we have the weight of scholarship represented by the American committee of revisers for saying that our text might *better* be translated, "baptize you *in* water." Now, these facts comprise in part my reason for saying that the argument derived from this passage for aspersion cannot be so forceful in the estimation of the educated as in that of the

mere English reader. Do not the facts justify the statement? Can the argument stand for as much with those who know the facts I have stated as with those who are ignorant of them? Certainly not.

I have thought it just that I should make these statements before making the argument I propose to make in this discourse, as I propose to admit, for the sake of the argument, so to speak, the correctness of the translation in the common version. I propose to admit, though not compelled to do so, and though I do not believe it, that "with water" is a better translation than "in water" would be. Yea; I will go further, and admit more than any scholar will claim; that is, not only that "with water" is the better translation, but that it is a necessary one; that it is the only correct one. Of course I do not believe this is so, as no even moderately well informed person can; but I make the admission that my argument, which is intended for the English reader particularly, may be seen to be entirely fair, and have its full force.

Then let it be understood that I make the unnecessary admission that there is no question about the correctness of the translation of the text.

"I indeed baptize you *with* water." Now, may not the passage be as fairly interpreted of immersion as of aspersion? That's the question to which we will give attention in the first place: that is to say; we shall examine the passage by itself—without reference to other scriptures bearing upon the subject—and see if there really is anything in it that favors pouring or sprinkling. Does baptize *with* water imply an application of the water to the subject, as the argument for aspersion always assumes. In fact, this assumption is all there is of the argument; and if it is shown to be false there will be

absolutely nothing of the argument left; not even fragments. Any one can see that the assumption and the argument are exactly the same.

I deny that there is anything whatever in the phrase, "baptize *with* water" that implies the application of the water to the subject. That, of course, puts me in the negative. And being in the negative, I have a right to demand the proof that *with* water implies an application of the water. I have a right to require of him who holds that it does to show *how* it does. On the other hand, I contend that "baptize with water" can be just as fairly interpreted of putting the subject into the water as of putting the water upon the subject. If I can hold this ground the argument will disappear.

Now, the only attempt I have ever seen or heard made by the advocates of pouring and sprinkling to prove that *with* water implies an application of the water, was by illustrations. I do not disparage illustrations. I like them, when they are apt and fair. For the only legitimate purpose they can serve they are good. To the field of illustration, then, let us go for a while. And first we will notice the illustrations that have been used to press our passage into the service of pouring and sprinkling. Here they are: "The woodman felled the tree with an axe." "The master whipped the boy with a switch." In the first place, all possible emphasis must be put upon *with* in these illustrations. That's important. Very well; let the emphasis go on. What next? Why, next, the advocate of aspersion has only to ask, with an air of triumph all over his face, "Was the tree applied to the axe, or the axe to the tree? Was the boy applied to the switch, or the switch to the boy?" Well, of course, the axe was applied to the tree, and the switch to the boy. Every

body will admit this. And with willing souls the case is made out. But what about the illustrations that have performed so important a part in the argument? Why, they are simply fraudulent. That's what. Every time any one uses these illustrations, as in this case, he perpetrates a gross fraud. Let us see if this can be made out. If so, a fallacy will be exposed which has deceived many souls; many now in the world, and many that have passed over the river; a popular fallacy of long standing. Illustrations that do not fairly illustrate generally misrepresent. But wherein are these illustrations unfair and fraudulent? Let us see. What is the phrase they are and have been used to illustrate? Let us examine that a little more analytically. "I indeed baptize you with water." That's the phrase. Now, water is the *object* of with, and the *element* of baptize. This cannot be disputed. However it may be used, whether by applying it to the subject or by enveloping the subject in it, water is the element of the baptism. And water is a *liquid* element, too, it is important to note. It is possible to apply a liquid element to an object, and it is also possible to put an object into a liquid element. This will hardly be denied. In the phrase, "baptize you with water," the element being liquid may be poured, sprinkled, or dipped into. As for any thing there is in the nature of the element either one of these actions is possible. But in the illustrations, "felled the tree with an axe," and "whipped the boy with a switch," there is no such element and no such possibility. In the very nature of the case, in the nature of a tree and an axe, the tree could not be put into the axe; in the nature of a boy and a switch, the boy cannot be put into the switch; and therefore the illustrations are unfair and fraudulent. They put an axe and a

switch, both solid substances, in the place of water, a liquid element. While it is possible to dip "you" into water, it is impossible to put a "tree" into an axe, or a "boy" into a switch! Hence the fraud. We have but to lay these illustrations along side of the phrase they are brought to illustrate and the fraud will glare in our faces. Let us see :

Baptize you with *water*.

Fell a tree with an *axe*.

It is possible to put you into water, but impossible to put a tree into an axe. The same is true of whipped the boy with a switch. But it will help us to see the gross unfairness of these illustrations by contrasting them with a few that are manifestly fair. Let us try that method a little anyhow.

The smith cools his iron *with* water. The smith hardens his iron *with* water. The laundress washes her kerchief *with* water. In these illustrations we have the liquid element, as in the phrase illustrated ; and we also have it possible to use the water by application or by being plunged into. It is possible for the smith to cool or harden his iron with water, either by applying the water to the iron or by putting the iron into water. So it is possible for the laundress to wash a kerchief either by putting the water on the kerchief or by putting the kerchief into the water. Hence the fairness of these illustrations is as obvious as the fraudulency of the others.

Now ; in these obviously fair illustrations—cools the iron with water, hardens the iron with water, washes the kerchief with water—does "*with* water" necessarily imply an application of the water? Because it is said that the smith cools or hardens his iron *with* water, does it follow as a necessity that he does it by applying the water to the iron?

Hardly. Because it is said that the laundress washes her kerchief with water, does it follow necessarily that she does it by applying the water to it? If a man wets his finger *with* water, does it follow that he does it by application of water? Hardly. In fact, is not immersion or dipping more usual in all these cases? It certainly is. But I am not trying to prove immersion by these illustrations. What then? Why, simply this:

That "with water" does not imply an application of water in baptism as the advocates of pouring and sprinkling argue and attempt to prove by fraudulent illustrations. I do not claim any thing in favor of immersion from the expression "with water." Let that be understood. I only claim that there is nothing in it that implies aspersion. An article may be washed with water, or cooled with water, or hardened with water, or wet with water just as well, and it occurs just as frequently, by being put into water as by an application of it, as I have shown by fair illustrations. Just so with the phrase, "baptize you with water;" it may be interpreted of immersion just as well as of aspersion. There is certainly nothing in the word "baptize," or the pronoun "you," to weigh against my argument. Indeed, if we go into a discussion of the meaning of baptize it will result in favor of the argument against pouring and sprinkling. But that is not within my purpose in this discourse.

Inasmuch, then, as "with water" does not of itself determine how John baptized with water, whether by immersing the people in it or by pouring or sprinkling it upon them, have we any other means by which we may determine the question? Are there any facts or circumstances given in the scriptures that will help us to a safe conclusion in the case? I am aware that the meaning

of the word baptize of itself settles this question to the satisfaction of all immersionists ; but I am not trying to convince such. I am reasoning with, and mainly for, honest people who believe in pouring and sprinkling for baptism. And still more particularly such as understand only the English language. I repeat the question, then, have we any other means than the expression "with water," within the reach of common people, by which to determine how John used water in baptizing? I think we have. But before proceeding to notice such other means, I want to call attention to what I consider an important rule of interpretation. For in interpreting scriptures, sacred or profane, we must be governed by sound rules, if we would reach safe conclusions.

In our interpretations of the scriptures, then, I submit, that every passage speaking on any subject should, if possible, be so interpreted as to harmonize with every other passage speaking on the same subject. This means fairness and friendliness in dealing with the word of God. It is a method by which certainly all the friends of the scriptures ought willingly to be governed in their interpretation. I have said this means friendliness. Let us suppose, for illustration, that one is interpreting a letter from a friend. There is in it a doubtful expression ; that is, an expression susceptible, in itself considered, of different constructions ; one construction of this doubtful expression makes it harmonize with everything else in the letter ; another possible construction makes it contradict, or at the least renders it inconsistent with other statements in the letter ; which construction would fairness and friendship require ? Which method would fairness and friendliness suggest ? the harmonious or the inharmonious one ? Most of us—all of us I shall presume to say—in

the case supposed would adopt the friendly method. We would not feel at liberty, or even disposed, to put a possible construction upon a doubtful expression in the letter of our friend, that would make him contradict himself, or even make his statements inconsistent, if we could find a possible construction for such doubtful phrase that would allow the letter to speak the truth only, and be consistent throughout. An enemy might adopt a different method. If he wished to convict the writer of unfaithfulness to facts, or of inconsistency, he would be likely to prefer any possible meaning of a doubtful clause, that would throw it out of harmony with other statements in the letter—that is, if the enemy was not very conscientious.

Now this friendliness is what I ask in construing the language of scripture, of its friends, of Christian people. This is the meaning of the rule I have submitted. Let us give to the unscrupulous enemies of the scriptures the exclusive use of the unfriendly method of interpretation.

Now let us take our phrase—"baptize you with water"—through the New Testament. We have seen that it may be interpreted of either immersion or aspersion, for aught there is in the expression, "with water." Let us now see which interpretation better harmonizes with all that is said upon the subject in other places in the New Testament.

We will not give much emphasis to the fact that when the time came for John to begin his work of baptizing people with water he came from the "hill country of Judea" to the Jordan for the purpose: "In those days *came* John the Baptist." Why "*came*" he to the river Jordan to baptize with water? Well; we may not know. We only mention the fact to begin with, without spending much time on it. Nor need we attach any great importance to

the circumstance that John wore camel's hair raiment, and was supported about the loins with a leather girdle, while he was baptizing with water. This may have been a mere circumstance of taste, convenience, or something else—it matters not. We will not spend time on it.

When John came into the wilderness through which the Jordan ran, dressed as we have briefly noticed, to preach and to baptize people with water, we learn that, “then went out unto him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were all baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.” (Matt. iii : 5, 6.) *In Jordan!* Now, Jordan is a *river*. John came out of the hill country of Judea to Jordan to preach, and to baptize with water; and the people went out and were “baptized of him *in the river* of Jordan.” And we learn further, that “Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John *in Jordan*; and straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened,” etc. (Mark i : 9, 10.) Among others John baptized our Lord with water. It was done *in the river* of Jordan, and after the baptism our Savior came *up out* of the water. These facts ought to weigh something in our enquiry. If John baptized with water by sprinkling only a few drops of it upon the people, why come out of the hill country to Jordan to do it? Why baptize *in the river*? Where was the necessity or the sense of our Lord after being baptized with water by having a few drops sprinkled upon him, having to come *up out of the water*? Do not these facts and circumstances look rather like John baptized with water by putting the people into the water? But let us not haste to a conclusion. The truth sometimes travels slowly, but it always gets there.

But John did not do all his baptizing with water in Jor-

dan. For, later, we are told that, "John also was baptizing in Enon near to Salim, because there was much water there; and they came and were baptized." (John iii: 23.) Dean Alford says that "Enon is an intensitive form of *Ain*, a fountain, which answers to the description here given." If he is right, "John was baptizing *in a fountain* near to Salim, because there was much water there." Baptizing *in a fountain*, and *because* there was *much water* there, is a fact with a reason for it, that, it seems to me, ought to have an important bearing upon the question as to how John baptized with water. It seems hardly probable that John would pour or sprinkle people in a fountain of much water. Nor is much water a necessity for pouring or sprinkling. But such a place, a fountain of much water, would be eminently suitable for immersing. Let it be observed, then, that John was baptizing *in a fountain*, if Dean Alford is right as to the meaning of Enon. And whether he is right or wrong about that, John was baptizing there *because* there was much water there. The fact that there was much water there is given as the reason why John was *baptizing* there; and not, as has been said by way of evasion of the significance of the fact, holding meeting there because there was plenty of water. When John baptized with water it was in the river Jordan, or elsewhere because there was *much water* there. A river, or much water, is a necessity for immersing, but not for pouring or sprinkling.

It is generally conceded, I believe, that as to the action performed, there was no difference between John's baptism and what we call Christian baptism—that is, the baptism performed by the disciples after the great commission was given by our Lord. So that it will be legitimate for us in pursuing our enquiry to notice some of the facts and cir-

cumstances attending the performance of this rite recorded in Acts of Apostles, as well as allusions to it in the epistles. In many instances where baptizing was done by apostles only the fact is recorded, and nothing is said that throws any light whatever upon the matter of our enquiry, more than is in the word baptize itself, and that is not within the scope of this argument. In other instances, however, facts and circumstances are recorded that I think both pertinent and potent. Let us notice the case of the baptism of the Ethiopian officer, by Philip, the evangelist, recorded in Acts viii: 36-39. "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch said, See, here is water: what doth hinder me to be baptized? . . . And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more."

In this case we have remarkably minute circumstantiality.

1. "They came unto a certain water." Not simply unto water; but unto a *certain* water. That would indicate, at least to a willing mind, that it was a somewhat known water. The word "certain" in the scriptures, and especially in the writings of Luke, is not infrequently used of distinguished persons, or well-known things—as, for instance, a "*certain* man in Cesarea, called Cornelius," (Acts x: 1.) "*a certain* rich man," and "*a certain* beggar," (Luke xvi.) "*certain* days"—"*certain* questions" etc. Thus indicating distinguished persons, well-known days and questions. They came to a certain water; that is, most likely, a well-known water on that road.

2. "They went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch." It is not said simply that they *went* into the water; but they went *down* into the water—down *into* the water; *both* Philip and the eunuch. Then following the statement that "he baptized him,"

3. We have, "when they were come up out of the water." Not simply were come *out* of the water; but *up* out of the water.

It has been said that the going down and the coming up, in this case, refer to the chariot in which they were riding. But who cannot see that the going down and the coming up both have reference to the water? Are not both connected with the water, by "into" in the one case and "out of" in the other? Besides, there is no evidence that Philip ever went back into the chariot. The probability is that he did not. The fact is, it is almost impossible to put any other construction upon the words of this passage than the literal and natural one. And it would seem from the narrative that in order to baptize with water, in this case at least, both the preacher and the subject went down into the water, and, consequently, when the baptizing had been done, had both to come up out of the water. Now, how does it seem most likely that Philip baptized with water? Had he done so by applying a few drops to the subject, then there would have been no necessity, no reason, for the circumstances of the case, so minutely given. On the other hand immersion requires exactly the circumstances here given. It is hardly worth while to ask which interpretation of "baptize with water" answers the demands of this scripture. One makes it altogether sensible; the other knocks all the sense out of it.

Let us notice another case given in Acts xvi: 32-34,

the baptism of the jailor at Philippi: "And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." Let us note here these facts:

1. When Paul and Silas preached to this jailor they "were in his house," he having before "brought them out" of the inner prison where they were when the earthquake occurred. (verse 30.)

2. After they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house, "he took them the same hour of the night, and . . . was baptized." He "took" them somewhere, just where the record does not say. Then after he was baptized, we learn that

3. "He brought them *into* his house." This, of course, he could not have done had he not taken them out of his house when he "took them" and was baptized.

4. Remember, this occurred some time after midnight.

Now this man was the prison keeper in a large city. It is only reasonable to suppose he had within the prison a good many prisoners; just how many we may not know. But we learn that when Paul and Silas prayed and sang, "the prisoners heard them." (v 25.) Then there were "all his," or "all that were in his house;" say his family, if you wish: and say at least one infant if you choose: and was there not enough water in the house to baptize the jailor and all his "with water," by pouring or sprinkling a few drops upon each one? A most unreasonable supposition!

5. The Revised Version, Dean Alford, Wesley and others, read the thirty-fourth verse, "brought them *up*

into his house." This being correct, as no doubt it is, the jailor not only took them out of his house, but took them *down* somewhere. Down where? Just where we may not know. But we do know that there was a river by the city. (verse 13.) And we know also that cities having both rivers and prisons have their prisons higher than the rivers at ordinary stages of water; and usually for obvious reasons, have them pretty close together. Then it is by no means a violent assumption that he took them down to the river, and when he was baptized, brought them up into his house. Anyhow he took them somewhere, just after midnight, and when he was baptized, he brought them up into his house. How, then, was the jailor most likely baptized with water? Do the circumstances of the case point to pouring or sprinkling? Surely not.

In the next place let us notice some allusions to baptism in Paul's Epistles that have a bearing upon our inquiry. He says: (Romans vi: 3, 4.) "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death. We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life." Again he says: (Col. ii: 11, 12.) "In whom ye were circumcised with the circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye also were raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead."

I am aware that controversialists have, after ages of heated controversy, contrived ingenious interpretations of these plain allusions to baptism, that leave the baptism out altogether; and that may possibly satisfy their own con-

sciences, though their practice is directly in the teeth of these plain passages as long as they remain untinkered. But we should bear in mind that the Roman and Colossian disciples to whom these epistles were addressed, knew nothing of these cunning explanations of the last century, and would understand the apostle to allude to their baptism: and if their baptism was a mere pouring or sprinkling, the allusions would have neither force nor sense in them. And the apostle would know this, too, as well as we ought to know it.

Now, we have seen that John "baptized in Jordan;" "in the river Jordan;" "in a fountain near to Salim, because there was much water there;" that our Savior "came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized of John in Jordan, and straightway coming up out of the water" etc., and that later, under the gospel commission, the preacher and the person to be baptized, "went down both into the water," for the purpose; and that after the baptism, they "came up out of the water;" and that the Apostle Paul said to the disciples at Rome: "*All we* who were baptized into Christ Jesus—were *buried* therefore with him through baptism;" and to the Colossians, "having been buried with him in baptism, wherein, ye were also raised with him;" what, I ask, shall be our conclusion as to how persons were baptized with water? Which of the two interpretations of "with water"—both equally possible so far as the mere words of the phrase are concerned, as we saw in the beginning—better harmonizes with all the facts, circumstances and allusions, to which we have given attention? Is it not a fact that one interpretation requires us to explain away all the facts, circumstances and allusions, while the other perfectly accords with them all?

Some cases of baptism recorded in Acts of Apostles have

been supposed to favor pouring and sprinkling, and to these let us give attention in conclusion.

It has been generally assumed that three thousand persons were baptized on the day of Pentecost; and it has been urged that so many could not have been immersed by the few disciples that were there, in only a part of a day. This has, by many, been supposed to be conclusive against immersion, at least on that occasion. The case deserves attention.

1. In the first place, there is no proof that so many persons were baptized on that occasion. The record does not say how many were baptized on that day. It says, "they that gladly received his [Peter's] word were baptized;" and it adds, "and the same day there were added about three thousand souls." "Unto them" is not in the text, but was supplied by the translators. The text simply says, "there were added about three thousand souls." Three thousand souls added means simply three thousand souls *joined together*; that is, a congregation of three thousand souls was *constituted* that day. How many of the three thousand were baptized that day, and how many had been baptized before, nobody knows. This, however, is important only as correctness is always important. The argument against immersion on that day can be answered without it.

2. Allowing, then, that three thousand persons were baptized that day, which, as I have said, cannot be shown; and allowing that only "ordained" preachers officiated; the work could have been done in a very short time. Jesus during his personal ministry ordained eighty-two preachers, twelve at one time and seventy at another, and they were likely all at Jerusalem on that occasion but Judas, and his place had been filled by Matthias. Three

thousand would only be a fraction over thirty-six souls apiece to the ordained preachers present. And the baptizing could have been done in thirty-six minutes. That's no extraordinary work.

And even allowing that only the twelve officiated in baptizing, they could have done the work easily in less than five hours. So that there was force enough to do the work in the time. And that there was an abundance of accessible water for the purpose has been shown to all who are willing to see, over and over again. The assumption we sometimes meet, that the Jews would have objected to the disciples using the public pools of Jerusalem is exploded by the fact that up to this time and later the disciples had "favor with all the people." Acts ii: 47.

It has been said that Paul was baptized in a house, and therefore more likely poured or sprinkled than immersed. The proof offered that he was baptized in a house is that he was told to "arise and be baptized," (Acts xxii: 16.) and that it is said he "arose and was baptized," (ibid. ix: 18.) nothing being said about his going out of the room where he was when the preacher came to him.

Now, this argument can be convincing only to a very willing soul. Does it really follow that Paul did not go out of the room where he was, when Ananias came to him, to be baptized, simply because it is not recorded that he did? Suppose we read that a man "arose and ate his breakfast;" shall we conclude that he did so in the room where he slept, standing upright in bed, because the record of the case says nothing of his going out of the room or even getting off the bed? Well, the cases are alike; and if the latter is not quite a demonstration, neither is the former.

It has been said that the word translated "arise" in the

passage means "standing;" and that therefore Paul was commanded to be baptized standing. And as he could not be immersed standing, he must therefore have been poured or sprinkled. A sufficient reply to this—if it really deserves any—is that the word translated arise in the passage does not mean standing, as the alleged argument assumes. It means simply arise, and there is nothing in it to hinder the person so commanded from immediately walking off.

The truth is, if there is anything in the fact that Paul was told to "*arise* and be baptized," bearing upon the question as to the action of baptism, it is against pouring and sprinkling. For if Paul was in a room, lying or sitting down, he could not be immersed without arising; but he could have been poured or sprinkled either lying or sitting just as well as standing.

Besides, it ought to stand for something in this argument that Paul himself said that when he was baptized he was *buried*. (Rom. vi: 4.) "*We were buried with him by baptism.*"

The advocates of pouring or sprinkling have tried to infer something favorable to their practice from the language of the apostle Peter at the house of Cornelius. "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized:" It is claimed that by "forbid water" the apostle meant "forbid water to be *brought* for baptizing." But when we consider the fact that one might just as well and as easily forbid *going to* water to baptize as bringing water for that purpose, the supposed argument for pouring or sprinkling falls to pieces. There is nothing in the passage about either *bringing* or *going to* water. It simply says can any man forbid water—that's all. Shall an *assumption* here that the apostle had reference to bringing water, be

made to over-ride all the plain facts, circumstances, and allusions to which we have given attention, to say nothing of the meaning of the word baptize? That would be giving to a transparent assumption a good deal of power.

Some persons may wish to know why I do not in this discourse give attention to the argument for pouring drawn from what is called Holy Ghost baptism.

Well, it does not belong here. Whatever the baptism with or in the Holy Spirit may mean, it clearly is not a case of baptism with water, and hence has no place in this inquiry. It belongs to the philological argument—to the discussion as to the meaning of the word baptize, and will be noticed in a discourse on that subject.

Let us conclude this discourse with an illustration, a fair illustration. We will suppose a case for the illustration. We will suppose that Mr. A., of Paris, Ky., leaves his home for a protracted stay in New York. After an absence of a year or two he receives a letter from his friend B, of Paris. Among other matters his friend B. writes him concerning a religious revival in and around Paris. He tells of a preacher that had been preaching in the country through which Stoner—a stream with which they are both well acquainted—runs; that he baptized with water; and that the people came out of the country round and out of Paris, in large numbers, and were baptized by him in Stoner—in the river Stoner. He tells also of a distinguished gentleman who came a considerable distance and was baptized by the preacher in the river Stoner; and that straightway coming up out of the water he returned home. He tells also of this same preacher, later, baptizing in a reservoir or fountain near Lexington, because there was much water there. He tells also of another preacher who had fallen into the good work; and that

on the way from Paris to Maysville he had fallen in with a somewhat distinguished gentleman in his carriage, and that he rode with him and preached to him Jesus on the way; that they came to a certain water; that the gentleman said, see, here is water: what doth hinder me to be baptized. The carriage was stopped; and they both went down into the water, both the preacher and the gentleman; and he baptized him; and when they were come up out of the water, they parted and met no more. He tells, also, that all who were baptized into Christ Jesus were buried with him in baptism; wherein they were also raised with him.

Now, the question is, how would Mr. A. interpret the letter of his friend B? What kind of a preacher—what kind of preachers—would Mr. A. conclude his friend B. had written about? Would he interpret all the facts, and circumstances, and explanations of B's letter of pouring or sprinkling? Would any of us so interpret such a letter from a friend? I think not. Well, ought we not be as fair, and as honest with the word of God as we would with the letter of a friend? Most assuredly we ought. God help us.

SERMON XI.

BAPTISM FOR REMISSION OF SINS.

WE should endeavor to avoid extremes. There is a manifest proneness among men, and especially men of earnest natures, to go to extremes upon all subjects. This has been quite conspicuously developed in the different theories of the importance of baptism. My brethren are supposed to hold an extreme position on this question ; at least, they are frequently so represented, and this should admonish them to be cautious.

It will be generally admitted that baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, and that the recorded teachings of Jesus and his inspired apostles are the only authoritative teachings upon the subject. Whoever cleaves closest to these is the most conservative.

Jesus came into this world to be the teacher and exemplar of men in religious matters. We shall do well, therefore, to consult him first in our inquiry into this subject. In entering upon his public ministry, we have this brief record of him: "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and

lighting upon him. And, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. iii: 13-17.)

Now, from this Scripture, we may learn several facts of some significance. Jesus was baptized at the threshold of his personal ministry; before the Spirit of God descended upon him; before the Father said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Here we have his *example*.

Now let us have his *teaching* as to baptism. In John iii: 3-5, he said to Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again he can not see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, how can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered, verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God."

It is hardly worth while to argue at any length that "born of water" here means to be baptized. It has only recently been called in question; and, even now, those who question this meaning do so generally in controversy. Men can do some very strange things, in the way of exegesis, when hard pressed in controversy, and great allowance is to be made for them. Dean Alford, one of the best, and by many esteemed the very best, of modern critics, says: "There can be *no* doubt, on any *honest* interpretation of the words, that 'to be born of water' refers to the token, or outward sign, of baptism." Jesus here teaches, then, beyond any reasonable doubt that to enter the kingdom of God, and become a child of God, one must be baptized. This accords with the example he gave, being himself baptized before the Father said,

“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Thus, both by precept and example, he says to all, “If you would be children of God, you must be baptized.” His teaching and example can by no fair construction be made to mean less than this.

In his last commission given to his disciples, sending them to all nations with the gospel, he said the same thing, without figure or symbol: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature: he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” (Mark xvi: 15, 16.) This language, fairly and honestly interpreted, puts the salvation promised upon the conditions of belief and baptism. How would fair-minded people understand such language out of the Bible? For instance, let a responsible man of this city proclaim thus: “He that believes and is baptized shall have one thousand dollars.” Would the people have any difficulty in understanding the conditions of obtaining the money? Certainly not. Every believer who desired the thousand dollars would be baptized. He would listen to no finely drawn criticisms; he would not delay; nor would he be satisfied with any doubtful “modes.” He would be baptized.

We have had some fine specimens of cavil, of late years, over these words of the Master. This, for example: “True, the Savior said he that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he only said he that *believes* not shall be damned. He did not say he that believes not, and is *not baptized*, shall be damned.” Well, suppose he had said, “He that believes not, and is not baptized, shall be damned;” would there have been any sense in it? No. And if there were any sense in it, would the phrase “and is not baptized,” put into the latter clause of the sentence,

either add to or diminish the conditions of *salvation*? Certainly not. It would only add a condition of *damnation*, would it not? But unbelief being an all-sufficient ground of condemnation, there would be no sense whatever in adding "and is not baptized." Besides, the unbeliever would not if he could, and could not if he would, be baptized.

But we should not go to this commission to ascertain the conditions of *damnation*; but, rather, the conditions of *salvation*. It is that, at any rate, we are inquiring after now. "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved," said the Lord; thus joining belief and baptism together, and upon the two conjointly conditioning salvation.

Richard Watson, the eminent and standard theologian of the Methodist church, in commenting on this commission, in his *Theological Institutes*, uses this language: "To understand the force of these words of our Lord, it must be observed that the gate of the 'common salvation' was only now for the first time going to be opened to the Gentile nations. He himself had declared that in his personal ministry he was sent but to 'the lost sheep of the house of Israel;' and he had restricted his disciples in like manner, not only from ministering to the Gentiles, but from entering any city of the Samaritans. By what means, therefore, were 'all nations' now to be brought into the church of God, which from henceforth was most truly to be catholic or universal? Plainly, by baptizing them that believed the 'good news' and accepted the terms of the new covenant. This is apparent from the words; and thus was baptism expressly made the initiatory rite by which believers of 'all nations' were to be introduced into the church and covenant of grace." (Inst., Part 4, p. 620.)

With Mr. Watson's idea of the church before this commission was given, of circumcision and so forth, we have nothing to do now. This quotation is made to show that this eminent Methodist divine understood our Lord, in these words, to make belief and baptism "the terms of the new covenant," and baptism "the initiatory rite into the church and covenant of grace." Just so my brethren understand it. In the church and covenant of grace, and only in it, so far as the word of God teaches, is salvation. Hence, in this commission, belief and baptism are made conditions of salvation, to all nations and for all ages; not belief alone, but belief *and* baptism. The two are by divine authority and divine appointment joined together in their relation to salvation. "What, therefore, God hath joined together let not man put asunder."

When the apostles went forth to preach under this commission, we find, as might reasonably be expected, that they preached to people of all nations strictly in accordance with its stipulations. That they might be able to do this they were inspired and directed by the Holy Spirit. Hence, our Lord said unto them: "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." This endowment, or clothing with power by the Holy Spirit, was, no doubt, what the Savior, by a figure of speech, called being "baptized with the Holy Spirit." This brings us to the Acts of Apostles, where we shall find their preaching. The first to preach was Peter. The first discourse was at Jerusalem, on the first Pentecost after the ascension and coronation of our Lord. The Holy Spirit came as the Lord had promised. The disciples were there, as they had been instructed to be. "And

they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." "The multitude came together." They were amazed, and wondered at what they saw and heard. Peter explained the cause of their wonder. And then, as directed by the Spirit, he preached to them, as he had been directed by the Lord in the commission. The conclusion of the great and first sermon was in these words: "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ." To the hearts of many of the multitude the sermon carried conviction; for we read that "When they heard this they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do?" It is not worth while to spend time arguing that these inquirers believed, so far as faith is a conviction of the heart. That fact, to a mind fairly disposed, is perfectly apparent. Else how could they have been pricked in their hearts? Are persons *ever* pricked in the heart with what they do *not* believe? Why would they say to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "What shall we do?" Does this question indicate unbelief? These Jews had despised Jesus. They had said, "Crucify him;" "Let his blood be upon us and our children." They had crucified him. They had mocked him in his agonies. They had revelled in his blood. But all this was in unbelief. Now they believe, and earnestly call for their duty. Peter answered, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts ii: 38.) Now, were not Peter's instructions in accordance with the commission he had received of the Lord? There must be, there can be, no translation

or interpretation of Peter's language here that makes it teach less, or more, or in anywise differently from the commission under which he was acting. He had been commanded to "preach." He did it. He had been commanded to preach repentance and remission of sins, in the name of Jesus, beginning at Jerusalem. He had received a commission from the Lord that said; "Preach the gospel to every creature; he that believes and is baptized shall be saved." To all this Peter was *true*, both at Jerusalem and elsewhere thereafter.

In this discourse, then, we find that Peter told believers to repent and be baptized, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins. To their belief, produced by hearing what he had preached, he added the further duties of repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus—repentance and baptism *joined together*—for the remission of sins. What, therefore, God hath joined together let not man put asunder.

Let us next look briefly at the history of Saul's salvation. And we will begin the examination by reading the words of Ananias to him, sent to tell him what he "must do:" "And now, why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts xxii: 16.) We learn in this chapter, and others where Saul's conversion is recited, that on his way from Jerusalem to Damascus, persecuting the disciples, the Lord himself appeared to him. The main purpose, however, for which the Lord appeared *personally* to Saul was to make him an apostle. This the Lord explained to him at the time. But when the Lord appeared to him, Saul was convinced that Jesus was the Christ; was made a believer in him whom he had theretofore persecuted, by hearing the truth from the Lord's own mouth. And he asked:

“What shall I do, Lord?” The Lord told him to go into Damascus, “and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.” We have already seen what was “appointed” for believers to do in the commission; and it was to this appointment, no doubt, the Lord referred. Saul arose and went into Damascus. The Lord sent Ananias to tell him what was “appointed” for him to do, and what he “must do.” Ananias went, and told him, as we have read, “Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” Ananias did not need to preach Jesus to him. Saul had seen him in the way. Ananias did not tell him to believe. Saul did believe already. Ananias did not tell him to repent. Saul was a penitent man already. He had been three days waiting in patience and prayer to know what was “appointed” for him yet to do. That Ananias told him. That only he needed to tell him. And now, let us notice that we have in Saul, a *believer*, a *penitent* believer, a *praying*, penitent believer told to arise and be baptized, and *wash away his sins*, calling on the name of the Lord. Does not this strictly harmonize with the commission, in which the Lord “appointed” that “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved?” It is no wonder Mr. Wesley should say, in his note on these words of Ananias to Saul: “Baptism, administered to real penitents, is both a means and seal of pardon. Nor did God, ordinarily, in the primitive church, bestow this on any, unless through this means.”

We are often asked the impertinent question, “How can *baptism* wash away sins?” We do not know how. Neither do we know how blood cleanses from sin. Still, we believe the word of God. We shall perhaps, never be able to see how baptism washes away sins, and especially

if we look upon it as an empty ceremony. But as long as we see written on it "the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," we ought to consider it sufficiently endorsed to be good for all it calls for. Let us not be troubled by questions of doubt or unbelief. Remember Abraham's faith, and walk in the steps thereof, nothing doubting.

Before leaving this case of Saul, let us indulge a single reflection further. Almost every passage of Scripture quoted to support the doctrine of justification by faith *only*, is taken from Paul's writings and preaching. Here we have seen how *he* came to the remission of sins. Was it by faith only? Surely not. Well, as we have here his experience, would it not be fair, to him, to interpret his preaching and writings in the light of the same? Would it not be wise, as well as fair, to interpret what he said to the jailer, and all he said in his epistles about justification, in harmony with the recorded manner in which he came to the remission of sins?

Before dismissing this part of the subject, let us notice a few passages in the epistles, referring to baptism, and showing its design. (Titus iii; 5:) "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." The washing—or laver—of regeneration is baptism. All the better critics so understand it. The apostle here teaches, then, that God saves us by two things in the regeneration, namely: the renewing of the Holy Spirit and baptism. This accords strictly with the Saviour's own words (John iii 5:): "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." In the one birth the Spirit renews the heart, and the person is baptized—

and is thus saved by the laver of regeneration and renewing of the Spirit. And *both* these passages accord with our Lord's commission, and with the preaching we have noticed under that commission.

(I. Peter iii: 21:) "Wherein [Noah's ark] few, that is eight, souls were saved by water, the antitype whereof, [as Wesley correctly translates], baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." "Baptism now saves us," because our Lord has said, "He that believeth and is baptized *shall be saved*." That's the explanation. Before dismissing this passage—plain enough without comment, but a little difficult to understand after much comment—let us read a remark upon it by Richard Watson, the great Methodist theologian: "In like manner [he had defined the word rendered *answer* to mean aim, intent, and had given an instance in the Old Testament.] baptism has an end, an intent, 'not the putting away of the filth of the flesh,' but obtaining 'a good conscience toward God;' and it *requires, claims*, this good conscience through that faith in Christ whereof cometh remission of sins, the cleansing of the 'conscience from dead works,' and those supplies of supernatural aid by which, in future, men may live in all good conscience before God. It is thus that we see how St. Peter preserves the correspondence between the act of Noah in preparing the ark as an act of faith by which he was justified, and the act of submitting to Christian baptism, which is also obviously an act of faith, in order to the remission of sins, or the obtaining a good conscience before God." (Theo. Inst., part 4, page 624.)

Other passages of Scripture might be cited to show that baptism is *initiative* to the church of God, and hence

to the enjoyment of all its promises and blessings; but what has been read must suffice. Now, are we at liberty to conclude, in the light of these passages from the word of God, that baptism is a mere "*ceremony*," and that one can be justified without it as well as with it? Can we conclude that it is a mere "*symbol*," and in no sense connected with the sinner's justification or salvation? Surely not.

The view some people now take of baptism, that minimizes it to a mere empty ceremony for christening gunboats, cannons and infants, and of no importance even in such cases, is one of the workings of the law of reaction upon the public mind. It is an extreme, begotten by another. The church fathers of the third century magnified baptism as much as some now minimize it. Tertullian, about the beginning of the third century, contended that there was a virtue or grace imparted to the waters of baptism, as to those of the pool of Bethesda, by the angel, that made them efficacious in taking away sins. Others of the church fathers, especially in Egypt, took the same view. And it was in Egypt, and early in the third century, that infant baptism, so-called, was brought into the church. It was put upon the ground of original sin, and the efficaciousness of the waters of baptism to wash away guilt. Tertullian, it is true, did not believe in infant baptism, but it was because he did not believe infants were sinners. But Origen believed in the guilt of infants, and also took the extreme view of the efficaciousness of the waters of baptism. Hence, he contended for infant baptism, to wash away the pollution of their birth. And he was the first man on record to advocate the practice. When this great father was besieged with inquiries as to why infants were baptized, when the practice was a new

one, he answered as follows: "Having occasion given in this place, I will mention a thing that causes *frequent inquiries among the brethren*: Infants are baptized for the *forgiveness of sins*. Of what sins? Or when have they sinned? Or how can any reason of the laver in their case hold good, but according to that sense we mentioned even now; none is free from pollution, though his life be but of the length of one day upon the earth? And it is for that reason, because *by the sacrament of baptism the pollution of our birth is taken away*, that infants are baptized." (Vol. I., p. 65.)

Original sin, and the virtue of the sacrament of baptism, without faith or penitence, to cleanse from sin, compose the ground upon which infant baptism, so-called, was brought into the church, and upon which it was defended by its advocates universally, until within a comparatively recent period. Mr. Wesley thus grounded it in his writings upon the subject. Hear him: "As to the grounds of it: If infants are guilty of original sin then are they proper subjects of baptism; seeing, in the ordinary way, they cannot be saved, *unless this be washed away* by baptism. . . . It is true, the second Adam has found a remedy for the disease which came upon all by the offense of the first; but the benefit of this is to be received through the means which he hath appointed; through baptism in particular, which is the ordinary means he hath appointed for that purpose, and to which God has tied us, though he may not have tied himself." (Treaties on baptism, Doct. Tracts, p. 251.) In the ritual of baptism, in the discipline of the Methodist Episcopal church, it was grounded upon the same doctrine, until that ritual was changed, only a few years ago. Since the great reaction among Protestant pedo-baptists on the question as to the

necessity and importance of baptism, the practice of infant baptism is about left groundless. If it were not already in their churches, it would most likely never come in, since they have now no substantial *reason* for it. In fact, they deem it of comparatively little importance now that even penitent believers should be baptized. With many of them now, baptism is a mere ceremony—almost an empty ceremony. In their controversies they not infrequently belittle it; and in practice they neglect it, especially in the case of infants. Now, they tell us that the only baptism worth contending for—the only real baptism, in fact—is that of the Holy Ghost. Some of them say, with the Quakers, that that is the “one baptism” of the New Testament—the true Christian baptism.

As this discourse is intended to have considerable scope, a few words about the baptism of the Holy Spirit may be allowed. There never was any such literal thing as a baptism with or in the Holy Spirit; no one was ever literally dipped into the Holy Spirit, nor was the Holy Spirit ever literally poured or sprinkled upon any person. The very idea of such a literal baptism is preposterous. What! is the Holy Spirit a liquid or other element that can be turned out in a stream or scattered in particles upon a person, or that a person may be dipped into? Surely not. How, then, comes it to pass that we have in the Scriptures the expression “baptized with the Holy Ghost?” Clearly, it is a figurative expression. When John the Baptist and our Lord spoke of the abundant communication of the Spirit to the first disciples, after the ascension, they called it a baptism by a figure of speech. What is a figure of speech? When one calls one thing by the name of another, in some respects different thing, he uses a figure of speech. It is a very com-

mon mode of expression. We all use words figuratively, and do so frequently. Children do it. It was more common among oriental people two thousand years ago than it is here and now. This method of expression is adopted for the purpose of giving force and emphasis to our thoughts beyond what we are able to do by the literal use of words. If, for example, one wishes to give great emphasis to the thought of some man's *power*, mental or physical, he could do so by calling him an *engine*. This would, of course, be a figure of speech, but one that all would readily understand without concluding that a man is really an engine, or an engine really a man. We have heard boys call some little hero a horse, and we understand the meaning of this homely figure without concluding that a boy is really a horse, or a horse a real boy. The Holy Spirit was given, in a measure, before Jesus ascended to heaven. The prophets had it in some measure, and so did John the Baptist himself, and other good people. But when Jesus ascended to the throne in heaven and was glorified, it was given to his apostles and first disciples in a measure not theretofore known. They were endowed with the Spirit—guided by the Spirit into all the truth, and into the utterance of the truth, in languages with which they were wholly unacquainted. They could interpret tongues, heal the sick, foretell events yet in the future, and even raise the dead to life. When John and our Lord foretold this abundant and extraordinary communication of the Spirit to the disciples of Jesus, they called it a *baptism* of the Spirit. The people to whom they thus spoke knew what it was to be baptized. They had been baptized. John had baptized thousands of people in a recent period. Jesus, by his disciples, baptized more than John. Indeed, baptizing had come to be

a common, every-day thing. It was immersion, too. It was an abundant thing, as to the element used—water. It was performed in the river Jordan. It required “much water.” As to the subject, it was an overwhelming, a burial. Now, this was a very suitable word, to use figuratively, to express the abundant, the overwhelming, gifts of the Spirit promised to the disciples. Jesus so used this very word, because so common and so well known, to convey an idea of the overwhelming character of the sufferings he was to endure. The very best critics have taken this view of the expression “baptized in the Holy Spirit.” Bloomfield, speaking of the expression as used by John the Baptist (Matt. iii. 11,) says: “The most probable opinion is that of Chrysostom and others of the ancients, that baptism here, in the sense *obruere aliquem re*, has reference to the *exuberant abundance* of those extraordinary spiritual gifts soon to be imparted to the first converts.” And, on Acts i. 5, where our Lord uses the same figure, he says: “*Baptized* suggests the *abundance* of the thing—*q. d.* ‘ye shall be *plenteously* imbued with the influences of the Holy Spirit.’”

Dr. MacKnight expresses about the same view: “The descent of the Spirit upon the first converts was called baptism on account of the multitude, variety, and greatness of the gifts with which it was attended, insomuch that the minds of those on whom he descended were as fully replenished with his gifts as their bodies were covered with water in baptism.”

We see nothing now among Christians, nor has there been anything since the extraordinary formative period of the church, that could properly be called, even by a figure, a *baptism* of the Spirit. The children of God now have and enjoy the Holy Spirit in a measure proportioned

to their faith, obedience, and trust, but certainly in no measure such as Paul and Peter did. Men now who make the loudest profession of Holy Spirit baptism are the men who can not be induced, in some cases, to preach the words we all confess were spoken by the Spirit. They oftentimes belittle the commandments given by the Holy Spirit. They are mistaken about having received a *baptism* of the Holy Spirit: it was only a *sprinkling* that they got.

The baptism of the Spirit was a *promise*. The baptism appointed in the commission of our Lord is a *command*. The baptism of the Spirit was not an ordinance or command to be obeyed by the believer, but the baptism of the commission is a command to be obeyed. The baptism of the Spirit was not to be administered by men; but that of the commission was appointed to be administered only by men. The baptism of the Spirit was not a baptism "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" but that of the commission is to be so performed. The baptism of the Spirit was not to be initiative of its subjects; but the baptism of the commission is initiative into the church, into the one body. The baptism of the Spirit was not connected with salvation or the remission of sins; but the baptism of the commission is so connected. The baptism of the commission is an act of the faith of the individual believer, and is hence a transitive act—one in which, by his own voluntary act, he passes into the one body, into Christ: is born into the kingdom of God. The baptism of the Spirit is a figurative baptism; but that of the commission is a literal baptism of the believers of all nations and all times.

The baptism of the commission, and of all those passages already quoted from Acts of Apostles and from the

epistles, is the "one baptism"—the literal baptism of the new institution—and its element is *water*. It is, in almost every way possible to words and figures, connected with the sinner's salvation or pardon. It is joined with faith, and made with it a condition of salvation. It is connected with repentance, and with it made for the remission of sins. It is shown to be *imitatory* in its character—believers are said to have been "baptized into Christ," and so to have "put on Christ;" "baptized into his death;" and so to have come into the benefits of his death; "baptized into one body," and so to have been made members thereof—and in this way shown to be for remission of sins. It may be said in all candor and fairness, and with all proper respect for every one, that no intelligent, fair-minded, person can read the Scriptures cited already in this discourse without feeling in his heart that they do certainly, at least, *seem* to make baptism a condition of remission of sins. And yet it must be granted that intelligent, fair-minded, honest Protestants reject the doctrine, and look upon baptism as a mere "ceremony," or "symbol," or "outward sign" of something; or *something else*, they may not know what—only they may think they know it is not for the remission of sins. And why is this?

Well, Protestants generally have accepted the doctrine of justification by faith; and that is certainly a doctrine of the Scriptures. Justification by faith, it is generally agreed, is opposed to justification by works. This is true. The apostle Paul, most conspicuously of the New Testament teachers, sets the one over against the other. He most emphatically denies that justification is by works of righteousness, and as emphatically affirms that it is by faith. Baptism has been classed with works; and hence

baptism for the remission of sins has been rejected because it has been supposed to be opposed to the Scripture doctrine of justification by faith. This is the most formidable difficulty to-day that the truth on this subject has to contend with. Let us look to this seeming conflict. Let it be granted that if "baptism for the remission of sins" is really opposed to "justification by faith," then it is false. Let us look, however, at the classification. Is baptism *rightly* classed with what Paul calls "works of righteousness?" It certainly is not; and here is the fundamental difficulty. Baptism belongs on the other side. It is always to be classed with faith. It is an act of faith. It is an objective expression of faith. It is faith actualized. Without faith, it is nothing. Without faith, it is indeed an empty ceremony. All that it is, it is *as an expression of faith* in Jesus the Christ. It is *of faith*, and can not be scripturally separated from it. "Baptism for the remission of sins," therefore, is justification by faith. Belief and baptism are *divinely* wedded, and can not be *humanly* divorced. Baptism is opposed to works of righteousness, just as faith is, and just because faith is. Let us consult Paul on this point. Titus iii. 5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, *but* according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Here is *opposition*. In this sentence the apostle opposes "works of righteousness" on the one hand to "the washing of *regeneration* and renewing of the Holy Ghost" on the other. He teaches that God does *not* save us by the "works of righteousness," but *does* save us by the "washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Now, "the washing [or laver] of regeneration" is *baptism*; the renewing of the Holy Ghost is effected through *faith*: so here we have

faith and baptism on the same side, and *opposed* to works of righteousness on the other side. This is *Paul's* classification. It has been denied by some that the "laver of regeneration" is baptism, and asserted, in the interests of error, that it refers to the work of the Spirit in regeneration. This view, however, hardly deserves a notice. It is only necessary to observe that "the renewing of the Holy Ghost" is *added* to the "laver of regeneration." They are two things. The passage clearly means the same as "born of water and the Spirit," and both mean the same as "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Any way, in every scriptural classification, belief and baptism go together, and are opposed to what Paul calls "works of righteousness."

Richard Watson, in his *Biblical and Theological Dictionary*, in an article on "Baptism," says: "The design of this institution [baptism], which was *to express faith* in Christ on the part of those who were baptized, and to declare their resolution of openly professing his religion, and cultivating real and universal holiness, appears from . . . Titus iii: 5." And, again, in his *Theological Institutes*, part 4, page 624: "Baptism, which is *also obviously an act of faith*, in order to the remission of sins, or the obtaining a good conscience before God." This standard Methodist authority is quoted as corroborating the view of baptism which we take, that it is an act of faith, because it is of great weight with some, who, in their controversies on this subject, class baptism with works of righteousness, and to show that such a classification is not only in the teeth of Paul's teaching upon the subject, but also of their own standard theology.

But let us now give attention to what is considered the strongest passage, and the one oftenest quoted, to prove

justification by faith only, and without baptism, in all Paul's writings: "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." (Rom. iv. 4, 5.)

Now, is the apostle here combating the *acts of faith*? Is he to be understood as intending to exclude those acts by which faith expresses itself, and, in fact, *becomes* real, *actual*, living faith? When he says "to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace," does he mean the one who confesses Jesus Christ, and is baptized into him—the one whose faith *speaks* out and *acts* out? Surely not. This would contradict his own experience in coming to remission of sins, as we have already seen, as well as so many unmistakable passages of Scripture—many of them in his own writings. How, then, are we to understand him? Let us hear on this point also a somewhat distinguished Methodist writer, Dr. Whedon, in his *Commentary on the New Testament*. We will read from his notes on Romans, third and fourth chapters. He says: "The battle of the apostle against works in this epistle is part of his great battle against circumcision as a means of salvation, against the claim of the power of the Jewish ritual to *save without Christ*, and against the proud pretenses of heathen moralism. It is, indeed, the battle of *the gospel* against all anti-Christianity. . . . This exclusion of works as a condition means an exclusion of all *merit* or *compensation* to God. . . . If, wherever we find the word *works* in the epistle, we read it *adequate compensation*, we shall at once see the conclusiveness of the apostle's reasoning."

Now, does baptism propose to "*save without Christ*?"

Does it deny or repudiate Christ? Does it belong to "anti-Christianity?" Does it propose to "*pay or compensate God?*" Does any one look upon it as having in it any *purchasing* power? Surely not. On the contrary, baptism is *of* the gospel, and goes with it in "the great battle of the gospel against all anti-Christianity." It is of faith. It is faith *accepting* Christ. It is faith putting on Christ. So far from being a purchasing or compensating work, disclaiming any need of Christ, it is the act of faith by which the penitent believer puts on Christ, "*in whom* we have redemption by his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." It is not opposed to grace. It emphasizes the doctrine of salvation by grace. It is the act in which the penitent believer surrenders himself to Christ to be saved by his grace. It is faith reaching out for the death of Christ. The penitent believer is "baptized into his death"—"is buried with him by baptism into death"—into *his* death. It preaches louder than words can the merit of the death of Christ. Paul was combating a plan or system of justification by works of merit or compensation *without the sacrifice of Christ*—a plan that proposed to save the sinner without faith in Christ, without him at all, in any sense. The effort to class the baptism of the believer with such works is a frightful misrepresentation of the apostle, and is pitiable indeed. It is a stupendous blunder and full of mischief.

We *believe* into Christ, it is true; and it is equally true that we are baptized into Christ. The explanation is that baptism is the act of faith by which we put him on. The doctrine of justification by faith is scriptural, and the doctrine of baptism for the remission of sins is scriptural also. They are both alike and together scriptural. This is the scriptural and conservative view of the subject. It

neither magnifies baptism, by attributing to it some merit or virtue to take away sins without faith, nor minimizes it, by making it a mere ceremony and one of little importance. And, besides, it admits of the truth of all the Scripture statements, both about faith and baptism, without mutilating them. This view of the subject puts an end to that kind of discussion that consists in one party quoting and emphasizing all those passages of Scripture that teach justification by faith, and the other party quoting with emphasis those passages which teach baptism for remission of sins; thus seeming, to the untaught, to array Scripture against Scripture.

And this view, too, harmonizes perfectly the teachings of the apostles Paul and James. The sinner is justified by faith, without such works as Paul excluded; and yet faith, without such acts as make it a real, actual, living faith, "is dead, being alone," as James taught. We are justified without such works as Paul combated; but we are justified by such works as James contended for—*works of faith*—"obedience to the faith"—as Paul also taught.

SERMON XII.

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? (Acts xvi: 30.)

THERE is a general agreement among Protestants that the principle on which men are accepted with God is the same, and has been the same, in all dispensations, patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian. In fact, principles never change. Forms, ceremonies, ordinances, and positive enactments have been changed with the different dispensations, but the same principles obtain through all. Principles are durable. Faith is a principle running through all the dispensations of religion. It is the principle, on our part, upon which God accepts and blesses us. This principle has obtained from Adam to the present time. But faith, merely as a conviction of the heart, merely as a psychological condition, is not sufficient, and never has been, to bring the soul into acceptance with God and the enjoyment of his promises. In this meager sense it is worthless; it is dead. Faith must be a real, living, actual principle to benefit the soul. It must be faithfulness to God. It must be fidelity to him. It must be firm allegiance to duty to God and implicit trust in him. In divinely appointed forms, ceremonies, ordinances, and positive laws, faith acts, expresses itself, actualizes itself, and becomes the living, actual, real principle on which men are accepted with God. Real, living faith hears what God says, does what he bids, and trusts his promises.

Only such faith is worth anything; indeed, only such faith is alive.

The Bible deals very little in verbal definitions. Its method of teaching is rather by examples, illustrations, exemplifications of principles. God shows us principles in the lives of men. The life of Abraham is God's definition of faith to men. In that life, God shows us what he means by faith. Here we have a complete, divine standard of faith. Hence Abraham is "the father of all them that believe." He is held up in the Bible as an example of faith, and all who would be children of God are bidden to "walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham." In no instance was faith ever put to severer trial. But in every trial it came out approved. It expressed itself. It actualized itself. "By faith, Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith, he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the promise." And again: "By faith, Abraham when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called, accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead." Abraham staggered at nothing. What God said do, that he did, yielding unquestioning obedience to God. No sacrifice of ease, or feeling, or philosophy was too great for him. Isaac was to Abraham everything. All promises, all his hopes, were bound up in him. He was absolutely *all* the future to Abraham. But he did not withhold him from God. And when he had in his heart offered him up to God, then it was he came to the

ram, the *substitute* God provided for Isaac, the type of him to whom faith now brings us all. Here we have the true type of faith, and the type of Christ, our sacrifice.

God bids us look at Abraham, and thus shows us what *he means by faith*. In Abraham he presents us a man that was faithful to him; not merely when it was convenient; not merely when it seemed wise to him; not merely when it was in the line of his pleasure, or philosophy, or convenience; but at all times and at any sacrifice.

Abraham's faith was expressed and actualized by doing what God required *him* to do. Noah's faith was actualized by doing what God told *him* to do. So, under the Christian dispensation, faith comes into actual existence by obedience to the commands of Christ. The principle is the same, but its actualization differs under the different dispensations. Faith is the same *subjectively* in all dispensations; but *objectively* it is varied by the divine commands.

With these remarks premised, we proceed to the question:

“WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?”

This is a practical question. It is *the* practical question, and, in fact, the only really practical question in the whole matter of our salvation. Of course, God saves us. His love is the prime, moving cause of our salvation. But all questions as to the divine attributes are theoretical, and all deductions as to the action of these attributes are more or less speculative.

God saves us through Jesus Christ. The death of Jesus is the sole meritorious, or compensative cause of our salvation. But even the atonement is not a practical question. Just how God can, in virtue of the sacrifice of Christ, be just and the justifier of the believer, we may

not understand. How the death of Christ met the demands of justice and satisfied the claims of the law against us, is not a practical question. It is enough for us to accept the facts as stated in the word of God.

All we do or can do is merely *appropriative*. But what God has required of us must be done. This is, therefore, the practical question: "What must I do to be saved?" It is not what must God, or Christ, or the Holy Spirit do? but what must *I* do? That's the practical question with us in the whole matter.

We find this question, substantially, propounded four times in the New Testament by sinners, and in no case were they rebuked for it. On the other hand, it was always heard and treated as a proper question, both by the Savior himself, and, after him, by his disciples. The first instance was that of the rich young man who came to Jesus in his personal ministry and asked: "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Jesus told him to "keep the commandments." The young man again asked: "Which?" Jesus referred him to the commandments of the decalogue. The young man answered: "All these have I kept from my youth up; what lack I yet?" This was under the Mosaic dispensation, and the law given by Moses, as a divine code, was still in force. The young man knew the law. He had lived under it from his youth up. He expected, no doubt, that Jesus would tell him something else, if not different from the law, in addition to it. And he had reason to expect something else. Jesus in speaking of the law, in the sermon on the mount, had said quite enough to justify the expectation. But the law was still in force. True, the evening twilight of that dispensation had come, and the morning twilight of the new one was dawning;

but the law was yet in force, and Jesus taught the young man to keep it. All else he could then do was, in the language of Jesus: "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come follow me." Under the law, a Jew's whole duty was to keep the law. In the mingling twilight of the dispensations, while yet the law was in force, one could keep the law, and leave all and follow Jesus, as the disciples did, and thus be schooled for the work of the coming dispensation. Under the Christian dispensation, one's whole duty is to hear and obey Christ. We are under the full light of the Christian dispensation. We can not, therefore, now properly answer one as Jesus did the rich young man. That answer was right then, but it would not be right now. No one, I presume, would so answer a sinner now.

After the ascension of our Savior and the descension of the Holy Spirit, and after the law, given until the promised seed should come, had expired by limitation, and the gospel had been committed to the disciples to be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, we find in Acts of Apostles this question three times propounded, and answered.

When the gospel was first preached at Jerusalem by Peter, the convicted Jews there "said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, *Men and brethren, what shall we do?*"—to be saved, of course.

Then, again, Saul, when convinced that Jesus, whom he had theretofore persecuted so fiercely, was indeed the Christ, he asked the Lord, "*What wilt thou have me to do?*"

In the text, the jailer at Philippi propounds the same question substantially to Paul and Silas. It is the answer to this question with which this sermon will have to do.

In the first place, we notice that the answers to this question, even in the Christian dispensation, and all given to sinners, are not the same. At Jerusalem, Peter's answer was: "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts ii: 38.)

When Saul propounded this question to the Savior, we read that the "Lord said unto him, Arise and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." Saul went. The Lord then sent Ananias to tell him what he "must do." Ananias went; and, after telling him that he was to be an apostle and a witness unto all men of what he had seen and heard, he said: "And now, why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts xxii: 16.)

The jailer at Philippi was answered "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." The question is the same substantially in all these cases, but in each case receives a different answer. Why is this? If we can determine why it is, we shall at the same time, and by the same process, arrive at the full exhaustive answer to the question of the sermon, "What must I do to be saved?"

Let us try to take a comprehensive view of this great subject. It is so easy to be narrow in our views that it requires an effort to be otherwise. It is possible for one to look so steadfastly and intently upon one thing as to be unable to see another. It is possible for one to believe one thing so devoutly as not to believe another thing equally true, at all. It is possible for one to so interpret a statement of Scripture as to make it contradict another

statement equally true, consistent, and important. Friends of the Scriptures ought to try to interpret them harmoniously. Every statement of Scripture upon a given subject should be so interpreted, if possible, as to admit of the truth of every other Scripture statement upon the same subject. Enemies of the Bible do not always so interpret it, but surely its friends should. Would we not so interpret the statements of a letter from a friend? Would we put any possible interpretation upon any statement in a letter from a friend, even though it should make it contradict other statements in the same letter? Not if it were possible to interpret them all harmoniously.

Now, let us apply this rule of harmonious interpretation to each and all of the Scripture answers to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" If it be possible, and it certainly is, as we shall see, let us construe all these answers consistently and harmoniously. If we agree to this, and I trust we do, the difficulty is passed, and we shall have no further trouble in understanding the subject.

Let us begin with the answer of Paul and Silas to the jailer—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." It is possible, now, to interpret this statement as a full, detailed, and an exhaustive answer to the question for the sinner under all circumstances, and, thus, to come to the conclusion that a sinner has only to believe on the Lord Jesus to be saved. But, then, what shall we do with the answer of Peter, at Jerusalem—"Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins?" and with that of Ananias to Saul—"Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord?" Shall we make that contradict these? or shall we so construe these as to make them mean nothing? We want no contradiction; neither

do we desire to interpret any part of the word of God clean away; so we will try another interpretation of the phrase, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." We will say it is not an exhaustive answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" but a sufficient and a proper answer to the person who asked it, *in his condition*, and, indeed, the proper answer to all persons under like circumstances, but to be supplemented by further instructions when circumstances and conditions are changed; that is, we will conclude that, while Paul and Silas only told the jailer to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," immediately upon his asking the question, they afterward—after enlightening him concerning the way of salvation—commanded him to "repent and be baptized, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." This would harmonize the two answers, anyhow. Now let us see if the context will not justify—does not, in fact, demand—this interpretation. Immediately following the answer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house," we read as follows: "And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes and was baptized, he and all his, straightway."

So it appears that immediately upon telling the inquirer to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, "they spake unto him the word of the Lord." Now, when he heard "the word of the Lord" and believed, his condition was changed—the condition of his mind, certainly, and most likely that of his heart. When the apostles told him to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, they did not wait for him to ask, who is the Lord Jesus Christ? or, how can I believe? but they immediately "spake unto him the word

of the Lord." This was, of course, to enlighten him concerning the Lord Jesus, for as yet there is no evidence that the jailer had even heard of him. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of the Lord." They spake unto him the word of the Lord, therefore, that he might believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, as they had commanded him. When he had heard the word, and had become a believer, did not the apostles command him to repent and be baptized? It is not written that they did, but is it not clearly *inferable* that they did? Why did he take them the same hour of the night and wash their stripes, and be baptized? What did he know about baptism if they had not told him? Repentance and baptism are a part of "the word of the Lord." When, therefore, "they spake unto him the word of the Lord," he learned the further duties of repentance and baptism; and that accounts for his attending to them the same hour of the night.

It is important to bear in mind the condition of the jailer when he asked what he must do to be saved. He had not heard the word of the Lord. He was not a believer in Jesus. There is no evidence that he knew anything of him whatever. He had doubtless heard that Paul and Silas claimed to be "the servants of the most high God," to "show unto the people the way of salvation." The "damsel possessed with a spirit of divination" had followed them, proclaiming this for many days. Paul cast the spirit out of her. Her masters were enraged. Paul and Silas were arrested, and beaten, and delivered to the jailer. This was all he knew about them up to the time he thrust them into the prison. The great earthquake at midnight aroused him. The situation alarmed him. He, supposing the prisoners had escaped, was about

to take his own life. Paul told him to do himself no harm ; that the prisoners had not gone, as he had feared. The jailer then recollected that Paul and Silas claimed to be the servants of the most high God. He was satisfied the prison had been shaken by the power of the most high God. He concluded, therefore, that they must be the servants of the most high God, showing the people the way of salvation. Hence it was that he asked them what he must do to be saved. The apostles gave him a general answer, stating the general principle upon which sinners are saved, deferring the details until he had heard the word of the Lord and believed. Then, as we have seen, having learned the way of salvation more fully, he proceeded, penitently, to be baptized the same hour of the night.

Now, let us look more particularly into the condition of the persons at Jerusalem who "said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do?" We find, by examining the context, that Peter had *already* preached unto them Jesus as the Lord and Christ, concluding his sermon with this sentence: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Then we are told that "when they heard this they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter did not tell them to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, as Paul told the jailer; and why not? Evidently because they already believed. They had heard the story of Jesus; of his resurrection, exaltation, and coronation in heaven. It had gone into their hearts. They believed it, and asked for their duty. Peter commanded them to do precisely what the jailer did *after he heard the word* and believed: "Repent and be baptized, every one

of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." So we find these two answers, not contradictory, but harmonious, only varied by the *condition* of the parties addressed.

As we have already seen, when Saul asked this same question, "What wilt thou have me to do?" he was told to go into the city of Damascus, and there it should be told him what he "must do." Ananias was sent to him, who told him only to "arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Why did he not tell him to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," as Paul himself afterwards told the jailer? Because Saul already believed. Had he not seen the Lord himself and heard the truth from his own mouth, on the way from Jerusalem? He certainly had, and certainly was now a believer, in so far as faith is a conviction of the heart. As a believer, he had asked for his duty, and had been sent to Damascus with the promise that there he should be told what he "must do;" and Ananias had been sent there to tell him. There was no need to tell *him* to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. He did that already. He was not in the same condition of the jailer at Philippi, who had never heard the word of the Lord and believed, and, therefore, did not need the same answer.

Why, then, was not Saul told to "*repent* and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," as Peter told the inquiring Jews at Jerusalem? Simply because Ananias had sufficient evidence that Saul was already a penitent man. Had he not been in Damascus "three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink?" and had not the Lord told Ananias that Saul was praying? Why tell him to repent? Ananias knew he was a penitent already; knew he was a penitent believer

—a praying penitent believer; and, therefore, did not tell him to believe, or to repent, but to arise and be baptized, and wash away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord. He instructed him as to his duty according to his condition and need.

Thus we see that though the answers to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" varied in words somewhat in these three cases, owing to the different conditions of the inquirers, yet, in fact, they were in perfect harmony. The jailer, the Jews to whom Peter preached at Jerusalem, and Saul, all did precisely the same things; they all believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; they all repented, and were all baptized. Now, this brings us to the complete answer to our question. If an untaught, unbelieving person should ask the question, as the jailer, it would be right to answer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; as Paul and Silas did. But when taught the word of the Lord, as were the Jews at Jerusalem, it would be right to answer, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins," as Peter did. And when the inquirer is a penitent, praying believer, as Saul was, he should be told, "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." All travel over precisely the same ground, so to speak, but are answered differently, because they asked the question at different points on the way. For illustration, let us suppose three persons three miles from Columbus, and, at that point, one of them asks a man whom he meets, "How far is it to Columbus?" He is answered correctly, "Three miles." They travel a mile on the way, and there another of the three asks a gentleman whom he meets, "How far is it to Columbus?" and is answered

correctly, "Two miles." A mile further, the third one inquires, and is answered, "One mile." We can see how each inquirer was answered correctly; yet the answers were different, being varied by the distance of the parties from the objective point. But all these traveled over the same ground. It was right, when three miles away, to answer, "Three miles;" but that answer would not have been right when only two miles, or one mile, away. What would we think of a man that had but *one* answer to the question, How far is it to Columbus? no matter at what point the question was asked? We would think a machine might be made to do as well, would we not? But there are people who have but one answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" No matter how far the inquirer may be from salvation, or how near, the answer is the same in all cases: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Of course, it cannot be said that this is not a scriptural answer, for it is in the very language of Scripture. The trouble is that it is often given out of place. We can readily see how that it would be wrong to tell a man that it was three miles to Columbus when he was only a mile away, because some one had so answered him two miles further off. Some of our religious neighbors have but one answer for the inquirer after salvation, no matter about his *condition*. It is, in all cases, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." Thus they answer the unbeliever, and correctly, too; and thus they answer the believer, incorrectly, of course. To characters such as the jailer was they say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ;" and in this they are right. To characters such as the instructed and convicted Jews at Jerusalem they say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ;" and in this they are wrong, as Peter's answer to such

persons clearly shows. Even to such characters as Saul was when Ananias went to him they say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ;" and that they are wrong in so doing the instructions of Ananias to Saul sufficiently show. Such believing penitents are often kept waiting and praying, taught and encouraged to expect some evidence directly from God that their sins are forgiven. If their imaginations are quick and easily wrought upon, they can be made to take their own feelings, raised to a high pitch by prayers, songs, and exhortations, as evidence of their pardon; and then, and thereafter, their assurance varies with the ebb and flow of the tide of feeling. Thus persons are oftentimes kept in a state of alternating belief and doubt, hope and fear, for days, weeks, months, years—some all their lives—with no other evidence of their pardon than they can find in the quicksands of their own imaginations. This is sad, but true. It is almost needless to say to the readers of the New Testament that nothing of the kind was known in apostolic times. Then persons were promptly taught, according to their conditions, what to do to be saved, and how to come to the promise of salvation, and to rely upon that promise with all the assurance with which we may stand upon the immutable and immovable Rock. And so it should be now.

Happy feelings are not to be despised or disparaged, but they should be sought in the promises of God. Our feelings, however, are not evidence of sins forgiven. Our feelings follow our faith. If we believe we are pardoned, we will feel so whether it be a fact or not. The apostles never taught persons to believe they were pardoned and then take their resultant feelings as evidence of the fact. Such teaching is as unscriptural as it is unreasonable. Remission of sins is promised to the baptized penitent be-

liever; and if sinners were taught now, as they were by the apostles, to come thus to the promise of God, they would do so now as then, and go on their way rejoicing as happy, and more intelligently so than they can be by being persuaded simply to believe they are pardoned and to take their feelings as proof of the fact.

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ!” Certainly. But stop not there, trying to believe you are pardoned. “Go forward.” “Repent and be baptized, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.” Then you may stand upon the promise of him who, having all authority, said to his disciples, “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature: he that believes and is baptized shall be saved,” and with a confidence that will not be shaken by a world in flames.

All this only brings one to salvation, to the enjoyment of that salvation which is of God in Christ Jesus. Then, still, the watchword should be, “Forward.” To the person thus brought to the enjoyment of salvation, more can not be said in so few words than: “Besides this giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. . . . For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

SERMON XIII.

INFANT BAPTISM.

ONE of the questions about baptism concerning which there is difference and discussion is as to the proper *subject* of the ordinance—that is, who may be scripturally baptized? It is about universally admitted that a penitent believer in Jesus Christ, who has not been baptized, is a scriptural subject of the ordinance. It might be worth while to mention that some Baptists who take pride in being somewhat exclusive try to make it appear that even more than penitence and belief in Jesus, on the part of the candidate, is necessary—that is, what they call an “experimental knowledge of sins forgiven.” But there is nothing in the scriptures about any such “experimental knowledge” as a pre-requisite to baptism, and those who profess to have it have never succeeded in making anything intelligible of it. What is an “experimental knowledge of sins forgiven?” We are told that it is a certain state of feeling, or condition of soul, and we have no right or inclination to call in question any one’s state of feelings; for the feelings of a man are known only to “the spirit of the man which is in him.” But who is authorized to interpret *any* state of feeling as an “evidence of sins forgiven?” Forgiveness of sins is one of “the things of God, that none knoweth save the Spirit of God.” How are we to know the things in the mind of God? The Apostle Paul tells us: “But we [the apos-

bles] received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God; which things also *we speak*, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth." (1 Cor. ii: 12, 13.) God conveys to us, then, a knowledge of the things in his mind, which he freely gives us, *by his Spirit, in words*; so that no man is left to interpret a mere state of feeling as the evidence of sins forgiven. If each man's interpretation of his own state of feeling is the only evidence he has of his pardon, then it would be difficult to show what advantage, in this respect, the Christian has of the Jew, or of the Mohammedan, or of the Pagan; would it not? But we intend no discussion now of the evidence of pardon; and refer to this matter only to pay a passing notice to a seeming exception to the general admission that a penitent believer in Jesus Christ is a scriptural subject of baptism. That's all now.

While, as has been said, there is very general agreement that penitent believers are scriptural subjects of baptism, some say that only such persons are. Then there are others who contend that infant children also are proper subjects of the ordinance. These are the two sides to the most important point of difference on the question. It might be worth while to note the fact that those who believe in and practice infant baptism, so-called, are divided among themselves as to the extent of it, scripturally. Some confine the right of it to infants of believing parents; others to infants of parents one of whom is a believer; and others extend it to all infants. We shall not stop, however, to discuss these questions of difference among pedo-baptists, but will leave that to them; while we shall discuss the primary and more fundamental question as to whether *any*

infants are scriptural subjects of this ordinance. It being admitted generally by pedo-baptists that penitent believers who have not been baptized are proper subjects of the ordinance, the only question between them and disciples about the *subject* of baptism is as to the baptism of infants; and in the discussion of this question, the disciples are in the negative. So that my discourse on the *subject* of baptism, if to any purpose at all, will really be one against infant baptism.

METHODS OF PROOF.

To establish such a practice as the baptism of infants, it has been held and it seems to me properly and correctly, that there are but three possible methods of proof—that is, of course, from the Protestant standpoint. With such persons as believe in high churchism, the authority of the church is all-sufficient. But with these I shall not reason in this discourse. If I were going to argue with them about infant baptism, or about sprinkling and pouring for baptism, or about any one of several other questions, I should begin with the fundamental question of church authority.

The three methods of proof among Protestants, then, are (1) Precept of scripture, (2) Example of scripture, and (3) Inference from scripture. By precept of scripture is meant an express commandment, recorded in scripture, either by our Lord himself or by some one unquestionably authorized by him, that infants should be baptized. Such a commandment would settle the question in favor of the practice in the judgment of all who recognize the supreme authority of the scriptures in all matters of our religion. By example of scripture is meant a recorded instance of the baptism of an infant with the approval either of our Lord himself or any one of the inspired men

of the New Testament. This also would settle the question in favor of the practice with all who make the Bible the supreme authority upon the subject. By inference from scripture is meant a logical deduction from scripture either that infants were baptized by our Lord or some one or more of his authorized teachers in New Testament times, or that he or they said that they should be.

But now of the first and second methods ; What can be claimed as to express scripture precept or example for the baptism of infants? Let us attend to this question for a few moments. I am not going myself to answer this question, but to take the answer from pedo-baptists themselves, and from such as are confessedly eminent and scholarly among them.

BISHOP BURNET.—“There is no express precept, or rule, given in the New Testament for baptism of infants.” *Exposit. of Thirty-nine Articles, Art. xxvii.*

DR. WALL.—“Among all the persons that are recorded as baptized by the Apostles there is no express mention of any infant.” *Hist. Inf. Bap. Introduct. p. 1.*

LUTHER.—“It cannot be proved by the sacred scripture that infant baptism was ‘instituted by Christ, or begun by the first Christians after the Apostles’.” *In A. R’s. Vanity of Inf. Bap. part ii. p. 8.*

SAMUEL PALMER.—“There is nothing in the words of the institution, nor in any after accounts of the administration of this rite, respecting the baptism of infants; there is not a single precept for nor example of this practice through the whole New Testament.” *Ans. to Dr. Priestley’s Address on the Lord’s Supper, p. 7.*

BISHOP SANDERSON.—“The baptism of infants, and the sprinkling of water in baptism instead of immersing

the whole body, must be exterminated from the Church, according to their principle; i. e., that nothing can be lawfully performed, much less required, in the affairs of religion which is not either commanded by God in the scripture, or at least recommended by a laudable example." De. Obligat. Conscient. Prelect iv. pp. 17, 18.

DR. FREEMAN.—“The traditions of the whole Catholic church confirm us in many of our doctrines; which, though they may be gathered out of scripture, yet are not laid down there in so many words: such as infant baptism, and of episcopal authority above presbyters.” Preservative against popery, Title iii: p. 19.

WALKER.—“Where authority from the scripture fails there the authority of the church is to be held as a law. . . . It doth not follow that our Savior gave no precept for the baptizing of infants, because no such precept is particularly expressed in the scripture; for our Savior spoke many things to his disciples concerning the kingdom of God, both before his passion and also after his resurrection, which are not written in the scriptures; and who can say but that among those *unwritten* sayings of his, there might be an express precept for infant baptism.” Modest Plea for Inf. Bap. pp. 221, 368.

MR. FULLER.—“We do freely confess that there is neither express precept, nor precedent, in the New Testament for the baptizing of infants. . . . There were many things which Jesus did which are not written; among which, for aught appears to the contrary, the baptizing of these infants, [Luke xviii: 15, 16, 17,] might be one of them.” Infants Advocate, pp. 71, 150.

I have made these quotations second-hand, from a work by Abraham Booth, entitled *Pedo-baptism Examined*, Vol. 1, pp. 303-307. Booth was an English Baptist. I have

never heard the correctness of his quotations questioned, though his work has been read and used for more than a half-century. I might read many more extracts, from pedo-baptist authors, of the same import, from the same volume, but what I have read are quite sufficient for my purpose. I would not be misunderstood as to the use of these authors. Most of them, while they accepted the scriptures as authoritative in religion, believed also in tradition and the authority of the church in such matters as the baptism of infants, etc. etc., as their own language shows. They were all pedo-baptists; that is, they all believed in and practiced infant baptism; but they did not claim any express scripture precept or example in its support. And it is for this purpose—to show this fact—that I have adduced their writings. With them tradition and church authority were all-sufficient authority in such matters. And while they were, in a sense, Protestants, they did not fully endorse what we now call the great principle of Protestantism—“that the Bible and the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants”—or if they did, they did not extend that principle to such matters as the baptizing of infants, and of sprinkling instead of immersing. The supposed unwritten sayings and acts of our Lord handed down to us by the church, and backed by its authority in such matters, was all the authority these men wanted for infant baptism and sprinkling for baptism. But such authority will not do for those who fully endorse and live up to the Protestant principle. If we are all to have the liberty of turning our imaginations loose among the supposed unwritten sayings and doings of our Lord and his apostles, we can exhume thence a good deal more than infant baptism. And if we are to trust the traditions and authority of the Catholic church in bringing down to us those

unwritten things, we shall not be able to stop short of popery and all its claims.

In the next place, we shall see what some very eminent and scholarly pedo-baptists, who repudiate tradition and church authority altogether, have to say on the question as to scripture precept and example for infant baptism—some more recent writers than those quoted from Mr. Booth.

I read first from the *Southern Review* [Methodist] Vol. xiv: No. 30, pp. 334–336. In an article on the “*History of Infant Baptism*” the editor, A. T. Bledsoe, LL. D., says: “It is an article of our faith, that the baptism of young children [infants] is in anywise to be retained in the church, *as most agreeable to the institution of Christ.*’ But yet, with all our searching we have been unable to find, in the New Testament, a single express declaration, or word, in favor of infant baptism. We justify the rite, therefore, solely on the ground of logical inference, and not on any express word of Christ or his apostles. This may, perhaps, be deemed, by some of our readers, a strange position for a pedo-baptist. It is by no means, however, a singular opinion. Hundreds of learned pedo-baptists have come to the same conclusion; especially since the New Testament has been subjected to a closer, more conscientious, and more candid exegesis than was formerly practiced by controversialists.” Then, to justify his statement that his was not “a singular opinion,” the writer cites other distinguished pedo-baptist writers as follows:

KNAPP’S THEOLOGY:—“There is no decisive example of this practice in the New Testament . . . There is, therefore, no express command for infant baptism found in the New Testament, as *Morus* justly concedes.” (Vol. ii: p. 524.)

DR. JACOB:—“However reasonably we may be con-

vinced that we find in the Christian scriptures 'the fundamental idea from which infant baptism was afterward developed,' and by which it may now be justified, *it ought to be distinctly acknowledged that it is not an apostolic ordinance.*"

NEANDER:—"Originally baptism was administered to adults; nor is the general spread of infant baptism at a later period any proof to the contrary; for even after infant baptism had been set forth as an apostolic institution, its introduction into the general practice of the church was but slow. Had it rested upon apostolic authority, there would have been a difficulty in explaining its late approval, and that even in the third century, it was opposed by at least one eminent father of the church."

Dr. Bledsoe, after making the quotations just read, adds: "We might, if necessary, adduce the admission of *many other* profoundly learned pedo-baptists, that their doctrine is not found in the New Testament, either in express terms, or by implication from any portion of its language." And again he says: "But what we wish, in this connection, to emphasize most particularly, is the wonderful contrast between the silence of Christ and the everlasting clamors of his church. Though he uttered not one express word on the subject of infant baptism, yet, on this very subject, have his professed followers filled the world with sound and fury. The apostles imitated his silence. But yet, in spite of all this, have the self-styled 'successors of the apostles,' and the advocates of their claims, made the universal church, and all the ages, ring with controversies, loud and long and deep, respecting the rite of infant baptism."

I will read one other testimony on this point—that is, showing that the eminent and scholarly among the pedo-

baptists, who do not accept the authority of the church or of tradition, frankly concede that the practice in question has no scripture precept or example in its support. I read from a little volume entitled “*Doctrinal Tracts*,” published for the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal church, containing an article on baptism prepared especially for the volume, and to take the place of one by Mr. Wesley which had been published in the little volume for almost a generation before. The new tract was prepared by a committee appointed by Conference for that very purpose. Here is what that new tract says on the point in hand :

“They [anti-pedo-baptists] object that there is no explicit warrant for baptizing infants in the New Testament, and they conclude that infants should not be baptized. By an explicit warrant they mean some express declaration either that infants should be or that they were baptized. . . . That there is no such explicit warrant for the baptism of infants is freely acknowledged.” (*Doct. Tracts* p. 250.)

It is needless to multiply concessions on this point. Enough have been adduced to show that many of the most eminent and scholarly pedo-baptists admit what we claim, namely, that there is no express scripture precept or example for infant baptism. There are, we concede, many among the advocates of this practice, who, for want of the necessary information, it may be, or, possibly, for want of sufficient candor, refuse to make this admission. But such persons can do little else than wrangle about it. At any rate they have failed to show even to their own brethren the precept or example.

LOGICAL INFERENCE,

then, is the only remaining method of proof by which any

respectable effort can be made to sustain this practice. Hence said Dr. Bledsoe correctly and candidly: "We justify the rite, therefore, *solely* on the ground of logical inference, and *not* on any express word of Christ or his apostles." And now, what shall we say of this method of sustaining such a practice as the one in question? Is "logical inference," be it ever so strong *as such*, a sufficient ground for it? Has God made it the duty of Christian parents to have their infant children baptized and left them to find out that such is their duty solely by logical inference? In other words, has he made it their duty, without saying one word about it in his entire revelation to men? Now, if infant baptism were a thing of indifference, a mere matter of expediency, and hence one that needed no proof, then, I grant that we might accept and practice it solely on the ground of logical inference. But it is no matter of this kind. Any one can see that it is calculated to, and that to the extent of its prevalence it does, completely set aside the baptism of believers. If it ever comes to prevail universally over christendom, then, thereafter there will be no such thing in christendom as the baptism of believers. And there will stand the *express words* of our Lord in the commission, "He that *believes* and is baptized," completely nullified—nullified, too, by a practice justified solely on the ground of logical inference! Infant baptism will then stand as the only institution under heaven having written upon it "the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." And it will stand solely on the ground of logical inference! Can a logical inference do all this? If so, it seems to me that it ought to be no doubtful one. It ought to be such an inference as all logicians can see. And even then there would be a very grave if not insuperable difficulty about

it, arising out of the fact that all parents are not good *logicians*. Logic, I know, is supposed to be perfect; but there are very few people who perfectly understand it. There are very few perfect *logicians*. People differ often and widely as to logical inferences. They often draw different conclusions from the same premises—make different inferences from the same facts. This, true enough, may not be the fault of logic, but the misfortune of the people, that they are not all good *logicians*.

There are inferences, I grant, so very plain that all responsible persons must see them. But is infant baptism supported by any such inferences? Has there ever been a logical inference drawn in support of this practice that even all pedo-baptists could see? I believe it can be shown that every inference that has ever been brought to support this practice has been disputed even by some who practice it. True, it may be, that they all justify their practice in their own estimation by inference, but they do not all agree on any one inference. There is no one inference that is not disputed by some of them. Then how can they expect unbelievers in the practice to adopt it upon an inference that is so doubtful that it is disputed even by some who believe in the practice? Some believe upon one inference, disputed by others; and others believe upon another inference, disputed by some. And yet they would all have us believe upon such proof, that God has made it the duty of all Christian parents to have their children baptized.

In the next place we shall notice a few of the arguments, or inferences, brought forward to support this practice. Here is one contributed by Dr. Bledsoe, in the same article from which we have already quoted his concession as to precept and example :

“Since the first disciples of Christ, as native Jews, never doubted that children were to be introduced into the Israelitish church by circumcision, it was natural that they should include children also in baptism, if Christ did not expressly forbid it. . . It was not only natural that they *should*, it was absolutely certain that they *would*, include children in baptism, as the event has shown. Yet Christ foreseeing the event, did not forbid it. Hence it must have been agreeable to his will.” There! that’s an inference which in the judgment of Dr. Bledsoe and some other great men is quite sufficient to justify infant baptism. It has failed, however, to convince the doubters; and is not satisfactory to all believers in infant baptism—believers on other grounds. Let us see: It assumes that owing to the bias the custom of circumcising infant children under the former dispensation had given to their minds, “the first disciples of Christ, as native Jews” began the practice of baptizing infants. But is this true? Do all pedo-baptists, even, accept it? No indeed! Let us hear Martin Luther on it: “It cannot be proved by the sacred scripture that infant baptism was instituted by Christ, or *begun by the first Christians after the apostles.*” As a matter of historical fact infant baptism was not begun by Jewish Christians at all; but in Africa, and long after “the first disciples of Christ” were dead. Many of the “first disciples of Christ, as native Jews,” with too strong a leaning to the circumcision of infant children, and to Mosaism generally, did a good many things they ought not to have done, and brought a good deal of trouble into the church of God; but the introduction of infant baptism is not one of the sins they will have to answer for. Give every one his due.

But the Doctor says, “Christ foreseeing the event, did

not forbid it. Hence it must have been agreeable to his will." There is a sweeping inference for you! If that justifies infant baptism, it must also justify *every* event foreseen and not forbidden by Christ. Logic is always fair. Those who undertake to inform us about the foreknowledge of God—experts in this field—tell us that he foresaw *all* things that come to pass. Then all things that come to pass, which he has not expressly forbidden, are "agreeable to his will." But that proves too much for Dr. Bledsoe, or for anybody else, excepting perhaps some very old Calvinists: and, proving too much, it proves nothing at all. Just think of it! Setting aside the command of God, that believers should be baptized, and justifying the substitution of infant baptism for it "solely on the ground of logical inference," and no better inference than that "Christ foreseeing the event, did not forbid it: hence it must have been agreeable to his will! !"

HOUSEHOLD BAPTISM,

Or, as our pedo-baptist friends prefer to call it, "the inference from the baptism of whole families recorded in the New Testament." Among the unlearned of the rank and file there is perhaps no inference more confidently relied on as justifying the practice in question than this one. With them a household means exactly a family, in the modern sense; and a family always includes at least one infant; family baptism therefore involves infant baptism, as one of the inexorable necessities of logic. Well, let us see about it.

It has never yet been shown, that anybody knows of, that the word "house" or "household," (from the same Greek word,) in the New Testament, ever means family, in the sense of parents, or parent and children. This has

only been assumed; and assumed, too, contrary to very significant facts. It is a fact, that when a writer of New Testament times meant to include little children in any statement, he did not rely upon the word *house* or *household* to do it; but even where the word *house* was used, he would use other words in the same sentence to indicate little children. Of course, I speak not now of writers in the New Testament, but of writers as nearly contemporaneous as we can get. Let us read a few examples from the "Pastor of Hermas," a production of Hermas, the same, most likely, mentioned by Paul, (Rom. xvi: 14.) as his contemporary. In his work, divided into Commandments and Chapters, Hermas says:

"Now I say to you, if you do not keep them, but neglect them, you will not be saved, nor your *children*, nor your *house*." (Com. xii: Chap. 3.) Again he says: "These things, therefore, shall you thus observe with your *children*, and all your *house*." (Similitude v: Chap. 3.) Once more, the same writer says: "Only continue humble, and serve the Lord in all purity of heart, you and your *children*, and your *house*." (Sim. vii.)

A little later lived Ignatius, the father of Episcopacy. He wrote a letter to Polycarp, and in that epistle (Chap. viii.) he says, "I salute all by name, and in particular the wife of Epitropus, with all her *house* and *children*." Now, we can get no nearer the New Testament writers on this side than these writers take us, and we see that by "house" they did not mean "children." When they meant to include children they said children, even though it was the next word after *house* and in the same sentence. And what has been said of these writers immediately succeeding the New Testament was true of Moses. He says: (Gen. xlvii: 24.) "Ye shall give the fifth part unto Pha-

raoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your *households* and for food for your *little ones*." Here we find Moses the giver of God's law, using the word "household" as not including "little ones." When he means both "households" and "little ones," he says both in the same sentence.

These quotations are sufficient to show that the word "house" or "household" did not necessarily include "children" or "little ones," as, when they were meant to be included in any statement, they were named in *addition* to household in the same statement, and in the same sentence. Just what the writers of those times did mean to include in the word household we may not be able to determine to our entire satisfaction: nor is it necessary that we should do so to refute the pedo-baptists in their effort to infer infant baptism from the baptism of households, which is all I am aiming to do.

While on this question about households let us go a little further, and examine its use in the New Testament.

1. In Acts x: 2, Luke, speaking of Cornelius, the centurion, says he was "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house." This language precludes the idea of infant children in the house of Cornelius, by predicating of "all his house" what infants are clearly incapable of. He *feared God* with *all* his house.

2. In Acts xviii: 8, we are told that, "Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house." Here again, clearly, infants are precluded, as *faith* is predicated of "all his house." Infants could not have "believed on the Lord."

3. In Acts xvi: 32-34, "And they [Paul and Silas] spake unto him [the jailer at Philippi] the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took

them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes ; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." In this case, the word of the Lord was spoken to all in the house ; and all "*rejoiced, believing in God.*" No infants in this house.

4. In Acts xvi : 15, we are told of Lydia that "she was baptized and all her house." There is nothing said here either to include or preclude infants. We have a right to demand, however, in view of what we have seen as to use of house and household, that they should be named, before granting that they are included in the statement here made. We have also the further right, to turn back and read the commission under which the apostles were working : "Preach the gospel to every creature: he that *believes* and is baptized shall be saved." The presumption is that they didn't transcend the authority given by that commission. We have a right to note the fact that Lydia, was "of the city of Thyatira ;" that consequently she was a long way from home, trading in purple at Philippi, and that even if she was a married woman, and even if she was a mother, and even if any one or more of her children were infants, she would not likely have them with her. And this is the only case of household baptism on which pedo-baptist debaters now make any stand at all!

5. Paul says, (1. Cor. 1 : 16) "I baptized also the household of Stephanas." No word or words added to include infants, as was the custom when they were meant to be included, as we have seen.

Now, we have a right to the commission here also. And we have a right also to read the account of Paul's visit to Corinth where he baptized Crispus, Gaius, and the

“household of Stephanas”, as given in Acts xviii: 7, 8. Here it is: “And he [Paul] departed thence and entered into a certain man’s house, named Justus, one that worshiped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. And Crispus the chief ruler of the synagogue believed on the Lord with all his house; and *many* of the Corinthians *hearing, believed* and were baptized.” This statement, no doubt, included “the household of Stephanas.” If so, they “*hearing, believed* and were baptized.”

There is another fact in connection with this “household of Stephanas” that ought to be noted, which brings us to another instance of the use of household in the New Testament.

6. In his first epistle to the Corinthians, the same in which he says he baptized the household of Stephanas, the apostle speaks again of this same “house,” on this wise: (xvi: 15, 16) “I beseech you, brethren, as ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints, that ye submit yourselves unto such.”

Now, this epistle was written not more than five years after Paul’s first visit to Corinth, when he baptized the “household of Stephanas;” and here he speaks of the “house of Stephanas” as having “addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,” and tells the brethren there to “submit yourselves unto such.” If the persons here included in the house of Stephanas were infants, any of them, when baptized five years before, they had come up to the “ministry of the saints” pretty rapidly. So much on this passage as it relates to the baptism of the house of Stephanas. Then, secondly, we certainly have here another use of “house” from which infants are precluded.

We have noticed six New Testament households, now,

and have seen that from five of them, the very language in which they are described, excludes infants. And in the other case, that of Lydia, the circumstances are strongly against our pedo-baptist friends in the use they attempt to make of it. Can infant baptism be justified by such an inference as this is? Why, many learned pedo-baptists themselves admit the insufficiency of it. For instance, in Knapp's Theology, it is said: "There is no decisive example of this practice in the New Testament; for it may be objected against those passages where the baptism of whole families is mentioned, (viz: Acts x: 42-48; xvi: 15-33; 1. Cor. i: 16.) that it is *doubtful whether there were any children in those families*, and if there were, *whether they were then baptized*"—(Vol. ii, p. 524.) So that even in this great pedo-baptist's estimation this inference is doubly doubtful: doubtful whether any infants were in the households; and if there were, doubtful whether they were then baptized. Can an inference thus confessedly doubly doubtful be relied on to convince the unbeliever in the practice?

INFERENCE FROM CIRCUMCISION.

Just what the argument is, in this case, it is not easy to state right definitely and satisfactorily. It has nothing like the antiquity of other inferences for the practice in question, and it has been relied on mostly by controversialists in the discussions of the question, in later years. These controversialists are by no means agreed among themselves as to *what the argument is*. In their discussions they have a good deal to say about the church, as to when and where it began, differing among themselves as widely as from Abel to Abraham. They claim that the church of the old dispensation is identical with that of the new, in *some* sense; but as to what sense and to what extent

the alleged identity obtains they again differ among themselves widely, holding nothing in common that needs to be replied to by the opponent of infant baptism. They very generally contend that in some sense—and here there is no agreement among them as to what sense—baptism now stands to its subject and the church as circumcision did under the former dispensation. They generally agree that as infants were circumcised under the former dispensation they ought to be baptized under the Christian dispensation. The strong point, the one in which they all agree, is that *infants* were circumcised by the command of God under the former dispensation. They all emphasize this unquestioned fact; and seem to think there ought to be something in it, somewhere or somehow in favor of *infant* baptism; but just what, or just how, or just where, they are by no means of one mind. Some of them have it, that circumcision was *initiative* to the church under the former dispensation, and that baptism is initiative now; and that infants were formerly initiated by circumcision, and should now be initiated by baptism. Others tell us that circumcision was only a recognition—or declaration—of church membership under the former dispensation; and that baptism is a recognition, or declaration, of membership now; and that as circumcision was extended to infants, so baptism ought to be. They go on to argue, that infants were put in the church when it was organized in the family of Abraham—that is, such as say the church was then organized—and that no law has since been given for putting them out; and that they were then initiated (some say—others, that their membership was recognized) by circumcision; and that as baptism has superseded circumcision, infants should now be initiated (or recognized) by baptism. That is about the process of the argument. Now,

the great strength and merit of this argument is, that it is of such a character as to open up an immense field for pedo-baptist debaters to skirmish in. They can find a good deal to say about "covenants," about "churches," about "ordinances," and occasionally something about "infants;" and the field is large enough for them to find a good deal to talk about without having anything to say about "infant *baptism*"—the weak point in their line of battle.

I have seen and heard a good many of the champions of infant baptism tug through the tedious processes of this alleged argument from the covenants, and church identity, and circumcision, with all the variations; and I have never yet heard it without finding my mind impressed most of all with the question: Is it possible that the God of infinite wisdom has made it the duty of Christian parents to have their infant children baptized and left them to find out that it is their duty by such a process as this? It seems to me that this question alone ought to condemn the alleged argument forever in the estimation of sensible and fair-minded people. Other insuperable objections to the argument are.

1. "The covenant of circumcision" (Acts vii: 8) was a covenant "in the flesh" of Abraham and his descendants, (Gen. xvii: 12, 13); while the the "new covenant" is in the spirit, and knows no flesh. (Heb. viii: 8-12) The covenant of circumcision embraced Abraham, and such as were born in his house and bought with his money; while the new covenant embraces believers in Jesus Christ, without respect to Abraham's flesh or money, or anybody else's flesh or money. (2. Cor. v: 16, 17,—Gal. iii: 26-29).

2. When God wanted parents to have their children circumcised in the old covenant, he *said* so in so many

words: "And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you." (Gen. xvii: 12.) Had he wanted infant children baptized in the new covenant, he would have said so, undoubtedly. Let us try a pedo-baptist argument just here, for their benefit: The Lord certainly foresaw that many Christian parents would refuse to have their infants baptized without either a scripture precept or example, yet, "foreseeing the event," he did not give the command. "Hence it must have been agreeable to his will" that they should so refuse. How will that do for an inference against infant baptism?

3. Under the former covenant only male infants, born of Abraham's flesh or bought with his money, were circumcised; while under the new covenant pedo-baptists contend for the baptism of infants without respect to *sex*, *flesh*, or *money*! How is that for *identity*! and for baptism *instead* of circumcision?

4. If the church is one and the same under both dispensations, and baptism now sustains the same relation to it that circumcision did under the former dispensation, then why were all circumcised persons commanded to be baptized as well as uncircumcised ones? Why were the Jews twice initiated into the church—or twice recognized? Could they not *hold over* from the old to the new dispensation (the church being the same) in virtue of their initiation or recognition by circumcision? They didn't. And as they didn't hold over was there not a loss of identity? Either there was a loss of identity, or the church held over from one dispensation to the other without members.

Let us hear what one of the most eminent and scholarly of all American pedo-baptists had to say on this *inference from circumcision*. I mean Moses Stuart, Professor of Sacred Literature in the Theological Seminary, Andover.

He says: "How unwary, too, are many excellent men in contending for infant baptism on the ground of the Jewish analogy of circumcision. . . . *Numberless difficulties* present themselves in our way, as soon as we begin to argue in such a manner as this."—Com. O. T. ch. 22. And again he says: "The covenant of circumcision furnishes no ground for infant baptism"—Lecture on Gal.

INFERENCE FROM ORIGINAL SIN.

After all, this is the real ground of the practice. It was on this ground that it was first brought into the church, about the beginning of the third century, and on this ground it was defended down to the beginning of the nineteenth century. "If infants are guilty of original sin then are they proper subjects of baptism," said John Wesley, and that was the ground on which its advocates put it from its origin. It was brought in as a deduction, and has been justified by the same deduction or inference throughout its history until within the last forty or fifty years. Of course, I do not mean that it was a deduction from original sin alone, but that that doctrine was one of the premises from which it was deduced. The other was baptism for remission of sins. From these premises infant baptism was a conclusion.

At the time infant baptism first appears in history, about the beginning of the third century, baptism as a necessity to salvation was universally taught. The church fathers not only accepted fully the words of our Lord and his apostles upon this subject, but many of them went further and ascribed to the water of baptism an intrinsic virtue to wash away sins and purify the soul. In fact, that was a time in the history of the church when almost everything was carried to an extreme. If there were any very safe and conservative men among the church fathers

they didn't write any; or, if they did, their writings have not been preserved.

Now, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," (Mark xvi: 16.) is scripture. "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," (Acts, ii: 38.) is scripture also. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," (John iii: 5.) is scripture too. "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins calling on the name of the Lord," (Acts xxii: 16.) is another passage of holy scripture. And, "Baptism doth also now save us," (1. Pet. iii: 21.) is still another passage, bearing upon the same subject. They are all plain. They are all true, of course. But it will be observed that none of these scriptures ascribe any intrinsic virtue to the water of baptism. It is in itself nothing. Baptism is what it is, is all that these scriptures ascribe to it, as an expression of faith in Jesus Christ, as an act of obedience and loyalty to him—as a trustful submission to the divine will. But the church fathers, among other extravagancies and vagaries began, in the second century to ascribe to this ordinance a virtue even dissociated from faith, or anything else in the creature—an intrinsic virtue for purification from sin.

About this time the doctrine of original sin came in. This, too, was an exaggeration and perversion of scripture teaching. According to many of the leading church fathers, everybody was born a sinner; that is, *guilty of Adam's sin*. Infants were all sinners at birth—guilty of Adam's first sin, and for that reason must be damned forever, if not washed, or regenerated. Baptism was the washing of regeneration. Infants must be washed. Therefore infants must be baptized. These are the premises and the conclusion! That's the logic of infant baptism,

as every one acquainted with its history knows. When thus reduced to a syllogism both premises are false. And that's a good deal to be the matter with a syllogism. Baptism dissociated from faith in Jesus Christ saves nobody, is not for remission of sins to anybody; nor is it the washing of the regeneration. So that the doctrine of baptism for remission of sins, as interpreted by the church fathers of that time, was false. So also was their doctrine of original sin. And both premises being false, of course the conclusion was also.

On this question as to the origin of the practice in question it is worth while to spend a little time. The first mention, in any form, of infant baptism was in the first quarter of the third century, and by Tertullian, one of the most distinguished of the Latin fathers. On this point, says Dr. Bledsoe, in an article already cited in this discourse: "Tertullian is the first writer in the church who makes any express mention of the custom of infant baptism. Before his time, A. D. 200, there is not an allusion to the custom from which its existence may be fairly inferred." (Southern Review, Vol. xiv, p. 339.) Now, Tertullian opposed the practice; and here are his words, as translated by the distinguished pedo-baptist, Dr. Wall, in his Hist. of Inft. Bapt. Vol. i: p. 94.: "Our Lord says indeed, do not forbid them to come. Therefore let them come when they are grown up; let them come when they understand; when they are instructed whither it is that they come; let them be made Christians when they can know Christ. *'What need their guiltless age make such haste to the forgiveness of sins!'*" I have made this quotation mainly for this last sentence, in which this eminent father argues the needlessness of baptizing infants from "their *guiltless age.*" He didn't believe infants were guilty

of sin. He opposed baptizing them. He grounded his opposition, certainly in part, upon his notion of "their guiltless age."

Now Origen wrote in the same quarter of the third century. They were contemporaries. The one lived and wrote at Carthage; the other at Alexandria. They were the most eminent fathers of the age. Origen advocated infant baptism, and was the first man to do so, that anybody knows of. Let us see on what he grounds it. (Wall's Hist. Inft. Bapt. Vol. i; pp. 104, 105.) Here are his words: "If there were nothing in infants that wanted forgiveness and mercy, the grace of baptism would be needless to them." And again he says: "Having occasion given in this place, I will mention a thing that causes frequent inquiries among the brethren. Infants are baptized for the forgiveness of sins. Of what sins? Or when have they sinned? Or how can any reason of the laver in their case hold good, but according to that sense that we mentioned even now: none is free from pollution though his life be but of the length of one day upon the earth? And it is for that reason because by the sacrament of baptism the pollution of our birth is taken away, that infants are baptized." There is no mistaking the ground on which Origen puts the new custom, in the words we have read. He puts it on the ground that infants need "forgiveness." He admits that otherwise "baptism would be needless to them." There stand the two great fathers! One believes infants are sinners, and hence need the grace of baptism; the other believes infants are guiltless, and that the grace of baptism is needless to them. Can anything be plainer than that the ground of the practice—the "reason," as Origen puts it—was original sin; that is, that infants one day old were sinners, and needed the "grace of baptism"

for forgiveness. This, too, it should be remembered is the beginning of the custom. We have gotten back to the origin of the custom, and to the original ground of it. If anyone doubts that the custom was *new* when Origen wrote, read his words again: "I will mention a thing," says he, "that causes *frequent inquiries* among the brethren." Then, his *answer* shows the nature of these "inquiries." Here is the answer: "Infants are baptized for the forgiveness of sins." The inquiries must have been, "*Why* are you baptizing *infants*?" Origen was a very great man in the church, and lived in the very great city of Alexandria; and the doctrine that infants are all guilty of sin from their birth, had brought in the custom of baptizing infants; and it being new, "caused frequent inquiries among the brethren" of the smaller towns and rural districts.

It is worth while for us, while standing here with Tertullian and Origen; the one opposing this custom because infants were in his estimation "guiltless;" the other advocating it, because they were in his estimation sinful and in need of forgiveness—the custom a *new* one, and therefore, causing its advocate to be plied with "frequent inquiries among the brethren"—it is worth while, from this standpoint, to look back toward the apostles, and see if the history we have affords us anything bearing upon our subject. Do the earlier fathers—earlier than Tertullian and Origen—teach that infants are sinners. They do not. Hear Hermas, one of the apostolic fathers, who, it is supposed, saw and heard the apostle Paul: (Pastor of Hermas, chap. xxix.) "And they that believed from the twelfth mountain which was white, are the following: They are as *infant children in whose hearts no evil originates.*"

Barnabas (not later than the middle of the second cen-

ture) says: "He hath made us after another pattern, that we should possess the soul of *children*." (Epistle, chap. vi) These references to infant children—and others might be cited—by writers between the apostles and the beginning of the third century show that the doctrine of original sin had not yet come in; and no such thing as infant baptism is mentioned in that period. The first two centuries of the Christian era are as silent as the grave on the custom of infant baptism; and on the *necessity* for it, the guilt of infants.

The fathers of the second century were as silent about infant baptism and infant guilt as the apostles were; and "the apostles," as Dr. Bledsoe would say, "imitated the silence of Christ" upon the subject.

But now taking our stand with Origen and Tertullian and looking this way, we see the doctrine of original sin and the custom of infant baptism spreading, and, like a mighty river, flowing on down the ages, sweeping everything before it, east and west, until it reaches the nineteenth century—the doctrine and the custom always going together, as the foundation and the structure built thereupon.

So intimately and indissolubly were the doctrine of the sinfulness and guilt of infants, and the custom of baptizing them, linked together in the teaching of the whole Catholic church in the centuries following Origen that in the latter part of the fourth century when Pelagius denied that infants were by nature sinful in such a sense as to be liable to eternal damnation if they died unbaptized, he was accused of denying the right of infants to baptism; that is, he was accused of denying infant baptism because he denied the doctrine which was the sole ground of it in the Catholic church at that time. Hence this distinguished

heretic said in his letter to Pope Innocent: (Wall's Hist. of Inft. Bap. Vol. 1, p. 450.) "Men slander me as if I denied the sacrament of baptism to infants, or did promise the kingdom of heaven to some persons without the redemption of Christ." But the renowned Augustin understood him more accurately than many others; and he says, speaking of him and those who agreed with him: "So that the thing he complains he is slandered in, he has set down so as that he might easily answer to the crime objected, and yet keep his opinion. But the thing that is objected to them is this, that they will not own that unbaptized infants are liable to the condemnation of the first man and that there has passed upon them original sin, which is to be cleansed by regeneration; but do contend that they are to be baptized only for their receiving the kingdom of heaven, etc.". (Ibid 447.) These quotations show that it was at that time a heresy—or as Augustin puts it, a "crime"—not to "own that unbaptized infants are liable to the condemnation of the first man;" and that one not so owning was set down as denying the right of baptism to infants, because he denied the doctrine upon which it was universally grounded. There was at that time no other known reason why any one should believe in infant baptism than the doctrine of original sin. If one denied that doctrine, he was at once set down as opposed to infant baptism. Now, would this have been the case had infant baptism been instituted by Jesus or his apostles and practiced from the beginning? It is not reasonable to suppose that it would. Had it been grounded upon the authority of Jesus or his apostles, and practiced from the beginning, as the baptism of believers, it would not have been necessary for the church councils of the third century to be settling questions about it and adjusting it to the

common practice, as we know they had to do. Neither would Origen have been under the necessity of answering "frequent inquiries among the brethren" as to why "infants are baptized."

Thus infant baptism came into the church with the doctrine of original sin, and thus it came down through the ages into the nineteenth century.

Now let us see how it was grounded in the early part of this century. John Wesley may be said to have represented the views of the English church as well as of the Methodist church of which he was the acknowledged founder. I read from a little volume entitled "*Doctrinal Tracts*, published by order of the General Conference" of the Methodist Episcopal church. The preface to the edition from which I read says: "Several new Tracts are included in this volume, and Mr. Wesley's short treatise on baptism is substituted in the place of the extract from Mr. Edwards on that subject." From this "short treatise of baptism" by Mr. Wesley, I read, showing the ground of infant baptism as Mr. Wesley understood it when he wrote it, and as the General Conference understood it, when in 1832, it ordered its publication in the *Doctrinal Tracts*.

Mr. Wesley says: "But the grand question is, who are the proper subjects of baptism? grown persons only, or infants also? In order to answer this fully, I shall, first, lay down the *grounds* of infant baptism, taken from scripture, reason, and primitive, *universal* practice." Then he says: "As to the *grounds* of it: If infants are guilty of original sin, then are they proper subjects of baptism; seeing in the ordinary way they cannot be saved unless this be washed away by baptism. It has been already proved that this original stain cleaves to every

child of man ; and that hereby they are children of wrath, and liable to eternal damnation." (Doct. Tracts, p. 251.) There it is! just as it started out in the first quarter of the third century, when Origen was so pressed by "frequent inquiries among the brethren." And notice, Mr. Wesley says, that the ground of it is taken from "*universal practice*"—that is, "primitive, universal practice."

And in accordance with Mr. Wesley's teaching, the Ritual for baptism in the Discipline of the Methodist church puts it upon the same ground,—or, rather, *did* put it upon the same ground, almost in Mr. Wesley's words, until within the last twenty-five or thirty years. The Ritual has been considerably modified of late years. And, no doubt, the good work of modification will go on, as there is still room for improvement.

It is due to Protestant pedo-baptists as well as to the subject in hand to say that they have very generally abandoned the doctrine of original sin as the ground of infant baptism ; and as fast as they can, they are getting it and all correlated notions out of their creeds and rituals. And in so doing they are leaving infant baptism without any ground or reason or meaning. In the ages from Origen down to Wesley it *meant* something to baptize an infant. It meant "salvation from the condemnation of the first man." It meant that they might be "delivered from the wrath of God." It meant regeneration. Now, however, it doesn't mean much. The ground of it is gone, and it is a castle in the air. It is an empty ceremony. One advocate, nowadays, grounds it upon one thing and another upon another. One says infants are saved and are members of the church, and as such have a right to baptism. Another says they are saved by the grace of God in Christ Jesus, and should be baptized to bring them

into the church. Another says they are all in the "invisible church," and ought to be baptized into the "visible church." Every Protestant pedo-baptist scribe or debater puts the practice upon a ground to suit him.

No wonder the people are losing faith in the custom. No wonder we see in the papers frequently and hear from the pulpits complaints that the baptism of infants is being neglected—is in many parts of the country falling into desuetude. It is about as hard to hold up a custom without meaning, without any reason for it, as to hold up a house against the winds without any foundation. It will have to go where Protestantism prevails. The abandonment of the doctrine of original sin is the death knell of infant baptism. It is only a question of time.

SERMON XIV.

A PLEA FOR THE CHURCH OF GOD.

THIS is an age of growth. It is astonishing, when one stops a moment to think of it, how much of that which makes our civilization better than barbarism has been brought in within the lifetime of many of our old men—well, within the last seventy-five or eighty years, we will say. It seems to us, in the light of our age, with everything whirring and buzzing about us, doing the world's business by the power of steam and electricity, a wonder that our ancestors were for centuries and even thousands of years piddling along, doing almost nothing, barely scratching a meagre sustenance out of the earth, when all the while there was so much in it.

This is an age of schemes, of movements, of associations, of orders, of societies, all meant, of course, for the good of the people, for the betterment of society generally. Upon every good idea, and for reaching every good end, for the correction of every wrong and for the suppression of every great evil, we have already, or are likely to have in the near future, a special society organized, or association formed, officered and equipped for that special work. It is amazing, when one gives a thought to it, how many societies—political, moral, benevolent and religious societies—have been conceived and brought into the world within even the last half century, all intended to improve society and bless the world, and some of them to glorify God also. In our churches, composed of their members,

we have societies organized, with their pledges and constitutions and laws, until half the alphabet is used for the initials of their names; and the work of forming societies is still going on. A new one is brought forth almost every day. We have societies or associations for the different sexes, for all ages, and for all conditions of men and women. If a young man wants Christian "association" for reading, rest or work, here is the Y. M. C. A. for him. If young Christians want to work for Christ, and are not certain they are capable of doing much, but are willing to endeavor, here is the Y. P. S. C. E. for them. If our Christian women wish to work especially in the good cause of temperance, here is the W. C. T. U. for them; and so on and so forth—a society or association for every good work and for the suppression of every great evil in the world.

What should be the attitude of the members of the church of God toward all these things? There are many people who decide this question very readily, some one way and some another. For myself, I have had some difficulty in deciding it to my own satisfaction.

Before going further in what I have to say about societies, specially religious societies, let me say a few words about the church, as to what I understand it to be, and to be for. The church of God, in its most comprehensive sense, includes all real believers in Jesus Christ, of all sexes, ages, colors, countries—and worlds. Of the church in this broad sense there is no organization further than that Christ is the head and all believers are members of his body. It has no officers. It is a union like that of the vine and its branches. The bond of union is faith in Jesus Christ.

But church in the New Testament has another sense,

less comprehensive and more limited locally. In this sense the word is used in the plural—as “then had the churches rest,” “the churches of Christ salute you,” “all the churches of the Gentiles,” “as in all churches of the saints,” “the churches of God which are in Judea,” etc. The churches in their local sense are composed of members of the church in the more comprehensive sense, in cities, towns and neighborhoods, associated together for the purposes of work, edification and enjoyment. This local association of disciples, with officers to oversee and serve them, is the only church organization—if I may use that word—known to the New Testament. Nor were these local churches associated together in any organic sense. They were entirely independent of each other, further than that the members of all were spiritually united by the bonds of a common faith, hope and love. The ecclesiasticisms of our day are all younger than the church of God. Now, anyone who is a member of the church of God in its broadest sense, and a member of the church in its local sense, *needs* to belong to no other society, or association, or organization of a religious kind, in order to his usefulness or happiness in life, being thus furnished with all the means and instrumentalities for doing all the good he can do, and with all the association necessary for his edification and happiness. Such an one needs to do no more joining as to religious societies in order to his usefulness, happiness and salvation. I speak of the church member's *necessity* and *duty*, and not of his Christian *liberty*. Of that hereafter. As a member of the church he is thoroughly panoplied and furnished for the battle of life. The church furnishes all the society and all the means and instrumentalities he *needs*.

The question then arises, What should be the attitude

of the member of the church of God toward all other religious associations and societies than the church? This question is not one to be hastily and inconsiderately answered. It is one of no little importance. Certainly Christians should not oppose or stand in the way of any good work being done by any person, or association of persons. They should carefully avoid the appearance of doing so. *Political* parties, even, advocate some good measures and do some good things. This will not be denied. Christians should not be found opposing any good they are aiming to do.

The societies and orders of a moral and benevolent character—Masons, Odd Fellows, etc.—perhaps without exception, do some good, and Christians should be careful not to oppose them in any good work. And the many religious societies of our day, other than the church, are aiming to do good, and are doing some good beyond question. Christians should offer no resistance to any good work they are doing. Their methods may be in some respects objectionable, and they may do some things that might better not be done; still, Christians should be very careful to say nothing and do nothing that can be construed into opposition to the good they do. The disciples once saw a man casting out demons in the name of Jesus, and forbade him because he followed not with them, and when they reported this to their Master, he rebuked them, saying: "Forbid him not; for he that is not against us is for us." We should not forbid anyone working a good work because he does not follow with us.

In the second place: It is the Christian's liberty to show his approval of any good work, though not done by Christians, and though he cannot approve all the methods by which it was done. As a citizen of this Nation, the

Christian has the right to vote—that is, the Christian *man*—and for myself I frequently exercise this right. When I see a political party advocating a good thing, or opposing an evil one, I consider that party to that extent on my side, and allow it to vote with me. If a political party proposes to cast out a demon, so to speak, I shall certainly not forbid it. If a political party gets on the right side of any moral question, it gets on our side. If it makes war upon any of the evils of the day, it fights on our side; and on all such questions we can fight together, though that party may do and advocate many things we do not like. The party that votes against slavery, the party that votes against polygamy, the party that votes against whisky, the party that votes against lotteries and pools, is to that extent on our side, and we can vote together, though we may not *belong* to any political party, nor the party belong to the church. We belong to the army of the Lord, enlisted, pledged, initiated, sworn in, to fight for life or during the war against all evil and for all good; but we should not despise any assistance from those who may choose to fight the evils we are fighting, simply because they do not belong to the regular army. Let them fight on our side if they wish to. They are helping us. We are pledged to our Leader. We belong to his army—the church. We are soldiers under him, the great Prince of our salvation. We are panoplied with the whole armor of God. The weapons of our warfare, as Christians, are not carnal, but mighty through God for the pulling down of the strongholds of sin in every shape and form. We are contending for more than are any of the political parties, or any of the moral, benevolent or religious societies. “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are

just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report," for these we contend. We are fighting against sin and evil all along the line. Any person or party fighting for any particular good thing or against any particular evil is helping us. True, we are not enlisted under their banner, and are not subject to their orders, are not marching and fighting at their command. They are helping us, and we should approve and rejoice in any good they do, in any help they may lend us. We can go together just so long and so far as they go *our way*. We can fight together while they fight in any part our battles.

Finally: We cannot afford to do or say anything that in any sense or any measure disparages or minimizes the church of God, and thereby dishonors our Leader. We should not expressly or by implication concede that the church of God is in any sense or measure insufficient, or that her divinely appointed means and instrumentalities are in any measure inefficient, for the purposes of their appointment. We should stand for the supreme authority of Christ. We are complete in him, who is over all principalities and powers, in heaven or on earth. We cannot be too careful here. We should stand for the church as God's appointment for the conversion and salvation of the world; as God's appointed and equipped army for the conquest of the world. With others than Christians we should fight only when they fight on our side—fight our battles. We should company with them only when they go our way. I confess I look with some distrust and fearful apprehensions upon the growing number of associations and societies in the churches. Must we have an association—a Christian Association—for young men? What is the church of God? What is it for? Is

it not for Christian association? Is it not a sufficient association for Christians? That is, I mean, is it not a sufficient *Christian Association*? But we are told we must have a Christian Association especially and exclusively for young men. I don't know but young men might better be associated with older ones, and all of them associated with women, as in the church of God. And we must also have a Christian Association for young women exclusively, we are told. I am a doubter. Then we must have Endeavor Societies for young people. But, I ask, is not the church an Endeavor Society? Is not that one of the objects of its existence in the world? If we are to organize and sustain a society for every special Christian work, and for every sex and every age, what will become of the church? Who will be left in the church? Only a few very old men and women, too old to work, or to associate, or even to endeavor, to die off in. Will it not become an old, useless, fallen-down, outside fence? Or, to speak of it as a plant—and it is a plant planted by the Lord—will not the societies suck the life out of it? I sucker my plants—that is, I pull the suckers off.

I insist that it is not right for Christians to give their time and strength to the societies and neglect the church of God. These societies were not planted by our Lord, nor by his apostles. Think of the apostle Paul going from city to city organizing Y. P. C. E. S's, or Y. M. C. A's! Paul did no such work, nor did any other apostle.

Now, please do not understand me as opposing any good work done by any of these societies. I rejoice in every good work that is done in the world. But what I mean is, that Christians do not need to spend their time and means organizing and fostering such societies. The church of God is spiritual house enough for us to live in,

temple enough for us to worship in, vineyard enough for us to work in, husbandry enough for us to tend, building enough for us to work on, army enough for us to march, drill and fight in. People who are contending, as they say, for primitive Christianity, for New Testament Christianity, should stand for the church of the New Testament, and leave others to spend their time on human societies, if they cannot be persuaded to do better.

Where we go into and foster these religious societies, with their pledges and constitutions, we do it in the teeth of our fathers who proposed to return to the Christianity and the church of the New Testament, and by our action endorse the creed principle, and thus condemn ourselves in the the thing which we allow. Instead of strengthening the young people among us in opposition to creeds and parties, and in their *faith* in the all-sufficiency of the New Testament as the rule of faith and practice for the people of God, we are breaking down in their estimation that for which we and our fathers have contended and tried to build up. We are educating our children for sectarianism.

Preachers of the restoration, who are, or who profess to be, contending for primitive Christianity, for that pure Christianity and church of the New Testament, will find, when it is too late perhaps, that when they are going over the country organizing Christian Associations and Christian Endeavors, and teaching our young people how necessary they are, they are pulling down that which our fathers labored to build up, and which they may think they are building up.

To repeat what I have said :

First. Members of the church of God should be careful to oppose no good work being done either by individuals or societies. Every good work is in the line of our work, and will be a help. While we may not be able to approve all the methods of outside individuals or societies, we should not put ourselves in any such attitude as can fairly be construed into opposition to any good work. Let anybody cast out demons. Let anybody fight the evils of the day. Let anybody do good without opposition from us.

Second. Church members can show their sympathy with and approval of every good work. We can as citizens vote with such parties as are advocating good measures without belonging to such parties or endorsing all their methods. We can, under our own banner, fight with all who are fighting against evil. We can go with and co-operate with all who are going our way and working our work.

Third. We cannot afford to say or do anything that implies even the necessity, so far as we are concerned, of any organization or society of a religious character other than the church of God. It is enough for us. It is all we need. We are complete in Jesus Christ and his church. We should stand in and for the church. We should work in and by the church. We should honor the Head of the church. We should not go out to work, but work in the church. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the purpose of the ages which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Only thus can we heed the teaching of the apostle, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

For my own part, while I rejoice in all the good I see accomplished by the many religious parties and associations and societies, I have settled the question that the church of God is religious society enough for me; I organize no other Christian Associations for young or old, male or female. I have no time or energy to spend building up any other Christian Endeavor Societies.

"I love thy church, oh God,
 Her walls before thee stand,
 Dear as the apple of thine eye,
 And graven on thy hand.
 For her my tears shall fall,
 For her my prayers ascend,
 To her my care and toils be given,
 'Till toils and cares shall end."

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