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WHAT A CHURCH HAS A RIGHT TO EXPECT FROM ITS MINISTER.

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Two Sermons, Preached upon assuming the Pastorate of the First Baptist Church, Richmond, Va., October, 1854, by Rev. J. L. BURROWS, D. D.

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*“ I ask, therefore, for what intent ye have sent for me ? ”*—Acts x., 29.

Directed by God, Cornelius, a Gentile, sent for Peter, the apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. Miraculous intimations of God's will were given to both the Gentile and the Christian, because the time had come when the door of faith was to be opened to the Gentiles. One of those great events in history that control the course and move the destinies of nations; that change the face of the world, was heralded and prepared for by these divine revelations to Peter, on the one hand, and to Cornelius on the other. Under the guidance of God, these two men met and looked into each other's eyes; the one a representative of that system that was about to burst from the confines of Judea, and to commence its march of subjugation and triumph over the earth; the other, a representative of the nations to whom the privileges and blessings of the new covenant were now about to be extended. It was a sublime meeting, a glorious day for the Gentile world,—worthy, if we knew its exact date, to be entered in our calendar, as a high festival. The Christian minister met the heathen representative, and the work of missions commenced. The magnetic wires of influence that have transmitted Christianity to us, in America, in this nine-

teenth century, were then touched by the hand of Peter. The apostle, desirous of knowing clearly what expectations had been excited in the mind of Cornelius, puts directly the question of the text—"I ask, therefore, for what intent ye have sent for me?"

This question, dear brethren, I have deemed not inappropriate to the present occasion. You have sent for me, as a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ. In response to your kind and cordial invitation, I am here. Is it not well for us to strive to gain a clear apprehension of the intent, the purpose for which I have come? What do you expect from me? This will indicate the theme of the present discourse.

WHAT HAS A CHURCH A RIGHT TO EXPECT FROM ITS MINISTER?

*May I not take it for granted that you have not sent for me to do your work?* A church has not a right to expect that a minister will assume the personal responsibilities, or perform the personal duties of its members. It is a Papal notion, and a most mischievous one, that a priest can act as proxy for the people, bear their responsibilities, account for them to God, and secure their salvation. "Every one of us must give account of himself to God," for the manner in which his talents have been improved, his influence exerted, his own work accomplished. Our Lord requires, among his disciples, a division of labor; of "every man according to his several ability." There are duties growing out of every Christian's position and social relations, which, in the nature of things, it is impossible for any one but himself to perform.

Who, but the father, can fulfil a father's duties to his own children? Who can so control, and influence, and mould the character of her children, as a mother? Can they transfer their influence or responsibility to the pastor of a church, to any third party? Can they suppose that they are in any degree relieved of obligation, because a minister of Jesus Christ may occasionally visit their household or strive to enforce the claims of the gospel upon the hearts of their children? No creature on earth, or in heaven, can step between parents and children, and become the parents' proxy, and assume their work, or bear their responsibilities, or answer for their wrong training or neglect.

What is thus strongly true in these relations, is in a degree

true in all other relations of life. There are duties growing out of every man's own position, which no one but himself can fulfil. If he leave them unperformed, unperformed they must, of necessity, forever remain. There are those within the circle of every Christian's influence, whom he can reach with an effect that no other can secure. The duties and obligations of each are special and definite, growing out of his own relations to the household, the church, and the community, and he cannot transfer them to another. The pastor cannot, if he would, take upon himself the work or the responsibilities of the parent, the brother, the child; he cannot do the work of deacons, trustees, Sabbath school teachers, private Christians. "Every one shall bear his own burden."

May I not take it for granted, then, my brethren, that you have not sent for me to do your work. I am not here to work *for* you, but to work *with* you; not to relieve you, but to associate what influence my position may give me with yours, for the promotion of the glory of our common Lord, and for the extension of his kingdom. Let it be understood, then, at the very outset, that I shall attempt to fulfil no other man's duties. I could not do it, if I would; and I shall have enough of my own to task all the ability, energy and time I may be able to command.

*A church has a right to expect from its minister a personal, practical exemplification of the principles of that gospel which he teaches.*—The Apostle Paul emphatically insists upon this: "Thou, therefore, which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself. Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege." "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord."

The character of Christianity ought not to be judged by the conduct of its professors, nor even of its ministers, but by its own inherent principles. It is, in itself, a pure, refining, holy system, which the inconsistency or hypocrisy of its professed adherents cannot mar or deform.

But though men *ought not* thus to judge, yet, in their depravity, in their eagerness for encouragement of their own impenitence or indifference, they *will* thus judge, and a pure and consistent life, in professors of religion, is there-

fore necessary, as a means of grace, to take away all excuse, and to impress a sense of the practical excellency of godliness upon the consciences of all.

The minister is really under no stronger obligations to a holy life, than the humblest member of the church. The obligations, in all cases, are the same. The same blood was shed for each, that was shed for him, and the same Holy Spirit renews and strengthens the heart of each, that has wrought in his soul. Nothing more has been done for the salvation of the minister, than for any other disciple, and, consequently, the same motives, with equal force, appeal to the gratitude and obedience of all.

Still, from his position, from the very fact that he preaches a holy and self-denying gospel, his own conduct and spirit will be noted. The Devil, more than

“Death, loves a shining mark,”

and the faults and failings of a minister will be more loudly bruited, and more triumphantly arrayed against Christianity, than those of another.

I humbly, therefore, recognize the right of the church to expect that its pastor will practically exemplify the principles he teaches. I have no confidence in myself, that I shall be able to do so. I am too bitterly aware of my own infirmities and faults, to rely upon my own resolutions and strength. But, trusting in the grace of Christ, in the promised aid of his Holy Spirit, and believing that your prayers will be daily offered for your minister, I may humbly promise to strive so to live, that the name of Christ may not be blasphemed, and the church of Christ not dishonored through me.

Even holy and inspired apostles entreated for the prayers of the saints. How much more may I implore not to be forgotten in the prayers of those who love the Lord Jesus Christ and his church.

*A church has a right to expect that their pastor shall be their teacher, in things pertaining to their own spirituality and usefulness.—They have a right to look to the pulpit for instruction. Our Lord has given to his church “some evangelists, some pastors and teachers.” “Whom we preach warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” “Every scribe who is instructed unto the kingdom*

of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.”

That it is the duty of the minister to warn and exhort, and stimulate, to employ all possible motives to induce holiness and devotion ; to appeal to the conscience, to the fears, to the hopes, to the hearts of his hearers, is all true ; but to make such appeals and exhortations effectual, there must be knowledge in the minds of those to whom they are addressed. All action and effort, to be effectual, must be intelligent. Men may be urged and pressed into a certain line of conduct ; the sympathies, and affections, and passions may be strongly excited, but unless they comprehend the reasons, understand with some clearness the grounds of the line of conduct commended, their course will be wavering, unstable, and unsatisfactory. Passion and impulse are very unsafe and unsteady guides of human conduct. The motive ends with the allaying of the passion, with the ceasing of the impulse. A man should adopt his course for life, and pursue it from principle, and this involves the conviction of the judgment, the assent of the understanding. When the affections are in harmony with the judgment, and our impulses are controlled by fixed and intelligent principles, our conduct will be most likely to be steady, uniform, and consistent.

That those who are best instructed in the principles and doctrines of Christianity, are the most reliable and useful Christians, the experience of every church proves. The defections from our churches, to a very great extent, are from among those who, under the pressure of strong excitement, and without any very clear views of what is involved in a profession of Christianity, are brought into the church. Reliable piety must have as its basis religious intelligence.

I conceive it, therefore, to be one of the first duties of the pastor, to instruct his people, to exhibit the reasons for faith and action, to elucidate the doctrines of the gospel, and show their harmonies and their bearings on the practical life.

In order to this, the pastor must be a student, especially a student of God's Word. He may not rely on any miraculous endowments, upon any aids of the Holy Spirit out of the line of his own mental activities. That the Holy Spirit does aid, enlighten, even suggest, I gratefully believe ; but his operations are in agreement with man's mental nature,

not aside from it. The man who, without mental labor to comprehend the truth, tells us that he relies directly upon the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that he means to utter only that which is supernaturally communicated to him, is most likely, by his vapid inanities, to slander the Spirit of God, and dishonor the truth of the Bible. The minister of Jesus must obtain his knowledge of divine truth, as the physician gains his knowledge of medicine, or the jurist of his law, by mental application and study. The operations of the Spirit are in the direction of such application and study, not without them. No man has a right to make the influence of the Spirit an apology for his ignorance, or an excuse for his stupidity and indolence.

With such views, my brethren, you will expect me, as your pastor, to spend very much of my time in the seclusion of the study. You will not expect me to be found at all hours upon the streets, or in gossiping from house to house, in unmeaning and unnecessary visiting, and wasting the precious, returnless hours in unprofitable wanderings. If, with my slender abilities, I shall be able at all to instruct, to teach, it must be by constant personal application. I sincerely feel that it is necessary for me to learn, in order to teach, and I beg you now, in entering upon my ministrations, to believe that in the labors of the study, I shall be working for you, as really, and I trust more effectively, than if I were spending pleasant hours at your pleasant homes.

*A church has a right to expect that its minister will preach "sound doctrine," in accordance with the system of truth developed in the gospel.*

He has no right to demand a blind reception of his dicta, as though it were authoritative and final. No such submission to his teachings is required of the people of God, as renders it necessary that they should lay aside their own judgment, and forego the investigation of truth for themselves. This is the essence of the Papal faith.

The Bible teaches that every man is brought face to face with God, to give an account for himself of the faith he embraces, as well as for his practical life. This is the essence of the Baptist faith.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world." "Be ye ready to give a

reason, to him that asketh, of the hope that is in you." "If any man preach unto you any other gospel than that ye have received, let him be accursed." The right of the church to test, by the principles of the gospel, the doctrines of their teachers, is unquestionable. It is the glory of Protestantism that it admits it. It is the shame and disgrace of Popery that it denies it.

The Bible does not regard men as things, dependent upon external forces to be moved, but as intelligences, to exercise each his own judgment. To render an implicit submission to the guidance of a priest in all matters of religious faith and practice may be very easy, may save a man a great deal of anxiety and perplexity, but is an ignoble ease, a very contemptible kind of comfort. Nothing but ignorance or a perverted conscience could submit to it. It is a system that regards the human family as things to be governed, not as men to think and decide for themselves, in view of reasons and motives.

You have not sent for me, brethren, to do your religious thinking for you, to decide any cases of conscience for you, to relieve you of the duty of studying God's truth for yourselves. I trust you will not receive any doctrine merely because I preach it. It will be my duty to aid your decisions, to present the reasons for my own views, to show why certain doctrines should be believed and practiced; but, after all, your own minds must weigh, and ponder, and adopt. Your views of truth must be your own, or they have no character at all. Every church ought to strive to deserve an encomium similar to that uttered by an inspired apostle concerning the church at Berea: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so."

*A church has a right to expect that its minister will be FAITHFUL in his presentation of truth.*—My brethren, they are serious subjects which the minister of Christ is called upon to handle. A man in whom you confide may counsel you wrongly in relation to your earthly affairs, and the results may be disastrous. By following his advice you may lose your property, and bring pecuniary ruin upon your family. But, Oh! what is all this in comparison with the interests that are involved in the dispensation of religious

truth? The views we adopt, and the practical course we pursue, involve everlasting interests. And, dare the minister of Jesus Christ strive to make his instructions palatable and pleasing, seek to conciliate present favor, labor to commend himself to the applause and admiration of his hearers, and shrink from the utterance of such truths as are necessary for their present spirituality and future salvation, lest he should give pain to his auditors, render them uneasy or unhappy when wrong, or lest he should hazard his own popularity? The surgeon might better strive to please his patient, by sparing him the pain of amputating a mortifying limb; the present ease can only result in a speedy temporal death. But he who shrinks from applying the remedies provided in the gospel for diseased souls, trifles with eternal life and death.

Striving then ever to keep in mind the danger, guilt and doom of those who "handle the word of the Lord deceitfully," who "prophesy smooth things," and "cry peace, peace, where God has not spoken peace," who are negligent watchmen and unprofitable stewards, I will endeavor to be faithful to your souls, seeking rather what will profit than what will please, what will tend to promote the spirituality, usefulness and salvation of my hearers, rather than what will minister to their present gratification. Pray for me, brethren, that when we stand together before the "great white throne," no blood of yours may be found on my skirts.

*A church has a right to expect that its minister will cherish a sympathising affection personally for all those within the field of his pastoral influence.*—The pastor's duties are not confined to the pulpit. He may properly be expected to know individually those committed to his charge, and to extend his ministrations to their personal necessities, according to his ability, to counsel them in trouble, to direct them in perplexity, to comfort them in affliction, to suggest the consolations of the gospel in seasons of bereavement and death. Where a soul is convinced of the guilt and danger of sin, the true-hearted pastor will not be satisfied with imparting the general instructions appropriate to the pulpit; he will, in personal converse, endeavor to point out those truths that are adapted to the special case. And, so, in relation to all other specialities.

Brethren, if our union as pastor and church be protracted

for a few years, I shall be called to visit you in seasons of trial, to kneel by your bedside in sickness and in the struggles of death, to sympathize with the survivors when their dead are borne from their desolate homes, to tell the living of your faith in Jesus, of the usefulness of your lives, and of the triumph of grace as evinced in your dying hours, if you leave such consolatory reminiscences behind. With your joys and prosperity, too, I trust I shall have a sympathizing heart. Wherever I can be useful to you personally, as a minister of Christ, there I shall always be ready, by night or day, to go. What I have said in a former part of the discourse in relation to mere miscellaneous, aimless visiting, I do not wish to be applied to any cases where I can be useful. Where I can do the humblest any spiritual service, there I trust I may be ever promptly and cheerfully found. But, brethren, do not leave it to me to discover such cases, to guess them out by a sort of intuition. Do not take it for granted that I must know, without information, who and where the sick and tried are. I speak thus plainly, because I have had some rather sore experiences on this subject, and have been censured for not being, as pastor, in places where I never knew my services were needed or could be useful. I shall never consider myself as liable to blame, unless informed as to where, and by whom, my services are expected.

*In fine, a church has a right to expect from its pastor an entire and hearty devotement to its interests.*—Called to such a position and sustained in it, it is but justice that his whole time, talents, labors, should be consecrated to the interests of the church. He may not devote the time or powers to which they have the first claim, to any secular pursuits, or mere personal interests. In association with his brethren, he may engage in such labors as have for their end the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom; but even these must be subordinate to his duties to the church he serves. His own people have the first, most just, and holiest claim upon his heart, his hours, and abilities.

Very imperfectly, brethren, I have thus endeavored to sketch some of the relations which a pastor sustains to a church. I wish not to shrink from any responsibilities. And yet I assume them "in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." May I not hope for your sympathy.

your aid, and your prayers to cheer these labors, to render them pleasant and profitable to the church, and to the cause of Christ? May God, of His infinite mercy, bless the union this day formed between us, and make it conducive to the promotion of His glory, the enlarged influences of the church, and the salvation of many souls.

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#### WHAT A MINISTER HAS A RIGHT TO EXPECT FROM A CHURCH.

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By Rev. J. L. BURROWS, D. D.

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*“ Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me ; that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea ; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints ; that I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.”*—Rom. xv., 30—33.

Thus earnestly does the apostle plead for the co-operation and prayers of the Christians, among whom he was about to labor. It had long been in his heart to visit Rome, where the remaining days of his life were to be spent, where, by his labors, he was to aid in the establishment and enlargement of the church, and where he was to find a grave. But, first, he must visit Jerusalem, to bear the contributions of the churches of Macedonia and Achaia, for the relief of the suffering saints there. Notice how earnestly he implores the co-operation and prayers of the Roman Christians, among whom he was about to settle for the remnant of his life : *“ Strive together with me.”* Here he recognizes the necessity of mutual labor, by all the disciples of Christ, in order to the effectiveness of the gospel, and the prosperity of the church : *“ In your prayers to God for me.”* He thus recognizes that they were dependent upon God’s blessing for

success. Here two great doctrines, often unwisely severed, are brought together in one view, as, indeed, they often are by the apostle, viz : the earnest, personal, and united labors of Christians, on the one hand, connected with a humble, prayerful reliance upon God's grace, on the other. The proper work of a church cannot be accomplished without both. No labor will be effective without the blessing of God. No blessing of God need be anticipated, without the earnest and positive labors of the church. "Strive together with me," "pray to God for me;" these are his fervent solicitations of the church at Rome. There are four points, in relation to which especially, he begs their prayers, 1st : that he might "be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea," the enemies of the gospel, who sought his death. In our day and land, we have no fears of persecution, or molestation, such as threatened the apostle. We are happily raised above the necessity of such prayers. 2d, That his service for Jerusalem might be accepted of the saints," that the Christians there might receive him as an ambassador of Christ, and, by their sympathy, confidence, and co-operation, render his labors profitable. 3d, That this service being performed, he might "come to Rome with joy by the will of God." He anticipated no joy from any connection with the rulers or the rabble of the imperial city, none from mingling with its philosophers, or gazing upon its marvels of art. His joy was to be found in the heart of the little church there gathered, with whom he longed to labor. And even there he would not be, nor would he, by any dangers or difficulties, be deterred from his journey, unless it were according to the "will of God." For us all, and always, brethren, His will should be our sole rule of conduct. The 4th object for which he entreats their prayers is, that they might "together be refreshed." And in this is involved the imparting and exercise of all spiritual graces ; the refreshing influences of the Holy Spirit resting upon the church.

And let us not fail to notice, brethren, the motives by which he enforces his solicitation for their prayers : "I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me, in your prayers to God for me." This is the great motive to induce holy living, and holy enterprise, with every Christian. If the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and the whis-

pered love of the Holy Spirit, affect not our hearts, control not our lives, there is no motive that can beneficently or permanently influence us. All motives are exhausted when these are urged.

The theme which I educe from this passage may be thus stated: **WHAT A MINISTER HAS A RIGHT TO EXPECT FROM THE CHURCH.**

Having, in the previous discourse, dwelt upon the theme, *What a church has a right to expect from its minister*: it seems but fitting that the converse proposition should be the subject of discourse.

It will not, I trust, be deemed indecorous if I say, that *as a man, the minister has no right to expect anything more from the church, or the community, than any other man.* He yields none of his personal rights, social privileges, or civil immunities, in becoming a minister of the gospel; nor, on the other hand, does his clerical profession entitle him, as a man, to any rights, privileges, or immunities, which do not equally belong to every other man, of like character, intelligence and heart. Because he is a minister, he has no right to expect to pass for more than he is intrinsically worth, as a citizen. I claim nothing more for myself, as a man, than I shall deserve by an upright and useful life. I surrender no rights, ask for no impunities or favors, merely because I happen to be a minister of the gospel. I scout and scorn the idea that I am to be endured, by a sort of sufferance and charity, because I am a minister, in any circle where I would not be welcomed as an individual man. Nor can this sentiment be stigmatized as a censurable pride; for one's usefulness and efficiency, as a minister, is based upon his character as a man. His influence for good in a community, is impaired by anything that detracts from his manhood.

Yet, in his official relations to the church, as its pastor, he has a right to expect certain manifestations of conduct and heart.

*And if, in the first place, I say he has a right to expect a competent secular support,* it is not because I have any personal anxieties on that subject, but rather for the sake of completeness in the discussion. Common justice demands, what the word of God so fully and unequivocally has ordained, that those who "preach the gospel should live of

the gospel." If a church asks that all the time and abilities of a minister shall be devoted to its service—and with nothing less should any church be satisfied—it is both rational and scriptural that the church should supply those necessities and comforts for the present life, which they prohibit him from seeking directly for himself.

*A pastor has a right to expect the confidence and esteem of the members of the church he serves.*—"Know them," said the inspired apostle, "that have the rule over you, and esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." Such confidence and esteem are necessary to his usefulness. If he prove himself worthy of them, they should be cheerfully accorded him. If he be not worthy of them, he ought not to be in their pulpit.

Oh! there is something cheering and stimulating to the heart of the minister, in the assurance that the people he serves regard him with confiding affection; that they sympathize with him in his labors, rejoice in his efficiency and prosperity; and mourn over his want of success. It is easy and sweet to labor among a people, where mutual love gives point and power to the truth; where his hearers are thus, by their confidence and affection, predisposed to listen to his expositions, as utterances of a sincere and honest heart, and as likely to be in accordance with the principles of the word of God.

When a people become suspicious, captious, fearful lest they may not implicitly confide in the intelligence, soundness, integrity, or piety of their minister, it is better, both for them and for him, that the relations should be at once dissolved. He can scarcely expect to effect anything to good purpose. The very source of his strength is sapped. The confidence and affection of his people, is essential to his usefulness and success.

*A pastor has a right to expect the uniform and devout attendance at the sanctuary of the members of the church.* Scarcely anything can be more discouraging to a minister, than to see the seats of his people frequently vacant in the house of God. The example of the neglectful member speaks to the pastor, and to the congregation, in language something like this: "I can find but little edification or pleasure in the services of the church. The minister does not interest or profit me. I find more enjoyment in my own house on the Lord's day. I care but little for the fellowship of the saints in God's

house. The sanctuary is a wearisome place to me, and the services of the Sabbath are a drudgery, which I will avoid as often as I may." Now such examples dishearten a minister. The very truths adapted to their state of heart, they are often not present to hear. It has a dispiriting influence upon the members of the church. The godly mourn over such defections, and the careless take the example as an excuse for their own delinquencies. Such failures in attendance at the house of God, when not caused by sickness or necessity, are violations of covenant obligations, and a sacrifice of the requirements of the gospel, to one's personal likings or laziness. I suppose the rule to be an unexceptionable one, that the minister has a right to expect the attendance of the people in the pew, just as often as they have a right to expect him in the pulpit, and that any excuse which is valid for their absence, is equally valid for his. If, when in ordinary health, it is too cold or too hot, too stormy or too dusty for them to leave their homes, I suppose it is equally so for him.

That is never a sufficient excuse for absence from the sanctuary, which would not be equally sufficient, for absence from the place of business, or the social company of the week day. The sickness, or the shower, or the sultriness that would not deter the man from seeking the counting-room, or the work-shop, should never be permitted to deter him from seeking the house of God, when the disciples meet for worship and prayer.

If you have called me here, to minister to you in sacred things, I have a right to expect your uniform, regular attendance, upon the ministrations you have invited.

*A pastor needs, and may expect, the fervent and frequent prayers of his people.* We cannot be too profoundly impressed with the truth that we are dependent for success and prosperity upon the blessing of God. We cannot secure them by any mere human instrumentalities and energies. This truth being apprehended, in connection with the assurance of God's willingness to be "sought unto," and to "give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him," how greatly necessary is seen to be the duty of prayer. How pathetic and earnest are the frequent implorings of the apostles for the prayers of their brethren! How much more are they needed by the feebler, uninspired ministers of this degenerate age.

The prayers of a church, more than any labors or studies of his own, can secure for the truth that falls from a minister's lips, an impulse—a power—that shall drive it into the souls and consciences of those who listen. From the cloud of prayer that arises from an earnest church, flashes a spiritual electricity that illumines, and burns, and kills, laying the slain sinner prostrate before the crags of Sinai, thence to be borne helpless to Calvary, for resuscitation and life.

The church that most earnestly prays for its minister, is, by that very exercise, best prepared to profit by his preaching. When, on their knees, they have implored a blessing upon his services, if there be faith, even as a grain of mustard seed, in their petitions, they will expect the blessing they implore, and their souls be thus spiritually fitted to receive and enjoy the truth. They will be best satisfied, and most profited, and will love most sincerely, the minister whom they most frequently commend to the throne of grace.

Brethren, I do deem your prayers for me essential to my success here ; essential to your own profiting, essential to the salvation of souls among you. And, therefore, it is no mere formal request, coldly made upon entering upon my duties among you, but is the sincere and earnest beseeching of my soul, that you remember me in your daily prayers. When alone you seek communion with God ; when with the family you bow before the household altar ; when you gather in the social circle ; oh ! forget not to pray for your pastor, that his mind may be illumined, and his heart controlled by the indwelling Spirit, and that celestial power may be given to his ministrations, which otherwise will be barren and profitless.

*A pastor has a right to expect, too, the personal and positive co-operation and labor of all its members, in the common work of the church.*—The obligations to strive, by personal influence and effort, for the extension of the kingdom of Christ, and the salvation of souls, does not rest upon the minister alone. It is equally the interest and the duty of all. For every one who finds a place in the church of God, there is some positive work. “The whole body fitly joined together,” in Christ the head, “is compacted by that which every joint supplieth, making increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love.” “Go work to-day in

my vineyard," is the requirement of our Lord, of every disciple. "We are workers together with him." Is it not a sad truth, that there are in all our churches, some, too many, who make membership in a church the end of a religious profession? They seem to think that the great object of life is accomplished, when they have once been received into fellowship with the church, and found a seat at the communion board. Henceforth they have nothing to do but to enjoy. They want to be nursed, comforted, passively fitted for quietly and peacefully leaving the world and entering heaven. Now, such have altogether mistaken the prime object of their conversion. The church is not a cradle, in which to rock spiritual infancy, nor a hospital, in which to take care of the sick, and feeble, and infirm; it is a camp for soldiers, strong, and armed, to do battle; it is a field for laborers, with stout hearts and strong sinews; it is a place for combining energies, and directing them against the power of the devil and the ungodliness of the world.

Just in proportion to the number of its active, working members, who strive to meet the responsibilities of their calling, will a church be useful and efficient. Every indolent, inactive professor of religion, detracts so much as his influence is worth, from the combined efficiency of the body. The strength of the whole, is the aggregate of the strength of the individuals that compose the whole, and he who fails in positive activities, withdraws just so much power from the body.

From these views, and I believe them scripturally true, you will perceive that I expect to be useful in this place, only so far as I shall have the co-operation of the members of the church. It is "through the church," not without its ministry indeed, but in harmonious labors with its ministry, that God will manifest his glory in the world, and even "to the powers and principalities in heavenly places." What power, in a church where there is this mutual labor, where a sense of personal responsibility to accomplish all he can of good rests upon each member, where every one is busy in his spiritual sphere, warning the ungodly, instructing the ignorant, guiding the enquiring, comforting the mourning, visiting the sick, ministering to the poor, reclaiming the wandering, restoring the backsliding, seeking out the neglected and bringing them to the house of God, distributing religious

knowledge, teaching children the way of salvation, making peace between discordant brethren, giving liberally to every benevolent object, stimulating each other to every good word and work, hunting every day for opportunities to do good, and cheerfully improving them, for the glory of God and for the good of man ; what obstacle could obstruct the progress, or resist the power of such a church ?

Oh ! my brethren, may I look for a co-operation anything like this from you during my labors here ? May I expect to see these pews constantly full, through your influence upon the community ? When called to visit the sick and mourning, shall I find that some of you have been there before me, comforting and praying for them ? Shall I see you often in my home, introducing the anxious and enquiring, for instruction and prayer ? Shall I find that every place, where Christian zeal and love can be useful, is well occupied ? May I depend upon you, as " fellow helpers to the truth," in every department of Christian enterprise ? When I call upon the world to witness the power of Christianity, in moulding the hearts and controlling the lives of men, in restraining selfishness and wrong, in promoting benevolence and love, will you allow me to point to you, as living exemplifications of the truth of such teachings ? When I tell the world of the blessedness of piety, of its power to make its recipients happy and pure, may I send the skeptical to you for proof of its efficiency, in your own experience ? When there is anything to be done for the interests of the church, for the good of the community in which we live, may I come confidently to you and ask you to do your part of the work ? When I see some spiritual duty to be performed, some friend to warn, some wayward youth to restrain, some seriously disposed companion to encourage, some impenitent associate to plead with, some sick to visit, some poor to relieve, some erring brother to restore, where I think your voice and aid may be most useful, may I come to you, and point out the method of doing good, with the assurance that it will be heartily embraced ?

And when we, together, look out upon the field, which is the world, enquire what is necessary for the furtherance of the gospel in this city and its surroundings ; thence explore the destitution of the State in which we live, and consult

how it is to be supplied ; thence look out upon the waste places of our own wonderful and heterogeneously populating land, so needful of religious culture, and so entirely dependent upon a voluntary Christian benevolence for it ; when from still greater distances we hear the hungry cry of the heathen for the bread of life, may I, in all such cases, come to you and expect a cheerful hearing, a prompt sympathy, a ready co-operation, a generous liberality in meeting all these claims, an eagerness to do according to the ability that God giveth to the promotion of every good work ? I shall be a happy pastor, you will be a happy, blessed church, if we shall thus all labor together for the kingdom of Christ and the good of souls.

With these views, dear brethren, thus plainly and frankly expressed, I give myself, my time, my heart, what little abilities I may possess, to your service. God helping me, I will strive to do my duty. And when the account of this pastorate, be it brief or protracted, shall be called for at the bar of judgment, I hope, through the grace of God, to be able to say, "Lord thy pound hath gained five pounds." That each of us may have an account so grateful to render, "I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me ; \* \* \* \* that my service \* \* \* may be accepted of the saints ; that I may come to you with joy, by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen."

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### EDITOR'S ANNUAL ADDRESS.

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*To Brethren Beloved* :—Friends, strangers, and all to whom this salutation may come, the "Preacher" gratefully presents this, his fourteenth Annual Address : a pleasure denied us twelve months ago by want of space, but more than counterbalanced by the blazing paragraphs of one, eloquent of speech and mighty in the Scriptures, now to our great sorrow, we hope only temporarily, laid aside from his public ministrations.\*

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\* Rev. H. H. Tucker, then of Lagrange, Ga., subsequently of Alexandria, Va., suffering from disability of lungs.

This is among the services we always covet. At every pause, rest, and resumption of duty like this, we feel as did ancient Israel when arrived at Beth-car, between Mizpeh and Shen, and when "Samuel took a stone, and set it, saying, 'Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.'" We feel as a giant feels when coming forth from his chamber, he rejoiceth to run a race; or as we suppose, were he a sentient being, the sun would feel, had he slept from twilight of evening to twilight of morning, when he seizeth the reins of his golden chariot, and goeth forth, shedding light and heat in all directions around him.

Such a work as the gospel ministry needs no apology. Every laborer in this glorious cause, whether in heathen lands or Christian, may say, in the language of a beloved missionary\* some years since in a speech delivered in this city: "I have no apology to make, Mr. President, for a trespass on your patience—I rejoice that on this platform I may plead the cause of perishing millions—I live under the very walls of the temple of Juggernaut." Yes! while with the Apostle of the Gentiles in his defence before Agrippa, we can say, "Having obtained help from God, *I continue* unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people and to the Gentiles;" we are forced to lament that not only here and there a city, or a country, but almost the entire world is still almost "wholly given to idolatry." Wherever we turn our eyes, pagodas and cathedrals of mammon send their glitterings pires to the clouds; hecatombs of souls are sacrificed on the altars of fashion; and the delusions of superstition, or the effronteries of infidelity, or the luxuries of worldliness, or the corruptions and counterfeits of a pure gospel, are with open jaws, as some modern Molock, devouring, and still open to devour, whole generations of men.

The gospel of Christ is the world's only hope; and of this the ministry of the gospel, and the holy lives of its professors, are the great instrumentalities. Its institutions are impregnable ramparts; its doctrines fortresses of strength; but its aggressive measures are all summed up in the preaching of the cross, and in the exemplariness of those who profess to believe it. The advancement and glory of the churches in every age have been in the direct ratio of the power and action of these; and to be the humble auxiliary of both is the sole work and the highest ambition of the "Baptist Preacher."

The single fact, that at this moment, on this continent, Baptist churches are by several thousands more numerous than pastors, is sufficient to show the need we have of the press. And no class of men are more forward to enlist the services of this auxiliary than are the experienced and devoted pastors themselves. We have perused and re-perused with profit, an eloquent address on this subject, by Rev. G. W. Samson, of Washington City, at the last Anniversary of the American Baptist Publication Society, from which we submit the following extract: "It is a striking fact, that God has made the leading minds among the ministers of his Word *writers*, rather than *speakers*. Moses, 'slow of speech,

\* Rev. Mr. Sutton.

and not eloquent,' is called to write books for the people to read. Peter and Apollos, orators of the primitive church, after their 'preaching,' were instructed *more perfectly* by younger men and pious women. Paul's critics said of him, his *speech* is contemptible; but his *letters* weighty and powerful. Luther preached to hundreds with *his voice*, but to tens of thousands with his *pen*, while Calvin by his *written pages* is still preaching to millions. What is preaching? What is a sermon? It is the gathering of the teachings on any one truth revealed in the Scriptures, presented in that form which is best adapted to convince the mind and move the heart. Written and oral presentations of truth are *together* gospel preaching."

In one word, the living ministry is of Divine appointment; but equally so is the printed page, in the great work of propagating and establishing religious truth.

Neither with those who neglect the whole truth, nor those who with much truth blend cancelling errors, do we as a denomination so much need logical argument as moral. In so far as discussion is concerned, we have the advantage in all that is peculiar to ourselves, because the truth is with us: and our antagonists admit it. In addition, we are in morals equal to our neighbors. But this is not sufficient: we ought to be better.

To God every man is under obligation to be perfect. But from him who before the world voluntarily assumes an obligation, on his own solemnly professed conviction of duty, the world expects much more than it does from others. Of all sects, Baptists alone do this. By how much the more my baptism is better than that of one who was sprinkled in infancy, and who has never investigated the subject; by so much the more ought I to fulfill the lofty obligations assumed in my baptism. So of everything else. Baptists therefore ought to be better than other Christians. Of what avails it to be nearer the truth, or to have the exact truth, if others without it are practically as good? Religion is not an abstraction.

What is practical religion? One says, "It is to believe every thing the Bible teaches, and do all it commands." But this falls very far short of it. A man may act honestly through the whole of the longest life, and yet be dishonest. To be true Christians, we must not only believe all, and do all, but *be* all. Religion has as much to do with what we *are*, as what we *believe*, or *do*, or *omit* to do.

Pressing as is the want of increased energy in the ministry, not less suffers the cause of truth by carelessness of *religious living*. When every Christian man shall be better than the best non-professor; and when in little things and little words no wordling can justly take exception to any church member; and when other denominations shall be forced to confess that we excel the world and them as far in spirituality as we profess to excel them in our adherence to the truth; then will the going forth of our Zion be "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."—EDITOR.



## THE BAPTIST PREACHER,

Published in Richmond, Virginia, at \$1 per annum, payable in advance; in monthly numbers, (to be issued punctually at the beginning of each month,) varying in size, from 16 to 32 octavo pages, forming, at the end of the year, a neatly executed Volume.

Names of subscribers, and remittances of money by mail, at the risk of the Editor, made to him in Richmond, will receive prompt attention. H. KEELING.

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### BUSINESS ITEMS.

#### APOLOGY.

To our patrons we owe an apology for several delays of issue within two years past, placing two numbers, and in one instance three, under one cover: a fault always to be avoided if possible, yet not without precedent in the history of some of our ablest Journals, and among them the Southern Literary Messenger, when conducted by its first editor, whose energy secured him the title "Indomitable"—Thomas W. White, Esq., of this city. But we do not expect to repeat it.

#### PREMIUMS.

In conformity with an usage now becoming general, we offer to voluntary Agents the following:

1. For every new subscriber with the money sent before the first of March, and so ordering it, we will send, in addition to the volume of 1855, all the numbers of 1854, among which are several Sermons worth \$1 each; or,
2. We will send any books in any bookstore in the city, at cost to us, and take pay in commission on names and remittances, on as liberal terms as any paper in the Union.

#### SPECIAL NOTICE.

Agents and others returning names for *only* one year, will confer a great favor by mentioning that fact, as our losses on that score have been immense. Some one subscribes and pays for his friend in some place, and orders the work as a gratuity to him, without informing us. We continue the paper as to a bona fide subscriber, and then the bill of course is unpaid, because the sum is too small to admit of troublesome and tedious correspondence.

#### REMITTANCES.

Sums under \$5 we prefer in gold, because all notes of less, being forbidden by our State laws, we sell to the brokers at a discount. But when gold is impossible we solicit current notes, not of companies, which even the brokers will not buy, but of banks, and especially of the Atlantic States. Gold wrapped in a bit of paper to prevent its sliding, and attached by a wafer to the inside of the letter, always comes safely.

THE  
BAPTIST PREACHER.

New Series.

APRIL, 1855.

No. 4.

THE USES, BEAUTIES, AND SYMBOLICAL TEACHINGS  
OF THE ORDINANCE OF BAPTISM.

A Sermon, by Rev. H. H. TUCKER, of La Grange, Georgia.

*"As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."*—GAL. iii: 27.

IT is the duty of all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, to publish that fact to the world. I might show that this is so from the word of God, or I might show it on rational grounds. I might urge among other reasons, that without this public profession, one could not exert that influence which he owes to the cause of his Saviour and his God. I will not dwell on this point, but will suppose it to be conceded, that those who really do believe on Jesus Christ, and are determined to serve him with singleness of heart, ought to make the fact known.

There are various ways in which this publication might be made. It might be made in some cases through the newspapers. One might make it known by oral communication to each of his friends individually; or he might announce the fact, either in person or by proxy, on one or more occasions, before some popular assembly; or it might perhaps be made known in the course of a long time, by a devout and Christian life, without any express declaration of change.

If it should so happen, that of all the various ways of making the fact known, there should be one which reason would lead us to believe *better* than any other, it would be our duty

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to adopt that way. The best way, is the one which the Christian ought always to choose. If it should so be, that God has *prescribed* a particular way of doing it, we may be sure that *that* is the best way, and we are bound to adopt it for a double reason : 1st, because it *is* the best way ; and 2d, because God has prescribed it, either of which would be sufficient without the other ; but if both exist together, the obligation would seem to be, in some sense at least, of double force. If, in addition to all this, the Lord had shown us *why* it was a more excellent way, the obligation to adopt it would be, if possible, stronger still ; for in this case our reason as well as our conscience, and our allegiance to God, would each be separately appealed to. We are bound to do it as God's creatures, because he has commanded it ; as moral beings, because our moral sense requires it ; and as intellectual beings, because our reason approves it.

The ordinance of baptism is the method of publishing faith in Jesus Christ which has been selected by Infinite Wisdom, and enjoined by the Almighty on all his people. "*Thus,*" said our Saviour, "*thus* it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Thus, that is, *in this manner*. What he was then doing, it becomes all his people to do. He was submitting to the ordinance of baptism, and his people "*thus,*" that is, in the *same way*, should fulfil their righteous obligations to God. It is worthy of remark, that this first precept in the New Testament which enjoins baptism, should be a precept embodied in an example ; as if our Lord, to guard against misconstruction of his *language*, had himself performed the *act* designated in the precept. "*Thus,*" then, is not a mere expletive, but becomes a word of some meaning ; it is at once descriptive and preceptive, and is of binding authority, for the Lord hath said it. Those only *obey* who do "*thus.*" In the commission which Christ gives to his ministers, he says, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." We find that the apostles, acting on this commission, always baptized persons as soon as they believed on Jesus Christ. The same duty is binding on us, whether we see the reasonableness of it or not. The express command of Jesus Christ is reason enough for the doing of anything, without inquiring further. We learn from the Scrip-

tures, however, many important advantages which accrue from this particular *way* of publishing our faith in the gospel of Christ.

Baptism is a symbol addressed to the senses. As such it is much more impressive than any other expression of the truths it is designed to teach. We all know that impressions on the eye are stronger, and more lasting, and more instructive than those made on the ear. A lecture on chemistry, for example, however able and lucid it may be, conveys but little information to the minds of the hearers, unless accompanied by *experiments*; and even what knowledge it does convey is likely to be speedily forgotten. But let the actual experiment be performed before the eyes of the pupil, and he understands clearly and in a moment that which was but faintly comprehended before; and, having *seen* as well as heard, an indelible impression is made on memory. It was doubtless in observance of this principle, that when our Saviour wished to inculcate a child-like spirit, not satisfied with merely stating the doctrine in the hearing of his disciples, "he called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." If the lesson had been addressed to the ear alone, they *might* have forgotten it. Doubtless thousands of the sayings of Jesus of Nazareth were forgotten by those who heard them, and this *might* have been one of the forgotten things. But they never *could* forget the scene, when Jesus took a little child, and set him in their midst, and they stood round, and the Saviour, perhaps laying his hand on the head of the little one, said, Except a man humble himself as this little child, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.

All the doctrines taught by the ordinance of baptism are taught in the written and in the preached word. But this symbol preaches them over again, and in a different kind of language,—in the more impressive, if not more expressive language of signs. Thus, if, in another ordinance, bread and wine are made preachers, and if, by the illustration of our Saviour, every little child is made a preacher, so also is baptism a preacher, commissioned of God and appointed by him to teach certain lessons of wisdom to his people. Every baptismal wave is eloquent with instruction.

Let us see what are some of these symbolical teachings, and thus we shall be able to appreciate the uses and beauties of this heaven-ordained institution.

1. Here is a washing, a total ablution of the whole body in water—an element which possesses the delightful property of *cleansing*. It is what chemists call a universal solvent—an element under whose magic influence every kind of impurity is dissolved and passes away—an element whose touch makes *clean*. Inspired by the thought of purity, may I not wander a little from the subject of my discourse? How happy a thing it is that water has the power of *cleansing*! Doubtless every pious man, often when he slakes his thirst with cool water, lifts his heart to God in thankfulness for that pure and delightful beverage which he has prepared to invigorate his creatures and beautify his footstool. But does it ever occur to us to thank God that he has given to this element the power of cleansing? Suppose it had not this power! It might still quench our thirst; but how soon would the world be involved in wretchedness and disease, and our abodes, our garments, and our bodies become objects of loathing! Or suppose that this cleansing, purifying element were rare, and therefore costly, and inaccessible to many. Thank God that water cleanses, and that everybody can get it! The poor have access to it in abundance as well as the rich. Thank God for gushing springs, and cool wells, and purling streams, and mighty rivers, and broad oceans! The element of purity is the most abundant on earth. This fact itself preaches. Yes! bubbling brooks and the roar of old ocean, preach to men! Thank God for this mighty purifier and this mighty preacher! Two-thirds of a world full of water! And that the purifier itself may be kept pure, thank God that he has prepared in the laboratory of nature the potent saline antiseptic, and hidden it in the caves of the deep, so that as the rivers return to the great reservoir whence they came, laden with the impurities of earth, they are divested of that burden by the great catharist, made pure, revived, and rejuvenated, and sent heavenward, as if to receive the finishing touch of purity, and descend to the earth in showers, washing the very air as they fall, (thank God for that!) refreshing the earth and gladdening the heart of man.

Pardon the episode. Yet perhaps it is not so great a digression from the subject of our discourse, for there is a

propriety and a *beauty*, such as the taste of God approves, in the selection of this purifying, cleansing, refreshing, delightful element as the instrument of baptism. The preacher, of all others, should have *clean* hands and a *pure* heart. Water is a preacher, and is in its very essence purity itself, and the agent of universal cleanliness.

But to return to the point. Here is a washing of the whole body in water. Yet it is a *religious* act. As such it must be for the benefit of the soul. Yet water cannot cleanse the soul, nor even *touch* it. But the act symbolically teaches that the soul *needs* cleansing. It is a practical confession that the soul is defiled. It is saying to the world that without a washing, a *total* washing of *some* sort, the soul is unfit for the kingdom of God, where all is immaculate. It is a washing of the *whole* body, which shows that the soul is stained *all over* with sin, and that no part of it is unpolluted. Let me not be satisfied with a symbol, which shows that my soul is only spotted, as it were, with sin, and needs only a partial cleansing. No. If the symbol would express the sentiment of my heart, let it show that my whole soul is corrupt, and that there is no cleanness in it. Let it be a symbol which cannot be misunderstood. Let it be one the meaning of which, in spite of the narrowest construction, will even yet be comprehensive enough to cover the whole ground. Such is baptism. As you see the candidate go down into the water, he proclaims by that act, before men, before angels, and before God, unclean, unclean *all over!* Here is a sermon, saints and sinners, which you may do well to listen to.

2. But this is not all—this is only the beginning. While the ordinance teaches that we *need* cleansing, it also teaches that we *are* cleansed. As one comes out of the water, by that act he proclaims his belief that there *is* a fountain that cleanses from sin. His act is the echo of the sentiment of Zion's song,

There is a fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,  
Lose all their guilty stains.

Emerging from the wave all over-washed with the emblem of purity, by the act itself he says, (and oh! how impressively!) Not of myself can I be made clean; something *out*

of myself, something extraneous from my soul as this water is from my person, must remove the stain of my sin. As this ablution of the body is copious enough to remove every impurity, leaving not a spot untouched, so the spiritual washing which it represents is ample enough to cleanse from *all* sin, and to present the soul to God “without *spot*, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” Oh! give me the symbol that teaches that “the blood of Christ cleanses from *all* sin.” As I hope to be made *wholly* pure—as I hope to be one of the spirits of the just made *perfect*, give me a sign which will show that I am washed *all over* in the precious blood of the atonement. Let me not be satisfied with less than this. Let me have a symbol that will set forth not only the truth, but the *whole* truth. If the thing signified be total cleansing, let the sign represent totality—let it indicate the glorious fact in all its plenitude. Let me have an ordinance that will sweetly harmonize with my feelings, when I say to my Saviour,

Plunge me in that sacred flood,  
 In that fountain of thy blood;  
 Then thy Father's eye shall see,  
 Not a spot of guilt in me!

3. But more. “Know ye not that so many of us as are baptized into Jesus Christ are baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead, so we also should walk in newness of life.” Thus, in baptism we proclaim not only that there is a cleansing, but that the death and resurrection of Christ are the *grounds* of it. Let me never see one buried and put out of sight beneath the wave, without remembering the lesson it so eloquently teaches, that the Lord of glory, whose throne is in the heavens, lay buried in the earth,—that this humiliation was for me,—and that *that* act was the finishing stroke in the work of atoning for my sin. Let me never see one emerge from the watery tomb without remembering that Christ is *risen!*—that I have a *living* Saviour!—that he who stood by the sepulchre, and said “Mary!” calls me by name, too!—that he who died to save me, lives to love me,—that he who shed his blood for me, lives to plead its efficacy! “If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.” But Christ *is* risen, and the act of emerging

from the water is appointed by him to remind us of the fact. 'Thanks be to God for the glorious fact, and thanks for this visible remembrancer,—this silent but impressive preacher of it !

4. But baptism teaches another lesson. "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have *put on* Christ." The expression "as many of you as" is equivalent to the phrase "all who." So then "*all who* have been baptized into Christ" are the persons of whom it is affirmed, that they have "put on Christ." What is meant by putting on Christ? It means to *clothe* oneself (using a strong figure) with the spirit and character of Christ, so as to present to all beholders nothing but a Christ-like appearance. It implies, then, that we are conformed to his image, totally consecrated to him, and united and identified with him. "Know ye not that so many of you as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" We are dead to the world, to all its cares, and business, and joy, and folly—dead to all but Christ. We are buried out of sight of the world—we thereby renounce the world. Hereafter we care nothing for it. It has no hold upon us. Christ is our all, and we are his. The world should have no more hold on our affections than on a dead man who has no affections. We rise to newness of life—to a new world, as it were, of which Christ is the centre and sum. You see one descend into the water. By that act he proclaims to you that he is done with the world; that henceforth he stays in it only in obedience to his Master's will, and only to promote his glory, and to enjoy its blessings only according to the word of God, and that all its forbidden pleasures, its hopes, its lusts, its covetousness, he utterly renounces. You see one arise. By that act he declares that it is his intention to walk in newness of life. As he comes up dripping from the wave, he says, "I have given myself to the Lord. I have given him my time, my talents, my heart, my personal services, my fortune—the whole of it, and all that I have, and all that I am." Oh! it is a solemn vow that we make before God in baptism! A declaration to God before the world that we are *his*—our lives and our fortunes consecrate to his service! How great a desecration of this ordinance for any one to receive it who makes no such promise, or who does not appreciate any of its teachings! There were none such among the Galatians;

for the Apostle says, "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ:" that is, all who have been baptized into Christ have professed his spirit and his religion. And, my brethren, how fearful is the condition of those of us who have not fulfilled the solemn vow taken upon us *voluntarily* in baptism! Our whole bodies were submerged in token of total, not of partial consecration. Have we given our whole souls to the Lord? Do we keep back from the Lord any of the time, the thought, the affection, the energy, or the *money* that belongs to him? Remember, when you gave your whole body to the wave, you gave your whole self and all your possessions to the Lord by the most solemn act of your life—an act far more solemn than the oath that you take in a court of justice, for *that* is to men calling God to witness, but this is an oath to God calling men to witness. If you prove recreant to this solemn and awful vow, are you not deceived in supposing yourself fit for the kingdom of God? Here is the oath of allegiance to the Almighty, not only spoken, but *acted*, that it may be the more impressive; and if, after that, there is any part of your life or fortune that is not dedicated to God, and considered as *his* and not yours, you have violated the most awful obligations that a human soul can take upon itself. True, such a sweeping principle as this may sweep many a one out of the church who is in it, but the church of Christ would not be the loser by such a loss. In the last day, it will be found to sweep many a one away as the chaff before the whirlwind. Brethren, whenever you see one buried with Christ in baptism, remember that once *you* were buried, and thus professed to renounce the world. Whenever you see one arise, remember that once you, by the same act, professed a determination to walk in newness of life. If you had never made such a vow in your baptism, this ordinance that you will presently witness would not remind you of your duty, and certainly could not remind you of a broken vow, none having ever been made. But you *did* make it. The act was your own, and not another's. You acted for yourself, and not another for you without your knowledge. You were not unconscious; but in the full possession of mature faculties, you acted knowingly, understandingly, and deliberately. Let the spectacle you are about to witness remind you of what you have done.

5. This ordinance also teaches us that Christ is our pattern. It is in imitation of his *example*, as well as in obedience to his command, that we submit to this rite. Beautifully depicted by the poet is the scene, when the forerunner of the Son of God administered this impressive rite in Jordan's stream.

It was a cool spot in the wilderness,  
Touched by the river Jordan.

\* \* \* \* \*

Softly in

Through a long aisle of willows, dim and cool,  
Stole the clear waters with their muffled feet,  
And hushing as they spread into the light,  
Circled the edges of the pebbled tank  
Slowly, then rippled through the woods away.  
Hither had come the Apostle of the wild,  
Winding the river's course. 'Twas near the flush  
Of eve, and with a multitude around,  
Who from their cities had come out to hear,  
He stood breast high amid the running stream,  
Baptizing as the Spirit gave him power.

\* \* \* \* \*

Silent upon the green and sloping bank  
The people sat, and mused if he were Christ.

The rippling stream

Still turned its silver courses from his breast  
As he divined their thought. "I but baptize,"  
He said, "with water; but there cometh One  
The latchet of whose shoes I may not dare  
Even to unloose. He will baptize with fire  
And with the Holy Ghost." And lo! while yet  
The words were on his lips, he raised his eyes,  
And on the bank stood Jesus!

\* \* \* \* \*

He waited to go in. But John forbade,  
And hurried to his feet, and stayed him there,  
And said, "Nay, Master! I have need of *thine*,  
Not thou of *mine!*" And Jesus with a smile  
Of heavenly sadness, met his earnest looks,  
And answered, "Suffer it to be so now;  
For thus it doth become me to fulfil  
All righteousness." And, leaning to the stream,  
He took around him the Apostle's arm,  
And drew him gently to the midst.

The wood

Was thick with a dim twilight as they came  
Up from the water. With his clasped hands  
Laid on his breast, the Apostle silently  
Followed his Master's footsteps; when lo! a light,  
Bright as the tenfold glory of the sun,  
Yet lambent as the softly burning stars,  
Enveloped them, and from the heavens away  
Parted the dim blue ether like a veil;  
And as a voice fearful exceedingly  
Broke from the midst, "THIS IS MY MUCH-LOVED SON  
IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED," a snow-white dove,  
Floating upon its wings descended through;  
And shedding a swift music from its plumes,  
Circled, and fluttered to the Saviour's breast!

Presently you will see the same rite administered, the example of which was set, eighteen hundred years ago, by our great exemplar and lawgiver. Let it teach you that in this, as in all things else, Christ is our pattern. As God once said to Moses, "See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount," so let us remember that in this ordinance Christ says to us, "See that thou do all things according to the pattern that I showed thee in the river of Jordan."

6. This ordinance also teaches, that by faith we are united to Christ. As one's body is plunged into the water and enveloped, and as it were lost in it, so his soul, if he be a true believer, is buried in Christ, and as it were enveloped in *His* soul, and thus united with it, and thus made the object of God's everlasting love, and therefore forever safe, happy, and blest. "For ye are dead," says an Apostle, "and your life is *hid with Christ in God.*" (Col. iii : 3.) Dead to the world, and hid from its sight in baptism, but our life, our soul, is hid with Christ in God. As the whole body is received into the embrace of the wave, so the soul is received into the bosom of God. The perishable is immersed into the emblem of purity,—the imperishable, into purity itself. "Baptized *into* Christ!" There is profound significancy in the phrase. Thank God that the simple act of faith immerses the believer into the bosom of his love. Thus is answered our Saviour's prayer, "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."

7. Baptism teaches also the union of Christians. Not only are they united to Christ, but to each other. As substances, however different, yet if all plunged beneath the same fluid, will all come out of it subject to its action, and therefore in that respect alike, and all of a color, as it were,—so Christians, however various their characters, if their souls have been baptized into Christ, will "all be one," and will all bear the marks of his love upon them, and thus be in uniform,—in the uniform of "one Lord, one faith, one baptism."

8. Furthermore and lastly. By this ordinance we profess our belief in the final resurrection of the body as well as in the immortality of the soul. "Christ is risen from the dead," says the Scripture, "and become the first fruits of them that

slept." Others had risen from the dead before him, but they died again. Christ was the first who rose from the power of death entirely—the first who rose to immortality. He is the first fruits of *these*—the first sheaf, as it were, which is an earnest of the whole harvest; as an apostle elsewhere says, "Christ the first fruits—*afterward* they that are Christ's at his coming." The first sheaf is of the same nature as those that will follow; so, if we know what the first is, we may know what to expect in the rest. Christ, then, rose with an immortal body, glorious as the sun when he shineth in his strength, which was received in a cloud up to heaven out of sight. This was the first sheaf, and the others will be like unto it; "for he shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." "As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death," as we are in baptism, "we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." An apostle also says, "If the dead rise not at all, why are they then baptized for the dead?" That is, if there be no resurrection from the dead, why are we commanded to use a symbol which teaches that there is a resurrection? So, then, as you see one arise from the water, glittering with ten thousand drops of the element that best reflects the light of heaven, you are taught that the child of God will rise from the grave, resplendent with glory, and clothed with immortality. With this precious hope before us, we can say, "O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?" "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ," "who burst the bars of death, and triumphed o'er the grave!" As you see one's body raised from the watery tomb, thus in the last day will that same body triumphantly rise and proclaim its victory over death and hell.

The Almighty does nothing without a reason. If this be so, the ordinance of baptism has not been arbitrarily selected, or struck upon at random. It must be that there are some *special and valuable ends* to be accomplished by this act; and it must be, that no act but this can accomplish these ends, otherwise it would not have been singled out in preference to all others; and it must be, that if any other act be

substituted for this, these ends are defeated, and the ordinance becomes at once meaningless and useless. For the most part, we can see but a little way into the motives of the Almighty; but in this instance, having seen how strikingly and how beautifully the ordinance of baptism typifies nearly all the leading doctrines of the gospel, we are prepared to appreciate something of the Divine wisdom in prescribing this particular ceremony above all others, as the initiatory rite into the Christian church. It teaches most impressively the necessity of a total cleansing—in other words, the doctrine of total depravity. It teaches that there *is* such a total cleansing, that we may be cleansed from *all* sin, and that the whole soul may be washed and made clean,—in other words, the doctrine of a complete atonement.

It teaches that the death and resurrection of Christ are the grounds of that cleansing. It teaches that Christ is our pattern and exemplar. It teaches that we are united to Christ, made one with him, and thus objects of everlasting love. It teaches that we are united to each other, and are all fashioned alike. It teaches that, as the result of all this, there will be a glorious resurrection of the saints to immortality. What a speaking fact is baptism—how instructive a preacher! It seems to be an exponent of the whole Christian system. How it condenses, without crowding, a world of thought into a small compass! What a complete epitome—what a miniature gospel is this one fact, beautiful in its minutest particulars, on which each feature of the evangelical system is daguerretyped! Who does not recognize the likeness of the gospel in the ordinance of baptism! That which I have spent an hour in endeavoring to set forth, will now be tacitly preached over again before your eyes, succinctly recapitulated all in a moment by the watery symbol. The bosom of the deep reflects the image and the light of heaven, but the more honored wave of baptismal waters reflects the better light of the heaven of heavens—the truth of the word of God. What a significant deed is this! *Let men tax their ingenuity to find one other single act that will symbolize so many gospel truths.* In vain are the inventions of men substituted for the designs of God. Here is a rite so impressive that none who ever saw it ever forgot it. The sermon which you have this morning *heard*, you may forget, but the sermon which you will presently *see*, you never can

forget ; nor will the recipient of the rite ever inquire of others for information as to this part of his history. In baptism you behold a rite which never loses its interest, but is gazed upon for the thousandth time as at the first, and even with a fresh and increasing interest,—a rite so attractive that all classes of people, the pious and the thoughtless, the aristocrat and the plebeian, the poet and the sage, all come up in multitudes to witness it, and thus bear testimony (many of them unwillingly, and more of them unwittingly) to its beauty and its impressiveness—a rite which, for eighteen hundred years, has never lost that hold upon the mind of man which it had at its institution, when “Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan,” flocked to the river-side to behold it—a rite overpowering in its interest and yet majestic in its simplicity, and not set off with the pomps and gewgaws that would gratify a depraved taste—a rite which, to the pure and intellectual, is beautiful, because appropriate and expressive ; for all *such* are aware that without appropriateness there can be no beauty—a rite which all three persons of the glorious Godhead have delighted to honor ; for while the Father spoke from heaven and sanctioned it, the Son submitted to it in the river Jordan, and the Holy Ghost visibly descended and shed the unction of its wing over the scene—a rite which, though silent, is didactic, which, though dumb, is eloquent, and which will be a preacher of the doctrines of the gospel as long as rivers shall find their way to the sea, or as ocean’s waves shall lave the shore. Hallelujah ! Amen !

## JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

A Sermon by Rev. H. H. TUCKER, now of La Grange, Ga. Preached by him while recently Pastor of the Baptist Church in Alexandria, Virginia.

NOTHING is more prominent in the writings of Paul, than the doctrine of justification by faith. This may be said to be the very marrow of the gospel—its most delicious and most judicious portion. It is this on which the soul of the Christian grows fat and flourishes, and this that imparts life to him who is dead in trespasses and sins. It is, in fact, the concentration and essence of the gospel.

Yet among the unconverted, there is no doctrine so little understood or appreciated ; and it is to be feared that some even of the people of God, do not always comprehend and profit by it as they should. This, however, is not because it is difficult of comprehension ; but rather because it is so simple, and there is so little of it, that when people hear it, they will not believe they *have* heard it. So also on examining the Word of God, such persons, though they may see easily enough the obvious meaning of Scripture, yet fail to grasp the doctrine in question ; not, perhaps, because they are disposed to reject any teaching of the inspired record, but because they think there is something underlying what they see—an undercurrent of meaning which they cannot fathom, or a sort of second bottom below the first, which it is impossible to reach.

So, too, when any one would explain the subject, if he does not show something more than is obvious at first sight, and exhibit great profundity of thought, they think that he, too, has failed to get to the bottom of the matter.

The great secret is, that it *has no bottom*—it is *all surface*. It does not require penetration to see it. Those who penetrate get beyond it, and consequently do not see it ; and are

like a man who would plunge through a piece of canvas in order to see the picture painted on it. Those who do not attempt to penetrate, and who take it for granted that what they see is all there *is* to see,—they, and they alone, have a correct view of the matter. For this reason it is, that the truth is often “hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed to babes.”

Thousands of persons have been hearing of the doctrine of justification by faith all their lives, and yet do not know what that doctrine is. I propose, in the present discourse, to present it in its plainest form, so that he who runs may read. Should any complain that I take too much pains to elucidate what ought to be familiar to every one, let it be for my apology that I preach not so much for the mature and strong as for the sickly, whose food, though it be pure and nutritious, should yet be dilute, and for “babes,” whose appropriate aliment is the “sincere milk of the word,”—my desire being that these classes, in common with those who are strong in the Lord, should draw from this most salutary and invigorating doctrine that spiritual sustenance which it is calculated to afford, and without which no man can see eternal life.

“A man is justified by faith,” says our text, “without the deeds of the law.”

1. Let us inquire what is meant by this word “justified.” The etymology of the word is its best explanation. It comes from two Latin words, “justus” and “fio,” one of which means just, right, correct, according to law, complying with law or sanctioned by law; and the other means (in this instance) to esteem, regard, or consider.

The word “justus,” and the English word “just,” which is derived from it, both have reference to *law*. Every scholar knows that they both come from the word “jus,” which, in Latin, means law. A just man, therefore, in the original or etymological sense of the term, is a man who complies *exactly* with law. If he complies with the law of men, he is just so far as *that* law is concerned, and consequently *that* law has no penalty or punishment for him. If he complies perfectly with the law of God, he is just so far as *that* law is concerned, and consequently *that* law has no penalty or punishment for him. Having shown the meaning of “justus,” let me now remind you of the meaning of

“*fi*,” which is, as already said, to esteem, or, more properly, to *be* esteemed.\*

Now let us put the two together. “*Justus*” means complying with law, and (by consequence) not liable to the penalty of law. “*Fio*,” means to be considered, regarded, or esteemed. So *just-i-fied* means “regarded as having complied with law, and (by inference) free from the penalty of law.”†

When God justifies a man, then, he regards that man as having complied with his most holy law, and as being free from any penalty or punishment enjoined by that law. The man who is justified is considered or regarded as being innocent, and consequently not an object of punishment. This justification is essential to eternal life; for God cannot *treat* a man as if he were innocent unless he *regards* him as being innocent. It is important, then, to know how justification is to be obtained.

2. Our text assures us that it is *not* obtained by the “deeds of the law.” What it means is, that we, depraved creatures, cannot do the deeds that the law requires, i. e., we cannot lead such a perfect life as the most holy law of God requires. And even if we could, our holy life could have no retrospective effect, and consequently could not atone for the sins of the past. So there is nothing that we can do to make ourselves innocent before God or to justify ourselves in his sight. If we never had committed a sin, then we could justify ourselves by the deeds of the law. That is, we could say, “I have complied with all that God’s righteous law requires in every respect;” and if such an assertion were true, the Lord would say, “Yea and amen—they have walked in all my statutes blameless, and are spot-

\* The English reader will be satisfied with what I have said; the reader of Latin may be gratified to see the following quotation, which sustains the rendering given:—

“*Quanti quisque se ipse faciat tanti fiat ab amicis.*”—CICERO.

† If it be thought that I should have given the meaning of the original Greek word, and not of the Latin-English into which it is translated, I reply that my object is not to investigate a matter of Greek philology, but to explain a *doctrine*; consequently I have to do only with the language of those whom I address. Moreover, my discourse is intended, not for the learned, but for the unlearned.

It may be well, however, to remark, that the Greek word “*dikaïousthai*” conveys the same sentiment that is attributed to the word justification, and consequently an explanation of the translated word is equivalent to an explanation of the original.

less and without fault before me." This would be justification by the deeds of the law ; but our text tells us, that we are not to be justified in this way. If we are justified at all, it must be in some other way, and "*without*" these deeds. A few verses above where our text is found, the apostle says—"By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight;" and I might quote almost numberless instances where the same sentiment is advanced. They abound in all parts of scripture, but are found most frequently in the writings of Paul, who seems to have considered it no small part of his mission to establish this doctrine. But even if it were not taught in scripture, it seems to me that every one's own feelings ought to assure him that it is not possible for him to do anything to make himself appear just before God. Remember the meaning of that word "just,"—law-abiding, and therefore law-approved. Now, we know that we have not been law-abiding, and we know that we cannot be ; how, then, can we make ourselves *appear* to be so before a pure, holy, heart-searching, and omniscient God? I suppose (whatever men may say) that no one ever yet really appeared blameless even in his own sight, prejudiced as a man is in his own favor, and blunted as his own moral perceptions are ; how much less can he appear blameless before the Almighty, who is no respecter of persons, and in whose sight the very heavens are unclean? If the past has fallen short of fulfilling the law of God, so will the future. What act can we do which will not only satisfy the demands of the law upon us at the time of doing it, but which, in spite of the truth that the law claims *all* our capacities at *every* moment, will nevertheless possess a superfluous merit? If such an act could be done, what assurance have we that its superfluous merit would be entered as a credit to meet former deficiencies? Or, even admitting this, *how much* such merit would be required, to balance against the defalcations of days past?—and how much *more* to balance the defalcations of the future? What single act can that be which will possess so much righteousness in itself, that that righteousness will spread over the whole life—reach forward and backward and cover the guilt of a lifetime with such an impenetrable shield of goodness, that even the Almighty cannot see sin beneath it? No! Without appealing to scripture, our own consciousness assures

us that we cannot justify ourselves by the deeds of the law. If one act would fail, so would any number of acts; for they are all worthless, and cyphers added to cyphers produce no value. The experience of our hearts is but the echo of scripture, which declares that "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified."

3. We have now seen what justification is, and that it is essential to salvation. We have seen what is meant by the expression "deeds of the law," and that by these deeds justification is *not* to be attained. "A man is justified \* \* \* \* \* *without* the deeds of the law."

Having shown how we are *not* justified, let me now show how we *are*. Our text says, "A man is justified by faith." What is meant by this? When the sacred writers use the term "faith," I think they mean a hearty confidence in God's word, a willingness to rely on his promises and statements, and a cordial approval of them and assent to them. Now, God has made known in his word that Jesus Christ is his Son—that he came into the world for the purpose of saving sinners—that he has endured certain sufferings which the Almighty is willing to accept as an expiation of our guilt—that Christ is thus "the end of the law" to them who believe, i. e., Christ is the object on which the law expends its force and satisfies itself fully, so that it has no further demand on us—his blood has satiated the sword of justice, so that it cannot shed another drop. God has moreover assured us, that those who get the benefit of this expiation will be renewed in their nature, and that in another world they will be made perfect and absolutely free from any wicked disposition, and be eternally happy. Now, in all this, and in anything else that God has said, a man must have faith, i. e., he must believe it firmly,—assent to it cordially,—embrace it heartily,—and rely on it with perfect confidence—with a confidence that nothing can shake. The man who does this *believes*, and he who believes is *justified*. God considers him innocent, and will treat him so forever. No matter how wicked the man may have been. That has nothing to do with it. If he is saved at all, he must be saved in the usual way, and in the only way. And there is no sin so great but that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ will save him who is guilty of it. Among all the millions of the damned, there will not be one who can say, "I did exercise

a firm faith in Jesus Christ, and was lost notwithstanding." Here, then, is the doctrine of justification by faith:—If a man will rely on what Christ has done for him, and not on what he has done or expects to do for himself, *he is safe*. God be praised for salvation on terms so easy! It is like God to bestow such salvation as this. This is *free* salvation indeed!

To this glorious doctrine there have been urged many objections. Some of the most prominent I shall endeavor to state and answer; and I will state them as strongly as their most zealous supporters could do, convinced that the more strongly they are stated the more completely they will be destroyed.

1. It may be said that the text, as I have explained it, contains a contradiction. It says that a man is justified without the deeds of the law, i. e., without any action of his, and yet that he is justified by faith; and faith itself is an action of his, and also a deed of the law, for the law requires it. To this I reply, that if faith be a deed of the law, yet it is not *as such* that it justifies us. It is not in its character as a deed of the law that it justifies us, but only in its character as an aperture to the soul. We are justified not so much *by* faith as *through* it. There must needs be some opening, as it were, in our own nature through which salvation may come. Faith is that opening; and although the exercise of that faith is the man's own act, yet the ability and disposition to do it both come from God. Faith is not the meritorious ground of our salvation, nor the procuring cause of it. It is only the *receiving* of a salvation which results from other causes. Every other grace seems to flow outwardly; faith flows inward, and bears the blessing on its tide. Or, changing the figure, faith is a mere appropriator, a kind of digestive organ in our own souls which assimilates the divine blessing to our human nature, and makes it ours, enriching, as it were, our blood, and invigorating us with a divine energy.

As a deed of the law, faith is simply an act of obedience, and as such it could no more justify than any other act of obedience; for it has no more merit than any other, and perhaps *less* than some; but it has been selected by the Father of lights as the means whereby we should receive salvation. There is an appropriateness in the selection, for

how else *could* we receive it? Faith is the door to the soul. What else is there that affords access to us? What other avenue is possible?

The degree of merit that there is in faith may be made clear by the following illustration: Suppose a man to be placed under an exhausted receiver, i. e., under a vessel from which the air had been extracted by means of an air-pump. There being no atmosphere to support life, the man begins to die. And rapid is the process. In a few moments or seconds it will all be over. He struggles awhile, and becomes still—gasps convulsively for the last time, as you suppose—but just at that moment some one turns the screw and lets in the air. Instantly the man inhales the precious draft, breathes with delight once more the sweet air of heaven, and lives. Now, the act of breathing was the man's own act, and it was the act, too, by which his life was prolonged; for if he had not breathed the air, it would have done him no good. But who saved that man's life? Did he save it himself by breathing? Or did the other man save it who turned the screw, and let in the air? Now faith is the mere breathing in of God's truth, which is the atmosphere in which the soul of the Christian lives. If a man saves himself by faith, it is as one saves himself by breathing. The merit of saving the man's life under the exhausted receiver was in him who let in the air; and so it is by *grace* we are saved *through* faith. It is God's grace that saves us, and not we ourselves. Faith is the mere *reception* of the salvation of the Lord—the mere inhalation, as it were, of the air of the eternal hills. So the man is not saved because he believes, but he believes because he is saved—just as the man under the exhausted receiver did not receive the air because he breathed, but he breathed because he received the air.

The illustration I have used may not be applicable in *all* its particulars. It is seldom that an illustration is, either in scripture or elsewhere; but it shows what I mean (and it is for that purpose only that I use it) when I say that there is no merit in faith, and that it is not the procuring cause of salvation. A man is justified by faith, only as he lives by breathing. He who is the author and giver of life is the author and finisher of our faith. So our text does not contradict itself. It says that we are justified without the deeds of the law; and by that very expression strips the faith

mentioned of its merit, and views it, not in its character as a deed of the law, but displaces it from that position, and regards it only as a channel for the conveyance of divine grace.

2. Before I state the next objection, let me repeat the doctrine, which is, that if a man, no matter how wicked he has been, will rely on what Christ has done for him, and not on what he can do for himself, God will regard him as if he were innocent. It may be objected that this doctrine tends to licentiousness, for (it may be said) if you teach a man that there is no use in good works, he will not practice them. I respond to this by asking, Did you ever know of a believer in Jesus (and when I say a believer I mean a hearty believer—a believer in the gospel sense) who was a licentious man? The world has yet to produce an instance of this kind. True, there are many who *say* they believe in Jesus, but who are either self-deceived or are thorough hypocrites. But I do not speak of such. When I speak of believers, I mean not counterfeits, but *real* believers. None of these are wicked men. Is it fair to charge a doctrine with a tendency to licentiousness, when, out of millions of instances, there is not one single case where it has shown that tendency? So far from this, believers in Jesus are always examples of moral excellence. It is not claimed for them that they are faultless, for that would be making them angels, and not men; but it is claimed that their general course is that of the upright, and that in every good word and work in this world, they are foremost. What good thing is there in which Christians are not leaders? And if they be not superior to other men, why is it that hypocrites imitate them? It is gold that is counterfeited, not base metal.

Yes, the objector may say, the doctrine of justification by faith operates very well with those who believe it, but its effect on the rest of mankind is bad. People on the outside of the gospel pale are not to be brought within it by such a doctrine as that. If you preach to a man that he can be saved without good works, simply by an act of faith which is the work of a moment, he will be very apt to persevere in bad works, and risk the possibility of believing at the eleventh hour just before he dies. In reply to this, I have only to say, that the abuse of a doctrine which men may practise, does not prove that doctrine to be false, nor yet is it a reason

why the doctrine should not be preached. I have no doubt that many persons do thus wrest this doctrine, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. But must I hold back that which is true, and which alone can save, because wicked men will pervert it? What is there that they will not pervert? If you tell them that God is good and merciful, they will take advantage of his goodness, and risk his mercy by continuing in sin. If you tell them that God will certainly punish the wicked, and that he is angry with them every day, they will tell you that you are driving them away—that they never can be benefitted by such preaching as that—that if we wish to win them, we must present the character of God in more attractive colors. If you present them some of the mysteries of the gospel (for there are such) they will tell you that your gospel is unintelligible—that they cannot understand it, and so they reject it. If you present a plain, simple doctrine, like that of justification by faith, they will tell you that it is so simple that it cannot be all, and will accuse you of not understanding your own profession. And so what you say is either too hard to understand, or it is too easy, or the doctrine is too austere, or it is too mild, or it has some other defect; and in short, whatever doctrine you present, (if it be a *true* one,) unconverted men will find some fault with it, and invent some way to misuse and abuse it. If none of the gospel were preached except such as unconverted men would not abuse, the voice of an evangelical preacher would never again be heard on earth. The precious doctrine of justification by faith has proved a savor of life unto life to many, and probably it has been a savor of death unto death to many others. Many, perhaps, have seized upon this very doctrine which might be the means of eternal life, and have used it as the instrument of their own destruction. O my friends! if you are disposed to continue in sin on the ground that you can, at a future time, by a mere act of faith, wipe all your sins away, I tell you that you are incurring a peril to your souls more dreadful than language can describe. But I cannot allow the possibility, or even the probability, that you will abuse this doctrine, to prevent me from preaching this only truth by which either you or others can be saved, that Christ is all, and that faith in him will secure your title to his rest.

3. Another objection to the doctrine is, that it excludes repentance—it excludes hatred of sin—it excludes love of holiness—it excludes love to God—it excludes prayer and everything else that is good. All these things are duties, and whatever excludes them (says the objector) must be wrong. To this I reply, it is true the doctrine does exclude these things. But what does it exclude them from? It excludes them from being the ground-work of our salvation. It denies that these virtues are the basis of any of our hopes. These are the “deeds of the law,” and our *text* excludes them. It says “a man is justified *without* the deeds of the law.” Now, is not repentance a deed of the law, i. e., does not the law require it? Certainly it does. Is it not right, then, that a man should repent?—and is it not right that he should pray? Certainly it is, and it is right that we should practice all manner of other virtues and graces; but these, as already said, are deeds of the law, and these, if our text be true, have nothing whatever to do with a man’s justification. The blood of Christ is the ground of that, and the *only* ground. And from this ground our doctrine excludes repentance and every other deed of the law. But mark this,—our doctrine does not exclude these things from the catalogue of duties. We teach that a man ought to lead a life of devotion, and to consecrate himself, his heart, life, and fortune, to the Lord; but we utterly deny that he will be saved on account of these things. These are the deeds of the law, and if there is anything that the apostle Paul teaches more clearly than anything else, it is that by the deeds of the law no man living can be justified.

4. Another objection. By the scheme of justification by faith, repentance, and holy living may be taught as duties, but all inducement to the performance of them is taken away. *Salvation* is the great object to be obtained—the great desire of every one. Now, if these duties do not tend to bring about that salvation, and have nothing to do with it, men will be disposed to neglect them, saying, *Cui bono?*—of what use are they? The scheme is inoperative as to any practical good result. It is in vain to urge duty upon men, when you take away all its incentives. I answer, that our own experience, and the observation of ourselves and of all the world, show that *all* inducement to pious action is not taken away. For the most zealous advocates of the doctrine

that ever lived, have been among the most pious men that ever lived. Was their Christian activity (in some cases almost unparalleled) without motive? Nay, whatever inducements to action their theory may have taken away, there must have been some powerful incentive left; and if there be only *one* such incentive, facts show that that one has accomplished as much (to say the least) as has ever been done by those who boast of more. By this scheme, the mainspring to Christian action is love; by the opposite system, the great inducement is not love, but fear. The one is filial and disinterested—the other is servile and selfish. We have nothing to fear from a comparison of motives with those who oppose the doctrine of justification by faith. We claim that love, the motive which we urge, is the best, for,—

(1.) It is more honorable to the man. It is a motive such as would be a credit to any moral being; whereas a cringing fear or a narrow selfishness is a base motive, unworthy even of a fallen man, and such as among men is looked upon with contempt. Why should a motive which is despised and loathed when it actuates our duty to each other, be brought forward as the only one why we should serve God? If there were no other proof of the doctrine of justification by faith than this, it would be sufficient; that is, it is based on an honorable motive,—praiseworthy, and such as commands the admiration of the universe; whereas the opposite doctrine is based on motives discreditable and shameful. Duty performed from such motives could never be acceptable to God; and therefore the system which urges them is false, and ours being opposite to it must be true.

(2.) But love, the motive we urge, is best for another reason: it is more honorable to God. If the duty rendered him were *paid for* by salvation given as a reward for it, it would do him little credit, and but poorly show forth his glory. Surely there must be some beings in the universe who serve God because they *wish* to, and from *no other motive!* Why should not a redeemed man do this? He has more cause to do it than any angel or any other being. If *he* ought not to do it, *none* ought; and if none *ought*, then none *do*. Surely the sun is shorn of his beams! Not a being in the universe who would serve God unless he were hired to do it! Can this be so? Is it possible that the matchless perfections of God inspire no breast with love?

Nay, thou Maker and Saviour of my soul, thou knowest that thy people love thee! Does not this view also prove our doctrine? By our system, God receives the only kind of glory that is worthy of him, or that is glory at all. By the opposite system, he receives a glory which is bought and paid for, and is therefore no glory, but the reverse;—like titles and honorary degrees, which, if purchased, are not honorable but disgraceful, because in such case they only show forth the vanity and weakness of the purchaser. Shall the glory of God be brought to a level with merchandise? What shall we say of a system which attempts to honor the Almighty with that which would disgrace a man? It must be false.

(3.) But further still. Love is the best motive, because it is the *strongest*. Love, in all right-minded beings, is stronger than any selfish principle, glorious instances of which are not wanting even among men. This view also proves our doctrine. Duty ought to proceed from the strongest motive; on our principle it *does*. No man would admit that it is not strongest in *him*; what right then has he to say that it is not so in others?

The opposers of the doctrine of justification by faith are therefore unfortunate in their selection of an objection, when they urge that it offers no incentive to good works. In investigating this subject, we have found motives better and stronger than the opposer can claim, and we have also found what we did not look for in this quarter—proofs of the truth of our doctrine.

5. Allow me once more to repeat the doctrine. If any man will rely on what Christ has done for him, and not on what he can do for himself, God will justify him, that is, he will regard him as just—as innocent. It may be objected, that this does not accord with the experience of any one. For the act of faith, as described by us, is the work of a moment, and is easily done; whereas, in contradiction to this, facts show that all who have been converted were under exercise of mind a long time, repented heartily of sin, shed many bitter tears about it, and experienced much distress, amounting sometimes to agony. If it is so easy to be justified before God, simply by an act of faith, why is it that the experience of Christians is so protracted and distressing?

In reply to this, I will presently show that it is *not* contrary to the experience of Christians; but before that, let me

say that we draw our doctrines from the word of God, and not from the experience of men. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," and while this is so, "he that trusteth in his own heart" is indeed, as Solomon has said, "a fool." If a man could learn his lessons from *that*, and set up *his feelings* in opposition to God's word, he may live to regret it, or he may die to regret it. Whatever God's word inculcates we believe, whether it contradicts human experience or not. 'This postulate being laid down and distinctly understood, I now declare that the doctrine in question is *not* contrary to Christian experience. No man ever yet experienced any distress of mind in consequence of the exercise of faith. On the other hand, all men have experienced distress, some of them the deepest anguish, for the want of it. Every Christian will say, that the very moment he cordially assented to the truth that God can be just, and yet the justifier of him that believes on Jesus, and that it is for Jesus' sake alone that the sinner is justified,—from that moment he enjoyed a peace he never knew before. Furthermore : Sometimes a Christian's faith grows weak ; he almost loses sight for a time of the truth as it is in Jesus, or is not able to grasp it with a firm hold. At those times the Christian is always wretched. At other times, he has very clear and strong views of the gospel, and his faith grasps firmly the doctrine of Christ all and Christ only. 'Then he is happy. 'The doctrine will make any body happy who embraces it. True, most men pass through an ordeal of suffering before they experience the peace of the gospel. But the reason of this is, that they are averse to the truth in their hearts, and are not willing to accept it ; instead of flying to the cross of Christ, they cling to their works, and attempt to rely on their own strength ; and seeing the futility of these, is the cause of the gratuitous torment which they inflict upon themselves. But if they had relied on Christ wholly at first, they might have saved themselves this unnecessary pain. All the preliminary anguish of men in process of conversion is not because they do exercise faith, but because they do *not*. As soon as they do, they discover that the faith is the gift of God, and that the preface which they put to it was their own work without his authority, and that the pang which it produced was only equalled by its folly.

Here some one may ask to be informed, is not repentance

necessary to justification? I would respond, that as a meritorious ground, neither repentance nor faith is necessary to justification. The blood of Christ is the ONLY ground. Well, but it may be asked, must not a man repent before he tries to embrace by faith the truth of the gospel? This question seems to indicate that a man ought to repent awhile first, and then embrace the gospel afterwards; and insinuates that the repentance having gone before, is a ground why the sinner will be accepted. The scriptures do not countenance any such order of exercises. Sinners are very apt to chastise themselves a long time with bitter regrets for sin, and come to the gospel afterwards. But the word of God gives them no authority for their conduct. Repentance and faith are both duties. I cannot admit the principle, that either of them should be done first; because if I did, I would admit that one of them might be delayed until the other was done; and if that were even less than a moment, I could not concede it, for I hold it every man's duty to do both instantly, without a moment's parley or delay. What! shall I say that a man must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ after he has done something else, and therefore after a little while, and that in the meantime he need not believe? I cannot say it. Shall I say that he must repent after he has done something else, and that in the meantime (no matter how short the time) he is under no obligation to repent? Never! I call on sinners to repent *now*, and to believe *now*.

In my opinion repentance and faith may be said to be twins. They spring up in the breast contemporaneously. No man, I think, could by faith take advantage of the death of a crucified Saviour without at the same time bitterly regretting the sins that nailed that Saviour to his cross, and without determining, at the time at least, to forsake those sins and lead a life of holiness. Thus, his bosom becomes the scene of various conflicting emotions. The bitterness of sorrow for sin is mingled with the peace and joy of belief, self-reproaches with thanksgivings, self-distrust with strong confidence in Jesus; and thus the turmoil that agitates his soul, any one who has felt will know that it is in vain to attempt to describe. When I say that repentance and faith are contemporaries and twins, of course I mean *gospel* repentance and *gospel* faith. There is a spurious repentance which precedes faith, but it is not the thing itself—it is an imitation and a mockery. These exercises of mind that people expe-

rience are sometimes very terrible I know. I apprehend, however, that before sinners come to Christ, they do not know what true repentance is. They feel badly about sin, no doubt; but a man never feels as he ought about sin until he is willing to abandon it; and just so soon as he is willing to abandon it, I think the Lord will not let him wait in his agony a year, or an hour, or a moment; but will at once give him such a clear view of Christ, that he can rely on him, and thus he is justified. So, then, it is a man's duty instantly to repent and instantly to believe. Neither the one nor the other of these things, as often before stated, is the ground of his justification, but the moment he does believe he is justified; that is, God regards him as if he were innocent, and loves him as much as if he never had committed a sin, and will be as sure to save him for ever, as he is able to do it. If faith is the receiving grace, it is not because it is any better than repentance or than anything else, but only because, in the very nature of things, it is the only means by which blessing can be appropriated to our souls.

6. The last objection to the doctrine of justification by faith that I shall notice, is that it makes void the law; that is, if God saves men without reference to their obedience to his law, it shows that he himself has no respect for his law. This objection was raised in the days of Paul, who answered it by saying, that so far from making void the law we establish it. If God were to justify or save us, on the ground of such obedience as *we* could render, *that* would be making void the law in good earnest; for our best obedience is very imperfect. Hence, to save us on the ground of our compliance with law, would be equivalent to conceding that that law was very imperfect. If it were satisfied with such lives as ours, it could not be the law of God. Thus it would be made void indeed. But in justification by faith the law is established. For we acknowledge its holiness. We confess that it requires perfection. We acknowledge our inability to render such service as it requires; and in lieu of our own services, we offer those of Jesus Christ which were perfect absolutely, and infinitely dignified and worthy, because *He* was identified with the Almighty. With eyes streaming with tears, some of them tears of grief in view of our own unworthiness, and others tears of joy in view of the triumphs of the cross, we sing,—

I have no refuge of my own,  
But fly to what my Lord hath done,  
And suffered once for me.

Slain in the guilty sinner's stead,  
His spotless righteousness I plead,  
And his availing blood ;  
That righteousness my robe shall be,  
That merit shall atone for me,  
And bring me near to God !

Who does most honor to the law—the man who offers to satisfy it with his own works, wretched as they are, thus bringing *it* to a level with *them*? Or the man who does not insult it by offering his works, but confesses their infinite failure of its glory, hides behind the righteousness of Christ, and offers the perfect obedience which *He* rendered? *Exclaiming,*

Rock of Ages cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in thee !  
\* \* \* \* \*  
Should my tears for ever flow,  
Should my zeal no languor know,  
All for sin could not atone ;  
Thou must save, and thou *alone* !

Having disposed of the most popular objections to this great doctrine of the gospel, it is desirable before dismissing the subject, to notice several other important points.

1. This doctrine is peculiarly disagreeable to human nature. It is utterly subversive of pride, and excludes all shadow of boasting. The human heart clings to its own works. This doctrine shows a man that if he is saved at all it is *without* works ; and this is the very last point that the heart of the unregenerate man ever will give up. Many of them never do give it up, preferring the risk of death and destruction. Many men will dispute the doctrine openly. The greater part, however, of those who are likely to read these pages will probably say that they accept the doctrine ; but in this they may be mistaken ; in their hearts they may reject it. Oh ! it may be that the writer himself is deceived ! It may be that he mistakes a clear knowledge and firm conviction of what his feelings ought to be, for the actual possession of those feelings. A mere intellectual reception of the doctrine will not do ; and our hearts are so deceitful, we would do well to examine ourselves whether we be in the faith.

Perhaps there may be some who are convicted on the subject of religion, and their difficulty lies right here. They

are not ready to acknowledge themselves totally helpless, and utterly unable to do anything for themselves; or if they acknowledge this with their lips, they do not really *feel* it. They cannot say in their hearts, Jesus,

Other refuge have I none,  
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee!

Some of them say, "What must I do?" "What must I do?" Do? Why, you cannot *do* anything. That is the very point I have been trying to establish—that the deeds of the law are of no avail. I do not say to you *do* and live, but *look* and live! Christ has done all that it is necessary to *do*, and he has done it so completely, that there needs no doing of yours to perfect it. What remains for you is not to do but to *feel*—to say in your heart, "Lord, if I am saved, it will be of thy grace, through what Christ has done for me, and not for what I have done for myself. My salvation is not because I have repented, and wept, and prayed, and forsaken my sin, but because Christ died. On him, O my God, I rely, and thank thee for thy unspeakable gift." Think you not that this is the language of the saints in heaven? Why should it not be their language on earth? Oh! if ever I should be taken to that happy place, I will not say that my poor works have brought me there. No! I will not introduce such discord into the anthems of the blest! I will not so falsify the consciousness of my own soul. I will repudiate myself, and exalt my Saviour. I will look for the sources of my salvation, not *down* to the wretched doings of earth, but I will look *up* to the "great mountain" of His holiness, and to "the head stone thereof," and unite with that multitude which no man can number, in "shoutings" of "GRACE! GRACE UNTO IT!"

Some, however, are convinced that they can do nothing of themselves, but yet they are afraid to risk themselves on what Christ has done. They are in a most unhappy frame. They have no confidence in themselves. They have no confidence in Christ. Consequently, they feel as if there were no hope. My friends, the doctrine of justification by faith is the very thing for you. Trust in Christ! God has pledged his word that those who believe on Jesus shall be saved. You need not be afraid. No matter how great your sins. Throw yourself in the arms of the Lord Jesus, and he will not let you be lost. Would he die for you, and then

refuse to save you when you trust in him? That would be denying the efficacy of his own blood. Will he deny the value of his own death, and cast contempt on his own atonement? *Trust in him!*

2. The doctrine of justification by faith is peculiar to the gospel of Christ, and distinguishes it from every other system of religion. There have been thousands of religions invented among men, all differing from each other in various degrees. But however they may differ, they are all alike in one thing; that is, they all base their promises on the ground of certain meritorious actions. In this respect the gospel differs from the whole of them. It is to be expected that a religion coming from God would differ in some important respect from any and all religions of human origin. Indeed, if it did not, we should be disposed to question its divine character. I might name many such particulars; but will only now say, that here is one fundamental particular lying at the very bottom and roots of the whole system, and pervading also its remotest extremities, that is not only different from, but opposite to, any other religion ever known or heard of among men. Moreover, this doctrine any one may see at a glance, not only never did occur, but never would and never could have occurred, to the mind of any human being. It is, therefore, in itself a pleasing evidence of the truth of the Christian religion—the more pleasing, because come upon unexpectedly; for in considering this doctrine, we were not looking for proofs of the divinity of our gospel. While its very nature, therefore, proves its origin to be divine, this fact is an additional inducement why it should be embraced.

3. Those who oppose this doctrine must admit that they are found in bad company. Popery is a system of works, and so is Judaism, and Deism, and Mohammedanism, and Paganism in all its forms; and at the last day, those who, with bold face and confident tone, put forward their works, saying, “Lord, when saw we thee an-hungered or athirst, or a stranger, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?”—thus reciting the catalogue of their good deeds, “shall go away into everlasting punishment.” Oh! in that day may I be one of those who, surprised at the mention of any good in them, will tremblingly inquire, “Lord, *when* saw we thee an-hungered and fed thee, or thirsty and gave thee drink?”—thus abasing self; for these are they whom God calls “the righteous,” and these shall go into “life eternal.”

4. The doctrine of justification by faith is a *safe* doctrine. If it be an error, it is not a fatal error. For if we are to be saved by works, the good deeds of those who believe this doctrine will be as current in heaven as those of its opponents; so if the latter can be saved, the former can be. But a doctrine opposite to this is *not* safe. If *it* be wrong, it is fatally so. If it be wrong, its advocates cannot, of course, be saved by works; and having repudiated justification by faith, they cannot be saved by *that*, and consequently cannot be saved at all. They risk their all on a single chance, and if that should fail, they have nothing left to fall back upon, and are lost. To us who believe in justification by faith, there is the same opportunity for salvation by works that there is for others; but should that fail, which we know it will, then we can fall back, as we do, upon the Rock of Ages!

I therefore advise all saints to rely with confidence on the blood of the atonement. This only can give them the comfort, peace, and joy they need, and this only can lead them to love and serve their Saviour as they ought. This only can make them humble, take away their pride, destroy self-dependence, and enable them to say,

In my hand no price I bring,  
Simply to thy cross I cling!

I advise all sinners to abandon all idea of trying to save themselves by the deeds of the law, that is, by trying to live as they ought, for at this they never will succeed. I advise them not to try to make themselves better before they come to Christ, for they never will be better, but are growing worse every moment. I advise them to come, saying,

*Just as I am!* without one plea,  
But that thy blood was shed for me,  
And that thou bid'st me come to thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come!

*Just as I am!* and waiting not,  
To rid my soul of one dark blot,  
To thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,  
O Lamb of God, I come!

Come, sinners, *now*. Rely on Christ *now*,—trust in him *now*, and scripture warrants me in saying, “BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND THOU SHALT BE SAVED!”

NOTE.—This Sermon was intended for the May No., but the printer by mistake omitted the usual head.—EDITOR.

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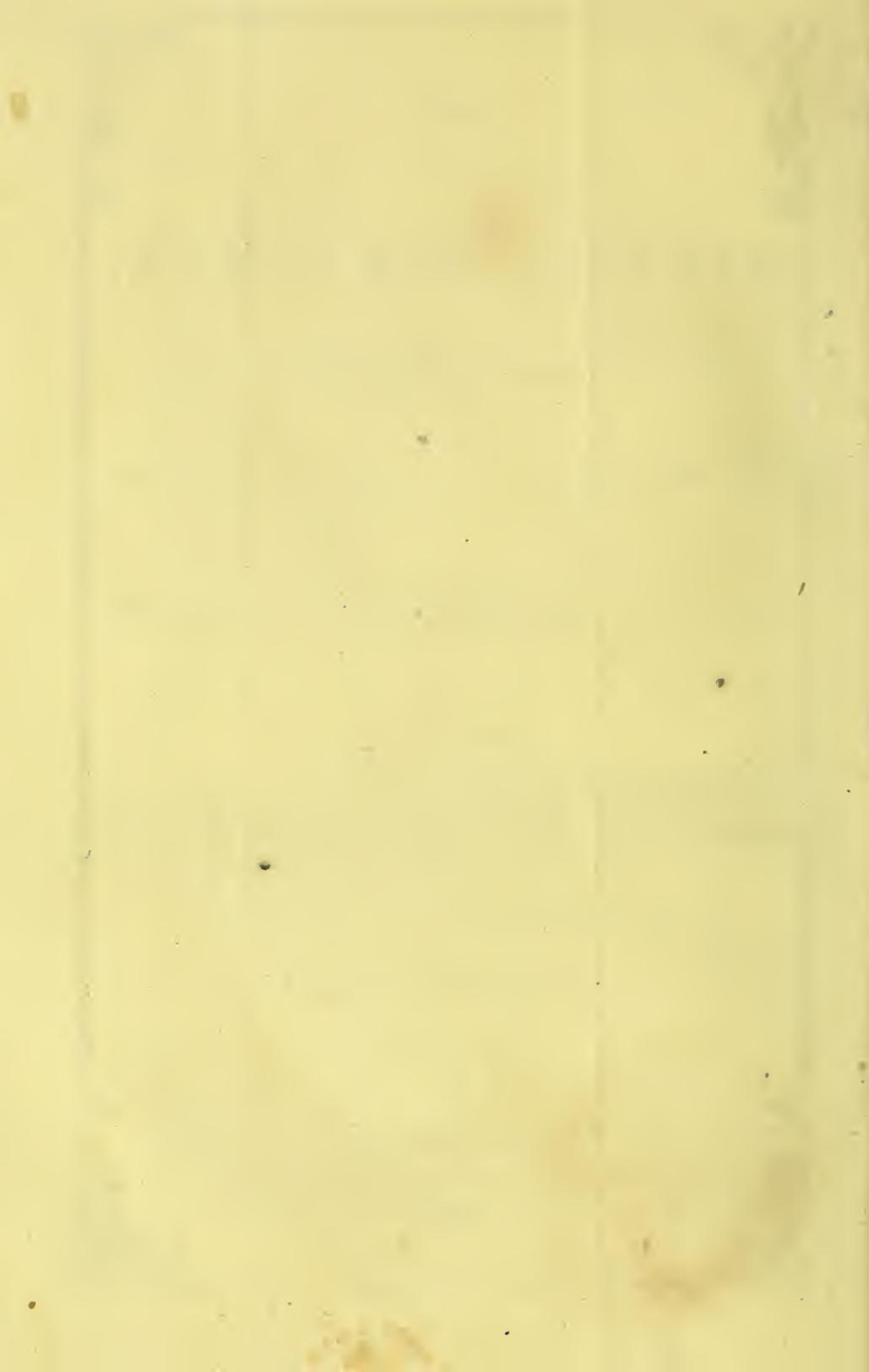
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THE NEW ORLEANS BAPTIST SANCTUARY.

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A Sermon, preached by the Pastor, Rev. WILLIAM C. DUNCAN, on the opening of the main audience room of the Coliseum Place Baptist Church, in New Orleans, Sunday morning, May 6, 1855.

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“*The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.*”—  
PSALM CXXVI : 3.

A tide of tumultuous feelings is swelling in my breast—dark shadows of the past move solemnly before my mental vision—radiant images of the present flash in brightness upon mine eye—upturned faces of happiness meet my gaze as I look upon this congregation, and I see a gleam of holy joy playing round the features of some that are assembled here. Methinks I almost hear the quick beatings of their heart, and the low whisperings of their cheerful soul, saying, “The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.”

’Tis true indeed. Jehovah *hath* done wonders for us, his people. He hath turned our captivity; he hath filled our mouths with laughter, and our tongues with singing. We are like those that dream; we can scarcely realize that we are the same who so lately mourned over the desolation of our Jerusalem.

Not many months since our harps were hung in sadness on the willows; we sat down in the land of the stranger, and wept when we remembered Zion.” Zion, *our* Zion, was desolate. Our temple was gone, alienated forever. The

song of praise was hushed, and only the sad wail of supplicating prayer was now and then upraised to God. The ordinances of the Lord's house had ceased to be administered, and Israel was scattered on every high hill amid adversity's dark and gloomy day. The voice of the under shepherd was heard no more, but only the lamentations of a faithful few, who met to mourn for the desolation of Zion, and to sigh over the blasting of cherished hopes that once had filled their soul with happiness and joy.

How is it now, my brethren? Here is a new Zion. Walk about her—"tell the towers thereof—mark ye well her bulwarks—consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generations following." I see happy faces here to-day that were once enshrouded in sorrow; I see gleaming eyes of joyousness, that were once bedewed with outbursting tears; I see forms all radiant now with gladness, which once were bowed in agony and woe. I see those here to-day joining now in the song of thanksgiving to God, who once implored Jehovah, on bended knee, to restore to his people the joys of his salvation. Sad indeed, most sad, were their outcries of anxious supplication, sent up amid the captivity of Zion, from sobbing hearts and quivering lips to God. "O Lord God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayers of thy people? How long, O Jehovah, wilt thou not remember thy servants? Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved."

But now all this is changed. The prayer of faith has been answered. Here is a new temple reared in honor of Jehovah—a temple for all that love to worship in the sanctuary of our God. Surely, the day-star from heaven has visited us; surely, the Lord hath redeemed us gloriously from our captivity.

Brethren, ye that mourned for long over the desolation of God's house; and you, ye daughters of Zion, that once hung your harps so pensively upon the willows, has not Jehovah answered your prayer? Look around you—raise your eye upward to the open ceiling of your almost completed temple, and scan its broad dimensions—fling a glance around this spacious hall, and examine the noble tabernacle which loving hearts are building for your God. Are not your souls elate with gladness? And do you not feel that Jehovah is now redeeming to you the promise which he spake by the

mouth of the prophet, "The Lord shall comfort Zion. He will comfort all her waste places, and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody." Yes, thou hast performed thy promise, thou mighty God; and oh! we bless thee, thou kind restorer of our joy. Uplift thy voice to him in thankfulness, O Zion, the redeemed—array thyself in the garments of praise for him; and do ye, oh! ye waste places of our Jerusalem, now restored to beauty, break forth into joy and sing together, for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed the chosen of his love.

About a year ago was commenced the building of the house, in the main audience room of which we assemble for the first time to-day. The work of uprearing the edifice has been diligently prosecuted, and now the part in which we are to worship for the future is almost completed. The work has been carried on amid the prayers and longings of anxious souls. Joyful was the day when we entered the lecture room below; still more joyful is the day when we hold our first religious exercises in this extensive hall. I cast a glance over these thick clustering pews, along these stately walls, up to the massive timbers of this open roof, and far away to the dim recess of yonder tower, and, as I look, I am conscious of strange feelings collecting round my heart. A sense of tenderness, a sense of awe, a sense of lively gratitude, are poured out in intermingling currents within my raptured soul. Feel you not the same, my brethren? And do not your bosoms thrill with unwonted sensations of thankfulness and praise? Bow before the Lord in grateful adoration. His Spirit is with us now, I hope, hovering above on dewy wing, and shedding down a blessing which shall consecrate this house to God forever. Yes, Father of all our happiness, we would dedicate to thee this holy temple, would make it a dwelling place for thee, a spot of hallowed memories, where, through all life's gloom, there may repose in undimmed brightness living beams of day-spring from on high.

It is true, my friends, that the God whom we worship does not dwell alone in temples made by the hands of men. He is a Spirit, whose life-sustaining presence fills all earth, and ocean, and air, and the depths of either unexplored.

All places, all times, have been sanctified to him by Jesus Christ. We may seek him amid the deep silence of the vine-clad grove ; we may seek him beside the rippling brook, on the mountain top, and in the forest shade. Oft times, indeed, it seems more meet to call upon the Lord in nature's arching temple, as when the soul longs for some solitude in which to roam in unobserved communion with her God. But public worship has peculiar charms, and the place in which man is wont to join with others in prayer and praise to Jehovah, has attached to it a sacredness which none but him who has felt it can fully know. True, any spot may be hallowed by prayer and holy meditation ; even rocks and caves, frequented by the pious, may acquire the charm of sacredness :

" Yet must the thoughtful soul of man invest  
 With dearer consecration those pure fanes,  
 Which, severed from all sound of earth's unrest,  
 Hear naught but suppliant or adoring strains  
 Rise heavenward. Ne'er may rock or cave possess  
 Their claims on human hearts to solemn tenderness."

This on which our temple is being reared is to me a hallowed spot. I feel that God will make our house his dwelling place, and that he will display within these walls the wonders of his grace. He has already visited his people here, and he has shown his power over the hearts and consciences of those that knew him not, but now rejoice in him "with joy unspeakable and full of glory." The room in which we lately worshipped, and whence there yet shall often rise the voice of prayer, has been filled from Sunday to Sunday, and from Wednesday evening to Wednesday evening, with the soul-refreshing presence of Jehovah. The Spirit has visited us in gracious outpourings from on high. The windows of heaven have been opened upon us, and the dews of God's blessing have been distilled upon our chastened hearts. Many a sweet moment have we spent in the cheerful room below ; it has become to us a spot of sacred memories. Some of us entered there into a new and holier covenant with God, and were revived in Christian peace and joy. Some, while meeting there, returned from our long and lonely wanderings to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. Some first learned to love the Saviour there ; felt there the first kindlings of responsive affection to God ; and there, in the presence of weeping friends, gave ourselves

away before the congregation to him who has redeemed us by his blood. To each of us it is a sacred place; we look upon it with feelings of deepest interest, and think it holy ground.

We love the quiet room below, and we love this spacious hall above. We were glad when they said unto us, "Let us go into the house of the Lord." We have come with crowns of thanksgiving on our heads, and singing in our hearts melodious songs of joy. Peace be within thy walls, temple of the living God. May the saints of the Lord be gathered in ever increasing numbers into thy courts of holiness and thanksgiving; may the people flock to thee as doves to their windows, and as eagles to their home in the mountains. For my brethren's sake, for my companion's sake, for the sake of all who shall come to thee to worship Jehovah, I say again, "Peace be within thee, temple of the Most High God; may thy walls be called 'salvation,' and thy gates 'praise.'"

Brethren, rejoice to-day before the Lord your God. Forget for a moment the sorrows of the past, and give yourselves to rapturous gladness. Oh! thou throbbing heart of mine, beat thou now with quickening pulse: "I will sing a new song unto thee, O God," for I feel my soul attuned this morning to melody divine. The glory of Lebanon has come upon thy temple, O Jehovah, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of thy sanctuary; make thou the habitation of thy feet all glorious with splendor; make thou this house of thine "an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations."

Once afflicted, brethren, ye are now restored to happiness and peace. Once deserted of God, ye are now become the "Zion of the Holy One of Israel." Ye are rescued and saved. Be true to your Redeemer, and all will be well; violence shall no more be heard in your land, wasting nor destruction within your borders; darkness shall never come again upon you, for the Lord shall be your everlasting light, and the days of your mourning shall be ended.

Praise Jehovah in the silence of your hearts in this his holy temple. May you meet often in the sanctuary of your God, and commune here for many coming years with him whom you adore. May these walls long stand as the monument of your love and patience; stand for years after this tongue

of mine lies silent in the grave, and after all the forms that sit before me now shall have crumbled into dust. *We* shall die ; *we* shall go hence, and be no more. Soon our friends shall lay our lifeless bodies in the tomb, and there in solemn stillness shall they moulder away. But this temple still shall stand, though growing grey with age, and its tower pointing up to heaven shall discourse to others with silent eloquence of life eternal and immortal joys. The clear-toned bell hanging yonder in the distance, which so oft has summoned us to worship, shall still ring on ; but its notes of sweetness shall fall on other ears, and speak to other hearts than ours. Uplift thy tower yet for many, many years, temple of our Heavenly King, and when our voices shall be heard no more within thy walls, may generations yet unborn worship unmolested here the God of their salvation.

When we look around upon this edifice, gaze upon its goodly proportions, and realize that this is all our own, we that know the former desolation of Zion, feel that the Lord has indeed done "great things" in our behalf. But he has done far more than give us a temple. He has poured out upon us the richest spiritual blessings in overflowing abundance. He has established us in peace and harmony ; he has enlivened our piety ; he has augmented our numbers in the church, in the Sunday school, and in the congregation. When we entered the room below, I felt that God would grant us his favor.\* Filled with the spirit of prophecy, I told you then that I thought a day had dawned on our Zion, the brightness of which would go on increasing in brilliancy ; that the well-spring of our new-found happiness would gush forth in streams which should continue to refresh and make glad the city of our God. Did not I make a true prediction ? Jehovah has visited his people. The time of his indignation seems to be overpast, and the time of refreshing has come. "The Lord *hath* done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

Peace and harmony have reigned from the first among the members of this church. The fellowship of kindred minds has found its place in our assemblies, and brotherly love, warm and impulsive, has throbbled in every breast. Bitterness and disputings have been unknown. Face has looked

\* The first sermon in the lecture room was preached on the second Sunday in November, 1854.

on face in mild benevolence, and heart has answered back to heart. Oh ! it has filled my soul with emotions too deep for utterance, when I have seen, as I have often done, hand press hand with the tightening grasp of tenderness, and eye overflow to eye with tears. Oh ! thou God of love, cause the streams of this affection to well up, as long as life shall last, in the bosom of every one of us, and may they flow on in ever-growing volume, and with warmer, holier gushings from the open fountain of our soul.

Your affection, brethren, has not been unnoticed ; it has not been without its power over the hearts of others. Some now present have had their feelings wrought upon, and seeing in you the proof that the religion of Jesus is a living, earnest reality, have been led to give themselves away to Christ. There are those among you who had wandered far away from their Saviour, a Saviour confessed by them in earlier days. They had lost their first love; the attractions of the world had insensibly stolen away their affection, and earthly cares engrossed the time they should have spent in thoughts of heaven. But they have returned to Christ. Departed joys have come back to them from out the distant past, and they feel to-day that God is very merciful, that Jesus is very compassionate, plenteous in kindness and in pardon. Returning wanderer, I know thy heart is filled with gladness now ; I know that a thrill of sacred pleasure pervades thy joyous breast, and gives thee calm content and peace. The image of Jesus is enshrined within thy soul again, and thou art certain now that thou wilt never forget him more. He is the chosen friend of thy life, and he is the comforter whom thou wishest near thee at thy death. Methinks I hear thee speak to him, and promise never-fading recollection :

“Remember thee, remember thee,  
While flows this purple tide,  
I'll keep thy precepts in my heart,  
Thy pattern for my guide ;  
And when life's weary journey ends,  
And light forsakes my eye,  
Be near me at my bed of pain,  
And teach me how to die.”

There are those here to-day who can say with peculiar emphasis, “ The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.” They have found the Saviour precious to their souls ; they have received in him the pardon of their

sins. Time was, and that not long ago, when Jesus possessed no attractions for them, when he was without beauty or comeliness, and found no favor in their eyes. Now he seems arrayed in loveliness, and altogether worthy man's highest, deepest adoration. Christ has been formed in them "the hope of glory;" they have confessed him openly, put him on in baptism, and been numbered with the people of the Lord. I see their happy faces now; I see their silent looks of joy, more eloquent far than words; I can read the thoughts that float in quietness across the mirror of their minds. There is gladness in their hearts, and their eyes are all aglow with heavenly animation. They have received the promise of life eternal, and they are happy in their Saviour.

Yes, heaven-renewed soul, thy God *hath* done "great things" for thee. Rescued from sin's most cruel thralldom, thou hast found the freedom of a new-born creature; another hope, another life is thine. Corrected by the filial rod of him that chastens because he loves thee, thou didst send upward deep-drawn sighs to heaven, didst pass from sighs to vows, from vows to bended knees, from bended knees to earnest penitence and faith. Then when with full heart thou didst give thyself away to Jesus, body and soul forever, assurance cast out doubt, hope banished fear, and grief gave place to joy. Then, thou didst find a glad Father; God, a happy child. Then didst thou live indeed, entranced with sacred raptures, an ark of peace, a shrine of grace celestial, an emerald throne of ever-radiant glory. Then thou didst bask beneath the golden sunshine of God's bright beaming mercy, and didst bathe thee in the silver streams of his eternal love. Then thy glad heart poured forth sweet murmurings amid its gushing happiness:

"In thee, dear Lord, my pensive soul respire,  
Thou art the fulness of my choice desires;  
Thou art that sacred spring, whose waters burst  
In streams to him that seeks with holy thirst.  
Thrice happy man, thrice happy thirst, to bring  
Thy fainting soul to so, so sweet a spring;  
Thrice happy he whose well-resolved breast  
Expects no other aid, no other rest."

And for thee, too, oh! thou still impenitent sinner, has God done "great things" within the last few months. But thou art *not* glad thereof; thou hast shown to him no gratitude. Thou hast met with the people of the Lord in this his holy tabernacle, and thou hast felt here the movings of

the Spirit, urging thee to repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Thou hast almost resolved to give thyself without reserve to the Saviour. Perhaps thou didst make up thy mind to begin a new life of holiness, and didst commence the work of reformation. But, in the face of all this, thou art still unconverted to Christ, still unreconciled to God. The enmity of thy heart is not yet subdued; thou hast not in all sincerity, and in all honesty, given thyself to the Redeemer.

Oh! why is this? Why wilt thou run such fearful risk of being lost forever? Why wilt thou still, "after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasure up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God?" So long as thou art impenitent; so long as thou wilt not heartily confess thy sin, and forsake it, thou art condemned to suffer the eternal vengeance of heaven's Almighty King. If thou believest not in Jesus, thou art condemned to suffer everlasting death; and every moment in which thou continuest in thine iniquity, thou art heaping up to thyself treasures of wrath against the day of wrath. The load of thy guilt is accumulating with fearful rapidity; burden being added to burden, and weight heaped up on weight. Thou mayst be gathering wealth, but thou art treasuring up wrath; thou mayst be acquiring fame, but thou art treasuring up wrath; thou mayst be gaining worldly friends, but thou art treasuring up wrath; thou mayst be enjoying earthly pleasure, frittering away thy life in folly, but thou art treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath. Every Sunday passed in dissipation, adds to the heap of wrath; every neglected sermon, every unheeded friendly admonition from God's faithful minister, every disregarded warning from providence, every slighted call from the Spirit of grace and mercy, adds fearfully to the ever-growing heap of God's avenging wrath. Every day the weight of thy sins is becoming heavier; every day thy load of guilt receives a fresh addition to sink thee down the deeper and the deeper in the dark, dark, ocean of eternal woe.

Think not, impenitent man, thou canst escape thy doom. Flatter not thyself that there is no punishment, or if any, not eternal in the world to come. If God will not destroy the wicked, why has he said that he *will*? If there be no future punishment, why has God said there *is*? Wouldst thou, O,

impious, convict thy God of falsehood? If there be no eternal retribution, then the Bible is a fiction, Jesus was an impostor, and the Apostles were either hypocrites or strangely self-deceived.

Thine own conscience tells thee that God will punish him that dies in his iniquity. Observe the flutter of thy heart, when illness comes upon thee. Remember that midnight voice, that doleful note of warning, coming, spectre-like, from out the spirit land. Call to mind the conviction that forced itself upon thee, when thou didst so lately bend over the cold, pale corpse of one that was dear to thee, and kissed the marble lips with inward tremblings and deep, deep agony of soul. Remember the emotions wakened in thee by the echo of the funeral knell, by the gloomy pall, the mournful bier; and remember how, as the shrouded corpse was borne along to its lonely tomb, thou didst feel that death is not the last of man; didst feel that the spirit will pass to a righteous judgment; yea, didst have dread thoughts of coming woe, when thou didst feel

“The sound of the funeral chant—  
And the steps of the bearers, heavy and slow,  
And the sobs of the mourners, deep and low;  
The weary sound, and the heavy breath,  
And the silent motions of passing death;  
And the smell, cold, oppressive, and dank,  
Sent through the pores of the coffin plank.”

Then didst thou quiver and tremble, thy soul felt sad and mournful, and fear crept to thy breast through every pore,

“As blood to a heart that will beat no more.”

Die not, oh, die not, unbelieving man, in thy impenitence! Die not so, or thou art lost forever! I tell the truth, if the Bible be true! Disbelieve me and refuse to obey my words, at the peril of thy soul! I have warned thee faithfully, I am ready to answer, when God shall ask me, “Where is thy brother?” My hands and my conscience, I call myself to witness, are free from thy blood! The doctrine of the gospel is fixed and positive, teaching that every unbeliever is already condemned to everlasting death; that only he that repents and turns to Christ, shall see eternal life. This, my friends, is the gospel of Christ; this is the gospel of the holy apostles; this is my gospel—the gospel which I shall ever proclaim from this pulpit to you; than which, I say with Paul, if any man, or even an angel from heaven, preach another, “let

him be anathema"—accursed of heaven, accursed of earth, forever.

Yes, my unconverted friends, God hath done "great things" for you ; but you are not glad thereof ; you answer the love of Jehovah with base ingratitude. Stubborn, unyielding souls, how can I move you to-day, how persuade you to come to Christ and live? Week after week, have I preached to some of you the gospel of Jesus. I have hurled against you, but with aching heart, the fearful threats and warnings of Jehovah; I have portrayed, with soul-yearnings of deep affection, the love of Christ, laying bare to you, as once I did not think I ever could, the secret thoughts and workings of my breast. I have admonished, I have entreated, I have implored you to flee to Jesus for refuge from the wrath to come, to seek from him eternal life. Some of you have been moved to tears, have been made to feel your danger, and have been almost persuaded to yield your hearts to Christ; but you have gone away from the house of God, and, mingling with the world, have forgotten your half-formed resolutions of amendment. Shall this be always so? Will you go on thus—now sinning, now repenting, now sinning again, and now again repenting—till God's patience is utterly exhausted, till he shall slay you suddenly, or wrap you, even before your life is ended, in the pall of everlasting gloom?

Oh, I much fear me this will be so with some that hear me now. Is my gospel hidden from you? Do you not understand it? Then woe unto you, woe, for the gospel is hid only from them that are lost, from them that are hurrying on in blindness down the road that leads to endless woe. God forbid that the gospel should be already hid from any of you! I can not, I will not believe it. Jehovah's mercy is not yet wholly departed; he has not yet cast you off forever. But He may; *but He may*. Haste, then, haste, and make your peace with Heaven, while yet a pardoning God is found. The day of forgiveness is passing away. Soon will come the night of death, and hover over you forever with its sable wing of darkness. Then it will be too late to seek the Lord; for there is no wisdom, nor knowledge, nor device, nor repentance, nor faith, nor hope, in the grave.

Why have you come hither to-day, my friends? Why do you assemble here from Sunday to Sunday? Right glad am

I to see you ; and from my soul I welcome you, for this and for all coming days of worship, to the sanctuary of our God. May this house prove to each of you the very gate of Paradise, and here may Heaven shed its choicest perfume on your waiting souls. But, oh, my heart misgives me for some among you. I fear me that there are those here who have come to-day, and have come before, to enjoy an hour of merely mental pleasure. Is it not so? I appeal to yourselves. *Is it not so?* And can you do this, when I am proclaiming to you a message of life and death? Can you sit there so quietly, so unmoved, and desire to have only your imagination delighted, while I am striving as for very life, to rouse your consciences and work upon your hearts?

Oh God forgive this people. How long shall my words be unto them "as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument," heard with attention, heard with feeling, heard with pleasure, but alas! forgotten almost as soon as spoken, drowned in the bustle and confusion of the world, lost amid its tumults, like echoes quelled amid the din of roaring waves.

God is my witness, I do not preach, and may I never preach to please your fancy. I preach, if haply, I may save your souls. This is my aim ; this is the height of my ambition. Oh, I would have each of you to shine in heaven as a star in the crown of my rejoicing! Never! *never!* Jehovah helping me, shall I forget, that when I go into this pulpit, I go to preach Jesus of Nazareth—Jesus crucified for you, for me. Him I proclaim to you to-day ; Him shall I ever proclaim from this sacred desk, the Spirit aiding my infirmities.

"In the Cross of Christ, I glory,  
Towering o'er the wrecks of Time ;  
All the light of sacred story,  
Gathers round its head sublime."

Oh, God, help me to speak faithfully to this people, to preach to them in all plainness, the gospel of salvation ; and may they each, Oh, Father, turn in penitence to Christ, and learn from Him to sing

"Of Thee with joy that hath a living spring,  
In a full heart of music."

## THE HATED SECT.

A Sermon, by Rev. F. M. BARKER, of Goochland, Va.

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*"But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest; for as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against."*—ACTS xxviii : 22.

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How wonderful are the ways of Providence! It is through a train of events, dark and mysterious, that God often answers prayer, and accomplishes his purposes. "I appeal unto Cæsar," (Acts xxv : 11,) is the magnanimous language of the heroic Paul, when perceiving that justice had forsaken the Cæsarean throne before which he was arraigned. By this appeal, his long cherished desire and ardent prayers to preach the gospel of Christ in the proud capital of the world, are to be granted.

On the third day after his arrival at Rome, he called the chief of the Jews together, and when they were come together, he said unto them: "For this cause, therefore, have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you, because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain." And they said unto him, "We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came showed or spake any harm of thee." "*But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest; for as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against.*" Paul on a set day most willingly complied with their request, and spoke "from morning till evening." Would that his speech of exposition and defence were recorded. Permit us, however, to attempt a response. The sect here said to have been "everywhere" maligned, were the early followers of Jesus, "called Christians first in Antioch."—(Acts xi : 26.)

*Their origin was then but recent.*—Perhaps thirty years would have covered their entire duration. They were emphatically a *new* sect, differing from all that had ever preceded them. Their *origin* is to be found in that people pre-

pared for a formation state by John the Baptist. As it is written in the prophets, "Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'"—(Mark i : 2, 3.)

Mark informs us that the ministry of John was "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God," and the Saviour himself confirms it. "The law and the prophets were *until* John; *since* that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it."—(Luke xvi : 16.)

The peculiar and distinguishing ensign given to this *new* sect, is the divine rite of baptism. Hence John, by divine authority, proclaimed it *new* from heaven, and "did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."—(Mark i : 4.)

The adorable Redeemer, about to enter upon his public ministry, to authenticate the divine character of his mission, to confirm and honor this new ordinance as a Christian institution, and to prefix his own example to the command which he was soon to give to his disciples, himself "was baptized of John in Jordan"—(Mark i : 9.) "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.*'"—(Mat. iii : 16, 17.)

Having thus been declared to be the promised Messiah, he now proceeds to gather his disciples from among those *prepared by John*; and both he and John proclaim the reign of heaven, and with entire unity of design, both administer the new and impressive rite of baptism to their converts. Of this sect such briefly was its inception and first step of progression. *Its visible, organic formation*, occurred "in an upper room" in Jerusalem, shortly after the resurrection and ascension of Messiah. "The number of names together were about an hundred and twenty."—(Acts i : 15.) This organization was the *first Christian church* the world ever saw. It differed as widely from the Jewish theocracy or commonwealth, as the poles are asunder. Nothing but an inextricable difficulty, a ruinous dilemma, could have originated the preposterous idea of their *identity*. The whole

pedo-baptistic argument for identity, involves almost as many absurdities as it has sentences. They are two different developments of two separate and distinct covenants. The one the covenant of circumcision, which was engrossed in the Sinaitic covenant, which is the covenant of *law*. The other the covenant of grace, which is the *gospel* covenant.\* Hence says the prophet, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a *new covenant* with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, *not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers* when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt." "In that he saith, a *new covenant*; he hath made the *first* old." (Heb. viii) The *old* covenant was the covenant of the "Jewish church," *falsely* so called. While the *new* covenant, which is the *gospel*, is the covenant of the *Christian* church. In the former, *flesh* and *blood* only were required in order to membership. In the latter, *faith in Christ* and a *new heart* are the unyielding prerequisites. Never was there a more unscriptural and vulnerable position assumed than that of the *identity* of the Jewish *nation* and the *Christian church*. This first Christian church at Jerusalem, formed as it was by the inspired apostles, is the *model* for all succeeding ages. As this pattern is ignored or abandoned, so is the great law of Christ contravened. All subsequent New Testament organizations conform most strictly to this model. Whatever feature or principle, therefore, not prominently developed in this prototype, we shall find in some of its fac-similes.

*Of whom were the New Testament churches composed?*—We have before remarked that *flesh* and *blood* were the *only* prerequisites to membership in the Jewish politico-ecclesiastical community. But these are of no account in the *gospel* dispensation. John, in his preparation work, emphatically denied all hereditary claims to the immunities of the new organization. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance, and think not to say within yourselves,

\* NOTE.—The writer learns with pleasure that Dr. Howell has just published a book on "The Covenants." He has not seen it, but from the character of his other works, he thinks he can safely recommend it to all who may wish information upon this important subject.

we have *Abraham to our father*; for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now (in this new kingdom, which is not of this world,) also the axe is laid unto the *root* of the trees." (Mat. iii : 7.) Alas! that these false and unworthy claims have been revived; that these Jewish sprouts should have sprung up to disfigure and infect the garden of the Lord! That the apostolic churches were composed of such, and such *only*, as were *baptized on a profession of faith in Christ*, is clearly manifest from the commission: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," &c. This is the *inflexible* and *only* law of Messiah's kingdom. What are its requirements? Dr. Geo. Campbell, the distinguished biblical critic of the Presbyterian church, gives the following answer: "There are manifestly three things which our Lord here distinctly enjoins his apostles to execute with regard to the nations, to wit: μαρτυρεῖν, βαπτίζειν σιμασζειν; that is, to *convert them to the faith*, to initiate the *converts* into the church by baptism, and to *instruct* the baptized in all the duties of the Christian life."\* This is high authority, and is what every honest intelligent man must admit. Be it remembered, that the *order* in which these several duties stand to each other is as imperative as the commission itself. To invert the order, therefore, to *baptize* and then *convert*, is to destroy the law, and reflect upon the wisdom and authority of the lawgiver. The accession to the newly constituted church on the day of Pentecost, and the subsequent course of the apostles, were in strict accordance with the exposition of the commission, as given by Dr. Campbell, and reduce it to a certainty, that the churches of this primitive sect contained such *only* as were baptized upon a profession of faith in the ascended Messiah. On that memorable occasion, Peter first *taught* or preached the gospel. The people heard, were convicted, and cried out, "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." "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized;

\* Camp. Four Gospels, 2 vol., p. 150.

and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."—(Acts ii : 37.)

Were any baptized and admitted to church membership but *believers*? Not one. "Then they that gladly *received his word*, were baptized" and added unto the church—three thousand in number. Philip goes down to Samaria, and, according to the law, first *taught* or *preached the gospel*. "And when they *believed* Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were *baptized*, both *men* and *women*."—(Acts viii : 12.) "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" "If thou *believest* with all thine heart, thou mayst."—(viii : 36.) "Can any man forbid water, (not "TO BE BROUGHT," as we sometimes see it written,) that these should not be baptized, *which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we*."—(Acts xi : 47.) The question is settled. There is not a baptism mentioned in the New Testament, in the narration of which, something is not either said or implied, that the persons baptized were *believers*. There is *not a single precept* or *example* of "infant baptism" in the Bible. In relation to it, silence, as profound as the grave, reigns through the entire volume of inspiration. "Infant baptism is an error from beginning to end; corrupt in theory, and corrupting in practice; born in superstition, cradled in fear, nursed in ignorance, supported by fraud, and spread by force; doomed to die in the light of historical investigation, and its very memory to be loathed in all future ages by a disabused church."\* In a foot note on the same page, the distinguished author says, "In no boastful spirit, but in the spirit of a martyr before God—stung by the solemn conviction of duty, after thirty-five years of earnest and impartial investigation on this subject, to speak out "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth"—we nail these THESES to the door of every pedo-Baptist church in Christendom, and challenge all the Christian scholarship of the age not to ignore, evade, or deny them, but to face the inevitable trial, summon the witnesses, sift the evidence, and if it can, disprove all or any one of them. And may God help the right,"—to which we sincerely respond, Amen!

As to the *modal action* of baptism, as practiced by this sect, it was clearly *immersion*. Of this, the word *baptizo*,

\* Prel. Hist. Essay to Bapt. Martyrs, by J. N. Brown, page 13.

invariably used to describe the ordinance, is proof positive. Every inducement possible, even *monied* premiums, have been offered to our opponents for a single instance in which the word clearly and properly means to sprinkle or to pour. But in every case their effort has been a most signal failure. The stratagem of going down *into* the water, and then kneeling to receive the affusion—the *baptismal plates* in which the candidate is represented as standing *to the waist in water while being sprinkled*—bespeak the fearful apprehensions of that *plainness* with which even the English version teaches *immersion*. *The church organizations* of this sect were *numerous*. Thirty-five different churches are mentioned in the New Testament, besides others included in the general designation, “Churches of Asia,” “churches of Macedonia,” &c. Paul, in his epistle to the Colossians, mentions *four* different churches, whose localities were only *five* miles apart. The improvement upon this divine pattern of having several hundred local societies consolidated into one great church-establishment, or hierarchy, was not then made.

*Each of these churches was an independent religious republic.*—There is not an instance on divine record where the right of one church to exercise jurisdiction over another church is either *claimed* or *acknowledged*. Nor is it any where intimated that *any man*, or *set* of men, exercised such control. All legislative and judicial claims over these little republics are a usurpation, and were unknown to the apostles. Each of these independent communities possessed and exercised the right of electing its own officers, receiving and excommunicating members, and managing its own affairs. These truths, denied and ignored though they have been, are spread out upon almost every page of the inspired record.\*

*This sect knew nothing of any superior orders in the ministry.*—With them there was no such prolific source of clerical restlessness and ambition! They knew no such detestable ecclesiastical tyranny! It remained for a subsequent darker age to disclose this grand stratagem of Satan, this incipency of popery! *They* knew of only two officers in a Christian church, *bishop* or *elder*, and *deacon*. *Bishop* and *elder* are different appellations which they applied to the *same* officer. This is evident from the import of the terms themselves, and those passages in which the apostles use

\* See Acts i : 15, 26; vi : 1, 6; 1 Cor. v : 4, 5, 13; 2 Cor. ii : 6.

them as *convertible*. The same individuals called in Acts 20 and 17 "*elders* of the church," are in the 28th verse denominated "overseers" or *bishops*, "the term bishop indicating the nature of the office to which elders are called." The same interchange is made in other places, but is hid from the English reader by the translators. Such are some of the peculiar characteristics of the pestiferous sect which, eighteen hundred years ago, was "everywhere spoken against." What has become of that sect? Though frequently driven by sword and fire into the mountain fastnesses, and "dens and caves of the earth," thank God it yet lives. Nor has there ever been a time since its origin when it did not live! Of all the numerous discordant sects of the present age, can any one fail to recognize and identify *this* ancient sect? Breathe softly! We seem to hear the universal, though very reluctant response, "*Baptists! BAPTISTS!!*" Verily, brethren, this sect are your veritable and venerable ancestors! We chant the name of no reformer, do homage to no being but Christ Jesus, as the founder of the Baptist churches! We lay no claim to the apostolical succession of "*the invisible gift!*" And if the Episcopal church have it, she received it through the filthy hands of the Romish church, the "*mother of harlots!*" We *do* claim, however, apostolic succession in faith, principles and practice. We do not say that this sect were called Baptists, but that they were what would *now* be called Baptists. The *name* is of but little importance. A rose is a rose, all over the world, though called by as many different names as there are soils or climates. It is an important fact, settled and conceded, that from the days of the apostles to the present, there have been those always disconnected from the Romish apostacy who rejected infant baptism, with all its kindred dogmas, practiced immersion as the *only* baptism, and maintained a democratic church polity. As early as the middle of the third century, a noble dissent was made from the community of Rome for the sake of purity of doctrine and membership. These dissenters adopted the name *Cathari* or *Puritani*, *the pure*, but were called by their enemies *Novatians*. From an invariable habit of baptizing those who came over to them from the corrupt party, they were the first who were called Anabaptists.

In his ecclesiastical researches Robinson says: "All over

the empire Puritan churches were constituted, and flourished through the succeeding two hundred years. Afterward, when penal laws obliged them to lurk in caverns and worship God in private, they were distinguished by a variety of names, and a *succession of them continued till the reformation.*" Soon after, another large secession was made in North Africa, called *Donatists*. Crispin says they held the views of the Novatians in the following points: "1. For purity of church members, by asserting that none ought to be admitted into the church but such as are visibly true believers and true saints. 2. For purity of church discipline. 3. For the independency of each church; and 4. They baptized again those whose first baptism they had reason to doubt." It is demonstrably clear that this sect, these "faithful and true witnesses," lived all through the middle ages down to the reformation, though bearing different names in different countries: such as Novatians, Donatists, Paulicians, Pelobrussians, Henricians, Josephists, Arnoldists, Waldenses, Lollards, and, lastly, Mennonites. They were never permitted to bear their present name, Baptists, "until after their legal toleration in England in 1688." These important historic facts have been most carefully and *wickedly* suppressed. Pedo-Baptist historians have wilfully ignored them, and withheld from us the dues which even *infidel* writers have given. These Christian chroniclers of the church of Christ, claiming an origin for themselves no *higher* than the *sixteenth century*, have jeeringly accused the Baptists of having sprung from the Munster-insurrectionists of Germany in 1533-'4. This, with the Roger Williams origin in America, is a libel written by pedo-Baptist pens, and echoed from the pulpit by striplings and tyros a thousand times. In all cases of controversy, it is used as the *argumentum ad hominem*. It is the reserved fire for every slanderous ranter against us. We rejoice there are a *few* exceptions. Out of *their* mouths will we condemn them. The distinguished pedo-Baptist historian, *Mosheim*, a bitter enemy to the Baptists, says: "The true origin of that sect which acquired the name of Anabaptists, by their administering anew the rite of baptism to those who came over to their communion, and derived that of Mennonists from that famous man, to whom they owe the greatest part of their present felicity, is HID IN THE REMOTE DEPTHS OF ANTIQUITY, and is consequently ex-

tremely difficult to be ascertained.”—Volume 4, page 427. Zuingulius, the Swiss reformer and cotemporary with Luther, says: “The institution of Anabaptism is no *novelty*, but for three hundred years has caused great disturbance in the church.” In 1819 the King of Holland selected two of the most distinguished pedo-Baptists to draw up for the use of the *government* a history of the “origin of Dutch Baptists.” Dr. Zpeig, professor of theology in the University of Groningen, and Dr. Dermont, the king’s chaplain, were the men. Did they report *Munster* as their birth-place? Hear them. “The Mennonites are descended from the tolerably pure, evangelical Waldenses, who were driven by persecution into various countries; and who, during the latter part of the twelfth century, fled into Flanders, and into the provinces of Holland and Zealand, where they lived simple and exemplary lives. *They were therefore in existence long before the Reformed Church of the Netherlands.*” Again they say, “We have now seen that the Baptists, who were formerly called Anabaptists, and in later times Mennonites, were the original Waldenses, and who, long in the history of the church, received the honor of that origin. ON THIS ACCOUNT THE BAPTISTS MAY BE CONSIDERED THE ONLY CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY WHICH HAS STOOD SINCE THE DAYS OF THE APOSTLES; AND AS A CHRISTIAN SOCIETY WHICH HAS PRESERVED PURE THE DOCTRINES OF THE GOSPEL THROUGH ALL AGES.”

May we not hope that a brighter day is dawning, when pedo-Baptist professors of theology and doctors of divinity, openly proclaim in the ears of kings and the world, that Baptists are the only true descendants of the apostles, the ONLY church “which has preserved pure the doctrines of the gospel through all ages.” Give publicity to these facts, rescued from oblivion to which Pedo-baptism has sought to assign them, and let them stop the mouths of “false accusers,” and cause “every tongue to confess” the true origin of Baptists. “Their rock is not as our rock, our enemies themselves being judges.”

But what was true of Baptists in the days of Paul, is true now. They are the “*sect every where spoken against.*” Strict adherence to the Scriptures, refusal to engraft Judaism upon Christianity, and a steady rejection of the “tradition of the elders,” brought upon the primitive sect contempt,

persecution and death. The very same causes have, in all ages, afflicted their descendants with the same curses. You, my brethren, have a noble ancestry in martyrology. A distinguished writer\* has recently published to the world, and challenged refutation, that all the martyrs of the first *three centuries*, estimated at three millions, were Baptists, with one solitary exception—"Cyprian of Carthage, the father of Pede-baptism." The following is one of the canons of the Council of Carthage, A. D. 414. "*We will that whosoever denies that little children, by baptism, ARE FREED FROM PERDITION AND ETERNALLY SAVED, that they be accursed.*" About the same time, re-baptism (falsely so called) was forbidden throughout the Roman empire, under penalty of death.

From the 3rd to the 15th centuries, all men were commanded, under severe penalties, to search out, report and deliver to the rack and stake, all of that "flagitious heresy." The Reformation itself, did not extinguish the fires built by Rome for our forefathers. A part of an edict of the Zuinglian Church, published at Zurich in 1530, reads: "for we will, according to law, *punish with death, all the Anabaptists and those that adhere to them.*"† About this time the earth was crimsoned with the blood of Baptists. The Reformers‡ themselves, waged a war of extermination against them.

Even in Protestant England bones have been disinterred three years after burial, and burnt to ashes, simply because they were *Baptists'* bones. In every country upon the globe, where this despised sect existed, have Jews, Catholics, and Protestants, with one consent, united to punish and extinguish them from the face of the earth. The demon of persecution followed them even to the new world. The Congregationalists of the North, and the Episcopalians of the South, thought they were doing God service in persecuting *this sect* even to bonds and imprisonments. Truly is it the "sect everywhere spoken against!" Why this universal hatred and persecuting spirit? Their refusal to acknowledge of divine origin, and practice as a law of Christ's kingdom, that

\* J. N. Brown, Prel. Essay to Bap. Mar. p. 11.

† Ben. His. Bap. p. 86.

‡ "Luther, Melancthon, Zuingle, Bucer, Bullinger, Calvin, and others abroad; at home (England,) Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, Barnes, Philpot, Becon, Turner, Veron, and many more." Strug. and Triumphs, Relig. Lib. p. 100.

human tradition, *Infant Baptism*, is the ground-work of it all.

This "part and pillar of Popery" has filled more dungeons, loaded more racks, planted more stakes, kindled more fires, and roasted more Christians, than any other thing in Christendom. The blood of millions and millions of martyrs cries terribly against it to-day! Thank God, its days are being numbered! May the celebrated maxim of Chillingworth soon be universally adopted in *practice* as well as theory: "the Bible and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants" In this land of civil and religious liberty, however, freedom to worship God according to the dictates of conscience, is a primary statute. Hence *only* there are no fires of persecution against us. But still we are "every where spoken against." Because we will not contravene the great law of believer's baptism—the prerequisite to communion in Christ's kingdom—and admit the *unbaptized* to the eucharist, we are termed "*selfish, uncharitable and bigoted.*" But in the eloquent language of Dr. Welch, we reply, "If to adhere to truth, if to prefer allegiance to the throne of Christ, if to regard the integrity of His institutions, and the purity of His word, be sectarianism, then let sectarianism be written on my brow, and underneath it, write the name of *bigot*, and I'll wear it till I die."

How often have we heard the defamatory charge: "The Baptists are an obscure, illiterate sect." If it is thus meant that we have no literature, and no scholars, we indignantly repel the charge. The whole New Testament is Baptist literature. The authors of all its epistles were Baptists. All the Christian writers of the second century were Baptists. If the middle ages are wanting in Baptist literature, it is because the same demon spirit that deprived Baptists of their churches, their property, their liberty, and their lives, destroyed their schools and burnt their books. To-day, they would not suffer by a comparison in scholars and literature, in all its various departments, with any sect or people on earth.\*

In conclusion, we remark, that the Baptists, though always and every where, the subjects of the most shameful, ruthless persecution, have never retaliated. "Soul-liberty" has ever been their motto. Their creed utterly forbids prescription and intolerance.

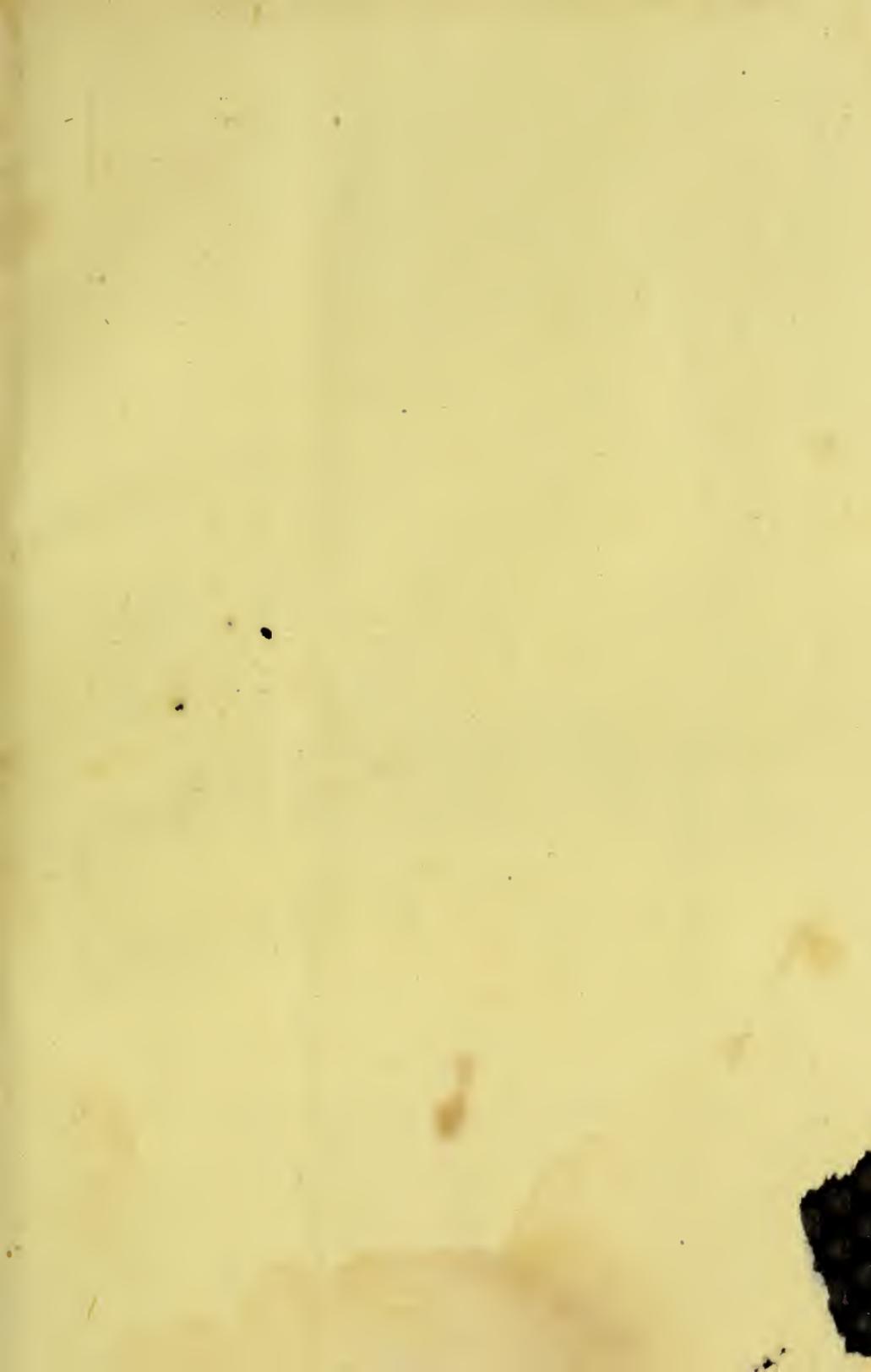
\* We beg leave to refer the reader to a masterly little tract, "Popular Charges against the Baptists refuted," by Rev. J. B. Jeter, D. D.

Thirty years ago the government of Holland offered them the support of the State. "It was politely, but firmly declined as inconsistent with their fundamental principles."

Roger Williams, a Baptist, to whom the world have not as yet awarded the proper meed of praise, was the father of *religious* liberty upon the American continent. From his mind were evolved those great principles of civil and religious freedom since incorporated into our government. Let us guard this sacred boon, for which our Baptist fathers for 1800 years have bled and died, with a jealous eye.

*The principles of the Baptists are destined to triumph.*— They are the principles of that Church of which Messiah said, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." For 1800 years they have withstood all the bulls, dungeons, racks and fires, which Rome and Protestant hierarchies could command. They have fully proven themselves to be of God. Hoary-headed and iron-hearted establishments are tottering and falling before their onward march in other lands. In our own happy country, trophies to their power are numerous and rapidly increasing. An accurate writer has recently stated, from a careful collation of facts, that the number of members received into the Baptist churches for some years past, *from other denominations, exceeds 2,000 annually*; and that the number of ministers so received by change of conviction, is equal to one for every week in the year. In addition to these, their own converts number about fifty thousand annually.

Let me most heartily congratulate you, my brethren, upon your renowned ancestry, and the divinity and success of your principles. Act worthy of the former, and be true to the latter. Let your prayers, your efforts, your sympathies and your money, freely flow for their universal propagation and triumph; and may the kingdoms of the world soon become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ.



## NOTE TO THE FIRST SERMON IN THIS NUMBER.

The Coliseum Place Baptist Church edifice is situated about the centre of the American portion of New Orleans, on the corner of Camp and Basin (now Terpsichore) streets. It is a large building, imposing but plain. The main audience-room measures in the clear, exclusive of the pulpit recess, 90 by 60 feet. It will accommodate a larger audience than any other Protestant house of worship in the city. A gallery runs across the front of the building, but there is none on the sides. No pillars intercept the view. In November the church was composed of nine members; it now numbers seventy. The Sunday School has on its register 204 scholars, presided over by four officers and twenty-six teachers.

To pay off the present debt upon the building, and to finish it, requires a sum of \$15,000. This must be raised. New Orleans has already subscribed very liberally, and will yet do more. It is hoped that Baptists abroad (for this important enterprise concerns Baptists everywhere in the Union, especially in the South,) will forthwith extend their liberal aid. At the late meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Montgomery, Alabama, a resolution was passed, requesting our pastors to bring the claims of the enterprise before their churches some time during the coming November, to take up a collection in its behalf, and to forward the money to Rev. Joseph Walker, Secretary of Domestic Mission Board, Marion, Alabama.

This money is needed to complete the edifice. It can be raised easily by a general effort. Will each pastor who reads this carry out the provisions of the convention resolution. Will private brethren also aid without further solicitation. Those who prefer it, may forward their donations to James H. Low, Treasurer of Board of Trustees, New Orleans.

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