

Scripture *establishes* this conclusion. All that God has taught is summed up in the word *truth*. His gracious purpose is the salvation and sanctification of men. It is the truth, and the truth alone, which effects this:—

It saves, 2 Thess. ii. 13; James i. 18.

It makes free, John viii. 32.

It sanctifies, 1 Peter, i. 22; John xvii. 17, 19.

As it is the truth, and the truth alone, which sanctifies and saves; in proportion as it is mixed with error it loses its full power to effect these grand results, both in minister and people.

So the belief that, if men are sincere it does not matter so much what they believe is wrong, for sincerity cannot make amends for the want of the saving and sanctifying truth, in all its effects upon the heart. Hence, also, it is wrong, because of conscientiousness of the apparent smallness of the error, of the feelings of those we esteem, or of any other consideration, to refrain from declaring the whole counsel of God, and exposing what is, to any extent, false. When it is considered that the smallest departure from the truth affects injuriously the eternal state of the soul, what diligent students of the Bible should ministers especially be, and how boldly and faithfully should they proclaim its teachings.

Again, because God is all wise, He can do nothing without a purpose, and what He has ordained must be most exactly fitted to effect the end in view.

If this be admitted, it will follow that the ordinances, in the order in which they stand connected in the New Testament, have a significance which must be injured or destroyed by any alteration, however slight. The New Testament establishes this conclusion also.

No passage can be found to show that baptism represents the *Spirit in the manner of its bestowal*. The Scripture teaching is, that it represents its effects in a *dying and being buried to sin and a rising to newness of life*. How beautifully immersion shows forth this burial and resurrection! How do sprinkling and pouring utterly fail.

Notwithstanding the arguments of Robert Hall to the contrary, it is evident that baptism, and then communion, was the New Testament order. Mr. Hall strives to prove too much; for, conceiving that the Apostles were not baptized at the time of the Supper, there is no proof that they were ever baptized, and hence they cannot be an example to baptized believers.

Baptism was ever enjoined as an immediate duty when one had believed. If this direction was followed, baptism was first, and hence the Supper must have succeeded, and not preceded it.

This Scripture evidence, coupled with the fact that, according to Neander (vol. I. 327,) and Mosheim (vol. I. 69, 189), unbaptized persons were excluded from the Lord's Supper during the first three centuries, may be taken as sufficient proof to establish that Baptism, and then Communion, was the Apostolic order. And is not this order necessary to their significance. Let the bread and wine represent spiritual nourishment, fellowship with God, or whatever any have made it represent, it is evident that these presuppose life, and hence cannot come before that ordinance which denotes the beginning of that life.

Reverse this order, and what relative significance can they bear?

III. Concluding remarks.

1. As God has given no especial permission for change, reversal or