

also, respecting councils being necessary in order to give validity to churches and ministers. I know that many churches do not connect themselves with any of our associations on account of their supposing that they meet together more as ecclesiastical councils, than simply as brethren who are representatives of independent churches, having "one Lord, one, faith, one baptism."

Yours, in Christian bonds,

J.O.A.O.

March 12, 1850.

ORDINATION.

On Friday Evening, March 21, the Rev. A. F. Spalding, late of Newton Theological Institution, was ordained to the pastoral office over the Baptist Church, St. Helen Street, Montreal. The service was conducted in the following manner:

The Rev. F. H. Marling, (Second Congregational Church) invoked the divine blessing.

Singing—10th Hymn, 2nd Book (*Watts*.)

The Rev. Dr. Taylor (United Presbyterian Church) read Ephes. iv. 1, 16, and prayed.

Singing—555, *New Selection*.

The Rev. Dr. Cramp preached. His text was Ephes. iv. 11. The object of the preacher was to illustrate this topic—the *Saviour provides and appoints His own ministers*. It was shown that the Lord Jesus qualifies His servants for the work to which he calls them, directs them, in the discharge of their duty,—and maintains the succession. Under the last head, the true nature of the "apostolical succession" was pointed out, and the manner of tracing it, viz., in the spiritual line, and not by episcopal genealogies, or any ecclesiastical consecration.

Mr. Spalding then read a brief statement of his views of christian truth, particularly mentioning those which distinguish the Protestant, the Trinitarian, and the Baptist.

The Rev. W. Parker, of Burlington, offered the ordination prayer, with imposition of hands.

The Rev. Dr. Davies, gave the right hand of fellowship, affectionately welcoming the new pastor, and expressing the wishes and prayers of his brethren on his behalf.

Singing—"How beautiful upon the mountains," &c.

The Rev. Wm. Parker delivered the charge, founded on 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2. It was an impressive, earnest, powerful exhortation. The duties, difficulties, and encouragements of the christian minister were set forth clearly and forcibly. In exhorting the pastor to be unremittently diligent in study, and in shewing the important place which the doctrine of the cross holds in the Christian system. Mr. Parker's observations were peculiarly interesting.

Singing—132nd Psalm—"Arise, O King of Grace," &c.

The Rev. Dr. Walker (first Congregational Church) addressed the church and congregation, from 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. His discourse was eminently faithful. The obligation of churches to respect esteem, and honour their pastors, to make suitable provision for them, and in every way to promote their comfort, and aid them by zealous, prayerful,

co-operation, was dwelt on with much energy and effect.

Singing:—Chorus—"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel," &c.

The *Doxology*—after which the pastor pronounced the benediction.

Mr. Spalding's labours have been already blessed in the hopeful conversion of several young persons. May these "manly drops" be followed by a plentiful shower!

C.

PEDOBAPTIST LIBERALITY ESTIMATED.

To the Editor of the Christian Observer.

SIR,—It is frequently alleged against Baptists, that they are "narrow-minded," "strait-laced," and "sectarian," in their views and feelings; and that, by their strict communion polity, they discredit the Christianity of all other religious communities.

Now, there is a certain vagueness and indeterminateness about these charges, from which our opponents draw a manifest advantage. inasmuch as while they are too intangible for refutation, they are sufficiently explicit and suggestive for all purposes of disparagement, and readily convey to the minds of the timid and the credulous, just such an impression of our spirit, and the tendency of our views, as is most fitted to deter them from pursuing an independent inquiry respecting the authority and sanction which Scripture accords them. Such a result is probably regarded as a triumph, and contemplated with satisfaction and complacency by those who have achieved it; but surely, in the case of every ingenious and well-regulated mind, this will be more than counterbalanced by the reflection, that it has been won at the expense of truth and charity, and that it can only be perpetuated by repressing, or at least discouraging freedom of enquiry.

It is no part of my present purpose to attempt a vindication of our body against such charges. Challenge us to produce Scripture warranty for ought that we believe or practise, and we are put on our metal at once; the traditionary spirit of an ancient Protestantism is stirred within us; we become eager, it may be impatient, to enter the arena, and measure strength with our antagonist, "hand to hand, and foot to foot," but armed with no other weapon than the "sword of the Spirit;" by it we test the faith and practice of others, and in it we confide to vindicate our own.

It may not, however, be inappropriate, and perhaps not unconstructive, to devote a little attention to the claims put forth by our assailants, to be regarded as the possessors of a more enlarged liberality, than pertains to ourselves.

Now, without laying much stress on the fact that the principle acted upon by these self-same parties, is in exact accordance with that which guides us for they insist, as strongly as we can on the necessity of baptism as a prerequisite to church fellowship and communion at the Supper; and would admit none to a participation in these whom they deem unbaptized—I think it may be made to appear that there are circumstances connected with their

ecclesiastical polity and modes of procedure, which, when duly estimated, will go far towards invalidating these claims, and serve to shew how largely they must draw on their own imaginations, and on the credulity of their adherents, when they presume to make them. Doubtless there is considerable variation in men's sentiments as to what liberality is. For myself, my notion of Christian liberality comprises in it a readiness to yield a hearty and spontaneous recognition to Christian excellence, wherever we find it, regardless of all distinction of sect or party, coupled with a willingness to co-operate with its possessors to the fullest extent, compatible with our obligations to our own personal conviction of TRUTH. To go beyond this, to conform to, or symbolize with, practices which we deem erroneous, or to become in any way identified with their maintenance and defence, would be, in my judgment, to violate our own consciences and to become "partakers of other men's sins." These views, it will be seen, are not only compatible with, but absolutely oblige us to, the practice of *strict communion*; and herein lies "the head and front of our offending;" this it is that is represented as the acme of intolerance and sectarianism, the very *ne plus ultra* of bigotry. Pedobaptist churches make it their boast that they are not thus restricted in their fellowship—they gladly receive all that Christ has received. "Spiritual vitality," is their "only term of communion and fellowship." This is a sort of *ad captandem* style employed in settling forth their own catholicity, in contrast with our sectarianism, to which we are all familiarized, and might perhaps be in danger of being taken by it, did we not happen to know the extremely prudential measures which these communities have adopted to guard against certain contingencies which, it is foreseen, might arise out of this extremely liberal policy. Moreover, these measures are not of a kind that bespeak the most generous confidence in the pacific intentions of their allies, nor yet just that sort of catholic indifference with respect to the perpetuation of their own peculiarities, which some of their professions would seem to imply.

Let us suppose a case: a number of Baptists join—say a Congregational church. All, for a time, goes on harmoniously. Meanwhile, the Baptist element, like good leaven, has been working, and a considerable number of the members have become impregnated with it, and it soon transpires that the Baptists are in the majority. Well, seeing that their attachment to immersion is, at least, as strong as that of their brethren is to sprinkling; and being, withal, the more numerous party, they think that they are entitled to demand, in common fairness, that as a church, they should testify henceforth to Baptist principles. In due course a proposition to this effect is submitted to the whole body, and though it encounters opposition from the Pedobaptist portion of the members, it is carried by a large majority, and at the same time, an address couched in the most affectionate and conciliatory terms is voted to the dissentients, inviting them to take that position which the change in their numerical relation of parties clearly pointed to. But no, instead of acquiescing in this proposal, and despite their stout voluntarism, and professions of