

the little children to come unto Me and for 'id them not, for of such is the kingdom of God.'

Infants were admitted into the Jewish Church by circumcision, and she feels sure that, had our Lord intended that they should be excluded from the Christian Church, He would have said so. Then, too, did not S. Paul baptize whole households? And are we to suppose that they contained no children? In truth we have the testimony of all the Christian centuries in favour of infant baptism. Every generation from the first has practised it, as in accordance with the mind of Jesus Christ.

3. Thirdly, the Baptists attach great importance to the outward and visible sign in baptism. This is apparent in their places of worship. In most dissenting chapels it is the pulpit that occupies the place of honour. Preaching is the chief, almost the only, ordinance. In church we know it is the altar, and the sacred feast celebrated there, to which the Christian's thoughts are chiefly directed.

The font indeed occupies a place of dignity, and is regarded with reverence, but it is near the door, to signify that baptism means admittance into the House of the Lord—that the washing with the holy waters is the first step in the Christian's life. But when we come to the Baptist Chapel the font stands in the most conspicuous part, as figuring forth the one great ordinance of the Baptist community. It is felt on entering that that which is symbolised here is regarded as the chief, perhaps the only, crisis in a man's spiritual life. And so the members of this denomination are very scrupulous about the ritual to be observed on the occasion. They condemn the practice which prevails in the Western Church of pouring water upon a part of the body. A baptism to be real and effective they insist must be by immersion. And for this among other reasons they say they hold aloof from the Church.

Now our answer to such a plea must be, in the first place, that the Prayer Book in no wise forbids the immersion of people.

Its direction, in fact, is to the opposite effect—that ordinarily, where no reason exists to the contrary, the child shall be immersed. There is nothing to prevent parents so wishing it from having their child passed into the Baptismal waters. And certainly we must admit that this illustrates best the language of S. Paul on the subject.

But supposing there is the danger, as there is with infants in our northern climate, of injury to the health. Then the Church, following the spirit of her Master's teaching, which inclined to mercy rather than sacrifice, allows the water to be poured upon the brow.

It is a question, indeed, whether among the Apostles it was customary to baptize by immersion. There are several instances in which we should almost gather that the Sacrament was administered in the other way. At any rate, is it not superstitious to say that the virtue of Baptism lies in the quantity of water more or less that is used? The Church takes the common-sense and liberal view of the matter. The power of the Sacrament comes not from the water, nor the words, nor the clergyman, but from God, who has commanded its use.

There are two thoughts which we may profitably take away from our Baptist friends.

First, their very existence as a separate body is a reproach to the Church of Christ. We ought all of us to be much holier, much more consistent Christians than we are. The evils of which they complain should not be found in our midst. A Churchman and a Communicant should be known for his greater devotion, his entire honesty, his unworldliness, his charity.

It is very shocking that the crimes of the world should appear among the children of the Church. The world has a right to expect something better from us. Still more, Christ expects something better from us. To whom much has been given, from them shall much be required. He that knows his Lord's Will and does it not, shall