

BAPTISM OF DYING PERSONS.

The Presbytery of Potosi, asking: "Is it agreeable to the faith and practice of the Presbyterian Church for a minister of the gospel to administer the sacrament of baptism to an adult, *in extremis*, in case said person professes faith in Christ, without being received into church membership?"

To this inquiry it is answered:

1. That the Assembly does not question the right of pastors to administer the ordinance of baptism to any who make a credible profession of faith in Christ, but advises the exercise of great care and prudence in teaching such adult applicants as are in extreme illness the true use and meaning of this ordinance, in order that no countenance be given to the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.

2. As to use of baptism in admitting such persons into the the Church, see Larger Catechism, Q. 165, 166, especially the clause "whereby the parties baptized are solemnly admitted into the visible Church," and "Baptism is not to be administered to any out of the visible Church."

STATE OF RELIGION.

The Report says, that some painful facts are disclosed as to the spiritual condition of the churches, and the evils which beset them. The spirit of worldliness which taints the profession of so many, the greed of gain which everywhere confronts the friend of Zion, the prevalence of intemperance and its kindred vices, from which professing Christians themselves are not all free, the deplorable desecration of the Sabbath, the neglect of the prayer meeting, of family worship and of household training, the lack of the grace of giving, the mad race for wealth, the persistent indulgence in demoralizing amusements, and the marked decline of spirituality and zeal for Christ, have—not everywhere—but in far too many portions of the Church, grievously saddened the hearts of God's friends, and hindered their efforts for the advancement of His kingdom.

But on the other hand, and as a pleasing offset to this gloomy picture, the cheering report comes up from almost every quarter that *the Lord is in the midst of His Church*—not always, indeed, in the powerful outpouring of His Spirit in the awakening and conversion of sinners; not always in the signal triumphs of His grace in the overthrow of error, and the capture of the strongholds of sin; not always even in the visible enlargement and progress of His Church; but always in the unswerving fidelity to truth and duty of those whom He has placed as watchmen upon her walls; in the steadfast devotion, even amid abounding temptation, of those who have been appointed to uphold the hands of these leaders of the sacramental hosts, and in the consecrated spirit of the godly men and saintly women composing her membership; who, having given themselves to God, withhold nothing of means, or effort, or time, or prayer, or sacrifice, that will minister to His glory in the growth, purity, stability, and prosperity of His kingdom. The faithfulness and zeal of these officers and members are evinced, not only in their unflinching opposition to error and maintenance of "the truth as it is in Jesus," but also in their successful endeavours to sustain the ordinances of religion, and extend to the perishing the means of grace. Besides the testimony which they

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