

termine the query," says Mr. Booth, "we may first consider the order of time, in which the positive institutions of the New Testament were appointed;" and margined, immediately claims for baptism priority of appointment, on the gross assumption that John's Baptism was Christian Baptism! and also, that which the apostles administered before the ascension of Christ. But that Christian Baptism was unknown until Christ arose from the dead, is made to appear from the following considerations.

1. The kingdom of Christ was not established until then.—I am aware that Jesus informs the Jews, that the "law and the prophets were until John," adding "since that time the kingdom of God is preached." That the kingdom of God, in this instance, signifies nothing more than that state of preparation which John's mission embraced is rendered obvious by the next clause; "and all men press into it." Jesus says, that this was but a "little flock." I am also aware that Mark seems to call John's mission "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ."—We presume all will admit, that David's preparation was the beginning of Solomon's temple; yet who supposes that Solomon's temple was then in existence? But if Jesus Christ really considered that his kingdom was established, why did he command the seventy to preach everywhere that it was only "at hand?" And why does the blessed Saviour himself declare so often that it was "near?" These expressions alone, are, in our judgment, sufficient to prove, that the life of Jesus on earth, so far as external circumstances were concerned, was only a continuation of John's mission; a greatly enlarged preparation for the great events of his death and resurrection, on which his kingdom was established on the day of Pentecost. This position will be further sustained, and its influence felt as we proceed.

2. No baptism, before the ascension of Jesus, demanded the prerequisites of Christian baptism. The baptism of John required only confession of sin and profession of repentance. But did not John, says the objector, turn away the Pharisees and the Sadducees, because they did not bring forth fruit meet for repentance? We think not. John was evidently surprised at their coming—as we have been at the appearance of like characters in the inquiry room—admits that they were taking at least one step, in fleeing from the wrath to come—gives them instruction well adapted to correct their prejudices; and closes his address to them by saying, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance," telling them that Jesus would proceed on much stricter principles. But if John's, like Christian baptism, demanded previous regeneration in its subjects, then the administrator must either have blundered unaccountably in his decisions, or else there must have been a marvellous "falling away from grace." It is well known that John baptized in Jordan a number sufficiently great to justify the Evangelist in saying that he baptized all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Judea, and all the region round about Jordan. It is equally well known that when Jesus appeared immediately afterwards, he found very few Christians in all those parts. Let the passage now be borne in mind which declares that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, and all must be convinced that the disciples of Christ, in these baptisms, did not make regeneration a prerequisite; but proceeded, in all probability, on the principles of John's baptism—enlarging the preparation which his mission contemplated. But we have the words of Jesus Christ himself, concerning these multitudes of baptized persons, showing that he did not receive them as Christians. In addressing them, he says of John, "He was a burning and a shining light, and ye were willing for a season, to rejoice in his light." John 7. 35. and in the 42d verse, he says to them, "I know that ye have not the love of God in you."

3. The import of Christian baptism was unknown previous to the ascension of Christ. "We are," says the apostle, "buried with Christ by baptism into death; that, like as he was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." If Peter had understood this, could he have reproved his Master, for saying that he should die? And how could all the apostles have been so obstinate in their unbelief of Christ's resurrection, if they had been baptizing for years in view of its accomplishment? "Know ye not," says Paul, "that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" Thus setting aside every baptism which was not based on the death of Christ, as unworthy of the name; and at the same time, making room for the exception of the eleven apostles, who doubtless were not baptized, for the same reason that John the Baptist was not, who freely admits his unbaptized state, in saying to Jesus, "I have need to be baptized of thee."

4. Before the resurrection of Jesus Christ, no baptism was administered in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Should the administrator omit either name in the act of baptism, it is plain that the subject would not receive Christian baptism. Hence, when Paul met certain disciples at Ephesus, who had not heard of a Holy Ghost, concluding that they had not heard of Christian baptism, he asks into what they had been baptized. This passage proves beyond the possibility of doubt, that John did not baptize in the name of the Holy Ghost, which, as we have already seen, goes to prove that the apostles did not, until Christ arose from the dead. Did John, or the disciples of Christ, baptize in the name of Jesus while he abode upon earth? If they did, what could induce the Saviour to charge the apostles and all who knew that he was the Messiah, to tell it to no man until he was risen from the dead? Did John baptize in the name of the Father? That God sent him to baptize, no one doubts; that he pronounced the name of God in the act of baptism, is without the least shadow of proof. It would be just as easy to show, that in the baptism unto Moses, each subject was baptized in the name of the Father. The same is true of all the baptisms, administered by the apostles prior to Christ's death.

5. When Jesus commissioned his disciples to baptize all nations, he made no exceptions in favor of previous baptisms; nor did the apostles understand him to make any. On the day of Pentecost, there must have been a multitude in the assembly, not only of those baptized by John, but also of those baptized by the apostles themselves; yet they cried, "Repent and be baptized every one of you." It is in vain to say, those baptized multitudes of whom we speak were already Christians, and hence did not cry out. Remember, Christ said of them, "I know you that ye have not the love of God in you." Therefore, since it cannot be shown, that they had become more hardened than others, we have good reason to believe that hundreds of them turned to God upon that day—heard the apostles gladly, and were baptized "in the name of the Lord Jesus"—like the twelve whom Paul found at Ephesus—a case in itself sufficient to prove, that John did not administer Christian baptism; notwithstanding all that Fuller, Kinghorn and others have done to make it appear otherwise.

In view of these arguments we presume that none who ever read Mr. Booth's "Rabbinical Fable" can for a moment suppose that Christian baptism was known before the ascension of Christ. Indeed we think it must be evident to all, that the argument of prior appointment is wholly in our favor, and in reality settles for ever the whole controversy, giving us the example of Jesus Christ himself, administering his supper to those who never had received Christian Baptism. And if so, who can be found bold enough to