

THE HOME MISSION JOURNAL

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WHOLE No 113.

We wish to inform our friends in the country as well as in the city that we are now being nicely settled in our new home on Canard street North End, not Charles street as before stated; the corporation having changed the name so as not to have two Charles streets in the city. And now we shall be pleased to have a call from any one coming to the city from any part of the country who may wish to subscribe for "THE HOME MISSION JOURNAL," or who may want to settle for it. We are very handy to the landing place of any of the steamboats coming from the lakes or up the river. And we are handy for any contracting parties coming to the city for matrimonial alliances, and can tie the matrimonial knot as solid as any of the Reverends of the city. It is only three minutes walk from any of the steamboat wharfs. Come to the public stairs that go up the rocks, and you will find us in the first house on Canard street, at the rear of Capt. Porter's dwelling that fronts on Main street.

In writing to us, address:—J. H. Hughes, No. 1 Canard street, Indiantown, St. John, North End, N. B. All correspondence for the HOME MISSION JOURNAL should be addressed to J. H. Hughes as above.

Should Baptist Churches Disband?

By O. P. Eaches.

MANY large teachings, all evangelical Christians hold in common, the fundamentals of our Christian faith are affirmed in nearly all Protestant pulpits. The existence of God, the deity of Jesus, the personality of the Holy Spirit, the need of forgiveness and a change in the governing disposition, the authority of the New Testament, a future life, these and other large beliefs, are the joint property of all intelligent believers. The Baptist churches stand for all these and also for certain well defined New Testament teachings that are denied, or depreciated or ignored by other Protestant bodies. No denomination should be founded on fads or freak ideas. Mere methods of working or questions of esthetics should not divide fellow Christians. Do the Baptist churches maintain principles that are worth standing out for? Are the ruling ideas of the Baptist churches of such importance that their suppression would impair Christ's teachings and injure the cause of spiritual Christianity?

The name assumed by our Baptist fathers, "Congregation of Baptized Believers" was a confession of faith and a protest. It was the affirmation that the church must be a spiritual body, that the Christian life is begun apart from baptism, that a New Testament baptism must be adhered to.

For centuries a clear witness has been borne that the act of baptism must not usurp the place of the Holy Spirit, that Christianity is a spiritual religion not begotten or maintained in any mechanical way. There is need today that to all professing Christians, to Roman Catholics and fellow Protestants alike, there must be the continued testimony that baptism is not a regenerating ordinance.

The position of the Catholic Church is plain and outspoken. The *Catholic Review* states—"Unbaptized, these little ones go into darkness; but baptized, they rejoice in the presence of God forever." It is the undisguised affirmation of this large church that through baptism there comes a spiritual life into the soul—it is a regenerative power. A few drops of water, the tip of the fingers, and through them and upon them eternal destinies hang. Heaven and hell, and eternity depend, not upon personal devotions, but upon a few muttered words and a teaspoonful of water. Under this conceptions of things, Chris-

tianity is a mere mechanical thing and we wonder what kind of a God must have founded this system of salvation.

When we turn to organized Protestantism we find a close kinship to Romish views and practices. In the prayer book of the Church of England and of the Episcopal church are these words: after the application of a few drops of water to an unconscious child: "Seeing now dearly beloved brethren, that this child is regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's church, let us give thanks unto Almighty God for these benefits." Millions of people are taught, in these words, that the act of baptism effects a change in spiritual character and destiny. Membership in the church and eternal salvation have been secured for the child by a mechanical, outward, physical act. Fittingly might the Bishop of Liverpool declare: "Myriads of church members throughout the land know nothing of the work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts." Independent of the personal character of the minister, independent of the personal character of the recipient, salvation and eternal life are commodities dealt in by a great church organization. That people by the hundred thousand, who hear this creed solemnly affirmed, should lay a false stress on baptism is a thing not to be wondered at. Nor does the Episcopal church stand alone in teaching baptismal regeneration. The Lutheran Synod in 1891, adopted as its up-to-date belief and working creed, the following statement concerning the efficacy of baptism: "Baptism seals to us and bestows upon us eternal life, because with it the new spiritual life in covenant with God has its beginning." This is the baldest Romanism in the utterance of a Protestant church. There is no place here for repentance, faith, character, voluntariness—heaven is bestowed in a magical way. This confession throws not light but darkness upon the mind and upon the New Testament.

Even our Presbyterian friends have in their Westminster Confession the roots of a baptismal regeneration. It affirms that baptism must be applied to infants. If it should be questioned why baptism should be administered to unconscious persons the answer is found in Chapter 28: 6, where it is declared that grace is actually conferred in baptism though the efficacy of it is delayed until riper years. Here again the Romanish conception of a *nopus operatum*, a spiritual result from a mechanical act, is declared. The confession has been revised so that reprobation has been stricken out, but the traces of baptismal regeneration remain. In the Presbyterian *Inferior* was lately found this poetical assertion of a salvation mediated through baptism:

A sacred rite of Gospel grace; wherein
It is declared that by the Spirit's power
The soul from its deep primal stain of sin
Is cleansed.

In Jamieson Brown and Fausset's widely circulated commentary are these words in explanation of Titus 3: 5: "They are presumed to be then regenerated; baptism is the proximate instrument of salvation." Thousands of people who ask this commentary for light and guidance in the way to eternal life are pointed to a mechanical, physical method of salvation.

In recent years in a county seat in New Jersey, the pastor of a large and influential pedo-Baptist church baptized the dead body of a young man and the dead body of an infant—because he arrived too late to baptize them while living. If this had taken place in Spain or in the Philippines by the hands of a Spanish priest it would seem entirely fitting. There is in every community a wide-spread feeling on the part of church members that without baptism the safety of a departed child is not assured.

The mission of Baptist churches is not yet accomplished. It has a protest to raise a teaching to give, until all assertions of a baptismal regeneration are driven away from the creeds and practices of our fellow Protestant bodies. Christianity must have at its centre a saving Christ, not a priest whose finger-tips create eternal life and change character. A salvation through water perverts the very nature of Christianity,

reducing it from its high level as a spiritual force into a mechanical system of salvation through touch. Quakerism is an error at one extreme, denying the existence of any water baptism as a scripture command. High churchism and ritualism constitute an error at the other extremes making almost everything depend upon a water baptism, through whose touch eternal life spring, up in the soul. Of the two, Quakerism is to be vastly preferred. It does give room for God's grace, for dependence upon spiritual realities, it exalts the spiritual, it minimizes the material. Between the two stand the Baptist churches. They affirm as a mouthpiece for the New Testament, that salvation is altogether a matter between the soul and Jesus Christ. Parents and church and baptism having nothing to do with it. When a soul trusts in Jesus Christ, then comes baptism as a confession, a pledge, an act of obedience and loyalty to Christ. Until Christ is permitted to have his own way in reference to the act and subject of baptism, until baptism is referred to its rightful place in the Christian system, until that time Baptist churches should not disband.
Hightstown, N. J.

Personal.

Rev. W. E. McIntyre has taken the work of Superintendent of missions for the province and has removed to this city. His address is 29 High street, St. John.

Prof. T. W. Todd, formerly principal of Nova Springs Seminary has become principal of Cedar Valley Seminary at Osage, Iowa. Mr. Todd is a son of Rev. F. S. Todd of Woodstock, N. B., and has had a distinguished career in the west. We extend him our congratulations.

Rev. B. F. Rattray has been spending the last three months at Thorntown and Coles's Island, Queens Co., supplying the First and Second Johnston churches. He closed his labors there the last Sunday in April and returned to his home in Washington, D. C.

When the World Conquers

The world conquers me when it succeeds in hindering me from seeing, loving, holding communion with and serving my Father, God. I conquer it when I lay my hand upon it, and force it to help me to get nearer Him, to get more like Him, to think oftener of Him, to do His will more gladly and more constantly. The one victory over the world is to bend it to serve me in the highest things—the attainment of a deeper love to God Himself, and a more glad consecration and service to Him. That is the victory—when you can make the world a ladder to lift you to God. When the world comes between you and God as an obscuring screen it has conquered you. When the world comes between you and God as a transparent medium, you have conquered it. To win victory is to get it beneath your feet and stand upon it, and reach up thereby to God.—Alex. McLaren.

All which happens through the whole world happens through hope. No husbandman would sow a grain of corn if he did not hope it would spring up and bring forth the ear. How much more we are helped on by hope in the way of eternal life.—Martin Luther.