

## REASONS WHY I AM A BAPTIST.

"What is truth?"—St. John, xviii. 38.

This should be the honest, sincere inquiry of every true man, especially of every Christian man. Not in the temper of the truckling, temporizing, vacillating Pilate, who seemed devoid of all individual and manly conviction, who in the same moment would please Christ and his enemies. A Christian should be able to give to every one that asketh him a reason for his hope with meekness and fear. I intend to spend this hour in giving you as concisely and cogently as I can the reasons why I am a Baptist, and in doing so I would disclaim all invidious remarks; our motives should be actuated by love and charity. But there are reasons which constitute us Baptists, which we have no right to ignore, and which the world has a right to demand and know, and which we in the interests of truth ought to joyfully give. (1) Of all Baptists are agreed with all other evangelical denominations in regard to the great body of fundamental truths of the Christian system, such as the being of God, the inspiration of the scriptures, the Trinity, the fall of man, the moral depravity of all the race, the atonement through Christ, the regeneration by the spirit, the resurrection of the dead, the endless happiness of the righteous, and endless punishment of the wicked. But Baptists believe that no doctrine or ordinance taught in God's word is non-essential to obedience and a correct faith, as men have not been able to discover the material utility of a thousand objects in the universe, in the earth beneath or the sky above, the air and the sea, yet they all unite to constitute the globe what it is for the habitation of man, so God's complete circle of truth tends to minister to the entire spiritual nature of man. But there are doctrines which have characterized and distinguished Baptists through all the ages, from the days of John the Baptist, our illustrious founder, to the present time; truths or principles of which we are not ashamed but of which we may be justly proud, if we glory in the Lord. (2) Baptist churches are distinguished from other religious bodies by making the scriptures their only rule of faith and practice of doctrine and duty so that whatsoever is not contained therein or can be proved thereby is not binding upon any man's conscience either as an article of faith or an ordinance to be obeyed. All churches do not hold this truth. Chillingworth, the staunch and sturdy old Protestant, said, "The bible and the bible only the religion of Protestants." The church of Rome recognizes the bible as of secondary authority and importance. She recognizes the pope as infallible, and the church through her cardinals, bishops, and councils as possessing equal authority.