

Original Contributions.

THE PREACHER—HIS CHARACTER.

T. H. BLENNIS.

Although the scenes of Gethsemane and the cruelty of Calvary were before the mind of the Saviour, he did not forget in the fullness of his sympathy to pray for his disciples, not that when he left them that they should be taken out of the world, but that they might be kept from evil. Notwithstanding he foresaw and foretold them what they would be called to do and endure, he sent them into a world of toil and trial—"As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them unto the world." The apostles are spoken of. They were called and commissioned to perform a specified work—to preach the gospel. They could not in person fulfil the command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." And the accompanying promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," shows that others were included. They were to be representative men. Theirs was to be representative teaching. They were to stand at the head of a long line of laborers that was to reach "unto the end of the world." They were to commence a work that was to be carried on till every child of Adam should hear the joyful message of salvation. Every true preacher of the gospel to-day has his heart fired by the same zeal, receives a similar commission, and falls into the regular succession, a kind of apostolic succession, if you please.

If the gospel of Jesus Christ is to triumph everywhere, if this poor sin-cursed world is ever brought to the foot of the cross, it will not be through the labors and talents of extraordinary men, for God has not made enough of these to meet the demand; but the work will be done by those who may not possess ten, nor five talents, but to whom the Heavenly Father has entrusted two, or perchance one. But, notwithstanding, there will be some things always necessary to success. Men who work for Christ *must* be men of character. Jesus invited all to come to him, and to be his disciples; but when he came to select his apostles—his messengers—and to give them official positions as ministers and teachers, he had regard for high character. This qualification may not, in degenerate times, be essential to the politician, the scientist, the essayist, for, without this one may be a learned lecturer on astronomy or chemistry, may figure upon the platform before literary societies, and discourse beautifully upon the literary productions of Shakespeare, or may uphold and endorse the opinions of a Huxley, or a Darwin; but the church and the world attach high importance, and justly so, to character in the pulpit. There must go from the sacred desk the impression that the man is equal to, and in many instances greater, than anything he says. Even a heathen could see that one of the necessary qualifica-

tions to a good orator is that he be a good man. Emphatically must this be the case with the Christian orator, who would speak the truth as it is in Jesus, and thus win men to purity and goodness. No talent is too great, no genius too brilliant, no attainments too rich for the work of preaching the gospel. There is a dignity in the Christian ministry second to no other in any position a man can occupy. There is here an elevation of character, a consecration of purpose, and a devotion of heart calculated to lift man to the highest and most sublime height of human usefulness. With the strong and steady reach of an unwavering faith in God, he stands undaunted and uncontaminated before the petty foibles and scheming machinations of men. Vanity and deceit, avarice and double-dealing, fault-finding and slander, jealousy and envy, are as much out of place in the heart and life of a preacher as a company of infernal spirits would be within the inner circle of eternal glory. It is enough to make an angel weep to see a minister of the gospel besmirch his sacred calling by stooping to indulge in thoughts and actions offensive alike in the sight of God and man, either to gratify a spirit of personal vanity or selfishness, or to satisfy the unhallowed principle of envy. Such a man will find, sooner or later, that his religious fingers have all been thumbs, and that in the end he has *undone* more than he has *done*. The faithful, *unselfish, sympathetic*, consecrated, gospel-loving preacher has set before him a mission and an object worthy the aims and efforts of immortal minds. His obligation is alone measured by his ability. He draws inspiration from the majesty of his mission. He toils where the Master appoints, and suffers what the Master sends. His character is constantly partaking of the spirit and genius of the religion he preaches. He is a living, moving and constant exemplification of its truth, its power and its principles. If this be not true of him, he is, on the other hand, a God-dishonoring sham, a cloud without rain, a stench in the nostrils of the Almighty, and the sooner he leaves the place of his usurpation the better for both the church and the world.

SPRINKLING, POURING, IMMERSION: WHICH?

W. H. HARDING.

III.

It is frequently asserted that learned men do not uphold immersion as baptism. Now the opinions of scholars will be of great value to us in this investigation. I think our Presbyterian brethren are very decided in their advocacy of sprinkling for baptism. In this article I will show what Presbyterians have to say on this point, and first I would have you know that in the seventeenth century, when the Westminster assembly of divines met and formulated what is called the "Westminster Confession of Faith," baptism was up for discussion, and twenty-four voted for immersion and twenty-five for sprinkling. So near was the Presbyterian church to having immersion as its practice for baptism.

I have before me a work called "Immersion," by John T. Christian, A. M., D. D. I shall quote from his chapter on "What Presbyterians say." I have some of the works from which he takes his extracts, and can certify that they are correct:

"John Calvin, the father of the Presbyterian church, never failed to testify that baptism was an immersion in water. Says he, 'The word baptize signifies to immerse, and it is certain that the rite of immersion was observed by the ancient church.'

"Beza, who was a colleague of Calvin, testifies: 'To be baptized in water signifies no other than to be immersed in water, which is the external ceremony of baptism.'

"Zwingle, another of Calvin's associates, said: 'When ye were immersed into the water of baptism, ye were engrafted into the death of Christ.'

"(On Rom. vi.) Richard Baxter, commenting on Rom. vi., says: 'It is commonly confessed by us to the Anabaptists that in the time of the apostles the baptized were dipped over head in water, and this signified their profession, both of believing the burial and resurrection of Christ, and of their own dying to sin and living to Christ, or rising again to newness of life.'

"Dr. Chalmers says in his lecture on the same chapter (Rom. vi.): 'The original meaning of the word baptism is immersion, and though we regard it as a point of indifference, . . . yet we doubt not that the prevalent style of the administration in the apostles' days was by an actual submerging of the whole body under water.'

"Philip Schaff, D. D., LL. D., who has written the best of our church histories, says: 'The baptism of Christ in the river of Jordan and the illustrations of baptism used in the New Testament, are all in favor of immersion rather than sprinkling, as is admitted by the best exegeses, Catholic and Protestant, English and German.'

In reply to an editorial in the *Christian Observer*, of Louisville, Ky., Dr. Powell writes to the *Western Recorder*, January 8th, 1891, as follows:

"I asked Bro. Sakellarios, who has charge of the Baptist church in Athens, if the Greek word could mean anything but immersion, and he said 'No.' To my question, how the Presbyterians managed this question, he replied, 'Very easily, by having a baptism made in which they immerse infants just as the Greek priests do.' Said he, 'Once they sprinkled some children, and it created such a scandal that it came near breaking up the church, and they were compelled to have a small baptism made. Adult Greeks are received into the Presbyterian church on the baptism which they received in the Greek church.' In Greece, Bulgaria, Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, and wherever the Greek language is spoken, immersion for baptism is practised."

Here is an instance where the Presbyterians practice what their scholars preach. This is the land where Greek is a living language, and nothing but immersion is practised there. This little statement does away with many a ponderous article. We commend this to our Presbyterian brethren.

I could add Barnes, Campbell, Locke, McKnight and many others to the above list, but after a careful investigation I find that the learned men in the Presbyterian church, in answer to the question "Which?" say "Immersion."