

J. Davis Barnett

Sermon First.

INFANT BAPTISM SCRIPTURAL.

THE subjects to which, according to announcement, I am to direct your attention to-day, are of a somewhat controversial character. Many persons regard religious controversy as a great evil to be sedulously avoided. But it is not an evil in itself considered. In proof of this I need only mention the fact that much of the Word of God is controversial. The Epistles of Paul are striking examples of this. Moreover, we owe the prevalence of truth so far as it is now spread in the earth, very much to the effect of controversy. Error has fiercely contended with truth for every inch of ground it has gained. The glorious Reformation of the 16th century, was commenced and carried forward by controversy, and the error yet remaining in the church and in the world, is to be purged away in the salutary fires of free and candid discussion. But religious controversy should always be pursued in a Christian spirit. It is often made a bad use of, and then, bursting all restraints, it operates—not like the summer thunder-storm, clearing the atmosphere and diffusing refreshment, but like the impetuous and wild tornado, “strewing yonder sea with wrecks,” and spreading devastation and ruin. There ought to be no bitterness, misrepresentation, vituperation, or contempt. These are the weapons of Satan’s Kingdom, and not Christ’s.

In the present instance, I design no provocation of strife, no stirring up of ill-feeling, but a simple and kind, yet firm and decided exhibition of what I deem to be the truth, on the important, and much debated subject of Baptism. Permit me then to invite your attention to the following passage of Scripture:—

Matthew 28, 19. “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

This verse is part of the commission given by our Lord