

God as a Branch of that One Church which Ho planted and his Apostles watered. I hope that our dissenting brethren who yet remain in wilful disobedience to their Bishop and Presbyters : but who, in direct opposition to the practice of our primitive brethren, ordain (as they call it) Presbyters for themselves, will, if they see this, take the matter into serious consideration; and may the Almighty load their minds to a knowledge of the truth.

We will now turn back to the keeping of the Sabbath, which was a point to be settled. I soon found that it was the practice of all christians, except slaves, and such others as had it not in their power, to reverence the day and to keep it holy unto the Lord. And therefore we, following their example, should abstain from all worldly occupations, conversation, and pleasure; and should spend the whole day in public and private exercises of God's worship; in administering to the afflicted, and such like. And this I found to be as agreeable to the New Testament as the former: though by no means so clearly laid down therein.

I was also led to believe that females were, from the earliest ages, admitted communicants to the Lord's Supper: and I therefore felt myself bound to believe it to be right, although there is no command for it in the New Testament.

I also found that the first writers on Baptism (not one century after the apostles) speak of Infants as being universally admitted to baptism; and as being proper subjects for baptism. And indeed this appears almost beyond a doubt from scripture alone.

Again, whether should the power of admitting and excluding members lay in the minister, or the members themselves? And who, allow me to ask, can determine more properly as to the propriety of admitting a communicant than the minister? I think no one? Yet in most of the dissenting churches, a worthy person may be prevented from communicating, through the caprice of a few silly old women, or inexperienced weakminded girls. I have made up my mind upon which is the most reasonable and most conducive to the prosperity and unity of the church. And I leave the candid reader to judge for himself.

Proceeding in my researches I found that this one church, (I had not yet fully determined what church) extended rapidly, and soon spread over many nations of the earth, through the exertions of the apostles and their successors, in the hand of God, who prospered their endeavours with wonderful success, not only in the members who became christians, but also in their firmness in enduring the torture that they had to suffer from their persecutors.

But the church, which before the reign of Constantine, and the establishment of the christian religion in the Roman Empire, was somewhat corrupted; and into which many unnecessary rites and ceremonies had crept—now grew corrupt rapidly; and continued to do so, until the 7th century, when the Bishop of Rome's supremacy over all the Bishops and Rulers of the Church, was acknowledged by the western part of Christendom. The power of the Popes increased with the corruption and worldliness of the church, until about the 14th century. The really pious all this time, both clergy and laity groaned under their afflictions; but always contended that a General Council, or, at least, a national one; was the only lawful way to remedy the evils so justly complained of. But all their endeavours were in vain. A power had got established in the church, acknowledged and supported by the kingdoms of this world, which defied opposition, and marred all attempts at reform. When therefore it appeared that there was no possibility of reforming the Church by proper means, it was with good reason that some determined to throw off the yoke by force: and, at the hazard of their lives and fortunes, do that, which by lawful means they could not. Thus a reformation was effected in the 16th century.

But most of the reformers went into dangerous extremes. Not content with throwing off the Pope, and errors of the church; they threw off church and all together. Not knowing well what to do with themselves after they were released from the power of Rome; and being filled with enthusiasm, and false notions of liberty and religion, they set to work forming new Churches, according to their own inventions.

The clergy and people of England took quite a different course. They admitted that the church of Rome was the true church, so far as its doctrines agreed with scripture, and the practice of the primitive church. And they declared it to be corrupt in those things which were contrary thereto. They therefore declared it necessary to discard ALL those corruptions and unscriptural doctrines and practices which had crept into the church. They also held that the Bishops of every nation ought to have authority to assemble together and make such regulations for their congregations as would conduce to the glory of God and the good of the church, without regard to the Bishop of Rome, or any foreign power whatever.

They accordingly set to work, and effected our glorious establishment, notwithstanding the bloody persecutions of the Roman power.

But who were they that went about this mighty work, and performed it? Were they the ignorant and unlearned? No! They were the most wise and learned of the nation: they were also the tried servants of the Almighty. They were sincerely devoted to the service of their Lord and Master Jesus Christ. They were such as were required to reform a church overflowing with superstition and wickedness. They had been ordained in the church of Rome, and they ordained others; thus the succession was brought down from the Apostles, to the present Church of England.

I now came to the conviction that the Church of England was the true church; and that the most of the others were spurious ones, formed by mens' own inventions, from 12 to 18 hundred years after inspiration had ceased. That those men were not inspired as they pretended to be, is plain, because their doctrines clash: indeed they have taught doctrines directly opposite to each other: and I cannot think that God inspires one man to say the Bible says, "thus," and another to say "the Bible does not say so."—To be concluded in our next.

RELIGIOUS MISCELLANY.

NEGLECT OF INFANT BAPTISM.

Means of Correction.

I am not ignorant that this doctrine is unpopular, because denied by many persons self-styled evangelical, among surrounding sects, and that it is laid aside, or its force explained away, by some within the Church perhaps for popularity, but yet the question is not so much what is popular, as what is true. By many sects of modern origin, the term regeneration, has been used to express something different from that which was understood by it in the ancient Church; and if the modern idea be attached, then we also deny that such regeneration does take place in baptism. For the first fifteen centuries, the term was used to express simply that change, whatever it may be, which takes place in every authorized baptism. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." Titus iii. 5. Justin Martyr, only about fifty years after the Apostles, writing to the Roman Emperor, Antoninus Pius, considered regeneration as identical with baptism. "And it is worthy of observation that he is not simply giving his own opinion of the matter, but is giving an account of the belief and practice of the great body of Christians. His words are; "We will state also in what manner we are created anew by Christ; and have dedicated ourselves to God; that we may not by omitting this appear to dissemble any thing in our explanation. As many are persuaded and believe that the things which we teach and declare are true, and promise that they are determined to live accordingly, are taught to pray and beseech God with fasting to grant them remission of their past sins, while we also pray and fast with them. We then lead them to a

* Perhaps it would be more correct to, say that he uses "Regeneration" and "Baptism" as synonymous terms.—Ed. CHRONICLE.

place where there is water, and there they are regenerated in the same manner as we also were; for they are then washed in the water, in the name of God the Father, and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit. For Christ said, "Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Irenæus, also, a writer in the same century, speaking of the commission of Christ to his Apostles, says; "Giving his disciples the power of regeneration to God, he said to them, 'Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'"

Quotations from authors in every century down to the Reformation might be made, which would show that the early Christians ever considered baptism to be regeneration. Zuinglius and Calvin were the first to deny in their controversies with the Papists, the doctrine of regeneration in Baptism.

This being clear, it is proper next to enquire what is the change which takes place in every authorized baptism and which is properly entitled to the name of regeneration? It is a change of state and condition, and of relationship to God. By our birth of natural parents, we are brought into the world, the heirs of corruption, sin, and condemnation. But Christ purchased our freedom from condemnation, sin, and the effects of corruption, and instituted baptism as the instrument by which we shall be freed from their dominion. In baptism we are received into a state of grace, a state of acceptance; our former sins are remitted; the Holy Spirit is vouchsafed to renew our corrupt and decayed nature, and to begin in our souls the germ of spiritual life; we are adopted by God as his spiritual children, and he sends forth his spirit into our hearts, whereby we cry Abba, Father. And as our entrance upon this lower world is called our birth, so our entrance within the Church by baptism may well be called our new birth, or regeneration; and also since by our first or natural birth, we are inheritors of certain privileges, and by our second or spiritual birth, do we become partakers of certain blessings. The one is as real as the other. Although it is invisible to our fleshly eyes yet it is clearly perceptible to the strong eye of faith. Here then is begun the spiritual life, which, if it be not extinguished, will become eternal in duration. And although of our natural parents we are born but to die, yet when born again by Christ and his Church by water and the Holy Ghost, we enter upon eternal life; in the phrase of Irenæus, we are regenerated to God; "we are the children of God, as if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." Yet all this is of God, and not of ourselves. The preparation only is ours. Salvation is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, through faith. Eph. ii. 8. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he best on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." Tit. iii. 5. "For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have all been made to drink into one spirit." 1 Cor. xiii. 13. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again; born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John 3. 5. "But as man may put an end to his natural life which he should neither begin nor continue beyond the will of God; so any one may extinguish the spiritual life begun of the Holy Ghost, by denying the soul its spiritual

* It is considered that Christ did not authorize the administration of baptism, except to those adults who sincerely to repent and to believe; and to all infants who have never committed sin, and who are presented by their parents. (Perhaps households an exception.—Ed. CHRONICLE.)