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DOCTRINAL SKETCHES.—No. 30.

BAPTISM.—ITS MODE.

The mode of baptism has often proved the subject of protracted and irritating controversies to the Church of Christ. We know not why it should be so. If there had been the same stress put upon the question in the beginning that modern disputants have laid upon it, we may reasonably doubt whether a difference of opinion concerning it could now exist; and if so little importance was attached to it, it may well be asked, why so much should be attached to it now?

Our own views, as a denomination, have been of the most liberal kind. Most carefully have we avoided dogmatizing on a subject on which no dogma is pronounced in the Holy Scriptures. We have accorded to those baptized in water the same position, as members of the Christian Church, which we have given to those baptized with water. To the table of our blessed Lord we not only cheerfully admit, but gladly welcome them; believing, as we do, that notwithstanding the difference in our methods, respectively, of administering this ordinance, we uniformly accept the Apostolic statement, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all." We even go a step further, for in our formula for the administration of this rite, there is no one method imperatively prescribed to the party officiating. In this matter, therefore, as well as in others, we are true to our Providential calling, and endeavour to show ourselves "the friends of all the enemies of none."

But it is possible that our position here may be misunderstood, or even misrepresented. It is to be thought that our liberality arises from indifference on the one hand or ignorance on the other; or if it be imagined either that we have no settled convictions as to the mode of baptism employed by the Apostles, or that we believe one way alone to be supported by Scripture, but accept another for custom or convenience sake, nothing can be farther from the truth. We believe that the subject has been settled thoroughly. In repeated examinations of the inspired record we find but stronger evidence that the application of water to the person was the original method in the early church, and that thus only can the full measure of the institution be exhibited; and yet, while we so think, we are willing to let others also think for themselves, and do not suppose it either kind or courteous to be protruding our sentiments on such people; to be perpetually endeavouring to unsettle their minds, or to be suggesting that they know better than they say, but fear to confess their Master's will. We believe that baptism is most scripturally performed either by sprinkling or pouring, and that there is no other mode, or that if any other mode, it is to be established by a variety of particulars.

In the first place the rite was not originated, though it was adopted and authoritatively obtained by our Lord Jesus Christ. Under the former dispensation the application both of the sacrificial blood, and of the purifying water, was by sprinkling. It was thus that those who had been separated by sin or uncleanness were restored to the fellowship of God's people, and were "brought nigh" to Himself. If then, according to St. Paul, these things were figures of the better services of the New Testament, and if, while we still have a purifying ablution for the purpose of introducing us to the Church of God, we have no express injunction as to another mode, we may at least say that there is presumptive evidence for the use of sprinkling or pouring.

But perhaps it will be claimed that in the very word employed by our Saviour in the Apostolic commission, there is a command as to the mode which is unquestionably explicit, and can only be interpreted in the sense of immersion. This has often been affirmed, and with a pertinacity which forbids the suspicion of a doubt on the part of those who advocate it. We shall not reply to these who insist upon it, but we will say that when our Lord, and the Apostles, used the word "baptizo" to signify immersion, the signification which they intended to convey cannot possibly be that of immersion. Our Lord's forerunner said respecting Him, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Similar was our Redeemer's own prediction, "John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost who shall come upon you and shed forth" which "cleans" tongues like as of fire" upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost, it follows either that our Lord did not fulfill His own prophecy and that of the Baptist, or else that He did baptize not by immersion, of which we have not the slightest intimation, but by the outpouring of the divine Spirit, and on this fact we claim that the question is fully set at rest. Christ did baptize with the richest blessing, by downpouring; and we may certainly do so with that element which is at once the appointed symbol and pledge of the divine influence. St. Paul would not have us ignorant that the fathers of the Jewish people, who were all baptized upon Moses in the cloud and in the sea. But these were not immersed in either the one or the other. Baptism then cannot be limited to that mode, and was not used in that sense in the case before us by the inspired writer of the epistle to the Corinthians. Why, then, it may be asked, is it affirmed that the ordinance, when administered in any other mode than by immersion, does not save the same way as these three witnesses show to be correct, is not the water, which we use in good faith, until the Church of God? We might further enquire, on what satisfactory ground can the immersionist mode be recommended? As a mere matter of fact not a case of it can be proved out of the New Testament. The supposed evidence is based exclusively upon inference, and in all our views we think the conclusion utterly unjust.

worthy. We have seen that the original word which is used will not justify the limitation of its meaning—at least to immersion. Neither will the particles "into" or "out of" the water, for they are used in scores of instances where the context cannot bear this signification. We may take one for illustration, and the more so as it is often quoted on the other side. Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch "went down both into the water," and "when they were come up out of the water the spirit of the Lord caught away Philip." But between these two, and consequently distinct from each of them, Philip baptized the eunuch. If, therefore, the particles above cited, of themselves, prove immersion, the sacred writer is chargeable with a useless tautology in his narrative; or else he must mean that both Philip and the convert first immersed themselves, and that afterwards the baptism took place!

Is the inference drawn from the statement that the river Jordan was selected for this purpose, or "Eonon near to Salim, because there was much water there?" But then for other purposes quite as important as the bathing of the entire body, might such a selection be made, and especially as Eonon was a place not of deep streams but of numerous wells—"of many waters." Besides, if John the Baptist resorted to the Jordan to immerse his disciples, whether did the eleven resort with their three thousand on the day of Pentecost, were added to the Church? It may safely be affirmed that neither in Jerusalem itself nor yet within a days' journey of it, was there an accommodation for the immersion of such a multitude on that occasion.

But it will be asked, does not St. Paul assert of true believers that they are "buried with Christ by baptism into death?" He does; but he does not say that this baptism is immersion, and it is simply begging the question to declare that he means this. He adds that by the same fact "we are planted together in the likeness of His death," and that "our old man is crucified with Him," and those who quietly assume that baptism must mean immersion because it "buries" with Christ, must also be prepared to show its resemblance to planting and to crucifixion, which is entirely contrary to the evidence that the Apostle did mean, we are certain that it was not his intention to show that by any mode of administering an outward rite a personal salvation was wrought for any man.

The spirit of the epistle to the Romans is peculiarly antagonistic to this thought. "Modern christians may magnify a circumstance, which is outwardly formal, into an essential condition of union with the church of Christ, and of participation in the benefits pertaining to that relation. They may add it to the table of the Lord all who conform to its usage, but of whose Christian experience the utmost they can do is to hope for the best; and they may refuse admission to those of whose enjoyment of the love of God, and of whose service in the cause of Christ it is impossible to doubt, simply because their baptism has not been after their own manner, and think that in all this they do God service. But the tendency of this course must be to unduly exact a form and unduly to depreciate the saving faith of the gospel. So did not Paul. It was against this tendency that he uttered those glorious protests with which his writings abound, and particularly those to the Romans and the Galatians, abound. Holding firmly therefore to his principle, "For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body," we acknowledge them as in every respect brethren in the Lord who give proof of their Christianity, no matter what the form of their baptism may have been; but at the same time we prefer to use the method of sprinkling or pouring, alone. We believe it to be the most convenient and apostolic usage. We believe it, above every other mode, fully to represent all that the sacrament is intended to pour and pledge, not only "the washing of regeneration" but likewise "the renewal of the Holy Ghost, shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour."

C. S.

LETTER FROM REV. G. S. MILLIGAN.

DEAR MR. EDITOR:—It will gratify many personal friends, readers of the *Provincial Wesleyan* to learn that a gracious Providence has attended my wife and self in all our journeying by sea and land, since in August last we bade adieu to family and friends in America; and that the year's rest from Circuit work has proved to be the most highly beneficial in restoring my shattered health, so that, instead of fearing that my privileged term of active service in the Lord's vineyard to be nearly at an end, I am now led to hope that it will please God to permit me to resume and, perhaps, for many years prosecute that ministry to which my life and energies have been devoted in the land of our adoption, with those hopes and increasing prosperity my fondest hopes and highest aspirations were closely and indissolubly joined.

The intervening months which have very quickly passed, have been spent very pleasantly in travelling through Ireland, Scotland, England, France and Italy. Health has been the primary object kept in view; hence the imperative restrictions of kind and prudent physicians respecting preaching have been very generally observed, the only exceptions being when the physical infirmities of brethren beloved have irresistibly appealed to my sympathies, or their overwhelming logic so prevailed as "just once" to hold medical prescription in abeyance. The observance of the rule, as indeed the suspension of all mental labor together with certain favourable conditions, arising from change of air and scene and other causes, has been most favorably upon my general health, as well as upon those special affections from which I have suffered during the past few years, while my very occasional disobedience of highly respected authority has afforded me the opportunity of scattering a few handfuls of good seed of the Kingdom along the wayside of our journeys, which I trust the great day will reveal have found their way into the good ground of some hearts, and thus I would more joyfully hope from the consideration that on this side the Atlantic men will very kindly, or at least attentively, bear the word from one announced as a stranger from British America.

Next to practicing silence, our orders on leaving America were pretty much to the effect, Go and enjoy yourselves as best you can, that you may come back again, if spared, recuperated and fitted in some degree to resume the labours of the Christian ministry. This injunction has been very generally acted upon; and, I trust, without disregarding the right spirit in which it was given. Travelling opens up many sources of enjoyment and instruction combined, to any one whose eyes are not altogether shut and ears closed and soul dead; and in our case many things have happily conspired to make our trip thus far very delightful, and to associate it long as memory endures with the most pleasing and grateful recollections. At present I shall write only in very general terms, perhaps hereafter, if deemed acceptable to your readers, I may send you in a series of papers, or itinerary with notes by the way. Our range of travel has been sufficiently extensive to bring us into contact with a very great variety of natural scenery; ocean, seas, mountains, hills, lakes and rivers, &c., have contributed to our pleasure in some of their grandest or most beautiful forms, and hereby impressed our minds more deeply in wonder and admiration for the creating and preserving God. We have had the satisfaction of enjoying a little in some of the great centres of population and industry, and of observing somewhat the various types of character therein, and learning something respecting the branches of art that engage the attention of the people, and in the Protestant and Catholic countries, the result leading us to think more highly of Protestantism and of those forms of it which are most simple and evangelical, and to be grateful for whose institutions seemed to us very palpable, and whose influence is felt and respected by classes on the Continent.

It has been our good fortune to bear a goodly number of the leading ministers of the British pulpit, and I am gratified to state that although I have heard the gospel preached by representatives of almost all evangelical denominations, I have rarely listened to a sentiment to which I could not utter a hearty amen. So much for the essential unity of the truth as it is in Jesus. Rationalism did show itself in a single case, and High Churchism (for one of whose exhibitions only I found time), might, alas, have been found in almost every town nevertheless I am inclined to think with more confidence than ever that there is light enough and grace enough in the Protestant Churches of the mother country to save them from being led very far astray by the attempted refinement of a German Philosophy or relapsing into the superstitious of Popery through the imposing grandeur and misguided zeal of her erratic and half-sister, Anglicanism. A mad agitation giving rise to a very general belief that state-churchism is doomed at no very distant day to be among the things that were, it is most assuring to gather from every quarter that, after all exceptions, the British pulpit has the right about it, and thousands of watchmen are every Sabbath evening to be found in the most of our cities and towns, and in the promotion of a true and liberal mental culture among the most enlightened nations of the world. It is however not prejudicial which leads me to say that while about the University of Cambridge, or Trinity College Dublin, or the Universities of Edinburgh or Glasgow, or Queen's College, Ireland, or the Normal Schools of the three cities last named, or indeed any of the other great and good scholastic establishments that I have been permitted to visit, I have seen much to admire in their magnificent equipments, their well trained professional educators, and splendid endowments for educational work, and had suggested, at times, matters of detail that seemed of considerable consequence, I have seen nothing to make me think highly of the Institutions of our Provinces or denomination, but on the contrary, have felt a degree of thankfulness for their efficiency and even at times some pride in the knowledge of the fact that a leaf might be taken with advantage from our own Educational codes, and, if it was not mistaken in results, something learned in the way of adding to the comfort and promoting the thorough training of those passing through a course of instruction.

It has been our privilege to visit the Museums and principal Picture Galleries in Dublin, Edinburgh, Cambridge, Liverpool, Paris, Turin, Geneva, Milan, Venice, Florence and Rome. From these strongly attractive spots where are grouped so many of the productions of the masters both of ancient and modern times, and where there is so much concentrated to illustrate the natural world in all its departments, and art in all countries and in almost all stages of progress, we found it often difficult to tear ourselves away, and often wish arose that in all our provincial towns, and especially our own Sackville, through the liberal devising of friends of education, the day might not be distant when there shall be a museum which shall contain a worthy treasury of art, &c., not greatly inferior to some of these.

In this connection I may add that we have been able to see many famous Cathedrals and Church edifices, many palaces, ancient and modern, and other remarkable specimens of architecture, such as works of art we could not fail to admire, however much disposed in some instances to question the wisdom of the enormous expenditures incurred in their erection or the idolatrous purposes for which genius and skill have been abused in their ornamentation. Of St. Peter's and other Basilicas, &c. at Rome, San Marco at Venice, Santa Maria at Florence, the Duomo at Milan, Notre Dame, St. Paul's and other cathedrals at Ely, Rouen, &c. we cannot speak particularly, but their mention will suggest a few of the many structures we have seen which deserve to be ranked among the architectural beauties of the world.

Another source of pleasure has been found in visiting historic ruins. While in Scotland we were pleased to look upon many an old tower which has its own story of heroic chivalry, or perhaps of savage cruelty in the times of border strife or bloody persecution. At Rome also, in the Coliseum, the palaces of the Caesars, the Roman and Trajan Forums, the Pantheon and other temples, arches, aqueducts, columns, baths, &c., &c., numberless objects claimed our attention that recalled a civilization of which we had read from boyhood, in a sense, grand on account of its beauty, stern on account of its grandeur, and iron rule, but which from its original and rude simplicity up to its culminating and almost unparalleled luxury, because, being with all its temples and display of priests and sacrifices, *without God*, was earthly, sensual, and devilish.

Our visit to France, of course brought us into the presence of ruins of a very different kind. In Paris we found enough to testify still of the splendour of the Queen of Cities prior to the late war, while in the destruction of the Tuilleries, Hotel de Ville, and the corner house at least of every fine block of buildings in the French metropolis, the wanton and fendish acts of the Communists were clearly revealed. An interesting, if not pleasurable study presented itself to us while endeavoring to trace out the progress of the legitimate in liberating the Parisians from the dreadful yoke of the Commune as still too clearly marked by the debris of ruined buildings and damage done by cannoning along the line of march, to which triumphal arches, statuary, &c., for which the ornamentation of this city was once so famous. The ruin of Assieres, where amid wide-spread desolation our own beautiful little Methodist Chapel, as if almost by a miracle, escaped with but little injury, the conqueror less fortunate being killed by a shell while attending to her domestic concerns; of St. Cloud, the charming palace of which, the favorite one of the ex-Emperor is said to have been destroyed by the French themselves to prevent its being used for their humiliation, as before, by the allied forces for signing articles of peace to the very great annoyance of the Prussians who, indignant at this, turned their guns unmercifully upon the town, and other towns and villages greatly wrecked; and indeed the present great depression of business marked by the signs of "shop to let" in every street of Paris and often in very great proximity to each other, and by the crowds of young men hastening out of the country for want of employment, together with the fearful loss of limb as seen among the objects in the hospitals or streets, and the dreadful loss of life indicated by graveyards thronged with those who fell in battle, were plain exponents of the grievous calamities that have overtaken France through the last war, calamities which every Frenchman burns with an ardent desire speedily to avenge.

As might be expected the religious aspect of our journey has been a most interesting one. We have passed through countries which we have passed have occasioned considerable inquiry on our part, and the information reached us as a whole has led me to regard the future with confidence and hope. In Ireland, while the Roman Catholic private and the Ultramontane party are more defiant since the overt act of the establishment, and boldly avow that nothing but the control of state education for their own ends will satisfy, the disestablished Protestant Church seems to be arousing herself and calling forth her latent energies for the work of evangelization; the Presbyterian Church, if ever, sometimes, actuated a little too much by that party spirit which would call down fire from heaven upon an adversary, yet in many respects nobly as well as earnestly contending for the faith, is buckling on afresh her armour for the battle; and our own Methodist Church despite her continued annual loss of communicants, by their exodus to America, was never more active than at present in seeking the conversion of the people to a true faith, which one might suppose, from a comparison with two districts of the opposite religions, would show to be the panacea for Ireland's oppression, far beyond the correction of any real political misery or utopian new-law, whether under the auspices of Fenian or Home-ruler agitators.

In France, judging from a number of congregations composed largely of women and children, and from the apparent want of interest in the services of the priests, as they proceeded with their ceremonies, the Roman Catholic religion has lost its hold upon the people. In coming out of the Madeleine in the deep conviction of my heart was just this, that while all possible attention had been paid to the aesthetic, to the neglect of spiritual or experimental religion, imposing and pretentious performances had lost their charm, and now because of the hollow and powerlessness of these to reach the heart and purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God, the people had become, to a great extent, disgusted with the very name of religion and rushed into scepticism and infidelity. Notwithstanding the dire visitation by the calamities of war, I hear the masses care little for God or the Bible. The priestly party in great zeal for religion, under the Archbishop of Paris, is employing most rigorous and all possible measures to enforce belief in the dogma of Papal infallibility and the whole system which for the present it represents, although many within the ecclesiastical circle are uneasy, and many of the laity in the ranks of the Liberals are anxious as to the issue in respect to political freedom, if the Government yield to present encroachments of the Church upon the rights of the State. Philosophy, lately so called, paralyzes for good and urges to evil many within the pale of the Retorted Church, who by their denial of the supernatural and evangelical world, in the name of gospel, take away the children's bread and for this proffer a stone. The most encouraging feature in connection with the moral regeneration of this people, and luxurious, ingenious and active, but proud and volatile people, lies, as I need not inform your readers, in the comparatively feeble yet active agencies of evangelical missions and colportage, whose labourers amid all the density of gloom impending over the moral horizon, through the wisdom and power of God causing light to emerge from the darkness with ever increasing brightness. Our own Methodist Church is doing a good work, nowhere it seems to me are the missionaries of the cross more deserving of the prayers of God's people; as nowhere, so far as I have been able to judge by observation or reading, do they labor under greater discouragements or against mightier obstacles.

In Italy, Popery has still a great hold upon the people. Judging from appearances they attend more numerous and manifest more deep emotion during their religious services. It is true that our opportunity for observing was mainly in Lent. We did see them in Venice during the Carnival season, when for the Sunday and two following days, by usage and Church consent, they gave themselves up to masquerading and frolic. Thousands of people turned out on the Lord's Day, which on the continent is not a holy day but a holiday, with masks and dresses of the most fantastic kinds, in the square of San Marco. For the afternoon all worship seemed suspended, a band of music discoursed what was deemed appropriate airs, and under a strange excitement the crowds that mingled together presented or received in perfect good nature the compliments or attention of the season, the object of the masked party being to say or do what he or she thinks proper within certain limits of honour, to some other known party, and yet be or she remain incog. After this wondrous commerce, having in its programme on the Sunday evening a ball, attended, as an informant told me, by thousands similarly dressed to the accompaniment of a carnival of pleasure making, it might be expected that the inhabitants might for a time afford to be extra-religious. That this was the case, I do not doubt, on the principle of adjusting the matter of righteousness, after the fashion of balancing profit and loss, nevertheless in the immense audiences that had gathered to hear their popular Lenten processions and their domestic concerns; of St. Cloud, the charming palace of which, the favorite one of the ex-Emperor is said to have been destroyed by the French themselves to prevent its being used for their humiliation, as before, by the allied forces for signing articles of peace to the very great annoyance of the Prussians who, indignant at this, turned their guns unmercifully upon the town, and other towns and villages greatly wrecked; and indeed the present great depression of business marked by the signs of "shop to let" in every street of Paris and often in very great proximity to each other, and by the crowds of young men hastening out of the country for want of employment, together with the fearful loss of limb as seen among the objects in the hospitals or streets, and the dreadful loss of life indicated by graveyards thronged with those who fell in battle, were plain exponents of the grievous calamities that have overtaken France through the last war, calamities which every Frenchman burns with an ardent desire speedily to avenge.

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As might be expected the religious aspect of our journey has been a most interesting one. We have passed through countries which we have passed have occasioned considerable inquiry on our part, and the information reached us as a whole has led me to regard the future with confidence and hope. In Ireland, while the Roman Catholic private and the Ultramontane party are more defiant since the overt act of the establishment, and boldly avow that nothing but the control of state education for their own ends will satisfy, the disestablished Protestant Church seems to be arousing herself and calling forth her latent energies for the work of evangelization; the Presbyterian Church, if ever, sometimes, actuated a little too much by that party spirit which would call down fire from heaven upon an adversary, yet in many respects nobly as well as earnestly contending for the faith, is buckling on afresh her armour for the battle