

Original Poetry.

THE BURNING OF THE TROPHIES IN THE TOWER.

Grey Fortress of the royal Thames, dark pile of old renown, So the red wing of the flame hath struck thy proudest glories down.

Of the Church upon the Holy Hills—the Apostolic shrine, With rampart of the faith that clings to truth's eternal line.

A PICTURE OF DISSENT BY A DISSENTER.

(From "The Church of England and Dissent," by the Rev. John Cuswood, M.A.)

1. Of the Election of Dissenting Ministers. "When a Minister is removed,—the choice of a successor always brings on a crisis in the history of the [vacant] Church."

is the result of that cloudiness, which envelopes the mind of the pastor: if there is ignorance in the pew, it is because there is so little knowledge in the pulpit.

3. Of Deacons of Dissenting Churches. "I have known instances, where through first the neglect and then the refusal (of deacons) to render an account" of money; "the affairs of religious societies have been carried into chancery, and strife, ill will, confusion, and every evil work have sprung up in the church!"

4. Of Members of Dissenting Churches. "They are frequently hasty in the choice of a pastor; and soon grow tired of the man whom they choose (hose) at first with every demonstration of sincere and strong regard."

5. Of Meetings of Dissenting Churches. "Church meetings have exhibited scenes of confusion little recomendatory of the democratic form of church government;" (p. 185.) "Instead of seeking the good of the whole, the feeling of too many of our members is, 'I will have my way!'"

at the Lord's table, and at their own; in the house of God, and at home." (p. 157.) "Discipline is relaxed to admit wealthy members of unsanctified dispositions."

6. Of False Doctrines of Dissenting Churches. "Creeping reptiles infest our churches, and perpetually insinuate that their ministers do not preach the Gospel; because they have dared to enforce the moral law as the rule of a believer's conduct."

7. Of the conduct of Dissenting churches toward one another. "It does not unfrequently happen when two or more Churches of the same denomination exist in a town, a most unhappy, unscripural, disgraceful temper is manifested towards each other."

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM.

If it be either in a Church or an individual mark of declining piety to lay undue stress upon ordinances or ceremonial institutions, as indicating a desire to compromise the spirit and reality of religion by a scrupulousness and exactness in the mere "holy service" of external acts, it would equally argue a decay of reverence to God and of respect for his commandments, if the solemn appointments by which his truth is designed to be kept visible to the world should come into contempt and disuse.

impulse of that very principle of faith which urges to the fulfilment of every practical Christian duty. And the same principle of faith would cause us to discern a divine efficacy in those ordinances which men, approaching them only in a temper of worldliness or a spirit of speculation, would deery in the same manner as Naaman the Syrian derided the simplicity and seeming absurdity of the remedy which was prescribed for the cure of his leprosy by Elisha the prophet.

We have made these few prefatory remarks as applicable to a subject upon which we propose briefly to treat, and which, from a defective faith or an erroneous understanding of its institution and requirements, has been exposed, in modern times at least, to much irreverence and neglect,—we mean THE HOLY SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM.

The word Baptism (from βαπτισμα) signifies washing; and this custom of washing, as a religious rite, was common both amongst the Jews and Gentiles. The former, although circumcision was their initiatory ordinance, were in the habit always of baptizing the proselytes to their religion,—as emblematic of their being washed from the impurities of heathenism, and made clean from the foulness of idolatry.

It is a fact, too, worthy of remembrance, that many heathen nations practised these washings in their religious ceremonies; and it was a common thing for a Gentile, when he formed a resolution to lead a new and better life, to wash his body—thus indicating that the sins also in which he had formerly indulged were now put away.

When John the Baptist commenced his mission, we find that, in preaching repentance, he conferred to the really penitent promise of remission of sins, by baptizing them in the river Jordan: from all of which instances we may learn, that the institution of Baptism in the Christian Church was no new thing, but the more solemn and sanctified revival of an old and almost universally practised custom;—that it was one of which the converts from the Gentiles would see the significance and acknowledge the propriety, while the Jew also would, from previous usage, be prepared to yield to it his respect.

The case may be thus plainly stated.—By nature all are sinners, and deserving of God's wrath and condemnation. To redeem us from this judgment of God against sin, Christ died for us. His sacrifice was accepted as a full and complete atonement for the sins of the whole world; and through the merits of that all-sufficient offering, his intercession for us is, and always will be, effectual at the throne of grace.

It was a token and pledge that "old things were now passed away and all things were become new,"—a visible memorial of having passed from a condition of wrath to a state of grace—from death unto life.

which exists as to the manner of performing this Sacramental rite,—some contending that, in order to be valid, it must be done by immersion, and a much larger portion of the Christian world affirming that the spirit and meaning of the Sacrament is equally maintained by the more convenient and more practicable method of aspersion, or sprinkling with water.

We read, in the history of the early Church, of another case in which sprinkling was substituted for immersion,—when, in times of difficulty, a sufficient quantity of water could not be procured; as, for example, when a martyr was to be baptized in prison, or one under a similar confinement was to baptize another.

These testimonies, in support of the custom of sprinkling in baptism, though incidental, are very ancient and very positive; and it is difficult not to believe that it derived a sanction from a similar usage occasionally adopted in the time of the Apostles themselves.

The instances are frequent, both under the Old and New Dispensation, in which a partial washing—as a religious purification—was accepted as a whole; where the washing of the hands, for instance, is made to constitute the removal of legal defilement. And the case is striking and remarkable in which our blessed Lord, after Peter, upon being told that unless he washed his feet, he should have no part with him, replied, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head," said to him, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit."

In the earlier ages of the Church, when a larger proportion of the candidates for baptism were adults, the inconveniences of immersion would be less felt, especially in those milder climates in which the Gospel was at first propagated; but in subsequent ages, when infants, in countries wholly converted, would necessarily form almost the only subject of baptism; when, in severe climates and uncongenial seasons, it would often be found hazardous to resort to the custom of complete immersion in baptism; and when, as would often be the case, a sufficient quantity of water, for the performance of the rite according to that manner, would not always be accessible, it is easy to understand how the practice of immersion would come gradually to be dispensed with, and at last abolished in the Christian Church.

These remarks lead us to another consideration,—viz, the propriety and lawfulness of INFANT BAPTISM; a subject, however, which must be deferred to another opportunity.