

once; or even if the rich and the learned were the leaders in accepting the Christian faith and confessing Christ, the problem would not seem so difficult to solve. But thus far, with the single exception of Rayagadda, God's purpose appears to have been to call out from this village and that a few only to be witnesses unto Him. And by all the ethics of those villages, whether high caste, low caste, or no caste, these few chosen vessels of God are regarded as a stench and a stigma to be hated, despised and shunned. But that is not all. Whenever it lies within their power they rob the Christians of houses and lands and loved ones. They will steal the very food from their mouths. In ways without number they are ostracized and boycotted and plundered, simply because they are Christians.

Moreover it has been the pleasure of God to call "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble." "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea and things which are not, to bring to nought things which are." Had God seen fit to select the wealthy and influential to be our co-workers, in proclaiming Christ to their fellow-countrymen, the question of self-support might perhaps not be so big and bothersome. They could be independent of their heathen neighbors, and in spite of all their heinous hatred and diabolical plotting they could manage to live without mission help. At least this is the way it sometimes looks to us. But dare anyone say that such a choice would be best for us and best for Foreign Missions? After all, I rather think God knows a little more than we do about this entire business. The work is His. The Christians are His. He called them and saved them, and even though they are few and poor and despised He will care for them. After we, the missionaries, have done all in our power to encourage the native church, and enable her to become independent and self-supporting, there will still remain great mountains of difficulty which no power but God's can remove. And as God has, according to his own mercy saved whom He would, so we believe that in His own wise way He will supply their needs and through them get glory unto Himself. Perhaps in our endeavor to discover a satisfactory solution of this problem, it will be safe for us to study and figure and labor, as though all depended upon us. But at the same time to believe, and pray and wait upon God as though all depended upon Him, and it surely does all depend upon Him.

You would like to know if anything practical is really being done along the line of self-support on the Bobbili field. In another letter I will endeavor to give what light I can upon that query.

R. E. GULLISON.

In tent at Madepilli, 18 miles from Bobbili, August 21, 1899.

P. S.—Yesterday three believers were baptized and received into fellowship of the Bobbili church.

R. E. G.

Are Baptists a Peculiar People?

BY REV. J. E. ROBERTS, M. A., B. D., of Manchester.

At any rate, if they are, they have not a monopoly of peculiarity. Every denomination has its peculiar people; perhaps we have a rather larger supply than other denominations, because so many people agree as to Scriptural baptism without agreeing on any other ecclesiastical or even theological matters. Thus, we have strange fellows; but we are a happy family!

However, my inquiry runs in a different direction. Judged by the way in which many people talk of us, we are peculiar. Speakers make poor jokes about our love of water, jokes as offensive to true Baptists as they are irreverent, and one would imagine that we stood quiet alone in the interpretation of Scriptural baptism. But it is well to remember that we are in entire accord with the vast majority of the Christian Church in all ages. Let me just indicate how this is so.

The chief points to be considered in connection with the ordinance are two, viz., its mode and its subjects. Dealing first of all with the less important, the mode, the Baptist position is that the only Scriptural mode is by immersion. Now, are we alone in this? Decidedly not. Turning to the Prayer Book of the Established Church we find the following directions, "The priest (if they shall certify him that the child may well endure it) shall dip it in the water discreetly and warily"; and in the case of those of "riper years," "the priest shall dip him in the water or pour water upon him."

The ordinary mode is said to be immersion, with pouring as an alternative in case of physical weakness. There is not a word about sprinkling from first page to last. Every time an Anglican clergyman administers the Holy Sacrament of Baptism he breaks the rubric of his church. Here is another matter for the bishops to investigate.

But the Anglican Church and the Baptists are not alone. The Greek or Eastern Church practice immersion in baptizing to this day; so that the Baptists agree entirely

with the majority of the Church in prescribing immersion as the mode in baptism. The only peculiarity in our case in England is that we practise what we preach, whilst the Anglican Church preaches one thing and practises another. Surely the advantage in this case is with us. And another powerful ally has come to our side. Not so many years ago it was the custom to try to prove that the Greek word for baptizing might mean sprinkling. But this attempt is quite given up now save by a few hard-pressed Congregationalists and Wesleyans, who want to find directions for their ordinance in the New Testament rather than find directions for the ordinance therein. Modern scholarship has made the Baptist position unassailable. There is scarcely a recent commentary with any pretensions to scholarship which does not admit freely that the only baptism mentioned in the New Testament is immersion.

Therefore, so far as the mode is concerned, we must pass on the "peculiarity" to our brethren in the other Free Churches, though I hope we have too much reverence for Christ's ordinance to begin to make poor jokes about their mode of conducting it.

When we turn to the second point, and the far more important part, viz., the subjects of baptism, once again we find, to our surprise and delight, that instead of having to believe that we are right and the rest of the Christian Church wrong, we are in entire agreement with almost the entire Christian Church. Our position is, that all those who are baptized should make a profession of repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are necessary prerequisites. What say other Christians? Turn to the Prayer Book of the Anglican Church. In its Catechism I read as follows:—Question: "What is required of persons to be baptized?" Answer: "Repentance whereby they forsake sin; and faith whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that Sacrament."

I rub my eyes with amazement, and I am not surprised to find that the next question is the very pertinent one "Why then are infants baptized when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform them?" Answer: "Because they promise them both by their sureties, which promise, when they come to age, themselves are bound to perform."

Then I begin to see how matters stand. The Anglican Church teaches quite as firmly as we do that repentance and faith are the pre-requisites to baptism; and therefore—what? Why therefore, instead of giving up the practice of baptizing infants who cannot repent and believe, the Church introduces the sponsors to promise the impossible on behalf of the child. Thus, when I turn to the Service for the Baptism of Infants I find that the minister asks the God-Parents in the child's name, "Wilt thou be baptized in this faith?" In the "Service for the Baptism of such as are of Riper Years," these questions are asked quite properly of the persons to be baptized, and in these cases baptism is on a profession of repentance and faith and immersion just as it is with us.

But of course the Anglican Church has not invented this heathenish practice of having sponsors to make impossible promises. The practice obtains throughout the Eastern or Greek and the Roman Catholic Churches. In fact, practically the whole Christian Church, ancient and modern, agrees that baptism is to be administered only to those who repent and believe. Christian baptism always has meant, and always does mean, personal union with Jesus Christ through faith, and consequent union with His Church. Once again, the only peculiarity of the Baptists is that they square their practice with their theory. If baptism is for those who have repentance and faith, only believers are to be baptized. The Anglican Roman Catholic and Greek Churches teach not only those who have repentance and faith are to be baptized; but, instead of baptizing believers, they go on baptizing infants and get sponsors to make themselves ridiculous by making impossible promises of repentance and faith for the unconscious babe. Surely most impartial people would allow that Baptists have the most claim to respect in this matter.

So that we are compelled to hand over the banner for the peculiarity to the other Free Churches. Whether it be an honor or not, certain it is that it is they who differ from all Christendom, both as regards the mode and the subjects for baptism, and not the much misunderstood Baptists. Now, I do not claim for a moment that this fact proves the Baptists to be right. The right is not always with the majorities. But, still, it is a relief to find that we do not indict the wisdom of the whole of Christendom, but agree entirely with the vast majority of our fellow Christians in this and every age.

Then, what is the position of these dear Congregational-cum-Presbyterian-cum-Wesleyan friends? Simply this: they are far too good Protestants (at least, most of them are!) to carry out an ordinance because it has traditional authority, and so they have banished all the heathenish nonsense about sponsors. And yet, instead of taking the one further step of making practice agree with theory, and have clung to the established practice, and tried to find a new meaning for it. In this they have been partially successful. What a new meaning is exactly, no two of them can agree on earth. But, generally speaking, baptism is either a recognition of a child's birth into the Christian world, or a dedication service for the parents. Now, such a service may be useful. A good many Baptist ministers think it is, and have such a service. But this is not New Testament baptism.

Such a meaning for baptism is a modern invention discovered by the English Free Churches, to save them

from returning to the Biblical practice of baptizing believers. Such a meaning for baptism is not contemplated in the New Testament.

The most illogical people of all are the Congregationalists! They are the peculiar people. They are driven to it by the very robustness of their Protestantism. Wesleyans and Presbyterians have not yet shaken off all the grave clothes of sacerdotalism and sacramentalism. Some of their leaders especially are hampered considerably by their clinging ceremonies. But our good friends the Congregationalists will have none of these things. They recognize them as filthy rags. They have heard the voice of the Lord saying: "Loose him and let him go." And yet they cling to the outward form of the ceremony, and compromise matters by finding a new meaning for it. It may be clever, but is it wise? Is it Christian? True, it is a temptation to be like other people if possible. Men do not desire to differ from others unnecessarily.

But if agreement with the practice of others means neglect of the theory of Jesus Christ, the price may be too high to pay! We Baptists think so, and we believe that our friends the Congregationalists will soon think so too, and will soon break down the middle wall of partition between us by accepting the united testimony of the Christian Church as to the meaning of baptism, and by conforming the practice of the ordinance to that meaning so that "as many as are baptized into Christ Jesus" may be "baptized into his death." Then they will be able to join us in using words which are incomprehensible in their present theory: "We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death, that, like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also might we walk in newness of life.—Freeman.

Concerning Spiritual Gifts,

BY REV. A. P. COLLINS.

1 Cor. 12: 1—"We should not be ignorant."

1. They are gifts of the Holy Spirit not traits.
2. They are not bestowed till after conversion.
3. We are not born with them, neither the first nor the second time.
4. No one has all the gifts. They are bestowed according to the measure of grace given to us by the Father.

5. He makes no mistakes. The gift you have is the one you can make the best use of, both for His glory, your own joy, and the good of others.

6. In the bestowment of the gifts, God's purposes concerning you and his cause, are pure as Himself and high as His throne. Not to use the gift according to that purpose, is to dwarf your soul, and disappoint your Heavenly Father, and acknowledge that his grace was bestowed upon you in vain. The anti-missionary, who claims the elect will be gathered in without the gospel is the slothful servant saying to his Lord, "Thou art an austere man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strown."

The O-Missionary says, "I was afraid and went and hid my talent in the earth; lo, here thou hast that is thine." Why did he not lay it up as a treasure in heaven by sending the gospel to the lost?

7. The best gifts are to be coveted for the satisfaction of the body—the church. It is a sad and desolate heart that does not want to be of service, the best possible service to the Lord. Desire it, seek it, covet it, and when obtained, use the gift to God's glory.

8. Gifts are to be stirred up in us. 2 Tim. 2-6. See the man at the forge, the old country blacksmith shop, a piece of iron needs to be hammered, and shaped and fitted for service. Just a little fire in the furnace, a mighty stirring of the sleeping embers. The breath of the bellows is turned on it. The sparks fly, the iron is heated and ready for working, molding, shaping. "Stir up the gift that is in thee," preacher, deacon, brother, sister. Enthusiasm God inbreathed. Let your soul be all aflame with love for God and souls.

These gifts work effectually and in a most excellent way by love—the love that is kind, and thinks no evil of his brother, but believes and hopes all things; is not puffed up, but builds up, rejoices in the truth, and never fails.—Sel.

Love Led Him into Service for Others.

To the brave young Jonathan there came the vision of the shepherd boy, and in that hour Jonathan loved David with a love passing that of woman. But, bringing joy to-day, love brought pain to-morrow. When the brilliant David had eclipsed slow and heavy Jonathan, Saul became jealous for his son, and the javelin he hurled at the people's favorite filled Jonathan's heart with sorrow: "he was grieved." Then the threads grew strangely tangled, and at last love slew the youth whom first it had blessed.

Here is young John Bright, the knight errant of the poor, disputing with Gladstone the first place in English eloquence and oratory. On his marriage morn he wrote: "All of happiness that life holds is now mine. I shall know joy and not sorrow." For this man and woman were set each to each "like perfect music unto perfect words." But when twelve short months had passed the strong man bowed down in bitter grief and knew that henceforth all that was left to him in life was the memory of a sainted life and a year of overflowing happiness. In that hour Richard Cobden crossed the darkened threshold and said: "There are thousands and thousands of wives and mothers and children in England who are dying of hunger. Love hath led you into the happiness of your home. Let love now lead you into service for other homes." In that hour John Bright went forth to pass from town to town, pleading the cause of the poor, and carrying his Corn Laws. When peace again was his he found that love had fashioned a career strangely different from what he had anticipated, and so, like a star, he went forward to become the defender of hundreds of thousands of God's poor.—Murell Dwygh-Hillis, in *Ladies' Home Journal*.