

THE CASE OF THE BAPTISTS.

We are sometimes told that the Baptists are a modern sect, never heard of till the sixteenth century, and that all their assertions about antiquity are unfounded; and some observations on a book of mine have been recently written by "A Clergyman," who, whatever may be his attainments in other respects, is grievously defective in Christian courtesy, not to say gentlemanly bearing, and to whom, therefore, I shall make no further reference.

But the question is—WHO ARE THE BAPTISTS?

If the inquiry relate to the *name*, the answer is, that it first began to be used when the principles and practices which it indicates were associated with a distinct and separate religious body, instead of being characteristic of Christendom, as at the first. So of other names. There were no Protestants till the sixteenth century, when the celebrated *Protest* of certain German states and princes at the Diet of Spire (A. D. 1529) originated Protestantism; whereas the truths comprised under that appellation have been held by Christians from the beginning, and in that sense Protestantism is as old as Christianity itself. Again:—Presbyterianism is traced to the same sixteenth century; but Presbyterians will tell us that their mode of church government was the original mode, and that the Church of Christ was Presbyterian from the first. It strikes me that they are almost right on that point—with some exceptions, however, not necessary to be now enumerated.

Take the church at Jerusalem, the church at Rome, and other churches, whose beginnings are recorded in the New Testament. What were they? They were societies of men and women, who professed "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," and who, when they made that profession, were baptized "into [Dean Alford's translation] the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," that is, "buried with Christ" in baptism, as all Christians were at that time. Those churches consisted of baptized believers, as Baptist churches do now. Christian history, in the first century, was strictly and properly Baptist history, although the word "Baptist," as a distinctive