

## The Christian.

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## EDITORIAL.

BAPTIZED FOR THE DEAD.—1 Cor. xv. 19.

When Jesus delivered the gospel once for all time to the apostles to proclaim to all nations, He also gave them this symbol. Matt. xxviii. 19. Mark xvi. 16. The three facts of the gospel—that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again, are put into form in baptism, and the true believer obeys from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered. Rom. vi. 4-17. In this action he looks back to the resurrection of Christ and forward to his own, and the symbol is both *retrospective* and *prospective*.

The sinner who believes in Jesus so as to love Him and hate his own sins, and with his whole heart resolve, in God's strength, to forsake them, puts on Christ in baptism (Gal. iii. 27) Jesus pardons him, takes him into favor that he may walk in His footsteps till he pass through time and death and is glorified with Him in the resurrection.

When believers eat the Lord's supper as He has commanded, they show or symbolize His death, but not His burial and resurrection. Baptism is the only institution of the New Testament that symbolizes these. And if, as many in our day desire, the immersion of believers were abolished, there would be no ordinance in the Bible representing the resurrection of Christ and that of the saints, and we ask, "What then shall they do to represent the resurrection of the dead?" Is the resurrection of so little importance as to have no institution in the Bible to represent it?

All systems which unite men must have their peculiar symbols, if, for no other reasons, to separate them from those who are not of their order and experience, proves that those who reject Christ's appointments most studiously contend for their own.

God sent the Harbinger of His beloved Son to preach in the wilderness the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Jesus came from Galilee to Jordan, and obeyed His Father in baptism, and after He had died and risen, and was about to ascend to heaven, charged His apostles to baptize believers in His name, and promised to save such. The apostles faithfully enjoined it on all believers, and often referred to their baptism when addressing the saved. They pressed the fact as a reason for a holy and self-denying life, that they were dead to sin, and had been buried with Christ in baptism, that they should rise to walk in newness of life. And yet there are persons professing to be the followers of Christ, who deny that He commanded believers to be immersed in water. This need not surprise us when we remember that even in the apostles' days, some professing Christians denied the resurrection of the dead.

It is cheering, however, to know that many who love the Saviour lay aside their prejudice, and are being buried with Him in baptism. And also, that leading minds in the different communions unhesitatingly declare that the immersion of believers is what the Lord commanded, and the apostles practiced. In every decade the opposers of immersion are losing their hold on the public mind, and will do so just in proportion to the prevalence of gospel light and liberty.

Baptism is perverted not only in its action and subjects, but also in its design. While men agree that it is a symbol, they differ widely on what it symbolizes. Many take it to be a sign of what is wrought in a man instead of what Christ has done for him in His death and resurrection, so that he looks to his inward emotions, present and past,

instead of looking away from himself and everything else to the person and work of Jesus as his reason for being baptized. Baptism is described as "An outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace," and men are taught to believe that because God works in them without being restricted to any mode, he permits them to choose any one of three modes in obeying the positive command of Christ in baptism. That if they are sincere and have water sprinkled upon them, or poured upon them, or are immersed in water, God will be pleased with them and accept it as baptism! Many grow even wiser than their teachers and have discovered that sincerity will be taken without water at all, and determinedly contend that "There is no water in baptism"!!! Thus, men proceeding step by step, disregard the action and design of baptism, and finally the ordinance altogether, with the example of Jesus and His solemn and last command before their face.

We know of no scripture which says that baptism is a sign of an inward and spiritual grace, nor that its action resembles such inward grace. Circumcision is described as such a sign, but not baptism. We read of the circumcision of Christ, made without hands—circumcision of the heart, etc., etc. (Col. ii. 11. Rom. ii. 28-29. Deut. x. 16, xxx. 6.) But baptism is a sign of something else. What saith the scriptures? "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore, we are buried with Him by baptism into death, *that like as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*" (Rom. vi. 3, 4.) "Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of (or in) the operation of God, who raised Him from the dead." Col. ii. 12. Here, then, is a sign of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection, and of the believer's death to sin, and of his burial and resurrection with Christ. As Jesus had died for sin, it shows what certainly followed—that death, His burial and resurrection. And as believers had died to sin, it shows their burial and resurrection with Christ to walk in newness of life. This union is to continue while life remains, to survive death, and be completed in the resurrection when the Son will deliver up the Kingdom to God and the Father.

When Paul reasoned with those who denied the resurrection he showed that baptism was a mistake, if their theory was true, and that the following results would follow:

1st. *Christ is not risen.* For He the Head, and the saints the body, are one. If there be no resurrection for them, neither can there be for Him. If there be no harvest, there can be no first fruits.

2nd. *Our preaching is vain.*—It has Jesus' resurrection in it as the grand demonstration of all the rest.

3rd. *Your faith is vain.*—As it rests on the truth we preach.

4th. *We are found false witnesses of God.*—Miracles proved us to be God's witnesses, and hence we are His false witnesses.

5th. *Ye are yet in your sins.*—As it is only through the truth we preached ye can be saved.

6th. *They that have fallen asleep in Christ are perished.*—They must either rise again or perish.

Here the apostle exhibits the tremendous consequences of denying the resurrection, and leaves his opponents no alternative but either to accept the doctrine, or lose everything worth having in time or eternity.

As he turns away from the gloom—the eternal disappointment and sadness of that system—to gaze upon the glorious gospel of Christ, the apostle seems so overpowered with the contrast that his mind is drawn for the present from the arena of

debate to contemplate the wonderful history of sin and its cure; and as it rapidly vibrates between the introduction of death by Adam, and its final extinction by Christ, he soars into regions of indescribable sublimity. What imagination can reach the grandeur of that scene when sin's floodgates shall be finally closed, and all the remedial systems of God's benevolence shall have finished their work and ceased? When the reigning Redeemer shall have put down all authority and power, crushed every enemy under His feet, and destroyed the last enemy, death? When the principalities and powers created by Him and for His glory shall assemble to witness His last conquest, and His Father and His God receive the Kingdom from His hands? Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father, and God shall be all in all.

This untold glory is promised to the true believer at his baptism, and he has its foretaste in the gift of the Holy Spirit; and, though passing through a world of temptation, and altogether weak in himself, yet, leaning on the Almighty arm of his Redeemer, and seeking His daily strength, He will never leave nor forsake him until he is crowned with glory in the presence of His Father and the holy angels.

D. C.

## Original Contributions.

## VICTORY THROUGH FAITH.

For whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith.—I. John v. 4.

The above is the language of the apostle John, as given in the revised version of the New Testament. It was written when he was an old man, probably but a short time before his death. We learn from the writings of the apostolic fathers that John outlived all the other apostles and saw the closing years of the first century of our era before he departed this life. The date of this epistle is variously estimated. Some critics place it as late as 90 A. D., or even later. At all events its expressions undoubtedly represent the matured thought of the aged apostle. They constitute the ripened fruit of his long and vigorous Christian life. Inspired, as they undoubtedly were, by the Holy Spirit, they are confirmed by the rich experience of this aged saint. He knew it to be true, that the man begotten of God could overcome the world. And he was keenly conscious, also, that the principle of victory was the principle of faith.

John had evidently arrived at the full consciousness of this truth by a long process of education. We are permitted to view a scene in his early career where this idea seems conspicuously absent. He and his brother James had been sent into Samaria to prepare entertainment for their Lord, who was on His way to Jerusalem. The Samaritans, from their prejudice against the Jews, refused them shelter. Outraged at this treatment of their Master, they said, "Lord, wilt Thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" How different this inquiry from the statement at the head of this paper. Here they wished a victory over those bigots who had outraged the laws of hospitality and insulted their Lord. But the victory which they desired was a carnal one, and the means corresponded. But John has learned that the true victories are those of the spirit. He has realized the truth expressed by Paul, that our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. And he has been taught that in this struggle the condition of triumph is not to be able to call fire from heaven, but to be begotten of