

following scriptures:—"Ho that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."—Mark xvi: 16. "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins."—Acts ii: 38. "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins calling upon the name of the Lord."—Acts xxii: 16.

Baptism is not for the remission of sins because of any virtue in the act of itself, but it is "the obedience or faith," and God has ordained that by it we enter into Christ, who is able to cleanse our souls and purify our hearts.

That such is the teaching of scripture is evident from the following—"Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death."—Rom. vi. 3. "For we are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."—Gal. iii: 26, 27.

The teaching of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* is in our judgment not far astray upon this feature of the subject. This is what it says—

Baptism is a Sacrament of the New Testament ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church; but also to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his engrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life," chap. 28. Sec. 1.

This is all very well when applied to a proper subject, but how does it comport with the baptism of an infant? Is it a "sign and seal of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of giving up unto God," in the case of an infant? If it is the "sign" of anything it is that the administrator is ignorant of the teaching of Scripture upon this subject and that he is in bondage to the authority of men. Baptism cannot, it is evident, be a "sign and seal of remission of sins and of giving up unto God," to an innocent and irresponsible babe. The ordinance then in such a case is an empty ceremony, but it is done in the name of Jesus Christ, without His authority, it is a presumptuous act and an infringement upon the divine prerogative.

Baptism is designed for the remission of sins because it is designed to bring us into Christ. Baptism into Christ implies transition. It then implies activity, for the change is real and voluntary. This transition from one state of condition to another is effected by being "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: 4.

The design of the holy ordinance then implies not only that the proper subject is a responsible person but that he should be buried by baptism. When a few drops of water were sprinkled on you were you buried? Where you planted in a likeness of His death? Certainly not. You were only baptized, and there is no command in the Bible for that.

THE RELIGION OF JAPAN.

ITS PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.

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No 1—Its Past.

The original religion of Japan is Shintoism. It was invented and practised by the Japanese. Shintoism has in some vague notions of the immortality of the soul, of a future state of existence, of rewards and punishments, of a paradise, and of a hell. It declares that good people who keep God's law shall inherit paradise, and that they shall enter the realm of Kami (God). The wicked who do not keep God's law shall be thrust into hell.

What is God's law? It answers 1st. Purity of soul heart and body; 2nd. An exact observation of festival days; 3rd. Pilgrimage; 4th. The worship of

God both in the temple and in the family. The people however did not worship images or idols, but their custom was to hang up their mirror and a smooth white paper on the wall, which were emblems of purity of their hearts. There were many strange customs. When women reached fifteen years of age and men twenty, they were obliged to go to the old temples which are situated in the central provinces of Japan. The people were not allowed to marry until they made this pilgrimage.

A foreign religion called "Buddhism," was introduced into Japan two thousand years ago when an image of Buddha and his holy books were brought from Kudara. This is what Japanese traditions say. The crown prince at that time became a believer in Buddhism. From that time the Buddhist religion spread rapidly throughout all the land of Japan. Many high officers were opposed to Buddhism in Japan, believing that it would not be well for the country to allow a foreign religion to enter the land. Finally there were civil wars, but the party of anti-Buddhists were defeated by those who were converts to Buddhism, and from that time Buddhism was allowed to flourish without any opposition. When in ancient times the King of Japan visited the Temple, he humbled himself by calling himself a slave. For some time the priests of Buddha had wonderful power, and their opinions had great influence on the politics of the country. After a time the priests differed in their opinions, and divided up into sects, and thus Buddhism became separated into seventeen different branches, each of which had a temple of its own and preserved a strict separation from all others. The introduction of the teaching of Confucius was before the introduction of Buddhism, but his doctrines are not religious, but are the science of politics and morality.

Western scholars think Confucianism is an oriental religion. I think it is a mistake. Confucius was a great scholar of ancient philosophy, and he was once Prime Minister of Yei (an ancient dynasty of the Chinese Empire). This doctrine was believed in by the knight-hood of Japan, but they did not believe in this as a religion but as a classical morality of ancient times. The doctrine of Confucianism has been translated into English. These were the three prevailing systems of religion and ethics of old Japan.

The name of Japan was unknown to Europeans until the year 1542, when a Portuguese vessel, bound for Macao, in Pudra, was driven far out of her course by a tempest, and finally arrived on the coast of the west province of Japan.

Although the Japanese were cautious and vigilant to avoid intercourse with foreigners, there was no danger from such intercourse, and the Portuguese were received with a welcome. Seven years later several Jesuit priests went to Japan, among them the famous Francis Xavier, in order to undertake the conversion of the people. The priests were kindly welcomed through the western provinces. The Portuguese also were free to preach as well as to trade. In 1582 an embassy was sent to Rome by the feudal lord, Date, (a Japanese Catholic convert) bearing letters and presents to the Pope, in token of his allegiance to him as the Supreme Pontiff. By the end of the century the number of converts was estimated at two hundred thousand.

In 1622 it was found that a conspiracy had been formed by Roman Catholic converts to overthrow the Imperial Throne, and to destroy both the temples and idols; after two years of war the rebel party was destroyed by the Government forces of that time. There were very violent persecutions of the Roman converts; 22 priests and 200 converts were put to death, and the churches and schools were laid in ruins, and the foreign faith almost wiped out, even foreign traders were driven out of the country.

A national law was made prohibiting Christianity

in Japan, and if any one believed in Christianity they were put to death, and all foreigners were expelled. This was the end of Catholic Christianity in Japan. At the same time a proclamation was set forth that no Japanese should leave Japan, and also that no Japanese should be allowed to return from any foreign country. The punishment for both was that they should be put to death.

The distrust and dislike of foreigners shut the sea gates of Japan for almost two hundred years, until the visit of Commodore Perry of the American Navy. In 1853 on a Sunday, Perry with a squadron of American warships, cast anchor in Tokio Bay. Being a Christian he read the one hundredth psalm on the deck with his crew, and for the first time the Word of God rang out over Tokio's Bay, and echoed back over the quiet waters. This is the first introduction of Protestant Christianity in Japan. In 1854 a treaty was made between Japan and America. Japan opened her sea-ports, which had been closed for many years; the Japanese awakened their sleeping eyes. Since then there has been wonderful progress in Japan toward Western civilization. Therefore historians have called her, "New Japan." "The Kingdom of the Rising Sun." From that time all nations came to Japan, and the Japanese went to every country in the world. Several hundreds of Japanese young men were sent to America and Europe, year after year; those returning to Japan were helping to organize "New Japan"; almost all of them were placed in positions in the Government. They were the centre of social organization, and they were helping forward the work of progress toward modern civilization. The Empire of Japan is situated east of Asia, therefore geographers called her an Asiatic nation, but Japan is not Asiatic because their customs and civilization are remarkably different from those other countries of Asia. The Government of Japan was an absolute monarchy, but in 1881 a representative system was introduced and a new constitution was established. They have a good parliament system, with an upper and a lower house. Every national law must have the sanction of both houses of Parliament, and of the Emperor. There has been much progress in Japan, not only in the political system but also in religion, in society, education, individual and family life, daily customs and in the manners of the people. There is almost nothing now as it was thirty years ago, only the national beauty of the scenery.—*Canadian Evangelist*.

A grand work can be done in the Sunday School. We may sometimes fail to see it, but no one acquainted with our work in St. John could fail to see that the success of our late meeting was due largely to the faithful and persistent efforts of the Sunday school. Lord's day after Lord's day the good seed of the Kingdom is sown in the young hearts, and by and by, it brings forth fruit. Most of the recent converts being members of our Sunday school.

Faith, repentance, confession, and baptism, are among the conditions of salvation. With the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. The Lord has commanded all men everywhere to repent, and when giving His great commission said: Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: Again, baptizing in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.

Quintillion tells the story of a miser who poisoned the flowers in his neighbor's garden so that the poor man's bees could gather no honey. Thus discontent or misery seeks to propagate itself. Misery desires company. Why do some people take delight in saying ugly, cutting things? They are petulant, morose, and are themselves failures. They cannot endure the success and happiness of their neighbors. The grapes are sour because they cannot get the grapes.