

teachers, and avowing the purpose to live accordingly; next, directions to prayer, and fasting for the remission of sins; and then baptism, this last being regarded as the means of the new birth, that is, evidently, of the persons' becoming members of the Christian family; the regeneration, strictly speaking, or spiritual conception, implied in the earlier part of the process, reaching its ultimate point, or becoming consummated, in being born into the family, so as to be recognized as children of God and brethren of Christians.

In subsequent chapters, LXV.-LXVII., Justin continues his account, and describes the reception of the newly baptized person among the brethren, the administering of the Lord's Supper, and the accompanying worship. But through all these chapters, professedly devoted to an account of the Christian observances, not the slightest hint occurs respecting any persons' being baptized, but such as had received the gospel, and professed the purpose of living agreeably to it. Could this have been the case, if infant baptism had been the *uniform practice*? Should it be said that Justin's design did not require him to mention infant baptism, it must be considered that he professed to give such an account, that the emperor and senate, and people of Rome, might not be ignorant of any of the Christians' proceedings; and infant baptism, if it had been the uniform practice from the time of the apostles, must have been so frequent an observance by the year 138, that it could not have been forgotten, or been passed over, by an intelligent Christian apologist, who wished that nothing might be concealed either from the rulers or from the people. It might also have been so frequent an observance, that the voluntary entrance of a person into the Christian company, and active participation of the Lord's Supper and of worship, could not have been described as taking place in so direct connection with baptism. In case of infant baptism, a long interval must have intervened between the two transactions. In addition, it is well known that among the grounds of the hostile feeling which the populace at that period so extensively and bitterly cherished against the Christians, was the absurd accusation, that, in their assemblies, they were in the habit, among other enormities, of feasting on the bodies of infants. Any solemn, special ceremony in reference to their children, required by their religion, we may venture to say, could not have been omitted in a description of Christian worship and observances, while this foul charge of Thyeanean banquets was so perpetually reiterated.

Looking now at the writings of Justin simply as historical monuments, that is, as memorials of opinions and practices prevalent in his day among the Christians, I am unable to see how a conclusion, different

from that which Semisch has so candidly expressed, can be sustained: namely, "of an infant baptism Justin knows nothing."

#### DECLARING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD.

BY ALEXANDER CARSON, LL. D.

"Diminish not a word."—*Jeremiah* xxi. 2.

DIMINISH not a word! Why should a message of the all-wise Jehovah need such a caution? Shall a servant among men dread the consequences of tampering with the contents of a message to the friends or the enemies of his master; and shall the servant of the King of kings, compromise his duty, through fear, affection, or interest? The caution supposes then the temptation, and experience proves that the servants of the Lord are under the strongest solicitations of an evil heart to be unfaithful in declaring without reserve the will of their Lord. When the truth delivered is of a disagreeable nature, it exposes the messenger to the same hatred, as it he himself was the author of the threatened calamity. The messenger of good news is received with favor, but the messenger of evil news is an object of horror.

But the messengers of the Lord are not only exposed to the same displeasure with other messengers of evil, they are charged as malignant persons, who delight in the evil which they denounce as from the Lord. Men do not generally, in words, attack the Almighty, when they are displeased with his message, nor directly bring him to account for what is offensive; they bring the charge directly against those who deliver the message, or who urge them to consider it in all the relations of the children of Israel in the wilderness. They murmured against Moses, and instead of laying the blame of their calamities expressly on Jehovah, they brought them directly in charge against his servant Moses. In this way they gratify their resentment against the evil which they dread or suffer, and hide from themselves their awful guilt in calumniating the Almighty.

The things denounced by Jeremiah were exceedingly disagreeable to the people of Judah. Though mercy was always held out to repentance, yet, as they were wedded to their idolatry and sins, they despised the divine favor, or the way of a return to his service. They must have mercy, and have their own way. When the utter destitution of their temple and cities were presented, they were maddened with rage, and the hatred which they in reality indulged against God, was vented against the deliverers of his message. To encourage the prophet not to falter, Jehovah, here, in the most authoritative tone, charges him to diminish not a word. Neither must a tittle of the threatening be concealed, nor the language in the least softened.

The misconduct against which Jeremiah is here warned, is frequently exemplified in every age, in delivering the message of the Lord from the scriptures.

How many of the professed servants of the Lord, tamper with his message to the children of men! How many of them conceal a part of that which they know to be the will of God, in order to avoid giving offence.

This craft is by some openly avowed and gloried in, as an instance of holy guile, which is supposed to be a great accomplishment in a pastor. Have we never heard of ministers of the gospel, who boast that they dexterously avoid the doctrines of scripture that relate to the sovereignty of God, and the deep things of the divine counsels? How awfully wicked is the presumption! They condemn the wisdom of God as folly, and profess to have discovered a way of dealing with man more likely to be useful. The truths of the divine word are not to be taken out of their proper place. By pressing them in a view in which they are not exhibited in the divine word itself, evil may be done. But to suppose that any thing is revealed in scripture which it is wise to conceal, is an evidence of atheistical profaneness.

No part of the will of the Lord is to be concealed or testified for any purpose, on any account whatever. "Diminish not a word." Is the Lord more jealous with respect to the message to be delivered by Jeremiah, than he is with respect to the truths of the New Testament? Yet in how many moulds has the gospel been put, in order to form it in a manner suitable to the pride of man, so as to make it less offensive to the carnal mind? How many modifications have been given to the doctrines of faith, justification, &c., in order to reconcile the word of God, and the wisdom of man! How many ponderous volumes of commentary have been written, in order to effect what will never be affected—a cordial union between the natural lusts of man, and the statements of the book of God! All the contortions of scripture language, may be traced to the same source. The great bulk of those who are engaged in explaining the Bible, employ their efforts in endeavouring to destroy the features of divine wisdom, and make the book of God a favorite with the world.

The ordinances of the house of God, have experienced the same treatment. By the institutions of the great apostasy, all the ordinances of the New Testament have been either laid aside or modified by human wisdom. There is not one portion of the divine inspiration which has not been tampered with. And the Lord's people, when they have been allowed to return from Babylon, have in many instances, even thought it prudent to bend to circumstances, and by a holy guile, to persevere in those