

The Church Guardian

—: EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR:—

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ments See page 15.

CALENDAR FOR JUNE.

JUNE 3—2nd Sunday after Trinity.

" 8—Friday. Fast.

" 10—3rd Sunday after Trinity. [Notice of
St. Barnabas].

" 11—St. BARNABAS. A. & M.

" 15—Friday. Fast.

" 17—4th Sunday after Trinity.

" 20—QUEEN'S ACCESSION, 1837.

" 22—Friday. Fast.

" 24—Nativity of St. John Baptist. Athan.
Creed.

Fifth Sunday after Trinity. [Notice
of St. Peter].

" 29—St. PETER. A. & M. Fast.

IMMERSION AND THE BAPTIST NEW TESTAMENT.

[By REV. JOHN LOCKWARD, Rector of Port
Medway, N.S.]

It is quite probable that very many, other than theological students, have heard of the very questionable edition or translation of the New Testament, which was printed in the time of Oliver Cromwell, and which it was intended should supersede the translation of 1610 which is now our so-called Authorized Version. But few, perhaps, in proportion, have heard of the peculiar New Testament which has very generally come to be known as the Baptist New Testament. The former New Testament was issued by the Congregationalists, and from their version of a particular verse in an early chapter of the Acts of the Apostles we are forced to believe that the work was undertaken to make Scripture support their peculiar system of Church polity. This verse thus changed is Acts vi. 3. In our A. V. it reads: "Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business." This was too much for the Congregational theory, so they issued their New Testament, and only changed one letter in one of the smallest words in the verse. They merely changed a w for a y. But this changed "we" into "ye," and made the verse read: "Whom ye may appoint over this business." This, of course, would go far to support their new theory of Church authority and polity. But this version did not fulfil its intended purpose, and a few copies of it alone now remain to show how little support the best version of the Scriptures can be made to give to the theory of congregationalism.

The Baptist New Testament has been issued for the similar purpose of making Scripture support their fundamental doctrine of "Immersion" as the only Scripture mode of Baptism. This version was put forth by the Committee of the American Bible Union, apparently a few years prior to 1840. I only get at this as an approximate date from the following extract made from Dr. Hodges' "Baptism tested by Scripture and History." At the Bible Society anniversary, held April 28th, 1840, it was stated that "the nations of the earth must now look

to the Baptist denomination alone for faithful translations of the Word of God." Vide Hodges, p. 261. This translation for which so much credit is claimed, and from which so much was expected—which, however, has not in the least materialized—was made to support the theory or dictum that the words "Baptize" and "Baptism" mean only "Immersion" and "Immerse"; and hence such a version would justify the teaching that no baptism is valid or Scriptural which is not administered by the alone mode of Immersion. Thus we find that wherever the Greek words "Baptizo" and "Baptism," or any of their derivations or cases occur in the originals of the New Testament they are in this version supposed to be translated by "Immerse" and "Immersion." This appears to be the implied object and purpose of this translation—this is certainly what we have a right to expect under the circumstances which seem to have made the demand for this particular translation. But I will show that this rule has not been faithfully carried out. And in this respect the above translation, of which such proud and boastful words were spoken at the Bible Society anniversary in 1840, comes very near to be classed among and with unscrupulous and designing party publications.

Let me just give here two statements of two learned and distinguished men among the Baptists, touching the theory that "Baptize" means only to "Immerse." The Rev. Dr. Cramp, late President of Acadia College, N.S., says, "every word has one natural, obvious, original meaning, which will be applied to it by all readers or hearers, and with which it will be used by speakers and writers." The late Rev. C. N. Spurgeon in one of his "Excellent Thoughts for Young Ministers," says, "Rest assured, in Holy Scripture, the same word does not always mean the same thing." These statements need reconciling, and we must leave the duty and privilege and pleasure of reconciling them with the Baptists. Moreover, when they argue according to Dr. Cramp, we can reply according to Rev. Mr. Spurgeon! Some of the passages in this Baptist or Immersion New Testament seem to require at least much thought, if but little casuistry to make them intelligible. For instance, "John came immersing in the wilderness and preaching the immersion of repentance," St. Mark i. 4. To this it has been replied, that while we could understand that St. John came "Baptizing in the wilderness," or "John did baptize in the wilderness," it must be explained how he was "immersing in the wilderness" and not immersing in water. Then again, "And were all immersed unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea," 1 Cor. x. 2. This must be reconciled with the direction given to Moses in Ex. xiv. 16, when he was bid to lift up his rod "over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea." Also with 22nd verse, "and the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground." It seems that the Egyptians were the ones immersed. Again this verse, "And coming from the market, except they immerse themselves, they do not eat. And there are many other things which they received to hold, immersions of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels and couches," St. Mark vii. 4. Not to mention the account of travellers regarding the customs of the Jews, we must remember that Jerusalem was on a hill, and not by any means a well-watered city, with means to supply water for all these repeated and extensive immersions. And as regards the "couches," if they were "fixtures" and not like the furniture of to-day bearing that name, we could not understand how they could well be immersed. St. Mark iii. 2, "He will immerse you in the Holy Spirit and fire." There are other passages of a similar character which seem to require just a little explanation of a more or less casuistical character.

But the worst of the matter is the fact that

the words "Baptize" and "Baptism" have not invariably been translated by "by Immersion" and "Immerse." The general reader of this New Testament would no doubt suppose this to be the case, and would thereby be greatly deceived if not imposed upon, while, perhaps, only an unfortunate controversialist, with some slight ability to consult the original, would discover the fact. In our authorised version of St. Mark x. 38, 39, we read: "But Jesus said unto them, ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptised with the baptism that I am baptized with? And they said unto him, we can. And Jesus said unto them, ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I shall drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized." Now, in the original of the above passage, the proper cases and tenses of the Greek words "Baptize" and "Baptism" are found, and we would therefore fully expect that they would be rendered by "immerse" and "immersion" on the theory that "baptize" means only to "immerse." But the passage in this Baptist New Testament is thus translated: "And Jesus said to them: Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink, or to endure the immersion which I endure? And they said said to him: We are able. And Jesus said to them: Ye shall indeed drink the cup that I drink, and endure the immersion which I endure." Thus from this passage, from so unimpeachable an authority as the Baptist New Testament, we have the sufficient proof that the word "Baptize" does mean something other than "immerse." From this passage we learn that it might mean *endure*, if it does not in the least mean to wash or dip in water, or to pour water upon. We are thankful for such an unexpected admission! But to my mind there is something else to be learned from this meaning of *endure* here given to Baptize. Our Lord had already been *once* "immersed" by "St. John, the Immerser," and to speak here of another positive immersion yet to be received, would open the door for the teaching of a second necessary immersion. Next, in our A. V. at St. Luke xii. 50, we read: "But I have a baptism to be baptized with." In this passage, as in the other, the same Greek words baptize and baptism are in the original. But the Baptist New Testament thus translates the passage: "But I have an immersion to undergo." Here we have another admitted meaning for "Baptize." It means to *undergo* as well as to *endure* and to *immerse*.

I have recently had the opportunity and the pleasure of putting these little facts before a recent graduate of the Acadia College (Baptist) at Wolfville, N.S., when he explained them by saying that the use of 'endure' and 'undergo', was to avoid tautology. I replied first by saying that it seemed to me to sacrifice an important doctrinal fact, from their point of view, to a more finish of language. But I next referred him to a passage where tautology is used with reference to the same word under consideration. In the Immersion New Testament at Acts xix. 4, we read: "Then said Paul: John indeed immersed with the immersion of repentance." I have not since heard what the Acadian graduate has replied to that answer. It seems to me that the use of "endure" and "undergo" was not adopted merely to avoid tautology or some other word would on the same principle have been used to avoid such ineligance in this latter passage. However, on whatever grounds, and for whatever reasons, the fact remains that this very version of the New Testament is a proof that the word BAPTIZE has indeed more than one meaning, which is a full refutation of the Baptist doctrine of immersion from their own version of the Scriptures.

But there is another great advantage to be gained from this Baptist New Testament in meeting the arguments of the general run of Baptists. Two very popular, but of course un-