

attribute regenerating power to baptism, infant or adult, creeds which affirm the existence and purifying power of purgatory, and which teach as true the dogma of transubstantiation or even consubstantiation? The fact is that several so-called Christian creeds contain no small amount of heathen superstition rather than the true principle of sound Christianity; and these principles are taught in Protestant as well as Roman churches. A Scriptural Christianity repudiates these errors in toto. Such doctrines are alike unscriptural and unreasonable. If such teachings were genuine Christianity, many true men would rather be intelligent unbelievers than the superstitious devotees which faith in such teachings necessitates. It is well known that ministers of some Anglican churches ask their assistants to recite parts of the so-called Athanasian Creed; other rectors, we are told, mumble the damnatory clauses. They would stultify their intelligence and conscience by repeating them. Such creeds are a temptation to intellectual inanition or moral dishonesty. Better fully believe a few things than half believe many things.

LATER CREEDS.

After the so-called Athanasian Creed there were no general symbols of faith worthy of attention until the reformation. At the Council of Trent, 1545 to 1563, the Church of Rome found it necessary to give a more detailed statement of doctrine than could be found in any of its previous creeds. This became a necessity because of the aggression of Protestantism. On Nov. 23, 1641, "The Famous Remonstrance," suggesting the calling of a synod to settle the peace and good government of the church, was passed. Out of this proposal came the Westminster Assembly. The ordinance summoning it was issued June 12, 1643, and on July 1, 1643, the assembly was solemnly opened in Westminster Abbey before the two Houses of Parliament, with a sermon by William Tuissie. Among the notable divines participating in these great deliberations were Rutherford, Gillespie, Henderson, Lightfoot, Coleman and Selden. The Presbyterians greatly predominated. The stamp of Calvinistic Presbyterianism is on all the acts of the assembly. The sittings began in 1643, and continued until February 22, 1649; there was a sitting as late as March, 1652; and during these five and a half years there were 1163 sessions. As this is the latest, so it is the most elaborate of the creeds. The Confession is a comprehensive summary of theological doctrines; it is prepared with great logical skill and scholarly beauty. It is a remarkable monument of learning and piety; and it strongly expresses the dominant thought of a great spiritual movement which has colored the history of nations, and the principles and practices of several denominations. All students of national reform ought to be familiar with this great Confession. In 1643 the Assembly, through the influence of Dr. Lightfoot, voted by a majority of one against giving the choice as between immersion and sprinkling as baptism, and in the year following Parliament sanctioned their decision, and decreed that sprinkling should be the legal mode of baptism. It is interesting that it was a human parliament, and not the Divine Word which was the ultimate authority regarding baptism. The Westminster Confession, as I have already remarked, is a document remarkable for its rhetorical skill, for its scholarly breadth and for its Christian devotion. No one can speak lightly of so historic, learned, and devout a confession. Were your speaker a Presbyterian he should strongly oppose the revision of this historic confession; it ought rather to be left intact as a monument to the wisdom and theological learning of its age. If the Presbyterian church must have a confession, let a new one be made, rather than attempt to cut, trim and remodel the Westminster Confession. But these great creeds do not conserve doctrine. The Westminster Confession does not secure unity now in the Presbyterian church. Of what practical grain are these creeds today? The Baptist denomination has no creed in the technical sense of the term, and yet, with its nearly four millions of members in America today, it is more nearly a unit in faith and practice than are the churches which have their "long and strong creeds." This fact which no intelligent student of current church history will deny. Better far it is to go to the Word of God as the rule of faith and practice than to allow the creeds of very fallible men—creeds which were often the result of unscriptural compromises—to come between the conscience and its God.

THE HISTORIC EPISCOPATE.

The Lambeth Conference made much use of the term "Historic Episcopate" in discussing the question of church unity. It was proposed that the Historic Episcopate be "locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varied needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of His church." When one analyzes the remarks made regarding the Historic Episcopate, he inevitably finds an implication of the so-called apostolic succession. So long as this implication is present a great majority of Christians will refuse to endorse the Historic Episcopate. The apostles have no successors, and, in the very nature of the case could not have had successors. The Roman church puts forward the claim to an unbroken succession in the most dogmatic terms. This church excommunicates all other branches of the church, calling them heretic and schismatic. Many in Europe who call themselves Protestants of various names, are the Roman church in this regard. The Protestant Episcopal church in the United States, and some other churches of various names pride themselves on their apostolic succession. But we know that it was necessary that an apostle should have seen the Lord; the office, therefore, was incapable of succession

as soon as the original eye-witness had passed away. The claim of an uninterrupted clerical succession cannot be substantiated by satisfactory proof. All churches that make this claim trace their line, to some degree at least, through the channels of the Roman Pontiffs; but many of the records of these early hopes are lost, and can never be found. We do not know that the Apostle Peter ever acted as bishop in Rome. The fact is that this boasted lineage is a worthless myth. The claim made by some churches is offensive to other churchmen; it is promotive of bigotry, and destructive of the spirit of unity. It tends constantly toward a dangerous exclusiveness; it is also as unwise in policy as it is uncharitable in principle. Dr. G. A. Jacob, late head master of Christ's Hospital, and the author of the "Ecclesiastical Policy of the New Testament," says: "The apostles had no successors in their office; they stand alone as the divinely inspired teachers, legislators and rulers in Christ's church and kingdom." With this statement unprejudiced church writers will heartily agree. In the very nature of the case the apostles could have no successors. It is not possible that the great majority of believers can accept the "Historic Episcopate" as the term is ordinarily understood, as a basis of unity in the church of Jesus Christ. More and more do Baptists see the wisdom of making the Word of God the only rule of faith and practice. It cannot share its divine authority with creeds made by men. It has an enlarging, expanding and self adapting meaning which makes it the book for all centuries and countries. Human creeds are stiff, cold, formal and mechanical, but the Word of God is living and life-giving. Let us love it, obey it and rejoice in it. To support its teachings our Baptist fathers lived and died. We belong to a noble army of Baptist confessors and martyrs. No church has given nobler testimony to the teachings of the Bible. The Baptist who is not joyful in and grateful for his ancient, heroic and saintly ancestry must be hopelessly ignorant of a brave history, or hopelessly indifferent to the chivalrous, loyal and divine in human character and in Christian fealty. The Baptist who is ashamed of his principles is a Baptist of whom his principles might well be ashamed. Let us stand loyally and lovingly by our ancient faith, our historic position, and our Holy Bible. While it stands we shall stand, and "the word of our God shall stand forever."

MUST BE A BAPTIST.

If I take the Bible only as my guide, I must be a Baptist; if I discard it and take the traditions of men I could not consistently stop until I had reached Rome. But I am not likely to start on that downward grade. If I were not a Baptist logically I should have to be a Romanist. The Catholics are perfectly consistent but unscriptural; grant their premises and logically you must adopt their conclusions. The Baptists are also consistent and at the same time Scriptural; grant the Baptist premise and you must accept the Baptist conclusion. But the Congregationalists, the Methodists, the Presbyterians and Episcopalians are not consistent. Their position is half Romanist half Baptist. They have no logical standing ground. There are but two logical positions, one of which is held by the Romanists, the other by the Baptists. Every consistent, logical and unprejudiced thinker will take one or the other. Here, on the Word of God, Baptists stand; they are consistent Protestants; they antedate existing denominational divisions; they are truly apostolic. Baptism is the Catholic and apostolic ordinance. Their position is impregnable. God has given them wonderful prosperity. They are increasing in the United States today, as we have already seen, much faster than the population of this most rapidly populating country in the world; they are in sympathy with all progressive American ideas, and at the same time are loyal to the Word of God. They love their brethren of all denominations; they are ready to unite with them in all forms of Christian activity. They use constantly the Master's prayer for His disciples—"That they may all be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they may also be one in us."

If ever there is organic unity, it will begin at the baptism. Every denomination in Protestant Christendom and in the entire Roman and Greek churches can agree upon baptism, that is, immersion, as taught by our Lord and His apostles. The Greek church, numbering quite 50,000,000 of adherents, has ever been a most witness on behalf of baptism. The Roman church joyfully accepts it, and all the Protestant churches join hands with these two great bodies. On no substitute for baptism such as pouring or sprinkling can all the denominations agree. We are not now arguing a point, we are simply stating a fact. Do men really want organic Christian Union? Are they in earnest when they proclaim this desire? Are they willing to follow Christ into the waters of baptism? Are they willing to join hands with their brethren in all centuries and in all climes? Here is the opportunity; here is the truly apostolic and Catholic ordinance.

If they will but follow apostolic injunction and example then all can say: "We are buried with Him by baptism unto death." And then there may be, if it is desired, organic union without doing violence to the convictions of any, and in acknowledged harmony with the Word of God and its recognized interpretations. On but few points is the scholarship of the world so nearly a unit as it is in regard to the meaning of the "baptism," and as to the practices of the apostles and the early church. It would be easy to fill pages with the names of learned authorities on all these points, and the simple-minded disciple of the Lord Jesus, with no guide but the New Testament, comes to the same conclusion. May the Holy Spirit lead all believers into all truth.

Historic Documents.

I have fortunately found among the papers of the late Rev. Edward Manning a large part of the Minutes of the Association held at Cornwallis in 1809, which I now offer the MESSENGER AND VISITOR. No copy except this is known to exist. When these are printed I will offer the articles of Faith and the Covenant adopted at Yarmouth. By publishing them in the MESSENGER AND VISITOR they will be preserved with certainty. Persons desiring to preserve these old documents can cut them from the paper and keep them. All who have files of the old

minutes can supplement them from these publications. E. M. SAUNDERS.

Minutes of the Nova Scotia Baptist Association held at Cornwallis, June 26, 27 and 28, 1809.

Monday, June 26, 1809.—At 11 o'clock Brother Harris Harding preached from Acts 13.

At 2 p. m. chose Brother J. Dimock, Moderator, and Brother Edward Manning, Clerk, and Brother William Chipman an assistant.

Churches.	Died.	Dis.	Ad.	Ex.	Num.
Argyle—Enoch Towner	1	...	1	3	123
M. and Messenger, Yarmouth,	...	...	30	...	250
Digby—D. Shuck and S. Saxton,	1	...	...	1	68
Granville—Elder J. Manning, Deacon Delap and Israel Potter, Messengers,	...	...	...	...	70
Annapolis—Elder Chipman, Dea. Rice, D. Marton, D. Fellows and Dea. Randall,	3	...	...	3	146
Cornwallis—E. E. Manning, Deacons M. Chipman and Walter Reed, Brother Peter Crandall and William Chipman,	...	...	7	1	65
Horton—Elder T. S. Harding, Deacons Benj. Kinsman and Peter Bishop, and Simon Fitch, Esq.,	2	1	4	...	276
Chester—Elder J. Dimock, John Bradshaw, N. Floyd, T. Hubley, Messengers	1	1	4	...	122
Newport—Deacon Dimock, James Stephens, William Smith Messengers,	1	1	10	...	90
Wakefield,	...	...	...	...	...
Prince William—L. Hammond, Messenger,	...	...	...	...	30
Kingsclear,	...	...	...	...	...

Waterbury—Letter mislaid, but Brother James Manning knows their standing that they wish to continue in fellowship with the Association, 50

St. Martins, 52
Sackville—Elder J. Crandall, 40
Peticodiac branch of the Sackville church, 33
Onslow—Nathan Cleaveland, Pastor, 15
Amherst—Elders Thomas Ansley and Joseph Crandall,

who by their letter and messengers requested to be received as members of this Association and were received by vote.

Voted that Elder Henry Hale, from the United States, take a seat with this Association.

Voted that a copy of the circular letter prepared by Elder T. Harding be sent to the churches that are branches of this Association.

The Association voted to withdraw fellowship from all churches who admit unbaptized persons to what is called occasional communion and consider themselves a regular close communion Baptist Association.

Prayer by the Moderator and adjourned till 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The records end here. They close on the upper part of a page left blank and written on afterwards. The following page is still blank. I account for it in this way: The records are in the hand writing of Edward Manning, but William Chipman was his assistant. At the point where the records end it is probable Mr. Manning gave the work into the hands of Mr. Chipman. At the close of the Association Mr. Chipman, who wrote a very fine hand, has copied what Mr. Manning wrote and his copy went to the printers. In 1808, at Yarmouth, the Association ordered the articles, plan of the Association minutes and circular letter to be printed. It is possible they still exist and that other minutes—i. e., between 1807 and 1808 inclusive—may yet be found. Will all friends who have old papers look over them for this purpose.

E. M. S.

Take Time to Pray.

We are to take time for prayer, and to take time in prayer. Prayer is not only not to be omitted; it is not to be hurried. We are to approach God in prayer not only with a sober, but with a calm mind. Dew falls, we are told, only when the atmosphere is still, and the dew of prayer will fall abundantly on our souls, only when we are at leisure. Have you to confess that in this busy age you have so much work to do that prayer is thrust into a corner? Then the lesson of this word for you is plain. Take a holiday. Do more by doing less. To pray well is to work well. Luther, a far busier man than any of us used to say of his heavy days that he had so much work he could not do with less than two or three hours of prayer. The lesson is one of immense importance for the church of Christ today. Our activity is one of our greatest snares. We forget that it is of more importance to have power with God than to have power with man. Yet we have only to read the biographies of the most eminent workers that God has ever given to his church, to find that the secret of their power did not lie so much in what they did in the presence of men, as in what they did in the presence of God. They waited until they had got into touch with the power of God, and then went forth to do God's work. From scripture, from history, from the lives of God's saints comes the call, "Be at leisure when you pray."—Rev. George C. McGregor.