THE SAVIOUR'S PRAYER.

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word."—John 17-20.

BY REV. J. E. BAKER.

I love to think how Jesus, on the eve
Of His great agony, ere He did leave
The group beloved, the sorrowful seven,
Arose and lifted up His eyes to Heaven,
And filled with pity and undying care
Poured forth that wondrous sorrow-burdened prayer.
And not for them alone that prayer of tears!
His vision infinite ran through the years,
Encircling all who should on Him believe
He knew and loved us each; saw how we grieve
When one denies our Lord; our hopes, our fears,
Our faith, our love, our supplicant cries and tears
Were known to Him, when, in that darkening hour
He prayed in love divine, in God-like power.

O hope and trust and sing in grateful lays!
The keynote of our song, This Saviour Prays
For though uncertain be the way we take,
And evil forces all units to break
The heart; and human supplication fail,
That loving prayer of Jesus will prevail.

St. John, N. B.

ON BEING A BAPTIST*

BY PROF. JOHN C. LONG.

How I came to be a Baptist, and why I am a Baptist now, are two different questions. I became a Baptist in my youth, when I had read little, seen little, knew little, thought little. I now have had experience in the world, have read and have thought, and I am still a Baptist. I deliberately ratify and approve what I did years ago.

Becoming a Baptist.—My father and mother were not Baptists, and few of my immediate friends belonged to that denomination. I was walking one day with some boys, and one of them said: "The Baptists do not use the same Bible that other people use." "What you say," I answered, "can hardly be true. There must be some mistake about it." He insisted that it was true; and as I had no present means of verifying his statement, I said no more. But I often thought of it; and that remark, untrue and injurious as I afterward found, was probably the first thing that turned my thoughts toward the Baptists. It warned me not to take the statements of ignorant or prejudiced persons against any denomination of Christians as true, until by personal investigation I had found them true. The habit of investigating for myself led me to go to the one ultimate authority in religious matters, the Bible.

Thus far I had gotten, when in some way I came to be a member of a Bible class in a Baptist Sunday-school. Even then I did not attend preaching at the Baptist church. My Bible-class teacher was an ardent Baptist, but I do not recall that he used any direct means to proselyte me to his belief. He was a man of earnestness, intelligence, and honesty of mind, and afterward became one of the best and most helpful friends of my life. Possibly my sincere respect for him, or I may say, his silent, personal influence, was the next thing that drew me toward the Baptists. But the decisive thing, that which influenced me more than anything else, was what appeared to me to be the teachings of the New Testament, against which I did not care, or dare to go. And so, in my nineteenth year I became a Baptist.

As I look back, it seems to me that the principle that guided me in my choice of a denomination was a sort of a military respect for authority. I did not know how to disobey what seemed to do so in the New Testament. I do not believe in it now for the same reason, and also because I have learned that it owed its origin to a false conception of the virtue of baptism; the belief that baptism regenerates the soul; that it has power in itself to wash away sin. Then too, my interpretation of the teachings of the New Testament has been confirmed by the fact that the church always required faith before baptism, even in the case of infants. It is only of late years that any one has ever thought of baptizing even infants without requiring faith, at least in the sponsors. The foundation difference between Baptists and others was really as to the efficacy of the faith of sponsors. If parents can believe for their children the Baptists were wrong. If every one must believe for himself, the Baptists were right.

The Act of Baptism.—The first peculiarity of the Baptists was as to qualification for church membership—personal faith. The second, following from the first, was the denial of infant baptism. The third was in emphasizing the authority of the New Testament. The Old Testament was also the Word of God, but the New Testament was a sort of revised code for the government of the church. Others with them held to the New Testament, but no others so emphasized it. It was from their emphasis on the authority of the New Testament that they came to abandon the then current mode of baptism. The church was practicing sprinkling and pouring, and the New Testament taught immersion. The Baptists at the very first did not immerse. They came to be immersionists because the New Testament required it; or rather, because Christ so taught in the New Testament.

If any one doubts that immersion is there taught, the best thing for him to do is to read the New Testament for himself. That is what I did in my boyhood before I became a Baptist. I saw, or thought I saw, that immersion was baptism. I did not see that anything else was. My subsequent reading, study and thinking have not led me to change my opinion: (1) I have found that the original word to baptize means to immerse; (2) that where, in the New Testament, the circumstances of baptism are definitely mentioned, as where Jesus is baptized in the Jordan, and Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, immersion is indicated; (3) that in definite figurative allusions, as where baptism is spoken of as a burial and a rising, immersion is evidently in mind; (4) that in the earliest Christian writers, who definitely mention baptism, it is immersion; (5) that in all the earlier liturgies directions are given to immerse; (6) that the early baptisteries (and too later too), were fitted up for immersion. There were pools often described, with their three steps down, and three steps up, and the bottom, making seven in all, and there was the immersion, or immersions, representing death, and emersions representing the resurrection. This went on in the Latin or Catholic church for more than a thousand years, and goes on in the Greek, or Eastern church, to this day. It is true that in the case of sickness the church allowed pouring or sprinkling as a substitute for baptism; but when men thought of baptism they thought of immersion, a trine immersion everywhere except in Spain, and there a single immersion. If you ask why only a single immersion in Spain, and the trine immersion elsewhere, I could tell you, but not now. But the fact that they immersed once in Spain and three times elsewhere, and that there were special laws about it, emphasizes the fact that they immersed. It was toward the close of the sixth century that the customs began to differ as to trine or single immersion, and then and much later, all the church immersed.

When trine immersion first came in, no one knows. It is mentioned by Tertullian, who died in 220 A. D., as if it was the common practice. So far as I now recall, no earlier writer speaks of it, unless we suppose the so-called Apostolic Canons to be earlier than Tertullian. Some have thought that the threefold immersions was from the first; others that it was adopted to give emphasis to the doctrine of the trinity, which, in Tertullian's time and earlier, began to be called in question. The second view seems to me to be the true one. But whatever view we adopt the fact is the same, that immersion was the baptism. In baptizing, the priest said, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father," and immersed once, "and of the Son," and immersed the second time, "and of the Holy Ghost," and immersed the third time.

As I write these last words, far away from my books, the old liturgies come up before me, beginning in the fourth or fifth century, and coming down to the eleventh century and later. One wonders how scholars, knowing the history of the church, could ever believe that anything else but immersion was the baptism of the earlier and middle age church. But, great is the power of conjecture, of supposition. I have, somewhere among my papers, a letter from the late Dr. Henry M. Dexter, editor of the *Congregationalist*. I had written a review article on his *John Smith, the Se-Baptist*. I had recommended the thorough and painstaking way in which he seemed to have studied the literature of the baptismal controversy of the first half of the seventeenth century—the first controversy as to the act of baptism. I had wished that some one would perform a similar service for the literature on baptism in the eight and ninth centuries, and had ventured the assertion that no one could study that literature and still doubt as to what was the act of baptism. It is the literature of the time of Charlemagne and his sons. In answer to this assertion, Dr. Dexter said that for himself he believed that at the very first immersion, sprinkling, and pouring were practised, but that owing to a natural tendency to make much of baptism, immersion after a while became the only mode. This supposition might, indeed, account for the fact that in both the Eastern and Western church, immersion was the only baptism. But it has nothing else to recommend it. It is a mere supposition. It is a far more natural supposition that immersion was the practice of the age succeeding the apostles, because it had been the practice of the apostles. This supposition explains the fact equally well, and has everything else in its favor. If the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, in its lately discovered form, were as early as Dr Schaff and others put it (about 100 A. D.), the seventh chapter would be conclusive against Dr Dexter's supposition. It only allows pouring when there is no water for immersion, which shows that pouring was even then only permitted in cases of supposed necessity.

In instituting baptism, Christ did two things: First, He required a confession; and second, He described the manner of it. When the eunuch said to Philip, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip answered, "If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest." He said, I believe that Jesus is the Christ. And then they both went down into the water and Philip baptized him. I do not forget that this passage is supposed to be an interpolation. But if so, it was interpolated in the second century; it is quoted or referred to by Irenæus (died 202 A. D.), and may be taken as illustrating the teaching of the church in his time, and shows what was then the confession and what the form of making it. Men were baptized into Christ, became outwardly and formally His, in baptism. No one has ever thought of changing the confession. Many have thought the manner of making it a matter of indifference. And yet Christ prescribed both the confession and the manner of it.

Nothing has been gained by changing the act of baptism, except it may be convenience. Has nothing been lost? Is there no loss of reverence for Christ, when we permit ourselves to think that we may put something in the place of what He has prescribed? Is there no loss in significance when an emblem of purification (sprinkling) is substituted for an emblem of death and a new life? In our time the great question is whether Christ indeed died and rose again from the dead. Immersion, beginning from the very first, testifies that He did die and did rise again. It was intended to bear that testimony. What is the testimony that sprinkling or pouring bears? Does it say anything of Christ? Nothing whatever. By the discontinuance of immersion, men silenced one of the most eloquent witnesses for the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Was there no loss in that?

Those who have been "baptized" by sprinkling or pouring, provided they were baptized in their own personal profession, have confessed Christ, but they have not confessed Him in His own prescribed way. Our only authority to baptize any one comes from Christ. I could not baptize any one whose baptism He does not require, or in a way which He does not enjoin. There must be the required confession, and the prescribed form of it. I could not baptize an infant; I could not sprinkle any one in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

The Baptist Polity.—The Baptists are peculiar, but less prominently so, in their form of church government. In this respect they differ from some, but not from all other denominations. They hold that every local church has a right to conduct its own affairs without interference from any other church; that it has all the rights, duties, and functions conferred by Christ, and necessary to carry on His work. They claim that in holding this they are following the teachings of the New Testament; that the churches organized by the apostles were independent, congregational churches. They need no bishop in the modern sense, holding that the pastor is a bishop competent to the administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper; to the instruction of the congregation; and, with the church, to the exercise of discipline. This must have been the order in the beginning. When there was but one church in a city or province, the bishop of that church was a simple pastor. That one church was the whole church. When there was only one church in Rome, even the bishop of Rome was the pastor of only one church. When a church was established at Milan, the bishop of Milan was in like manner the pastor of only one church. There was no other church for him to be bishop of. The duties of a bishop, then, were originally confined to one church. In having a pastor or bishop for each church, the Baptists (and others) are following the primitive order.

But some deny that any form of church organization is revealed in the New Testament. Very good: a form of church government was either prescribed, or not prescribed. If it was not prescribed, the church organization may be determined by local and temporary conditions. The church may follow the analogy of the State and be Episcopalian in a monarchy, Presbyterian in an aristocracy, and Congregational in a republic. In fact, the government in State has always had much to do with the form of government in church. Episcopacy was natural in the Roman Empire; it is natural in England. But in America the tendency is to popular government in church as well as in State. Each community in the State is considered competent to manage its own local concerns, and each local church is considered competent to call and support its pastor, to discipline its members, and, in a word, to perform all the functions that belong to the church of Christ. Separate, independent, congregational churches are in line with the genius of our civil government.

But, suppose a form of church government has been revealed in the New Testament. In that case it might not be difficult to show that that form was probably independent and congregational. And in America, at least, it has the double advantage of being primitive, and at the same time adapted to the institutions of the country. It is simple, flexible, and easily adjusted to local conditions. It can never become a great corporation, with boundless wealth and patronage. It can never be a menace to popular liberty, nor, in any sense, a political engine. It is as much at home under one form of government as in another; in China as in America. It is as universal as the family, and as capable of fitting into all forms of social, economic, and political life.

So far as I am concerned, I have never wished the Baptist church polity changed. It has suffered for all local needs and, at the same time, for carrying on the most successful missionary operations, home and foreign, of recent times. If now and then we wish for greater power of organization, the ability more readily to concentrate the strength of the churches for the accomplishment of some great and desirable end, the wish is repressed as soon as we remember that the only concentration of effort native to Christianity is that which comes from a united, spontaneous impulse.

I said just now that Baptists feel no need of a diocesan bishop. Even in our own country such bishops have exerted a wide and wholesome influence. Many of them have been men of learning and ability, and of beautiful, consecrated lives. Their influence has not been confined to their own communion; it has been a public blessing. But the same may be said of Methodist and of Romanist, as well as of Episcopal bishops. It is as able, godly men that they have done their work, not as bishops, or simply as bishops. Its influence and power they can be matched by Presbyterian and Baptist pastors. No bishop in England was a greater and more uplifting force than Mr. Spurgeon. And when did England have a bishop or archbishop of greater influence than John Wesley? And church historians love to sing the praises of the venerable Bede, who was only a priest. The bishop may be something, but the man is far more.

The "Historic Episcopate."—For all practical purposes, even the Episcopal churches in America might do well enough without the bishops. The efficiency of the church is in the pastor and congregation. Once a year, or it may be once in several years, the bishop comes and administers confirmation. In this, he recognizes and gives his official sanction to what is already been done; he completes the baptism of years ago. We sometimes hear of uniting all denominations on the basis of the "historic episcopate." It might be interesting to know exactly what that means, if any one could tell us. The bishop of the second century was no more like the diocesan bishop of our day than the simple Bishop of Rome was like one of the mighty popes of the twelfth or thirteenth century. The bishop, as we know him, is a development; he becomes what he is through the influence of causes that for the most part no longer operate. He was useful in his time; he had a real service to perform, a service something like that of Judson in Burma, and of Clough among the Telugus. It was, perhaps, unavoidable that he should get to himself a character and prerogatives that did not originally belong to Him. Circumstances favored such a thing if they did not require it. Which is the historic bishop? The original pastor of a church, of which there were five hundred in North Africa alone in the time of Augustine (died 430 A. D.), or the present overseer of many churches? The bishop as he was, or as he came to be? Even a bishop of the second century is not needed now. Much less do we need a bishop of the ninth century—the century of bishops according to Voltaire. I, at least, am content with simple congregational churches and simple pastors.

Baptist "Close Communion."—It is no slight testimony to the reasonableness of Baptist principles that the most common objection urged against the denomination is in reference to a matter secondary and incidental. In common with all other Christians, Baptists hold that a right to participate in the celebration of the Lord's Supper depends first on a moral, and second, on a ceremonial qualification. In all ages the church has shown its attitude toward men by admitting them to, or excluding them from, communion. For open and flagrant sins, and likewise for errors in doctrine, it has withdrawn fellowship from men; it has *excommunicated* them. To admit a man to communion was to give him church approval, to acknowledge his full membership in the church. Baptists, in their practice of "close communion," but follow the old church custom. They admit to communion those whom they can admit to church fellowship. They have organized a separate denomination to give emphasis to their peculiar views. They could not receive an unimmersed man into their church, or one had only been baptized in infancy. To do so would be to abandon their principle of organization; to give up their protest against what they believe to be errors. And if they cannot receive such persons to church membership, for the same reason they cannot offer them the communion which in all ages has been the token of church fellowship. Their close communion is a matter of discipline. It is different from the close communion of other denominations only in its application, viz., to those whose baptism is unlawful or defective. Remove the peculiarity of their baptism and their close communion loses its peculiarity. The close communion is a logical sequence of their principles, or rather the outcome of their position as the sole asserters of believers' in opposition to infant baptism; and, in the Western world, of immersion in opposition to sprinkling and pouring as baptism. I have never been present at communion in a Baptist church where members of other denominations were also present, that I did not regret that they could not be asked to join in the communion. I recognized them as servants of our common Lord, and one with us in the fellowship of the Spirit. On the other hand, I have never been present at the baptism of an infant or when sprinkling was substituted for baptism, that I did not feel that those same dear brethren were mutilating, dishonoring an ordinance of Christ. With the recollection of their error present with me, and with that error proclaimed by them as truth, I do not know how to ask them to communion without approving their error. In withholding communion from them I simply intend to withhold approval from their baptism. A people who stand for a principle must follow the principle against their natural inclinations.

Baptist Peculiarities Less Marked.—I have mentioned the principal respects in which Baptists seem to me to be peculiar: (1) Their view of the church as being composed only of those who give a conscious allegiance to Christ. (2) The consequent rejection of infant baptism. (3) The emphasis of the New Testament as the law of the Christian church. (4) The consequent belief in immersion alone as baptism. (5) The independence of the churches, and government by the congregation itself. The close communion follows from these as an incident; it is a matter of discipline.

In reference to some of these things Baptist peculiarities are not so marked now as formerly. Baptists are not now alone in holding that the New Testament is the ultimate and sufficient authority for the Christian. Their peculiarity here is one of emphasis. Other denominations besides the Presbyterians hold to Calvinism, but none emphasize it as the Presbyterians do. In the same way none emphasize as the sole authority of the New Testament as the Baptists do. Methodists as a class, and many in other denominations, hold that no one can become a Christian except by conscious and willing submission to Christ. They hold this in common with Baptists, but they go far toward neutralizing the principal when they baptize infants. From the first the Congregationalists have held to the Independence of the churches, and many others have come so to hold. There is a growing apposition to infant baptism; and a wide feeling among Pedobaptists that no harm can come from neglecting it. Step by step things once entirely peculiar to Baptists, have been invading other denominations. Much as Baptists have grown in membership, their principles have had a wider and more expansive growth. When the development is away from the truth, the farther we go back the purer the church is in doctrine and practice. When the development is toward this truth the highest condition of purity is to be sought lower down. The wrong development was the result of wrong principles. A deflecting force was bearing men away from the simplicity of the truth as it is in Jesus. The right development is the result of right principles; working according to the original and central truths of Christianity we may expect gradually to make ourselves loose from error, and to move constantly toward the truth. The fact that Baptists have been leading toward clearer and purer conceptions of the church and its work, may be taken as a proof that they have seized the true fundamental principle of church development. And that is exactly what they have done. Their germinal conception is: A church composed of believers in Christ, organized and governed according to the teachings of the New Testament.

As I have grown in years my sympathies have been broadened. I have learned to look with more admiration on the excellences of my brethren of other denominations, and with more charity on what seems to me to be their errors. I have learned how easy it is to adopt false principles of growth, and how infallibly those principles lead astray, and how difficult it is for men to recall their missteps, and to give up wrong customs. At the same time with my charity toward others, has grown my devotion to the principles of my own denomination. I believe that they are safe, true, and according to the will and wisdom of Christ. So far as they have been tried, they have been working well. I believe that the whole Christian church would be better for adopting them.

Things to be Deplored.—If I should be asked whether I do not now and then meet with things among the Baptists that worry me, I should answer, Yes. I meet with ignorance, and sin, and uncharitableness; with narrowness, bigotry, and vulgarity. But I meet with these everywhere; they are not Baptist peculiarities. I have found them in all the denominations. The Apostle Paul found them in the churches in his day. He was provoked to say that all men seek their own, not the things that are Christ's. The worldliness and unbelief and contentiousness and partyism of men troubled him. He had experience with Alexander the coppersmith. And yet he did not permit the failings of men to chill his devotion to the truth. And besides, there were many in the early church of whom the world was not worthy. The apostle had among his brethren as sweet friendships as were ever known on earth, and as noble fellow-workers as ever banded together in a holy cause. In the same way I have met among the Baptists as true men and women as ever lived; men of simple faith, of unselfish purpose, of broad culture, of guileless devotion to truth; women of gentle manners, of pure spirits, of winning grace. These too, are not Baptist peculiarities. But I need not go outside my own denomination to find them; nor need I bound my friendship by denominational lines. But if the charm of culture, and wisdom, and social grace should lead me away from duty, I should see in them the right hand to be cut off, and the right eye to be plucked out.

The Baptists have been fighting a hard battle against human authority, against custom grown old, and against the prestige of wealth and learning. No other denomination has had so many things to resist and to overcome. But in spite of all, they have been advancing. If any should be discouraged because Baptists may have more than a fair proportion of the poor and unlearned, they may comfort themselves with the recollection that that was the case once with the whole church; and as in the primitive church, so in the Baptist denomination, there is room for all that is true and saving in the gospel of Christ, and all that is noble, reforming, and elevating in human life. I have already mentioned that ignorance and coarseness are not Baptist peculiarities. But if I should chance to be particularly troubled with such things among my denominational brethren, I should take it as a call to be better, and wiser, and more learned, and more Christian myself, and to strive to make others so. *Anything that naturally belongs to Christianity would be at home in a Baptist church.*

I have been mentioning such things as make me a Baptist. I have aimed to give a fair and true statement of the Baptist position. I have no temptation to speak unkindly of others. But they practice things that I believe to be unauthorized and injurious. I could not join with them in their practices. There is no one of the other great denominations that I could conscientiously join. I would not be at home in any one of them. There would always be a conflict between my obligation to my church and my obligation to Christ. I might possibly persuade myself, as others have done, that, after all, it might be just as well to baptize infants, and just as well to go with the majority in sprinkling and pouring for baptism. But in doing so I should lower my moral tone; I should blunt my sense of obligation to obey the law of Christ. I should, in some measure, at least, lose my restful peace of conscience. But, besides this, I should give up that positive and aggressive element of truth which Baptists hold. In a word, others hold and practise what I cannot hold and practise, and reject what I hold to be the truth of Christ. In a Baptist church my conscience is not troubled by anything that I am required to approve, or by anything that I am required to neglect; and this is why I am a Baptist.

In closing this paper I mention a fact that is certainly worthy of very serious consideration. It is this: Least want are now Baptist denominations were once common to the whole church all immersed; there was no infant baptism; all the churches were independent and congregational; and all were close communion.

Maid servant—"Professor, O professor! I just think, I have swallowed a sin!" Absent-minded Professor—"Never mind; here is another one."

*Published as a tract by the Am. Bapt. Pub. Society.

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February 21

Sabbath School.

BIBLE LESSO

Adapted from Peloubet's Select N

FIRST QUARTER.

Lesson IX. Mar. 4. Gen. 25

SELLING THE BIRTHRI

GOLDEN TEXT.

"The life is more than meat body is more than raiment."—23.

THE FICTION OF HISTORY chaps. 23-27.

EXPLANATORY.

THE TWIN BROTHERS. Va Twenty years after the ma Isaac, two sons, twins, were b 27. "Esau," the elder, "was a hunter," beckoning his wild self indulgent character, and him probably to society heathen Canaanites round ab man of the field." This is ant what follows, "a dweller in te stead of spending his life in th of his family, returning to after the day's labor at night, over the country, like the u hunters in hall savage lands was a plain man." This is quate rendering of the word, "perfect" in Job 1: 1-8, mea right," a man of general integ had a great force of charact capacity for strong and endu tion, which is closely allied religious nature. "Dwelling A man of steady, domest habits, staying at home, atten pastoring of his flocks and the of the family, instead of abroad in search of pleasure a ment. Jacob inherited from a tendency to shrewd barga sharp practice. He would g intellect what Esau would ga sical strength.

28. "And Isaac loved Es was a natural result of the c their characters. Isaac saw some ideal characteristics he wished for himself. He ad burly form, his physical dari pertness in all manly exercis over, "he did eat of his venis he especially liked. This w special weakness as many c tors make out. Every heal has special likings as to fo Rebekah loved Jacob." Out in part, and in part becau much at home with her, and similar tastes.

POSSIBILITIES. There were sibilities in each of these Esau might have become an and useful man, using his defend virtue and innocence age, energy and skill to war evils, and to defend his home mies; his healthy open-hear good nature to attract men religion, and pure morality character he might have r Jacob, on the other hand, wa born business man, a spie when rightly used. He good bargain by instinct far-reaching plans. He cou a power for good. He cou veloped all things that made of his clan. He could l means for spreading the tr He had also the nature climb the heavenly ladder t and stand upon the Mount uration.

THE SALE OF THE BIRTH 29-34 The Two boys gre young men, developing the and determining in this per Esau, the original good d grows older, into overmast

THE BARGAIN. 29. "Ja tage." "Sod" is the p 'seethe,' "to boil." The "pottage" signifies "a d boiling." The dish was s "liquid" form. The peop are exceedingly fond c which they call "kool." like gruel, and is m lous kinds of grain, wh beaten in a mortar." Thi made of lentils, "a specie longing to the pea tribe," red color, which "are still in Egypt and Syria." "A from the field." The wi he had been hunting. faint"—exhausted, the te of one who is both wea guishing.