

The Symbolism of Baptism.

Rev. J. S. Gatton.

It is a capital idea, in protracted meeting work, after one gets the ear of the people, to present briefly, as opportunity affords along through the meeting, the symbolic meaning of baptism. For instance, there is an important sense in which baptism symbolizes, or declares, the remission of sins through faith in the blood of Christ Jesus. 1 John, 1:7. Take as an illustration the case of Saul of Tarsus; when he was convicted of sin on his way to Damascus, Ananias was sent to preach, the Lord Jesus unto him, that he might receive sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost. Immediately after he was instructed concerning the Christ, scales, as it were, fell from his eyes and he received sight forthwith. Now notice, after he was filled with the Holy Ghost and he had received sight, Ananias commanded him to arise and be baptized and wash away his sins—not literally surely, but figuratively—baptism was the symbolical representation of the washing away of sins. Just as in the case of the leper, who came beseeching Christ to cleanse him, saying "If thou wilt thou canst make me clean. And Jesus moved with compassion, put forth his hand and touched him, and said unto him, I will, be thou clean. And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him and he was cleansed." And Jesus, "Said unto him go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded for a testimony unto them." Notice, the Savior first cleansed the leper, made him clean, then required him to be ceremonially cleansed as a testimony to all the people that he was really cleansed. So baptism is a public testimony or symbolical declaration of the washing away of sins.

Again, the Scriptures teach that Christ died for our sins, that he was buried and that he rose from the grave on the third day. 1 Cor. 15:3, 4. Now this burial and resurrection are symbolically declared by baptism. When a child of God is buried by baptism that act points back, almost 1900 years to the burial of Christ in Joseph's new sepulchre and when the believer is raised from the watery grave, that is an index finger pointing back to the resurrection of Christ, who was raised up by the glory of the Father. Rom. 6:4, 5. Just as the Lord's Supper symbolically represents his burial and resurrection; hence the two ordinances symbolize the three great facts of the blessed gospel. Likewise our death to sin and entrance upon a new life is declared to the world in the act of baptism. "We are 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." After death comes the burial—we die to sin and symbolically declare the fact by being buried in baptism; and as Christ arose from the grave preparatory to his intercessory work, so we arise from the watery grave to live a new life—we have new aims, new desires, new motives, new aspirations, etc.

The writer has made it a point, for years, in his protracted meeting work, to present the practical significance of baptism with very gratifying results. It is no uncommon thing for people of other denominations to be thus led into the truth and induced to follow the Savior in his expressive ordinance. In a recent meeting in the southwestern part of the state, there were among the nineteen additions to the church, four intelligent ladies members of the Cumberland Presbyterian church, who came out and were baptized into the fellowship of the Baptist church, thus symbolizing the truths mentioned above. The gospel in symbol is first class preaching for the masses.

Ennence, Ky.

The Right Ring in South Africa.

The Baptist Argus rejoices in the growing solidarity of the Baptists of the world. We are contributing what we can toward that end. There is a Pan-Baptist consciousness which is coming into existence. And by and by, there will be a Pan-Baptist Convention. It is coming. Meanwhile, the Baptists of the world are getting a new sense of responsibility and the heroism of duty is widening. Take this abstract of "ecclesiastical principles" as set forth in "The South

African Baptist;" "According to early Christian usage, each church has its bishop or pastor, who is assisted by the counsel of presbyters or deacons in carrying on divine worship, administering the ordinances, and directing church affairs agreeably to the Holy Scriptures. In the admission of members, and in other important matters, the judgment of the whole body of members is taken. Baptism, by immersion, of believers only upon the confession of their faith, is practiced as at the first. Each church is independent of all others in management, but by a voluntary union, they cooperate for general purposes."

Here is the right ring in doctrines and in work. The organized work is in good shape in this new land. The Hardshell sentiment cannot get a foothold among those Baptists. The last "South African Baptist" was published just before the recent annual meeting of the South African Baptist Union at Johannesburg. The leading editorial is on "Broadening Boundaries." A few extracts will give the spirit of our brethren in South Africa as they face their great work in the new empire of English peoples.

"It may be as well to suggest a wider theme of discussion. We do so under a grave sense of responsibility, and of the importance of the occasion. The truth is that the isolation of our South African church life is simply appalling. We labor far apart, and even an annual reunion, with fellow laborers and kindred spirits, is by no means a certainty for many. There is great peril in this state of things. For, first of all, our people and those whom they call to church offices get into narrow, wooden, and unprogressive methods of work. And even our ministers, missing the buoyant and brightening experiences of their college days, in the sharpening contact of mind with mind, are apt to suffer in their social, intellectual and spiritual calibre. As all our pastors and missionaries at present have received their training from other soil, South Africa itself having furnished us with neither as yet, during over eighty years of Baptist work, let us remember that the angel of the Lord has sent them down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is a desert." And the lack of touch with kindred spirits is sorely felt. Some men can no more be at their best without this than a flower can blossom without moisture. Even the Holy Spirit ministers his grace not apart from fellowship but through it. Well, we are going to meet, upon the rail, in the intervals of the session, at the houses of our hosts until far past the midnight hour; we shall have lively conversation, quick repartee, stories old and new, and all the healthful rejuvenescence of cheerful comradeship. When we have exchanged solicitude for each other's welfare, and spoken of the outstanding features of our own parochial work, there will yet be a vast field for helpful intercourse regarding our relation to the interests of the cities and colonies to which we belong. There is a vast social and national fabric to be constructed around us, and it is a fair question to ask if, Christian men are going to leave it to the exertions of others. This is worth a good deal of our attention, and we hope there will be animated talks about it."

And then these closing words have the spirit of Christ and of progress.

"Then, once more our duty to the colored and native peoples at our doors is not adequately discharged by having less than a dozen missionaries and a few evangelists amongst them. Let us speak together of these things. There must be created an enlightened Christian conscience amongst us upon these and related points. Only let us be quite sure of this, that if we ignobly evade any proper responsibility today, our successors will suffer for it tomorrow. Now is the time to prevent the need for any 'passive resistance' campaigns fifty years hence in South Africa. We have religious liberty, only do not let us receive that as if it meant liberty to do nothing in certain great departments of public usefulness. We have religious equality. What is the use of that if we are rendering unequal service to society, and yielding indolently every possible prestige and precedence to other bodies, who manfully take up the arduous tasks we shun?"

"May we all come back from Johannesburg stronger men, with a more comprehensive grasp of our duty, and a firmer resolve to perform it, for the country and the people amongst whom we live and labor."

Evening amusements should be of such a character as will elevate the mind and help us to Christian living. Did anyone ever make a better Christian of himself by attending a dance or card party? Did you ever feel the presence of the Holy Spirit at one of these gatherings? There are a great many things that we may indulge in which, if we do not go too far, might not hurt us much, but the power of habit and the influence of associates often lead one to excess. I would rather my son would never taste liquor or tobacco in any form, simply because the habit might lead him to use it excessively. I would rather my daughter would never enter the dance hall or sit at the card table for the same reason. We are not all constituted with strong will power. My observation of the dance has been that we are almost compelled to associate with some bad people. How can it be avoided? Think of a pure young girl of sixteen dancing in a set where perhaps the vilest young man in the neighborhood is dancing. A certain call of the change demand that he should swing this sweet sixteen year old, and before she is aware of it she is in the arms of one of the devil's angels and is started down the road to perdition. It is my belief that all such things as the social dance and card party are parlors to the great drawing-room of perdition. Let us remove the temptation and not place it before our children, thinking they will be strong enough to resist it. That is like some men who vote for a saloon and then pray for their boys to keep them from drinking.

And where does card-playing, whether it is euchre, whist, board of trade, etc., lead our precious young men and women to? They all go hand-in-hand, in my estimation, and the card playing, dances and saloon are stepping stones to perdition. A man who was sentenced to be hanged was told by the jailer that his mother desired to see him, to which he replied: "She is the last woman on earth I want to see." The jailer, thinking he had misunderstood, replied: "It is your mother who wants to see you." He assured the jailer he understood and said: "She is the cause of my being here. When I was young she bought me a pack of cards and taught me how to play them, saying, 'There is no harm in it' but it led me to the crime which now costs me my life."

Religious News.

For the past few months, HAMPTON STATION, snow storms, bad roads and N. B. sickness in the Pastor's family have seriously hindered our work on this large and scattered field. But we are not altogether cast down, neither have we been forsaken. The people on all parts of the field have been exceedingly kind. Not long since the fields of Smithtown and the Station met at Dr. Smith's hall and left us richer by \$32.00. The people at Saltsprings and other parts of the field have also kindly remembered us in a practical way. For all these tokens both pastor and wife wish to express their genuine gratitude. HARRY S. ERB.

Perhaps a few words from SALISBURY, N. B. this historic church will be of interest to our readers. As is well known, we have here one of the oldest churches in this province founded over a hundred years ago by Father Crandall, in whose memory the present church was built and dedicated to the Lord two years ago last June. This church was built at a cost of Three Thousand Dollars and, although the Baptist people are neither strong nor wealthy, they have by hard work and great self-sacrifice paid all but \$150. We purpose having a roll call in the spring and try to raise that amount so that, when the next birthday of the church comes around it will be free of debt. On Feb 28th, the new baptistry was used for the first time when Bro. Sharpe was baptized into the likeness of his Savior's death and last Lord's day received the right hand of fellowship. We trust that in the near future, others will take the same step and show to the world, by this outward sign, that an inward change has taken place. Since coming on this field we have received many tokens of kindness from the people. When we first came a handsome carpet was put down in the front room for our use; last all they met at the parsonage and left us richer by many dollars worth of provisions; again,