

Alabama Baptist.

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MARION, ALA.

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Born of Water and of the Spirit.

DOES WATER REGENERATE?—TWO AL-
TERNATES AND TWO MEANS—THE WAT-
ERS OF LIFE SPIRITUAL—“AND”
MEANS “EVEN”—THE TIME AND
THE MAN—RATIONALISTS AT
PAULS—ANOTHER MINISTER
PREPARED TEXT: BAPTISM
OF FIRE—CAUTION TO
MILITARY STUDENTS.

“Please give an exposition of the fifth verse of the third chapter of John, in the ALABAMA BAPTIST. Especially say whether you understand it to teach water baptism.”

The text about which our correspondent writes has occasioned much controversy. We therefore present our own view without dogmatism. One fundamental principle is clear. That water should have a like share with the Spirit of God in regeneration, is an idea not to be thought of. On the contrary, it appears from the eighth verse of the chapter (John 3), that the Spirit alone is the agent of this internal and wondrous transformation. For there the phrase, “born again” vs 7, is explained by the kindred expression, v. 8, “born of the Spirit.” In these texts water is not mentioned. And a very limited observation suffices to show why. For the baptismal sign of regeneration has no efficacy in producing that state. Many are regenerated without having received baptism; and many who have received it are not regenerate, as their whole lives show.

A natural explanation of our Lord's declaration (John 3:5) is arrived at when we make the words “of the Spirit,” explanatory of the preceding “of water.” As we see from the previous verse, Nicodemus opposed to our Lord's requirement of the new birth, its physical impossibility. His objection was to this effect:—A man can come into the world according to nature, only once. If then to use the phrase of John, (chapter 1:13) we must be “born of blood, or after the will of the flesh,” a second time:—it is impossible that any man shall ever enter into the kingdom of God. This idea our Lord corrects in his reply: “except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” That which is born of the flesh is flesh; that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. That is to say: The birth I speak of is altogether a different thing from what you are thinking of. You are mistaken in supposing that a pure offspring can come forth from an impure parentage. One must be born again not from flesh and blood—but from an element pure and cleansing, like water with which you cleanse your body for temple service—before he can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. This element is not natural, it is spiritual—yea it is the very Spirit of God.

The meaning of the passage according to this interpretation would also appear if the Greek conjunction, *kat*, which unites the two related words in our text, were translated “and” instead of “and.” Then the text would read: “Except a man be born of water, *and* of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.” This rendering would suit the paraphrase of Calvin, who explains the waters of regeneration as *agras spirituales, non fluviatiles, waters of the Spirit, not of the river.* The rendering is not forced. For *kat* has often this expository, or explanatory, force in Scripture; where being translated accordingly, it would add to the meaning. Thus to give a few examples: John 1:16. “Of his fullness have we all received and [even] grace for grace.” 1 Cor. 15:48. “And God giveth it (is what thou sowest) a body as it hath pleased him, and [even] to every seed its own body.” Gal. 6:15. “As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy and [even] upon the Israel of God.” Heb. 12:17. “By faith Abraham when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and [even] he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son.” Here the proper rendering would make the text a noble climax. In all these cases the *and* introduces an explanation of what had gone before; just as it does in the passage, “born of water and of the Spirit.”

But as *kat*, and, is not translated even in any of the passages above quoted, it may be of interest to readers who have no access to the Greek, to examine texts where this conjunction is so translated in our English version. The following instances will suffice: Mat. 12:45, *Even* the winds and the sea. Mark 6:2, *Even* such mighty works. Luke 12:7, *Even* the very hairs of your head are numbered. Rom. 8:7, *Even* dare to die. Heb. 11:19, *Even* from the dead. In all these passages the word translated *and* is *kat*. Thus there is every-

thing we could ask, the meaning of words as well as in the context of John 3:5, to justify the interpretation we have given. And even to demand the rejection of water baptism from this verse, is to make it clear to every one that it is impossible to baptize under the circumstances of the interview with Nicodemus would have been most imprudent. The sacramental efficacy of baptism would have been the last lesson that our Lord would have intended to teach upon a ruler of the Jews, whose distinguishing error was a superstitious reverence for outward forms. Says Tholuck: “The mention of baptism to this man, and at this time, is impossible in the least degree.” Hence Strauss and Water claim that this (supposed) reference to baptism affords evidence of the fictitious character of the whole interview. If however, the view we have presented is correct, the plausible argument of the German Rationalists falls to the ground. In reply to their objection Tholuck is even ready to accept the position, that John writing in a later time when baptism had become more prominent “involuntarily inserted the expression of water.” But we have seen, there is no need of any such forced explanation. Our Lord used the word water but he did not refer to baptism at all. And the proof is that in the very same breath he explained what he did mean. “Except a man be born of water, *and* of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.”

To our mind the case is so clear that only the desire to give a mystical character to baptism could have obscured the meaning of the text. Curiously enough, another text which has a superficial likeness to the present has been misinterpreted so as to subvert the idea of sprinkling and pouring as baptism. The text to which we refer is found in Mat. 3:11. He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. These expressions are regarded by many as synonymous; but the context shows that the two subjects between which stands the conjunction *and*, are precisely opposite. If the “fire” were a symbol, as the “water” is in John, the symbol would come first, and the Holy Ghost would then be added to explain its meaning. But here the position of fire shows that it is something different from the Holy Ghost. And the context proves this also. John the Baptist was speaking of the mercies and the judgments of the Lord. Hence he declares (Mat. 3:12) that God was able to “take children into Abraham” but (Mat. 3:10) that he would cast barren professors into the fire. Then the Lord declared that Christ would perform this twofold work of complete salvation and overwhelming destruction. (Mat. 3:11) by baptizing [the first of these classes] with the Holy Ghost, and [the second] with fire. And in the next verse, (Mat. 3:12), the same idea of grace to some and judgment to others, is insisted upon for the third time: “He will gather the wheat into the garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” There is nothing more singular and the prevalent misinterpretation of a text, so explained as this was by uninspired preachers. The dire consequences of God, with the regenerate and the unregenerate are the foundations of John's warning to his impatient and unbelieving countrymen. And yet the precise penalty with which he threatened them is mistaken by many for a Gospel blessing; and we have heard pious people pleading for it at the mercy seat!

This last exposition as well as that which suggested it will serve to illustrate the vital importance of the study of the context when we examine the meaning of any special passage of Holy Scripture. The best commentary upon a text is the plain meaning of the words and the logical connection of the sentence with what precedes and follows it—especially is such care required when the text seems to suggest an ordinance for here error is insured both by scribbles and suggestion, and when it is full grown it is like an ill weed and can scarcely be exterminated.

Cherry.

A brother writes to enquire whether the text in Job 11:17 ought to be as it is in most Bibles, “Woe to the idol shepherd,” or as it is in others, “Woe to the sheep shepherd.” The former is the reading of the English Version, but the latter is nearer to the sense of the original. Henderson and Moore render: “Woe to the worthless shepherd.” Hitzig gives it: “Woe to the negligent shepherd.” As will appear from the connection, the idea is that those wicked rulers whom God would raise up to punish the king of the people, should themselves be punished in the end. Not only their power but their intelligence would be taken from them. The people were fulfilled in the day of Christ when the rulers were in bondage to heathen power, and when even the things that made for their peace were hid from their eyes. They were blind leaders of the blind.

Doctrine of Sin.

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF SIN.
By John Talloch, D. D., Principal of St. Mary's College, University of St. Andrews, one of her Majesty's Chaplains for Scotland. New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Co.

The lectures which make up this volume are upon the following subjects: The question of Sin in relation to modern schools of thought; Idea of Evil outside of Revelation: Old Testament doctrine of Sin; Doctrine of Sin, as in the Gospels; Doctrine of St. Paul's Epistles; and Original Sin. The subjects are considered with Philosophic breadth and thoroughness.

The main idea of Principal Talloch is that the idea of sin which exists in human consciousness has been gradually unfolded in revelation, until at last the fully developed doctrine appears in the Gospels and in the Epistles of Paul. To the Hebrews sin was disobedience, a rejection of Divine good, death, a hereditary taint, a subjection to mysterious powers of evil. In our Lord's teachings the Kingdom of Darkness is more distinctly portrayed in its opposition to the kingdom of light. And sin appears less as a violation of the letter of the law, than as a corruption and disease of nature, a state of contrivance to God's moral perfection. Paul indicates the origin of sin in human nature; it came to us from Adam, who represented his posterity, and through whom we derive a will enfeebled for good and prone to evil. “The race was in a certain sense anticipated in him or stamped up in him.” The influences of wrong-doing are infectious and cumulative, as one generation succeeds another; and can be arrested only by the grace which the new Adam infuses into human nature, and which we receive by faith.

We thus sketch the main tenet of the author, which is clearly and vigorously elucidated. Principal Talloch adheres, for the most part, to the old standards of orthodoxy, while he suggests here and there, explanations by which they are shown to be in harmony with the best conclusions of modern thought. The history of the fall is considered in its moral and spiritual aspects, and so is the doom pronounced upon our guilty progenitors. Our author holds that death would have taken place in any event, as a necessity of physical nature, but that sin made death what it is—a penalty, painful and terrible. He does not discuss the imperfections of the civil law of Moses, in regard, for example, to concealing blood-revenge and the like, although this subject is one requiring thorough and discriminating consideration. Indeed we never can understand how rigidly we are confined to the New Testament, as a law of duty and a perfect revelation of truth, until we learn the imperfections of the Old Dispensation. The Great Teacher extended no indulgence to “the hardness of the heart,” Mat. 19:8. “The law came by Moses; but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”

The lectures of Principal Talloch will prove suggestive and stimulating. Their theme lies at the foundation of the whole system of redemption and has connection with all the parts thereof. His style is lucid, sometimes eloquent, as in his picture of the majestic and terrible Fate which presides over the Greek Tragedies, the pitiless avenger of the crimes of men.

Persecution of Baptists.

We regret to see from a letter recently published that the State church of Sweden has renewed its odious work of persecution. Rev. Mr. Wiberg gives a painful illustration of persecution in Sweden:

“I mentioned in my last letter the case of Bro. Carl Victor Palmblad, a student at our Bethel Seminary. This brother had been sentenced to pay a fine of 500 crowns, or undergo imprisonment for seventeen days on water and bread, for having preached the gospel contrary to the prohibition of four church councils. As it was not considered expedient either by himself or by his friends to pay the fine, he decided upon undergoing imprisonment on water and bread; but when he arrived at the prison the keeper thought he was too weak to endure starvation on water and bread for such a long time, wherefore he advised him to procure the testimony of a physician to that effect. Having obtained that, it was granted to him to undergo civil imprisonment in a cell for fifty-one days with ordinary food, instead of seventeen days' imprisonment on water and bread.

On Wednesday, Dec. 6th, he was set at liberty. When he came out of prison there was a large concourse of people assembled to congratulate him, and the same evening he preached at the Baptist meeting-room in Norrköping, to an assembly of about six hundred. Last Monday evening he arrived in Stockholm, again to take his place among the students in the seminary. At our church-meeting, the same evening he received a hearty welcome. He stated that during his time of imprisonment he experienced much peace and joy in the Lord.

In consequence of the imprisonment of this brother, the Committee of the Swedish Branch of the Evangelical Alliance waited upon the

king and presented a petition pleading for more extended religious liberty.”

The Lutherans of Scandinavia have yet to learn the lesson of religious liberty, and that from the same long enduring people who have implanted the principle in the Constitution of the United States and given it currency in the modern civilized world. Many are willing enough to divide the honor with us after the victory is won; but while the battle is raging the Baptists are in the front. We mourn for our afflicted brethren and invoke that grace in their behalf which may enable them to endure hardness as good soldiers of the cross. But we have no fear as to the result. For the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever. And they who have suffered with Christ shall also reign with him.

Literary Notices.

SCHOOL MANAGEMENT. By Alfred Holbrook. New York and New Orleans: A. S. Barnes & Co. 8 mo. pp. 278.

This is a course of lectures which have been published to serve as a text book on the arts of teaching and school management. It claims to present a novel and yet rational system for making the school attractive, and for giving animation and interest to pupils.

While we are not prepared to agree with the author in all his theories, we can say that this is a book of more than usual merit, and should be in the hands of every ambitious teacher. It contains many suggestions and plans that are rare and valuable.

RELIGION AND SCIENCE. The Psychological Basis of Religion considered from the Standpoint of Phenology. 12 mo. paper, 20 cents. New York: S. R. Wells & Company, Publishers, 737 Broadway.

In a compact pamphlet of thirty-five pages, Mr. Francis Gerry Fairfield, an eminent physiologist of New York, discusses the relations of Science and Religion, and endeavors to reconcile them from the standpoint of Phenology. The author claims that both Phenology and Religion have their basis in facts of structure and in the very nature of life. The forms of thought which make up science, pertain to the anterior lobes of the brain. The intuitions of life and being, which constitute religion, pertain to the posterior lobes. When the whole brain becomes conscious of itself, science and religion will be brought into harmony. The argument is too technical and condensed to suit the general reader. And it lies without the sphere of the Theologian. Yet, while we resign it to physiologists, we may observe that it does not reconcile science and religion; but indicates the cause of their conflict, as it is supposed to be found in the human brain. Of that deeper cause which is to be found in the human heart, and which only the enlightening Spirit can remove, our author has nothing to say.

FRANK LESLIE'S SUNDAY MAGAZINE for April, has for its illuminated frontispiece: “Do Right and Fear Not.” The leading article is a recollection of charming “Glimpses of Spain,” by Mrs. Mary Lowe Dickinson. “The latest form of Puritan Power” appears in a portrait and biographic notice of Rev. Joseph Cook, who claims the ear and has won the heart of the Evangelicals of New England. A superior man who is doing a great work. Under the title *Alypius of Tagaste*, Mrs. Webb gives the story of the father and mother of Augustine, the famous theologian. The hymnologist will be interested in the history of the favorite hymn, “Abide with me! fast falls the evening tide.” Among many other articles, we notice a lecture on the Bethany family, by the editor, and an instructive chapter on the Lake-Dwellers in Switzerland.

MATTHEW'S HAPPY HOME, for April, makes its appearance after a short delay caused by the change of its place of publication which is now Nashville, Tenn. It has in addition to its fashion plate and cuts some very good illustrations, the best of which is a school-boy puzzling over a sum. A thoughtful salutation announces the addition of Rev. C. C. Pope to the editorial corps. Mr. Pope argues for the higher culture of females. A grand reception was given in Nashville to the editors, who received an address of welcome from Dr. T. G. Jones. The number is a good one, with serials, short stories, essays and poetry. The editors are encouraged by the subscriptions coming in.

LITTLE'S LIVING AGE, April 7, 1877. There are ten articles. Fielding's Novels are discussed in an appreciative way by a literary adept. Matthew Arnold contributes from the *Nineteenth Century* an article on Falkland, but which is really an attack on the Puritans of England, with that exploded historian and broken politician known as Bolingbroke as his main authority. John Stuart Blackie is the author of an article relating the growth of Prussia to her present commanding attitude in Europe. The Alps in Winter present a new aspect of a familiar theme. The minor articles are good.

THE SABBATHIAN for April. The most important articles relate to the preservation of health on shipboard and in schools. There is also an interesting account of Edwin Chadwick the practical philanthropist, of whom a portrait is also given. The shorter articles are of interest. We cannot agree with the editor in his defence of the practice of vivisection, which certainly does evil that good may come.

THE SOUTHERN SOCIETY HISTORICAL PAPER. Gen. St. John's Report explains the failure of supplies at Amelia Court House. Gen. Lee's letter was not received. There is an account of Gen. Early's Valley Campaign, by his Chief of Artillery. Gen. Early himself contributes a critique on the Count of Paris' History of the Civil War. He declares the work a tissue of misrepresentation, which cannot be corrected except by putting it into the fire. Gen. Taylor's chapters on the Last Confederate Surrender, has interest to the people of our section.

SAD IN THE HEART. Words and music by Thos. P. Westendorf. Published by D. P. Fugitts, 165 Fourth Ave., Louisville, Ky.

This pretty ballad will be enjoyed by all who have heard Eileen Allanna, to which it is a sad but sweet reply.

Field Notes.

In a recent discourse, (which perhaps would have suited a week day better,) Mr. Talmage said: “The fact that the South is now submitting peacefully to the inauguration of a man against whom the vast majority of their States voted is proof positive that they mean peace, and—then bayonets at the South after this will be an insult to God and to the dignity of the nation.”

“The Churchman” thus takes off a new style of Scriptural reading now coming into vogue: “A new affectation has come into fashion in the use of the pretentious many verbs. Such words as leaped, walked, baptized, believed, saved, damned, are trotted as a sacred morsel under the tongue, until their use has become burdensome.” When St. Paul bled the impatient man at Lystra, we hear, “And he leaped and walked.” The Scriptures are most effective when read naturally.

We remember once hearing the first chapter of Ruth read by an eminent minister in a way so bracing its genuine and tender character, that it was like a new discovery; it had all the sweetness of a beautiful idyll. In reply to this assertion that close communion interferes with the progress of Baptists, stands the fact that they flourish only where their denominational peculiarities are conscientiously observed. The Baptist churches in England have been in a feeble state ever since the days when Hall hired them into the quagmire of open communion. In Wales and America where close communion prevails, the Baptists flourish. From the statement that Mr. Spurgeon has returned from his “vacation” without improved health, there is reason to fear that this eminent worker is breaking down under his multifarious toils. He has 4751 members under his pastoral charge, of whom 125 are lay preachers. Mr. Spurgeon's twin sons are in business, but occasionally preach. The pulpit and the pen should work together—good preaching and holy living make a strong and growing church. Rowland Hill was preaching in the open air, when a sudden shower of rain fell. He put on his hat, and said, pleasantly: “Excuse my hat, friends; but do not let the rain alarm you so much. What would the condemned souls in To-phet, parched for it, give for a single drop of this delightful rain?”

“Since I last wrote, three have been received for baptism, making twenty-four since the first of December. Seven or eight ‘by letter.’ Bro. Owens has been blessed in his work. Bro. Curry is holding meetings with Bro. Hawthorne's assistance. J. O. B. Lowry. After our leading article for the present number was written, in reply to a query from Mississippi, we received an article from Rev. J. O. B. Lowry, which bears in part upon the same subject. Our conclusions are different; yet we have read with lively interest the exposition traced by his accomplished pen. We learn that the Alabama Society will give a strawberry supper as soon as the berries are ripe. This is the first we have heard of as yet.

“We are having prayer meetings every day this week preparatory to beginning a protracted meeting. Have received nine by letter since April 1st.—O. F. Griggory.”

“Enclosed find \$2.50 for the ALABAMA BAPTIST. It is a household necessity with us—cannot do without it.”

The State convention of the Y. M. C. A. will meet in Enfield April 28th. “I am well pleased with the paper and would be glad to know that its subscription list had been so largely increased as to authorize you to send it to single subscribers at two dollars.—Jno. Lawrence, Cedar Bluff.”

In his last Allocation the Pope complains of the new traps and ambushes in his path, and asks: “How is it possible for us to govern the church?” To which the *Western Recorder*, without a particle of sympathy replies: “An old gentleman of eighty-five, with a snug little fortune of some odd millions ought not to be making himself so miserable over these matters. Europe is no doubt very wrong headed. It won't listen to you. It has got in a bad way about Popes. Some centuries since it might have been different. Let Bismarck and the rest of them quarrel it out.”

Wants of Alabama Baptists.

NUMBER THIRTEEN.

BETTER DISCIPLINE.

So many good things have been recently said in our paper on the subject of discipline, by Dr. Hilden and others, that we fear anything we can say will be superfluous, not to say an intrusion on ground which is being successfully occupied by greater ability; but this subject lies within the scope of our original plan, and therefore the reader will indulge us in the expression of a few thoughts on a theme of so great importance. *Better discipline* is certainly one of the wants of Alabama Baptists. It is not our purpose, however, to discuss the nature of church discipline, as has been done many times in former days under the heads of the proper treatment of private and personal offences, public and general offences, sufferable and unsufferable offences, or pardonable and unpardonable offences; but we wish to insist that there is a deplorable lack of discipline in our churches; to such an extent is this true that in many congregations it is difficult to discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not. Nor is it true that the punishment of evil doers is the only use for church discipline.

1. The church of Christ has an intricate disciplinary work to perform, which is of first importance and much neglected. When we speak of good family discipline, we mean the right sort of instruction for the children as well as wholesome correction. The army which only knew the rigors of martial law, certainly could not be considered a disciplined body of soldiers. Law among men is a rule of right. Constitutions and laws are intended to protect rights and develop and defend social order. Government could not of right punish evil doers until it had published to its citizens or subjects their rights and duties. Where there is no law there is no transgression, and the law in effect does not exist where the people have had no opportunity to know it. It would be absurd to punish a citizen for failing to attend muster or work the road when he had not been called on to do either. Some time since we were present in a court room when a gentleman was called upon and informed, that the day before a fifty dollar forfeit had been entered against him for non-attendance as a witness. He quickly and boldly replied that he had never been subpoenaed. When this was known, of course the forfeit broke down.

In all this we simply mean to impress the importance of instructive discipline in the churches. In many instances we can complain at and correct our members with an ill grace, because we have given them nothing to do, have never put the harness on them, have never taught them their rights and privileges in the church, and have given them no tangible instruction of the line of active duty. From the pulpit they may have heard a good deal about what Christians ought to do, but that of itself is not enough to produce Christian activity. They need some warm-hearted brethren and sisters who, with the pastor, will urge and push them, along, encourage them, strengthen them, and welcome them into the work; and then we may expect them to shun vice and walk worthy of their vocation. Frequently when young persons—particularly young men—join the church, they conclude pretty soon that the old brethren have not yet taken them into their circle, that they have no special use for them. And then many persons join who have grown to middle life or older out of the church, and there are no duties required of them. They are expected to walk circumspectly, attend church and help to pay, and having nothing more put on them they soon fall to this. When a person who has lived in sin and worldliness and evil society unites with the church, one of the first and best things that can be done for him, and which older members should diligently attempt, is to separate him from his wicked associates and fully identify him with the society of his brethren. Rest assured that sinful men will still try to use him, and the firm position which is essential to his usefulness he can not easily maintain without the help of his brethren. “Ye which are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak.” It is still true that “evil communications corrupt good manners.” The church member who is not much with his brethren, but is much with

the wicked, will lose his moral power and likely his self-control, and soon it may be said of him, “Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people, and hath destroyed his strength, and he knoweth it not.” But he cannot be separated from former surroundings, nor identified closely with his church, unless he is given work to do and shown how to do it. Nor can this be done in a day or with a single effort. Diligent, persistent and unflinching efforts to train its members for lives of purity and usefulness, is the business of the church of Christ in the exercise of discipline. “A church,” to use the language of Dr. Mell, “is not a college of proficients but a school of learners.” In learning then it is the object of this branch of discipline to keep them from the evil and learn them to do well.

2. *Corrective Discipline.* It is more pleasant to prevent disease than to cure it. It is more agreeable to forestall and prevent wrong doing among church members than it is to treat diseases after they occur, and hence we have put stress on training our members for usefulness. But offences come in the best regulated churches, and our Lord instituted in his church the power of correction and punishment, and enjoined on the church the duty of exercising this power. “If he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.” “Withdraw yourself from every man that walketh disorderly.” “Put away from among yours lives that wicked person.”

The articles of Bro. Hilden, which are applicable to Alabama churches as to those in any other State, have certainly shown a lamentable want of corrective discipline. Many things are now allowed to pass unnoticed or uncorrected, so we think, for which members in Alabama were held to a rigid accountability twenty years ago. Intemperance is ignored as it was not in those days. Many members are tolerated who have lost all character for common honesty. “Lewd fellows of the baser sort” sometimes hold membership without investigation. Others neglect all claims of the church and quit the house of God and remain members. Members live in perpetual enmity to each other, and pass on uncorrected. And so the pastor finds himself very nearly silenced when moral men tell him that his church tolerates many things of which they would not be guilty. In instances when discipline is attempted, the heart of the Lord's people is healed but slightly. The evil is slurred over; “and so they wrap it up.”

On the other hand, with the membership of some churches, there is an apparent disposition to make haste to have a church difficulty. Some are more anxious to maintain the character of expert and rigid disciplinarians, than they are to keep themselves right. They are constantly ready to try somebody. It has been often claimed that “charity begins at home.” Whether this is true or not, that is the place where reformation ought to begin. And we suppose that the backwardness which is frequently seen in arraignment offending members, grows out of a felt want of worthiness; if the afore said “disciplinarian” is absent, the easy goes by default, but the offender should retort, “Physician, heal thyself.”

Many cases are thrust into church conference which should have been examined, reproved, reclaimed and settled in a less public way. Many others are privately settled which ought to have been rebuked before all. And therefore the position of the moderator in all cases of discipline is one of more than ordinary importance. Frequently churches are precipitated into disgraceful trouble for want of a discreet and courageous moderator.

In conclusion we remark, that our pastors and editors and brethren do not write and preach as much on the subject of discipline as they did a few years ago; and as a consequence our young brethren and young deacons and young pastors are not posted on this subject, nor do they suitably recognize its importance. Although we were trained among plain country pastors, we are not aware that we have ever learned anything about church discipline since we were twenty-five years of age, and we think this is true of very many of our brethren who came up about the same time—whether preachers or laymen. In those days the Saturday sermons were largely devoted to the discussion of discipline and experimental religion, and the duty of maintaining wholesome discipline was urged upon the churches by the pastors and deacons with great courage and determination, and our young members all soon got a pretty correct idea of the Baptist view of these subjects. Alas, how little our Baptist young men know of our theory on discipline now! And thus we close this letter as usual, insisting that we want pastors and deacons who will teach the churches discipline, and who will demand its administration.

The Missouri Baptist S. S. Convention, meets with the First Baptist church at Booneville, May 4th, 1877, at 10 o'clock, A. M.

Looking for it Where it Never Was.

Some years ago when the British government sent an Ambassador to the “Court of Abyssinia,” he hunted about for a considerable time and was about to withdraw in despair, when the minister of foreign affairs informed him that he was wasting his time and spending the Queen's money looking in the wrong place for the Court of Abyssinia. And when men fail to find that for which they are looking, is not this failure most generally the result of not looking in the right place?

The search and research of Pedobaptism in the Old Testament for baptism may remind us of the embassy to the Court of Abyssinia. They cannot find baptism at all because they persist in looking for it where it never was. They are excited and anxious to be confirmed in their views; and then some of their people's consciences are disturbed on the subject and they must be confirmed; the smallest gleam of light on the subject dazes them, and as the song said, they “seize it with their eye.” It is found that it will not do to trust the New Testament in this matter; there is too much said about it there—a little too much light. It will keep talking about baptism in connection with going down into the water, and coming up out of the water, and much water, and buried by baptism, and believe and be baptized, and repent and be baptized, and they were baptized, both men and women; and thus this book talks so much like a Baptist book that there must be another explanation, inaugurated for the ascertainment of something that will tend to neutralize this look of “much water.”

And how easy it is to do this. Why certainly; does not the Old Testament talk about the clouds pouring out water, and sprinkling clean water, and about sprinkling the altar, and the people and the covenant? And does not circumcision furnish ample authority for infant church membership? Is not here dazle enough to neutralize the New Testament and satisfy any body except some “ignorant Baptists?”

New difficulty is that this is a search for baptism where it is not once mentioned. There is no conflict between the two Testaments. Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, about which the Old Testament does not dispute. Christ put away the ordinances and ceremonies of the Old Testament, calling them to his cross. Those who will fasten any part of these ceremonies on the church of Christ must take the whole. If Pedobaptists are right on this subject the extremely prelatist sects are the “rightest” of them all. Those who divide and subdivide the ceremonies of the Old Testament, putting a part into their systems and rejecting what remains, give us only a wretched and distorted system, which is neither consistent with the Old Testament nor the New. It is an attempt to unite the hands of Esau with the voice of Jacob; it is a blending of the heirship of the bound women with that of the free; it is the engrafting of a figment of Judaism on the Christian church. How much better take it that the law was our school master to bring us unto Christ, but now since Christ is come we are no longer under that school master, but are under the simple and beautiful guidance of the new covenant. Let us look for baptism where the Holy Spirit has unmistakably so corded it.

A Hard Hit.

A group of friends—some Baptists and some Pedobaptists, were in conversation. Dr. C. was one of this group. The conversation turned thusly and the question was urged by several. “Well Doctor, as you had a conversation with Mr. Hayes, perhaps you can tell us. Does Hayes believe that he was elected?”

Dr. C.—“I don't know, of course I said nothing to him or, to be to me on that subject.”

“Well Doctor, do you think it possible for him to believe that he was elected?”

Dr. C.—“O I suppose he believes he was elected. Men can believe very strange things. Why I have seen men who believed in infant baptism.”

Delegates to Southern Baptist Convention.

States are entitled to the following number of Delegates, based upon their contributions to the Board of Foreign Missions, to April 10, 1877: Maryland, 14; Virginia, 47; District of Columbia, 4; West Virginia, 1; North Carolina, 17; South Carolina, 27; Georgia, 33; Florida, 15; New York, 1; Alabama, 10; Mississippi, 15; Louisiana, 3; Texas, 8; Tennessee, 6; Kentucky, 37; Missouri, 9; Arkansas, 4. H. A. Turner, Richmond, Va., Cor. Secy.

The pupils of the Judson Institute will give in the Judson Chapel, Friday evening, April 20th, an entertainment consisting of Readings, Recitations and Music. The patrons and friends of the school are invited to attend.

