

John the Baptist's Baptism.

The Baptist was by birth a Jew. He was a prophet, and by divine purpose and calling a prophet and a Nazirite. He was a prophet by announcement of his father's prophecy concerning him; he was a prophet by the call which he received from God; he was a prophet by his own declaration; he was a prophet in the estimation of the Jews; and he was a prophet, and more than a prophet, by the testimony of Christ. He was "more than a prophet," because he was the subject of prophecy, the messenger of the Messiah, and an eyewitness of his atonement as such by the Father. No greater prophet had been born of woman, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than he. This was said of him by Christ, after he had answered the question which was brought to him by John's disciples from their master in prison: "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" It was in the Old Testament sense that the Baptist was a prophet—not in the New. He was the last representative of the law; and on this account the intensely legal. Coming as he did from the desert, wearing camel's hair and a leathern girdle, and living on locusts and wild honey, he looked like the Law. His appearance and habits were severe than his divine successor's; who, himself, has drawn the contrast: "John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." The call of the Baptist was like that which had come to his fellows throughout the dispensation which he closed: "The word of God came unto John, the son of Zachariah, in the wilderness." His preaching too was of the legal kind. Morality was his theme. To the publicans he said, "Exact no more than that which is appointed you," to the soldiers, "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages;" and to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, "Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance."

John's baptism was not Christian baptism; he baptized unto repentance. His baptism sufficed in its place before the advent of divine appointment, but did not suffice for the apostolic days; for instance, Acts 18:26, and the twelve Ephesian disciples, Acts 19:1-7. It appears from Luke 3:21 that Christ was about the last he baptized and that he baptized all the people; but Luke 7:30 excepts the Pharisees and lawyers. There is much reason to believe that many of their voices (whom John baptized) subsequently submitted to baptism, and that they were baptized in the name of Christ. "Crucify him! crucify him!" John was condemned, as he was sent to awaken conscience, by applying the law to daily life, and thus to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. But that preparation was not by means of such a kind that he submitted to baptism, but by the baptism of Christ. His baptism signified reformation and remission, but not "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which is shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." Why, then, did he need no pardon, because he had committed no sin, and was a "runner?" "Suffer it to be so now (as yet), for this is my baptism; to fulfill all righteousness." He had not publicly proclaimed himself, nor had he been attested by his Father, as the Messiah. Moreover he was "made under the law," all the righteousness of which he had fulfilled in his outward, as well as in his inward life; for he was circumcised on the eighth day, and presented in the temple on the fortieth; he was baptized to his parents, and did not enter on his public ministry until he was thirty years old. He doubtless also intended to recognize and sanction the Baptist as his predicted messenger. But the appropriateness and significance of his baptism are seen most clearly in the necessity which was upon him, as the Saviour, to be baptized. He was made like unto his brethren, and as such he was made like unto the Gentiles as well as Jews. He was baptized to fulfill the law, and the form in which he suffered it, for he, who knew no sin, was made sin for us.

The idea that John's baptism was Christian baptism, because Christ submitted to it, is a fallacy. The proof, one already given, is that Christ had to be baptized into his priestly office. It was Christ—not John—who established Christianity. And Christian baptism is both an institution and an illustration of established Christianity. Christian baptism, by its very name, draws its meaning and takes its character from Christ—from Christ alive, from Christ dead, from Christ buried, from Christ risen. Hence it is that he who is baptized into Christ, is baptized into his death, and is 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.

Peter, too, knowing well the difference between repentance and believing, calls baptism "the answer of a good conscience toward God," and he says, "It is the resurrection of Jesus Christ." It is clear, then, that baptism is of God's appointment, and therefore obligatory in its place; but it could not be Christian baptism until the Author of Christianity found it, and submitted to it, before he had shown himself as the Christ. From the time the twelve disciples were called till the day of Pentecost, there is not a single baptism mentioned in connection with believing but once in the gospels, and in that case after the resurrection. Mark 16:16. Their only outward act was announcing with loud voice, "Repent, and be baptized, and ye shall have the forgiveness of sins, and shall inherit the kingdom of heaven."

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Learning Secular Business.

In these days, our churches cannot afford to maintain a single unserviceable minister. The hive needs more working bees; but it has room for none who are inefficient. The commissariat is straitened, so that no man is welcome at the mess who is not worthily forward in the battle. The times are hard with most of our churches; there may be plenty of worldly goods in the hands of the Lord's stewards, but they are not exclusively eager to lay them out. Economy is therefore incumbent upon us, and we are bound to husband our resources for the Lord's sake and the work's sake. Many struggling churches, especially in the rural districts, are unable to support a pastor, and some of them display ability equal if not superior to the average of stipendiary pastors. It is an exceedingly great gain to the community when these brethren add themselves to the memory of the saints. Attending to a store, or an office; driving a plane, or forging a bar; visiting patients, or building houses; they are also intent upon soul-winning, and abundantly successful in it. Some of these gather around them a band of earnest workers, whom they lead on to holy enterprises, while they themselves, so far from being weak, and needing to be supported, are strong enough to support the weak. There is an exceedingly high style and order of Christian ministry; we know of none superior to it. Paul the apostle, pointing to his glory that he earned himself, said that he was chargeable to no man. He would by no means come down from his elevation to the lower level of being supported by the gifts of his fellow Christians. He did not teach that all preachers should belong to this honorable order; on the contrary, he claimed for the giver of spirituals that he should be a receiver of temporal; but he himself personally resolved to belong to the Great Unpaid. He rejoiced that he could say, "Mine own hands have ministered unto me."

With devout thankfulness, we remember many brethren who have taken and still hold high rank among the free lancers of Christ's army; all honor to them; may their shadows never grow less! Instead of being in the ranks, they are upon the heights, not doing less, but more, because they do not belong to "the regular clergy," but are mis-called "laymen," they are deserving of double honor, for to them the church is under special obligation.

We have too frequently noticed a great unrest among this class of brethren; it is evident that many of them think that they are not "wholly in the ministry," and they are not easy in their consciences. To be in the ministry, and yet to be outside of it, is a most uncomfortable condition. This unrest is not so noticeable among the better sort of them, as among the feeble. Those whom we would invite to the paid ministry are usually shy of it, and those whom we would dissuade are the most eager for it. The man has been a tower of strength in the village where he lives; he has preached the word, administered God's ordinances, managed a church, and been looked upon as a father by all around him; but he cannot let well alone; nothing will do but he must undermine his own standing, and ruin his own usefulness by quitting his secular calling, leaving those who esteem him, and casting himself on some church which knows nothing about him; for he is not content with his present people. He comes to ask our advice as to whether he had not better give up his grocery, and become what is called a "regular minister;" as if he had been irregular before. We devoutly wish that the craze had never touched the good man's brain.

A man is earning a living for his wife and family in a town, and having his evenings to spare, he has devoted them to the service of the Lord. His pastor looks upon him as a man highly; he has taken up a neglected district; and worked it well; nobody could do it better; he is a god-send to the region. Suddenly he is bitten with the clerical disease; he looks upon shop-keeping as degradation; he loses the white apron, and longs for the white cravat, which said white cravat he has already donned, but the apron detracts from its starchiness. With or without the advice of others, this brother persists in casting himself upon the churches; and now, instead of a blessing, he is a burden, and the god-send is a hindrance. When it turns out that he is not the leader of the people who have to support him, the support itself scarcely reaches the starvation point, and the man becomes disheartened and useless. It is wonderful what a difference it makes in the estimate of service whether it is remunerated or not; but another thing, by no means astonishing, namely, the different feeling of a man who is giving his work, and of another who is dependent upon the people. It is fine walking when you have a horse at hand, and it is splendid to be a pastor, and to feel that you can fall back upon your own resources. Many a man who has patently with his horse found it rough walking all the rest of his days.

We have just received a letter from a pious but weak person, asking us to give careful attention to a very important and important case. A

dear man (they are always dear men), engaged in business, is the object of solicitude to him as a dear man, that he is bringing up his dear family in a most extraordinary and exemplary manner; but the dear man feels that his calling injures his spirituality, and he wants to get out of it. He is not sure that he has gifts for the ministry, but he had a liking for it when he was a boy in petticoats, and he is quite sure that he would like to have a living in one church or another; he is not particular as to which. If we could give him support for his dear wife and family for a couple of years, the probability is that the dear man would become a burning and a shining light; but it is necessary, first of all, that he should be found for the dear man sufficient for the future education of his dear family, and numerous children. He would then feel that he was called in providence to take the important step of "selling off at a great reduction." We had no difficulty in pronouncing upon the case. So far as we are concerned, this dear man, as valuable as he is unknown, will remain at his unsupplied counter. We have no doubt that the same application will be made to a dozen other ministers, and it is barely possible that some simple brother will consider the dear man's case; but we shall not, for it needs no considering.

If this worthy person thinks that God has called him to preach, let him do so; if the church wants him to give it all his time, let him consider the request; but let him better wait till that request comes. When God's call and the request of a church unitedly press upon a man to renounce his means of livelihood, let him do so in full faith that the Lord will provide. This is a very different case from seeking guarantees, and proposing "to enter the church," and all that nonsense.

It can not now be doubted that much good has been effected in the work undertaken by the State Board. To name the many things well done is not necessary. It is, however, well to consider, how the work of that Board may be more efficiently done. Apprehension has sometimes been felt that quantity had been mistaken for quality in the work that has been done, numbers for strength. The intelligence of the people is often underestimated. A man may know and appreciate good preaching who can not preach. Increased means of knowledge has not been without good results among our membership. They demand a better order of preaching than has been uniformly supplied. This is evidenced by the large number of vacant pulpits in the churches of some of our best associations. The churches hold up a higher standard of pulpit, and the materials are not ready to meet the demand.

As far as possible the State Board must try to meet this growing necessity—this pressing demand. The means furnished, pastors can not be supplied and supported such as the vacant pulpits demand. The Board might group the associations where most work is needed, into about ten districts, and put in each district a good man, full of zeal and knowledge, and fitted to instruct and lead the people. He would not be able perhaps to preach as often as once every month to the churches; but he could spend several days among the membership visiting and teaching, several times during the year. If only eight or ten such men were in the employment of the Board, good salaries could be paid them and good men could be drawn from strong churches for this work. When it is ascertained that able and efficient preachers, owing to the limited support, could be had even when well supported, Baptists will contribute more liberally to ministerial education. Try the plan, brethren.

History of Alabama Baptists.

The Minutes of the Alabama Baptist Convention will show, that a Baptist Historical Society was organized some years ago. No doubt said minutes would all show that little or nothing was done. At a session of the Convention in Marion, I was appointed to collect material in and for the Bigby Association; I did so, and sent it to Dr. Reifweiser who was preparing reports for Cathcart. So ends my report.

Let the olden down History of Alabama Baptists—I is said that they always have too much water in it—three things are necessary: 1. To gather the material to make the history. 2. To select a competent writer. 3. To collect money to defray expenses.

Let the Convention at its next session appoint a committee of one in each association to gather material; also, a committee of one in each association to collect money. These collections of material and money can be made simultaneously. And while these collections are being made, much of the history could be written. Next, let the Convention select and secure the service of a competent writer. Suppose the Convention would select Rev. L. Henderson, D. D.

1. Because he is a ready, forcible and splendid writer, has few equals, and is every way most competent. 2. His knowledge of Alabama dates back to the beginning of Alabama's history. 3. He is in company with the events and lives, etc., of the history to be written. 4. He has now written perhaps more than half of the biography needed for said history. 5. From all these facts, and others that might be named, Dr. Henderson seems to be the man to be appointed by the "eternal King of things." J. C. W.

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The English Word "Baptize."

You ask, "When did the word 'baptize' and its corresponding terms first come into ecclesiastical use; and especially, when were they first used in any version of the New Testament, and what was the acceptance of the word when thus used?" The following quotations from the earliest Latin version of the New Testament, and from the early Church Fathers who wrote in Latin, will show, I think, a full and satisfactory answer. These Latin words, baptizo, baptizans, and baptizatus, called the oldest Latin translation, called the Vulgate, and used in the second century, and properly in the first half of it. The following examples will show in what use these words were then used. Mat. 3:11. Ego quidem baptizo in aqua. I indeed baptize in water. The same verse, Mt. 3:16. Et baptizatus est in Jordanis. And he was baptized in Jordan. He will baptize in the Holy Spirit and in fire. John 1:31. Propter hoc baptizo in aqua. Therefore I baptize in water. John 1:33. Sed qui mittit me baptizo in aqua. 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Woman's Experience.

It is almost wonderful to note the progress made in manufacturing cotton goods through the South in the last decade. This increase in the supply of such articles created a demand for live men to handle them. Strange as it may seem to some of our sister cities, one firm in Selma handles more of the cotton goods manufactured by the celebrated Eagle & Phoenix Mill of Columbus, Ga., than any other house in Alabama. We recall the Oberdorf & Ullman, one of the leading business firms in the South. This firm has built up a trade and made a reputation second to none. With all the capital they can use, they can buy in the best markets and on the best terms, and thereby give their customers the benefit of every advantage. Call and look through their window displays and you do not need a purchase it will be because you do not need anything.

IMPROVED COTTON SEED.—We call attention to the advertisement of Messrs. N. Walcott & Co. of this city. They have secured cotton seed for the season. Walcott & Co. are honorable and reliable gentlemen, and none need hesitate to entrust orders to them through the mails.

We have received from Messrs. N. Walcott & Co., of Louisville, Ky., a fine collection of Lilies, Dahlias and Gloriosa. Judging from our past experience with the plants of this well known firm, we are anticipating a fine floral display in our garden this summer and fall.—[E. T. W.]

The place to buy your DRUGS, The place to buy your LAMPS, The place to buy your GARDEN SEEDS, The place to buy your STAIN PROOFERS, The place to buy your SEED COATS, The place to buy your HAND SOAPS, The place to buy your COOKING OIL, The place to buy your CIGARS, The place to buy your ANYTHING usually kept in a Drug Store.

CATWORTH & COLEMAN, Selma, Ala.

SHE KNEW WHERE THEY WERE.—A young woman relates that she recently sat beside another woman, a stranger to her, in an Old Colony car. As the train passed Quincy the stranger pointed to the crowded benches and said: "I have been here for years in a commonplace town. I've got three of the best husbands I have there ever a woman had."—Taunton Gazette.

Among the little items of personal comfort and convenience are Ayer's Pills. They are the ready remedy which defeat many disorders, if taken in season, and should be kept in every family.

"Is Miss Blank at home?" asked a fault-finder from the back of the girl. The girl took from her pocket a photograph, and scanned it, and after another look at the features of the visitor, answered: "No, sir; she has gone to Europe." He left.—[Philadelphia News.]

W. M. Reed, Elkton, Limestone county, Ala., says: "I have used Brown's Iron Bitters and find it to be a good medicine."

A Michigan man got ahead of a sawlog going down the hill, and says \$10,000 in gold wouldn't hire him to try it again.

The largest assortment of GARDEN SEEDS in Central Alabama, at CATWORTH & COLEMAN'S.

An Iowa editor has lengthy editorial entitled "A Month of Horrors," and he was married about six weeks ago. [Toledo Sunday American.]

Have you a cough? Sleepless nights need no longer trouble you. The use of Ayer's Cherry Pectoral before retiring, will soothe the cough, quiet the inflammation, and allow the needed repose. It will, moreover, speedily heal the pulmonary organs, and give you health.

A New York judge says cigarette smoking is the worst habit of the age. He says that when a young man says he isn't afraid of cigarettes hurting him, he probably knows what he is talking about.—[Boston Transcript.]

OWSON SETS, call and examine and get prices before buying. CATWORTH & COLEMAN.

A child tussling in its sleep indicates worms. An army of them at work eating the victim's blood, and the child is suffering. Vermifuge will destroy them and save its life.

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Three Reasons.

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