

THE BIBLICAL RECORDER.

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THE BIBLICAL RECORDER.

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From the Religious Herald.

Evils of Immersion—No. 1.

As Vindex would find it a hard task to prove the existence of any other mode of baptism than immersion for the first ten centuries after the birth of Christ, it is a matter of especial wonder that he did not ascribe the great apostasy and early corruption of the church, to the prevalence of that mode. The united testimony of all church historians, proves conclusively that immersion was practised throughout the purest ages of Christianity, and sprinkling or pouring was not introduced until the church had become thoroughly Romanized; and that, in every age, those Christians who contended for a pure Christianity, by whatever name known, Montanists, Donatists, Paulicians, Paterines, Caidos, Albigenses, Waldenses, Lollards, &c., down to the Reformation, immersed. If the mode had continued to engender the errors of Romanism, according to Vindex's theory, the introduction of sprinkling ought to have exercised a salutary influence in removing its errors, and bringing it back to apostolic purity.

The bowl, as Wall asserts, was first used by Calvin, and by him was sprinkling introduced. His disciple, John Knox, the founder of Scotch Presbyterianism, introduced it into that country. Presbyterians, therefore, are the chief patrons and supporters of sprinkling. They entertain a most serious repugnance to going down into the water, and in many cases, prefer losing a member rather than perform so disagreeable a task. Vindex, we presume, would admit that they, at least, are entirely free from the sad delusion in which immersion binds its victims. Sprinkling being happily free from such an evil, we might well presume that the Scotch Presbyterian church would ever exhibit a lively pattern of primitive christianity; that no such delusions as Vindex charges on the Baptists would ever sully its lustre, or dim its purity. What says history? Sprinkling failed to preserve it a pure church: it is a church of regenerated and professed Christians. Time after time the statement has been made, that a large portion of its ministers were mere formalists destitute of the life and power of religion. The number has been variously estimated at from two-thirds to three-fourths. This was, probably, an exaggeration—but the number was, and is, very large. The Free church is supposed to have carried off nearly all the evangelical or converted portion. And what was true of the ministry was equally true of the members. It may be pleaded as an excuse, that the alliance with the State induced this sad delusion. Yet, a pure mode, with a baptism, the sign and seal of regeneration, ought to have counteracted the evils of this alliance. With such that is lovely and of good report, there is still a large aggregate of formal profession in the Scotch Presbyterian church.

In Ireland, its condition was still more deplorable. A few years ago, a large number, probably a majority of the Presbyterian churches, had embraced Unitarianism; and the orthodox churches, as the only way to preserve themselves from the contagion, withdrew and formed a separate body. Except in the three Northern Counties, fifty years ago, there was scarcely a Presbyterian church to be found in England free from Unitarianism. Ministers and members emigrating from the North of Ireland and Scotland, brought to the U. S. this formal, anti-evangelical spirit. Some of the Maryland churches strongly exhibited this characteristic; their religious profession forming no barrier with many members, to participating in worldly pleasures and amusements. A member of a Presbyterian church in Baltimore stated to the writer, that when he joined the church, he could not find one member who professed to have experienced a change of heart! Owing to the labors of a faithful minister, a most happy reform has since taken place. If immersion, then, has been the unhappy parent of delusion in the Baptist church, sprinkling has not preserved the Presbyterian from so grievous errors.

Geneva, the birth place of Presbyterianism, and where sprinkling was first brought into fashion, was not preserved by its use from falling into Unitarianism and Universalism. Evangelical religion had become extinct, and so remained until a little heaven was thrown into the lifeless mass of the Baptist Haldane. Through his labors, John D'Aubigne, Monod and others, were restored to a knowledge of the truth; and high

was enkindled, whose radiance has been felt throughout Europe.

The following is the last paragraph of this notable production of Vindex:

From time to time, as leisure may serve, the writer hopes to be able to present to the Christian public, some of the other Evils of Immersion, as objects of warning, of pity, and of prayer. If the reader will cast his eye forward to the list: Campbellism, Thomasism, Ironsideism, rejection of the Old Testament, Close Communion, stunted progress in knowledge, the great ignorance of masses, servitude to ordinances, and others still, he will have patience till each can be reached in its season.

Campbellism is the first on the list. Elder C. was a Presbyterian minister before he joined the Baptists, and his baptismal remission, we presume, he brought with him, and still adheres to, as his views do not go beyond the Confession.—We can only divide the honor—if he learned immersion from us, he is indebted for remission to the Presbyterians. We clear the skirt of our garments of Thomasism; he went out from the Reformers; but, we think Irvingism, the offspring of Presbyterianism, is a very fair offset. Ironsideism does not owe its peculiarities to immersion. That is a secondary matter with them—election, predestination, foreknowledge, are their favorite dogmas, for which they are equally strenuous as the more orthodox Presbyterians; and they bear about the same relation to the Baptist church as the Covenanters, and those seceders from the Presbyterian church, who use only Rouse's version of the Psalms, do to the Presbyterians. Rejection of the Old Testament why not add the New, too? there would be as much truth in one as the other. Does Vindex himself believe this incredible tale? (Close Communion. Infant baptism, rather than immersion, is the stumbling-block in the way. Servitude to ordinances! Did Vindex never meet with a Presbyterian mother, who, when her babe was sick, could not be satisfied until it was sprinkled—dreading above all other things that it should die without baptism? If he has not, we have.

At one period, during the present century, the Whig party in England claimed the possession of a far larger share of talent and ability than their adversaries. This gave rise to much ridicule, and to the nick-name of "all talents." It has ever been a favorite theme with Presbyterian writers to extol their own ability, talents and learning, and to deny those gifts to the Baptists. A worthy pupil of this school, Vindex descends with evident self-complacency and siffiancy on "the stunted progress in knowledge—the great ignorance of the masses" in the Baptist church. Without better proof, we might reasonably doubt the competency of our judge, and prefer resorting to a less bigotted and prejudiced tribunal. But we are willing to waive this point, and to enter our plea in abatement. We admit freely, then, that many of our ministers are not educated men; have not been to College; know neither Latin nor Greek. These, we believe, are indispensable requisites in the Presbyterian ministry. In the Northern States we have few uneducated ministers—in the South and West, many. The pioneers of the Baptist church in this State, were men of little learning; but possessing good abilities and ardent piety, the Lord blessed their labors, and churches were multiplied. They needed pastors and could not wait until the preachers had gone through a protracted course of study. Multitudes were every where perishing for lack of knowledge, and every one that could point them to the Saviour of sinners, was needed for immediate service, whether fully qualified or not.—Had we repelled men, apt to teach, faithful, pious and laboring, we should probably at this day have as few churches and members as the Presbyterians. We could not learn from the New Testament that a knowledge of Latin and Greek, or a theological training, was an indispensable requisite to preaching the gospel. We value learning as highly as others, and hope at no distant day to be able to send into the harvest only well-disciplined and cultivated men. But we prefer at present sending out godly men, competent to instruct, if unacquainted with any language but their own, rather than souls should perish, or churches die for want of preachers. A man may have passed through College with little profit, and with no qualifications to instruct others. We have known in our day Presbyterian ministers versed in Latin, Greek and Hebrew, yet very poor preachers—having no aptness to teach. On the other hand, we have had men who set their mark on the age, richly endowed and eminently useful, who were never at College. Bunyan, Andrew Fuller, Booth, the elder Hall, Andrew Broaddus, Baldwin, &c.

Whilst we have many uneducated ministers, we have an aggregate of educated men, fully equal to the combined host of the Presbyterian church; and sufficient to redeem us from the charge of inferiority. Can they furnish an equal to Wayland? Have they a more brilliant writer than Williams? Have they furnished classical text-books for schools equal to those of Drs. Conant and Kendrick? Have they any superiors in German and classical literature to Dr. Sears and Dr. Chase; or in the South able writers or scholars, than Drs. Curtis, Johnson, Fuller, Reynolds, Dagg, Manly, &c., and Howell? Have their commentators evinced more critical acumen, than Ripley, Hackett and J. N. Brown? We refer to the Presbyterian apart from the Congregational church.

Our progress in knowledge is stunted, says Vindex, and he has constituted himself our censor and judge. Within the last twenty-five years we have founded twenty Colleges and theological institutions, besides about ten endowed Female institutes of a high order; have formed two domestic missionary societies, two Publication societies, two Bible societies, a foreign mission society, and an Indian mission society. We have increased four-fold our foreign mission contributions, ten-fold our domestic mission contributions; have published a number of works, penned by our own writers, and have distributed them extensively among our members. Though our progress has not been such as we could have wished, yet we think it will fully compare with that made by the Presbyterian church; and if we could have come up to what Vindex might have deemed an unstunted progress, we should have left it far behind.

Ignorance of the masses! Very complimentary, truly. It is quite probable that we have a larger proportion of the poorer classes of society in our churches, than are found in the Presbyterian. The poor are to have the gospel preached to them, and we aim to fulfil the injunction. We invite them to our meetings—houses, try to afford them good accommodation, and to preach the gospel to them with plainness and simplicity.—The result is that many of them join our churches. But ignorance is not always the necessary adjunct of poverty. Though not versed in scholastic lore, the man who earns his daily bread by the sweat of his brow, may be a man of good mind, sound judgment and fair intelligence. It is such men, though poor as regards worldly substance, that most value and appreciate the gospel. A home-spun coat is no index to the capacity of the intellect. A russet gown may cover the exterior of a pious and intelligent female; whilst the world has seen many a learned dame and wealthy dotard. But the majority of our membership in this State will well compare with that of the Presbyterian or any other church.—It comprises the bone and sinew of our land; the surest supports and firmest reliances of our country. They are planters or farmers, living on their own land.—Men, if not classically educated, (though many are,) well-instructed, active, industrious, intelligent, and with means sufficiently ample to provide well for their families, and to educate their children. We wish no better or wealthier members. We are not without lawyers, have a fair share of physicians and other professional men. We had a respectable quota of representatives in the Convention; and in one county a few years ago, every magistrate on the bench, every militia officer, of the higher grades, and all the lawyers, were members of the Baptist church. We need only more piety, more united effort, more liberality, to make us, despite all the ignorance and stunted progress, imputed to us by Vindex, to place us in the vanguard of the Presbyterian or any other church in this State.

Are Premiums Bets?

The following Series of Premiums offered by Mr. Anderson, (a Protestant,) and his friends in England to Catholics, appeared in the English papers lately, and have been copied into the American and Foreign Christian Union, the organ of the Union and Evangelical Alliance, edited by Dr. Baird and others, Pedobaptist Protestants. So it is decided that Pedobaptists, neither in this country nor England, consider, Premiums offered for Scriptures to sustain doctrines or practices as bets, or the offering of them as betting or "gambling,"—or at least when offered by them to Catholics—though they consider them so when offered by Baptists to them! Circumstances alter cases. Here are the premiums and challenge:

CHALLENGE TO ROMAN CATHOLICS.

- £100 to any one for one passage in the Bible in which "Baptizo" in the Septuagint or New Testament is translated in our version by sprinkle or pour upon.
- £100 to any one producing Scripture to prove that the peculiar form of Church organization and government were left to the discretion of Christians in any age, or ages after Christ.
- £100, that Christians, as individuals, or as Churches, have a right to change the ordinances or externals of religion, as taught in the New Testament, in the least, whether in substance or form, by addition, diminution, change, or substitution.
- To EPISCOPALIANS.
- The following premiums are offered to any one producing plain Scriptural proof.
- £100 for the polity of the Episcopal Church.
- £100 for the six orders of officers found in that Church: Archbishops, Bishops, Dean, Curate or Vicar, Priest and Deacon.
- £100 for god-fathers and god-mothers, or sponsors to officiate at baptism.
- £100 for two baptisms, one of unbelieving infants, and the one of believing adults.
- £100 that infants or others, in their baptism, are "made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven."—(See Catechism or Book of Common Prayer.)
- £100 for Confirmation, as taught and observed by this Church.
- £100 for communion of the sick, as held and taught by this Church.
- £100 for reading prayers privately or in churches, instead of praying.
- £100 for the union of Church and State, and for a King or Queen to be the head of the Church.
- £100 for the religious observance of "Easter" as a festival or holiday in the Christian Church.

£100 for any passage of Scripture authorizing the Church of Rome to grant indulgences for sin.

£100 for the production of any article of divine faith necessary to salvation which cannot be read on or proved by the Bible.

At a time like the present, when the Roman Catholic priests are so eagerly looking after property—kidnapping young ladies of fortune into nunneries—extorting money from their deluded votaries on their death-beds—turning their chapels into theatres—bringing Irish actors on the stage to raise funds, the above is a fair opportunity of filling their coffers if they have truth on their side, as the rewards stated will be given on compliance with the conditions.

Mr. Atkinson challenges Dr. Cahill, or any other Roman Catholic priest or layman, to PUBLIC DISCUSSION on the above subjects.

Nor have Pedobaptists in England alone offered rewards for Scripture proof, but also in this country. The following appeared in the Watchman and Observer, a Presbyterian paper at Richmond, Va., and is offered by Presbyterians.

£100 reward to any Roman Catholic, who will find in the New Testament, a single instance of auricular confession to either priest or apostle.

£200 reward to any Roman Catholic who will point out a single passage in the Scriptures, which states that the Bishops of Rome, either as the successors of St. Peter, or in any other character, were to be in their succession the Heads of the Universal Church.

£300 reward to any Roman Catholic who will prove from the Scriptures, that the use of images was recommended either by Christ or his Apostles.

£400 reward to any Roman Catholic who will show by the Scriptures, that Christian bishops and priests are forbidden to marry?

Now, since their own practice fully vindicates them from the premium offered some three years since, and as it seems to be a great weapon with Protestants, against Catholics, I will also offer a few premiums to Pedobaptists, for Scriptures, to sustain some of the papal and protestant traditions they perpetuate. If it is not wrong in them it cannot be in me.

To ALL PEDOBAPTIST CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS.

1st, I will renew the grand premium offered some years since.

£1,000 for a passage in the Bible affording a plain precept for, or example of, Infant Sprinkling for Christian baptism.

£500 to any one who will furnish a solitary passage, usually relied on, or quoted by Pedobaptists to prove infant baptism, which has not been denied as authority for the practice by eminent and standard Pedobaptist divines.

£100 to any one who will produce, from standard historians, a solitary instance of infant baptism among Christians, (some heathen nations having practised it before the coming of Christ,) before the third century.

£100 to any one who will produce an instance of pouring or sprinkling among Christians, before the third century.

£100 to any one who will produce Scriptural authority, to prove that the visible Christian Church, as organized by Jesus Christ, is an institution identical with the Jewish commonwealth—or nation—once called "the Church in the Wilderness?"

£100 to any one producing Scriptural authority, to prove that baptism comes in the room or place of circumcision.

£100 to any one for one passage in the Bible in which "Baptizo" in the Septuagint or New Testament is translated in our version by sprinkle or pour upon.

£100 to any one producing Scripture to prove that the peculiar form of Church organization and government were left to the discretion of Christians in any age, or ages after Christ.

£100, that Christians, as individuals, or as Churches, have a right to change the ordinances or externals of religion, as taught in the New Testament, in the least, whether in substance or form, by addition, diminution, change, or substitution.

To EPISCOPALIANS. The following premiums are offered to any one producing plain Scriptural proof.

To PRESBYTERIANS. We offer the following premiums to any one producing plain scriptural proof.

£100 for Church government as held by them.

£100 for proof that the government of the Presbyterian church is democratic or republican.

£100 for a bench of "Ruling Elders," ruling the Church—"by the grace of God."

£100 that baptism is a sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace, of ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration or remission, (See Presbyterian Confession for this.)

£100 that infants of believers are born "holy," or

£100 that they are born into, or members of, the Church.

£100 that the servants, young or old, of believers, ought not to be baptized and taken into the Church, if the children of believers have the right.

£100 that all the members of a Christian Church have not an equal right to the supper and all its privilege, and that the infants and servants of the Presbyterian Church have not an equal right to the "supper" as the other members.

To METHODISTS. I offer the following premiums for plain Scriptural proof.

£100 for the polity of the Methodist E. Church.

£100 for proof, from reason or revelation, that the government of the Methodist E. Church is not a "clerical aristocracy—in the administration of which the people have no voice." (Extract from speech of Hon. R. Johnson,) a religious despotism, and its tendency dangerous to the permanency of our republican and free institutions.

£100 for its legislative power.

£100 for the authority vested in the Church of Christ to exclude its members when there is no violation of Scripture, or even immorality, as Methodists do for refusing to attend "Class"—a man's tradition.

£100 for admitting seekers, unregenerate persons into the Church.

£100 for receiving members on probation of six months, and admitting unbaptized probationers and seekers, and even unregenerate persons, as such, to partake of the Lord's Supper as a "means of grace."

£100 for "Love-Feasts," as held by Methodists.

£100 that the ministers of the Church have the exclusive right to receive and exclude members without the voice of the laity.

£100 for superior and inferior orders of ministers, such as Bishops, Presiding Elders, Elders, &c., and for the inferior minister to swear allegiance and obedience to his superior—governor.

£100 to any Methodist, who will prove from the Discipline, and Bishop Hedding on the administration of the Discipline, that the Methodist Episcopal Societies are open or free in communion, or that a Methodist minister can give a general invitation to all other professed Christian churches without examination or question, without knowingly violating the express law of his society governing the administration of the supper, as well as the general rules and duties of preachers, which he pledges himself, in common with every other Methodist, when received into the society to enjoy.

£100 to any one who can prove that the doctrine of baptismal regeneration is not taught in Wesley's Works, Doctrinal Tracts, and Methodist Discipline.

To CAMPBELLITES. £100 for reason or revelation, to prove that no person can be pardoned, regenerated, justified or saved in heaven, unless immersed in water, and that too, in the belief and for the intent, that the efficacy of Christ's blood is brought in contact with his conscience, while buried in the water," as taught by Mr. Campbell and the writers of the current Reformation.

If any one of the above premiums is claimed, the authority shall be presented and discussed before an impartial jury of six persons, mutually selected by the parties, and the law governing trials by jury, to regulate the decision, the party so claiming, furnishing the authority he relies upon, to the defendant at least one month before the discussion.

J. R. GRAVES,

Editor "Tenn. Baptist," Nashville.

Additional and Important Evidence.

(From the London Encyclopedia, Vol. 3.)

Baptism, Baptizo. Derived from the Greek Bapto and Baptize. The primary meaning is to dip, to plunge, to immerge. Protestant Christians use it strictly in its primary sense, or with greater latitude of meaning, according to their respective tenets, on the subject of the rite of baptism, as an ordinance of Christianity. It is sometimes employed figuratively, to express overwhelming sorrows, the covering of the earth by the dews of heaven; and the sacred influence of the Spirit of God in cleansing the heart.

(From the Encyclopedia Metropolitana, London.)

Whether immersion only was the mode of using this sacramental symbol is a question which need not detain the enquirer, since he will doubtless, in conformity with certain principles already established, perceive at once, that to smother departure from apostolic custom, as may be sup-

A Strange Thing.

Even the wise virgins slumbered and slept.—As sinners sleep in their sins, so Christians sometimes sleep over their duty. This is a strange thing. It is strange, if we consider what has been done for them. God has loved them with an everlasting love. For them the Saviour has died. The Holy Ghost has been sent down from heaven to renew their hearts and lead them to Christ. They have been made alive from the dead, and been made not only children, but heirs of God. And how can they sleep, for whom so much has been done?

It is strange, if we consider their professions.—They have subscribed with their own hands unto the Lord, acknowledged his right to them, vowed to be his. When convinced of their sins, and brought to feel their need of Christ, they bowed to his sceptre, and made a full surrender to him. They kept back nothing then; they made no reserve. And when they stood up in the great congregation, to profess their faith in Christ, there was no reserve made in their dedication to him who bled for them. And often since they have repeated their vows, and said we will serve the Lord. Yet after all, they fall asleep, and this may well excite astonishment.

It is strange if we consider their circumstances. They are engaged in a warfare. "Hell and their sins resist their course," and yet they sleep on the field of battle, and when their leader cries to arms! they are surrounded with temptations; within them are the remnants of corruption, without and around them the seductions and allurements of the world; they need to watch and pray, and yet they sleep! they are the salt of the earth, the light of the world, and stand in the most solemn relations to the cause of Christ and to perishing men; they are under the strongest obligations to be ever vigilant and active. On them is suspended, instrumentally, the salvation of souls and the conversion of the world! How then can they sleep? How strange that they can slumber, with the weight of a world resting upon their shoulders, with the destiny of immortals suspended upon their zeal and watchfulness! Christians sleep! It is a strange thing!—Home and Foreign Record.

Preparation for Death.

When you lie down at night; compose your spirit as if you were not to awake till the heavens be no more. And when you awake in the morning, consider that new day as your last, and live accordingly. Surely that night cometh, of which you will never see the morning; or that morning of which you will never see the night; but which of your mornings or nights will be such, you know not. Let the mantle of worldly enjoyments hang loose about you, that it may be easily dropped when death comes to carry you into another world. When the corn is forsaking the ground, it is ready for the sickle; when the fruit is ripe, it falls off the tree easily. So when a Christian's heart is truly wroth from the world, he is prepared for death, and it will be the more easy for him. A heart disengaged from the world is a heavenly one, and then we are ready for heaven, when our heart is there before us.—Burton.

What Changes.

The New York Recorder says: "God's ways are not as our ways." The discovery of gold in the West is to be the cause of the first effectual inroad upon the crystallized civilization of the Chinese.

We firmly believe that the immigration now going on from China to California, will have the effect to make an entire revolution in the habits of the Chinese living upon the coasts of the empire. By a strange movement of God's providence, we are thronged by the Irish and Germans on the one side of the continent, and the Chinese on the other. The duty of the Christian in view of these facts, is obvious. In a few years the countless thousands to whom we send missionaries of the cross will be at our own doors, a part of our body politic, contributing their share to our moral and intellectual life.

The True Christian.

No man ought to think he hath found peace, when nothing troubles him; nor that all is well, because every thing is according to his mind; nor that he is a holy person, because he prays with great sweetness and comfort. But he is at peace who is reconciled to God; and God loves him when he hath overcome himself; and all is well when nothing pleases him but God, being thankful in the midst of his afflictions; and he is holy, who, when he hath lost his comfort, loses nothing of his duty, but still the same when God changes his face towards him.—Jeremy Taylor.

When do we know Christ?—When we think as Christ thought, do as Christ did, live as he lived, when like him, we are patient, meek and humble, about our father's business are heavenly minded, when like him, our wills are lost in the will of God; when our sympathies with the suffering, raise the fallen, comfort the afflicted, forgive as we hope to be forgiven; when we feel thus, and do thus, then we know Christ; then we are united to him, as the branch is united to the vine; then we know what it is to have our lives hid with Christ in God.