





THE CONSTITUTION OF BAPTIST CHURCHES.

AS DISTINGUISHED FROM THAT OF ALL OTHER CHURCHES.

The church of Christ is His kingdom; its constitution is divine; and it is His will that it should be perfect in its plan. To alter it is to violate His law; and it is more to slight God's command, to interfere with His reign. Thus, the church of Christ is His kingdom; its constitution is divine; and it is His will that it should be perfect in its plan.

But in Protestant churches, many persons are received to membership without evidence of their conversion. In the Episcopal and Presbyterian establishments, and of some of the bodies formed by those who have seceded from them, persons are received to full membership without evidence of their conversion, and though the Congregationalists require proof of conversion before receiving persons to the Lord's table, and to full membership, they mostly regard infants, and unconverted persons, when baptized, as members of inferior degree. The Westminster Confession of Faith speaks of the members of churches as being "born within the church. Some Independents differ from this view, but very many of them regard both infants and unconverted persons, when baptized, as members of the church of Christ.—(See Dr. Wardlaw and Dr. Campbell.)

Baptist churches, on the contrary, receive as members, those only who give credible evidence of their conversion; they do not acknowledge as members, or as communicants, those who have no visible connection with the church of Christ.—Acts ii: 41; 1 Cor. iii: 15, 17.

II. Baptist churches (strictly so called) regard it as Christ's will, that all believers should be baptized. The New Testament churches consisted of baptized believers. Peter said to believers on the day of Pentecost, "Be baptized every one of you, and they were baptized."—Acts ii: 41; see also, x: 48. So that the Baptist churches are, in this respect, "followers of the church of God, as first founded by Christ and His apostles.—1 Thess. ii: 14.

But in doing so they differ from all other churches; for the Quakers, who reject baptism, and the Peloponnesians, who substitute another rite for the immersion of believers, and from all open communions, whether Baptist or Peloponnesian, who admit persons without being baptized at all; instead of requiring, as the apostles and first churches did, that all believers should be baptized before being received to membership and communion. Christ has given to His churches no dispensation, in His laws; no latitude; power to make new ones; but has enjoined on them to "observe all things whatsoever He has commanded." (Matt. xxviii: 20; and) "if ever tempted to neglect His laws, "to obey God rather than men."—Acts v: 29.

III. Baptist churches regard it as Christ's will that all church members should be voluntary members; that none should be made members, either against their will, or without their knowledge. God is a Spirit, and those who worship Him must do so in spirit and in truth. (John iv: 24); their service must be of love, faith and obedience.—1 Cor. xiii: 1; Rom. xiv: 23; Rom. xvi: 26. They must "will themselves unto God, as those who are alive from the dead."—Rom. vi: 13. In every part of their service they must have a willing heart. (2 Cor. viii: 12; Matt. first give themselves to the Lord, and then to the church, by the will of God.—2 Cor. viii: 5.

But this voluntary membership is opposed to the communion used by many national establishments, and to the fines, imprisonment, or worse penalties, by which membership has been enforced; it is equally opposed to the initiation of unconverted infants by baptism; and to membership by birth.

IV. Baptist churches maintain that Christ requires holy activity in every member. Church members are spoken of in Scripture as "living stones," forming part of "a spiritual house," which is devoted to God.—1 Pet. ii: 5. The young are to be instructed, (Eph. vi: 4); the unlearned, the feeble-minded, comforted, the weak supported, (1 Thess. v: 14); those who are despised, rejected with those who weep, sympathized with, those who are hated, visited, (Jas. i: 27. To the ungodly the gospel is to be made known, (1 Thess. i: 8); and good done to all men.—Gal. vi: 10. In some part of these labors all the members of Baptist churches are engaged. But the dead members of worldly communions are not even the nominal members of any Peloponnesian churches. They can have no part nor lot in the matter.

V. Baptist churches believe it to be Christ's will, that what is spent in His service should be given with a willing heart, and that every church member who is able, should thus give. When making a collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, the apostle says, "As I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye; upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as he hath prospered."—1 Cor. xvi: 2. This injunction shows that it is the duty of every church member to contribute as he is able. And the apostle says, "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath;—showing that a willing mind is essential to make such an offering to God." Church members are to "abound in the grace of rich and liberal giving to the cause of Christ."—2 Cor. viii: 12. The saints cannot thus give, and payments by contribution, as in State Churches, are not a gift to all.—2 Cor. viii: 4.

VI. Baptist churches regard it as Christ's will, that all his churches should be separate and distinct from the world, and from each other. They who have been baptized at their own desire, as a profession of faith, makes a real and visible distinction between the church and the world; but infant membership, by departing from this rule, blurs the line, and the world of the church, and the church of the world. The baptism of infants, and the church, are not the church and the world. But with the apostle says, "What communion hath light with darkness?—What fellowship hath light with darkness?—Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."—2 Cor. vi: 17, 18.

Correspondence.

REGENERATION BY BAPTISM—No. 2.

DEAR BAPTIST: A few days ago I forwarded you an article for publication, headed "The Sin Against the Holy Ghost," by which I endeavored to show, and think I did fairly demonstrate, that there are those among us, and that not a few in number, who are guilty of this most dreadful and damning sin.

I think I do not assume too much in saying that most, if not all Protestants agree and unite in teaching that the ponderous and imposing superstructure of Romanism is that "mystery of iniquity" which began to work in the days of the Apostles, and which, step by step, through the lapse of many ages made bold and rapid progress in corrupting the principles and doctrines of the holy religion of Christ, as taught in the New Testament, until it attained to its present magnitude and power, which is upheld and sustained "by principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places."

This power for evil, which has for its head "the beast of seven heads and ten horns," has in numerous instances made void the law of God in order to keep, uphold and enforce its own traditions. God's revealed word to man shows, as I proved in my former article, that the human family are dead in trespasses and in sins, and that according to the scriptures nothing short of the power of the Holy Spirit (whereby Christ was quickened and raised from the dead) can bring them to the possession and enjoyment of newness of life and consequent fitness for heaven. This corrupt power, designated in the Scriptures as "the man of sin and son of perdition," has ignored and set aside the work of the Spirit in regeneration by assuming that the new creation of the soul is obtained in baptism, which they confer upon unconscious babes who grow up to maturity under the persuasion and belief that they have in this way been made the children of God! A fatal delusion!

This is what our Lord Jesus Christ, in His communications with John in the Isle of Patmos, denominated the mark of the beast, and speaks of it in bitter terms of reproach and condemnation. This is the religious insignia of "the beast" given in the head, or in the hand, or in both, and seals his votaries to his interests during life.

Now this *mark*—for I can call the delusion by no other name—sets aside and repudiates (as far as human agency can do it) the operation and work of the Spirit in the important matter of salvation by this wretched substitute, the invention of men.

In this matter of error and wrong, the perpetrators and abettors become involved in two heinous crimes: First, the denial of the Holy Spirit's work in regeneration; and secondly, by presuming to invest baptism with saving power, they become involved in the sin of idolatry. For, as I showed in my former article, salvation is of God by the Spirit, and he has not invested baptism or any other ordinance with saving power. Therefore, the assumption is rank idolatry. Baptism, like the ordinances of the passover and supper, is only commemorative or declarative of God's work, and not procurative of it. Hence the criminality of those who practise it as a savior.

About forty years ago a new sect sprung up among us, the leader and founder of which pretended that the true gospel had been lost and buried for many centuries in the rubbish of antiquity, and that he then succeeded in disintering it. This bold reformer, as he then called himself, together with his warm and rancid coalitions, invested the old doctrine of "baptismal regeneration" with a new phrase, viz that of coupling a historic believer with it. He and they teach that before baptism mankind are in a state of condemnation; but after baptism they are pardoned, sanctified, reconciled, adopted and saved! Can Rome beat this in rankness of corruption? I think not. For when we consider the light which has been shed upon this subject during the present age, the error of the Campbellites throws the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation, worship of idols and purgatorial redemption away back in the shade. But those bold, self-confident reformers demand a hearing, and confident that they are right, ask, "Has not the inspired Apostle Peter said that baptism saves us?" Let us see: Peter 21. "The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us." The salvation we have is in a figure; and if only in a figure, how can it possibly be the fact or cause of it? Is it not as absurd and as fallacious as if we were to say the shadow of a tree is the tree itself?

But what follows in immediate connexion shows most unequivocally that there is no saving power in baptism;—not the putting away the filth of the flesh;—as Paul expresses it in the 7th chapter of 2d Cor., "the filthiness of the

flesh and spirit"—but the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

So the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the procuring cause of our salvation, of which baptism is emblematical, or "the figure," having reference to the salvation of Noah and his family in a wooden ark, the type of Christ, the true ark of safety and salvation.

Washington was born, and what mighty events and changes have characterized that cycle of years! So in the interim between the time of the Apostles and the fourth century, who knows how many records of the Scriptures were destroyed by flames or floods, or the hate of infidels. I repeat, let the "doxology remain where Jesus put it.

Bro. Broadbald waxes warm, and pours the following: "The same brother complains that Brother Hooper and myself have been content to express different opinions about the proper translation of a certain Greek tense, while what the people want is reasons, reasons, reasons. Does he think the people want the *Herold* to contain elaborate treatises on the syntax of the Greek verb?"

Certainly not, my brother. I would not disgrace the *Herold* with such "treatises," any more than I would burden its columns with the "result of things," expressed *ex cathedra*. I still think that a few "reasons" ought to have accompanied certain statements which "J. A. B." made with reference to this revision of the New Testament. If it is in all respects as good as he represents it, it ought to supplant the common version at once; but even the "general reader" would hesitate to do this on the written declaration of a brother, however wise and scholarly he may be.

With reference to Dr. Hooper I must say, that he *did* give "reasons" for differing from "J. A. B." with regard to "a certain Greek tense."

These reasons "J. A. B." has never tried to answer or set aside. Now, as Dr. Hooper is quite at home in the Greek, and is regarded by those who know him best as a modern Person in that line, it is scarcely satisfactory to dispose of his verdict in the case by the simple declaration of a disagreement.

With reference to the readers of the *Herold* desiring his treatises on Greek and Sanskrit, "J. A. B." concludes thus: "I somewhat doubt whether they do. It may even be that some readers think the paper has been having too much about Greek, and are hoping that the present writer, for example, if he must continue to write, will some of these months leave the Revised New Testament, and find a different subject—which hope I would not wholly discourage.

I am willing to give him all the benefit of his "doubt," nor would I encourage him to write on the "Revised New Testament," against his belief that the readers of the *Herold* might prefer "a different subject."

In conclusion, I wish to answer him, that the "brother writing from Virginia to another paper," was prompted to do so from no other motive than a desire of promoting truth.

THE INDIVIDUALITY OF GOD'S REQUIREMENTS. How very hard it is, for us to feel that the requirements of God, are of individual application. There are many who do not realize this; because, they worship God by proxy. It is of vast importance that we individually feel that we are personally accountable to God. We are prone to consider the commands of God more applicable to others than to us. We overlook the personality of the scriptures. Though the scriptures were written hundreds of years ago, they are just as obligatory as if God now spoke them to us in an audible voice. What is the first duty that God requires of us? It is to search the scriptures and learn his will. This is the primary duty of all. We should become acquainted with the Bible for ourselves. We ought to know the will of our Heavenly Father. We can learn his will only from the Bible. It is the individual duty of every one to search the scriptures, and know what God requires him to do. Parents should educate their children that they may be able to do this. How criminal it is to neglect this important duty. We ought to believe all the Bible teaches. It is our duty to believe, even where we cannot comprehend. A thorough comprehension is not necessary to a cordial belief. If we fail to search and believe the scriptures for ourselves it will never be done, because no one else can do it for us. It is a shame that the masses of Christians practically know so little about the scriptures. This may result from the fact, that they do not realize it to be their individual duty to study them. A knowledge and a belief of the Bible are necessary to repentance. The first thing that we learn in God's will, for us to do, is to repent. John comes preaching repentance. His heart was in his work. He told the weight of his responsibility. He earnestly urged the people to repent. The first thing that Jesus preached was repentance. He knew what was the first thing necessary for the people. By his authority the apostles went forth and preached that men should repent. Repentance is both the gift of God and the act of the creature. The power necessary to repent is God's. The act of repenting is man's. Repentance is purely a personal duty. John, Christ and the apostles thus understood and preached it. Every one must repent for himself. None on earth or in heaven can repent for him.

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He whose life is hid with Christ in God, may suffer injustice from the conduct or words of another, but he can never suffer loss. He sees the hand of God in everything. He knows that everything which takes place has either a direct or indirect relation to his present state, and is designed for his benefit. "All things work together for his good."

God requires us to be baptized. Repentance and faith have reference to the internal man. Baptism is a declaration of our faith in Christ. By it we declare our allegiance to a buried, risen and ascended Savior. It is the only monument the world has to establish the truth of Christ's resurrection. What mighty efforts the world has, and is putting forth, to destroy this glorious monument. The Lord's supper and baptism stand as a "Boaz and Jachin." They will never be overthrown. Let us know and feel that religion is absolutely a personal thing. It is not a family concern; neither is it of hereditary descent. Every one of us must give an account of himself to God. Let us live to please God. Repentance, faith and baptism are as such individual duties as eating or sleeping. Let us realize that we have a God to serve, a soul to save and a heaven to gain.

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Business Department.

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He whose life is hid with Christ in God, may suffer injustice from the conduct or words of another, but he can never suffer loss. He sees the hand of God in everything. He knows that everything which takes place has either a direct or indirect relation to his present state, and is designed for his benefit. "All things work together for his good."

God requires us to be baptized. Repentance and faith have reference to the internal man. Baptism is a declaration of our faith in Christ. By it we declare our allegiance to a buried, risen and ascended Savior. It is the only monument the world has to establish the truth of Christ's resurrection. What mighty efforts the world has, and is putting forth, to destroy this glorious monument. The Lord's supper and baptism stand as a "Boaz and Jachin." They will never be overthrown. Let us know and feel that religion is absolutely a personal thing. It is not a family concern; neither is it of hereditary descent. Every one of us must give an account of himself to God. Let us live to please God. Repentance, faith and baptism are as such individual duties as eating or sleeping. Let us realize that we have a God to serve, a soul to save and a heaven to gain.

Business Department.

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W. E. F.

SONG—"LEAF BY LEAF." Leaf by leaf the roses fall, Drop by drop the stream runs by One by one beyond recall— Summer's beauties fade and die, But the roses bloom again, And the spring will gush anew, In the pleasant April rain, And the summer sun and dew, So in hours of deepest gloom, When the springs of gladness fall, And the roses in their bloom, Drop like maidens wan and pale, We shall find some hope that lies Like a silent gem apart, Hidden far from careless eyes, In the garden of the heart. Some sweet hope to gladness wed, That will spring fresh and new, When grief's winter shall have fled— Giving place to the rain and dew— Some sweet hope that breathes of spring, Through the weary time, Bidding for its blossoming, In a friendlier, summer clime.

THE WRONG LIBRARY. Not long ago a very prominent minister, not a Baptist, in a very prominent place, pronounced the Episcopal pulpit "imbecile." The "clergy" became very indignant, and some others apologetic. "Keynote," a contributor to the *Examiner and Chronicle*, takes up the matter and shows the propriety of the term with telling force. "Biceps," some Episcopal clergyman, we suppose, undertakes to overwhelm "Keynote" with broad assertions. Another writer, "Inquirer," finds himself in a difficulty on reading "Biceps," and delivers himself as follows, under the heading, "The Wrong Library." It is exceedingly probable that many others have the "wrong library"—better look. But here is what he says:—*Times Herald*. "What shall I do with my library? It is not the right sort of one, if "Biceps" is right in his opinion expressed in the *Examiner* of the 27th, as follows: "Let 'Keynote' step into the library of some Protestant divine—I care not of what denomination—and he will find two-thirds of the standard Protestant works on theology written by men whom he, forsooth, stigmatizes as having no brains, to wit, by clergymen of the Church of England—a church which has produced a galaxy of theologians such as the world has never seen, and whose books are known and read by all men." "I say nothing in defence of my friend 'Keynote,' for he is fully able to defend himself. But I wish to know what to do with my library, as it is the wrong one. In selecting it I know I have no prejudice against Episcopal authors. It so happens, however, that in looking at it I only see the following: Howe, Owen, Baxter, Ruthinford, Gaym, Henry, George Campbell, M'Knight, Dodridge, Dick, Ambrose, Edwards, Davis, Neal, Williams, Ains, West, J., Richard Watson, Payson, James, Barnes, Stuart, Dwight, Brockbridge, the Alexanders, Miller, Hedge, Spring, Sprague, Hall, Brown, Plummer, Lord, Jay, Lange, Gannett, Harris, Finny, Guthrie, Robinson, Thompson, Beecher, Stone, Flavel, Phelps, Griffin, Gilliland, Adams.

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God requires us to be baptized. Rep



Items. THE RELIGIOUS PRESS.—A...

FRATERNAL SYMPATHY. Never as now did we feel the need of the power of sympathy, and words of comfort...

under his omnipotent control, who bids kingdoms rise and fall, who scatters crumbs in the pathway of the sparrow, is your Father, your best Friend...

the first Resurrection. Your double affliction is hard—very hard to bear. May God sustain you, my brother...

a dear friend, now she is gone. But should we grieve for those who are better off than we? done with trouble, and now at home...

DEAR BROTHER GRAYES.—It is with deep sorrow I learned of the death of your beloved wife and mother, some time since...

DEAR BROTHER GRAYES.—I have just written a line or so in the midst of a crowd of children and friends. But must say to you my very dear brother...

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SPECIAL NOTICES. Prize Article, No. 3, on "Feet Washing," will appear this month...

E. Dodson.—Your suggestions are appropriate. We will do it, when the Baptists have money again...

B. D. Harris, N. C.—We shall never forget the man who came thirty-two miles to a night meeting...

Eld. W. Miss.—You should put on a Banner's body brace without delay, or you will lose your voice...

J. F. Glass, Ky.—Your \$1 received, and hymn-book sent. Thanks for kind words...

Bro. Perry, Miss.—The lady whose manuscript you have, wishes you to express it to her...

Mrs. L. McGill, Miss.—Your request is complied with, and your truly kind sentiments appreciated...

J. H. Cason, Ala.—Have ordered for you the Tracts from Philadelphia. Look in the Postoffice next week...

W. L. Slack, Miss.—Nothing would delight us more than your proposal...

Eld. P. T. Henderson, Tenn.—It would be useless for us to hunt up that man, as we are only able to print as authors find the means...

Eld. G. M. Prime, Ark.—Your letter is received and books forwarded. The minutes of your Association are ready...

Bro. Cochran.—Your sermon is published in THE BAPTIST, though contrary to our rule...

J. W. York, Agent.—Yes, twenty per cent. off for clubs of five. Take subscribers for three months, or two, or one...

J. B. Hukabee, Ala.—We see no way but for you to join that church. Where two or three are gathered together in my name...

Milton Taylor, Tenn.—We know you well, as a Baptist, and love you as a brother. We sent a paper to every Baptist in Tennessee...

Eld. B. E. Thomas.—Will all his friends remember that his Postoffice is Madison, St. Francis county, Ark...

Bro. G. W. M. Tichen, Miss.—We did not imagine that any one but yourself would understand the purpose of our letter to you...

J. H. S.—We have nothing to offer that brother but a traveling agency in Kentucky, for Ray's Key to Campbellism, and our periodicals...

C. M. Gordon, Miss.—Your words encourage us to go on in the face of obstacles and fears. If every Baptist minister would but resolve and determine to send at least ten or twelve...

MARRIED. In Wetumpka, Ala., Wednesday, December 14th, by Rev. G. R. Foster, E. T. Strick, to Miss Elouise R. Trimble...

By Elder George W. Young on the 14th November, 1867, Mr. J. Ous B. Fitzpatrick, and Miss S. P. Ryser, daughter of Thomas A. Ryser, Esq., of Haywood county, Tenn.

By the same on the 17th November, Mr. P. S. Gray and Miss Sarah E. Brown, of Haywood county, Tenn.

A Pleasant New Year's Gift to us, would be clubs of five, ten, or three, or even one new subscriber. There is scarce a Baptist in the land who could not send us a little New Year's Gift of this sort...

The "Southern Farmer," for December, is before us, and we are frank to confess our astonishment. We thought the first number could not be surpassed...

A Desirable Holiday Present. There was a time—and not very long ago, either—when Sewing Machines, with all their acknowledged utility, were among the luxuries of social life...

But there are so many different Sewing Machines, the people say, all putting forth indisputable claims to pre-eminence, excellence, that we are in a quandary, and don't know which to buy...

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