

Baptist Churches Primitive and Apostolic.

AN
INTRODUCTORY SERMON

DELIVERED BEFORE THE
Illinois River Baptist Association,

At CHILLICOTHE, ILLINOIS, JUNE 14, 1854,

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OF PEKIN, ILLINOIS

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE ASSOCIATION
WITH AN: APPENDIX

Peoria:
PRINTED BY BENJAMIN FOSTER.
1854.

SERMON.

**"THESE THAT HAVE TURNED THE. WORLD UPSIDE DOWN HAVE COME
HITHER ALSO."** Acts, XVII.6.

Paul and Silas had come to Thessalonica, preaching Christ crucified, the only Savior of sinners. Some of the Jews residing there believed and consorted with Paul and Silas, and or the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

The gospel was mighty. It overthrew their idolatry and called immortal beings from the adoration of blocks and stones to the worship of the living and true God. So mighty a reformation, and 'so sudden as this had been, was not to be tamely borne by the unbelieving Jews and the lewd fellows of the baser sort ; and consequently they made their demonstration, gathered their crowd, and sat all the city in an uproar. They assaulted the house of Jason, where they supposed Paul and Silas were, and when they found them not, they drew Jason and some other of the converts before the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down have come hither also."

It is true the Gospel had wrought a mighty change in Thessalonica. It had turned many of their wicked ways upside down, and transformed many of its citizens into new creatures ; and never since that day has the aspect of things been the same there that it was before.

We who are met here today, as an Association, profess to be of the same class as Paul and Silas, the followers of Jesus Christ. The Gospel which they preached, we also believe and preach. The great truths they advocated, are the truths most dear to us. Upon them are based all our hopes for this world and for the world to come.

But how striking and how delightful the contrast between their circumstances and ours, their congregations and ours today, the city where they were met, and the town in which we are convened! They were surrounded by dumb idols and heathen temples ; we, by a christian community, in a christian land. Their assemblies were often disorderly, interrupted by the basest of men. Ours, I trust, is an assembly of devout worshipers. Their city was thrown into an uproar by clamorous wickedness, and the best of its citizens were dragged before their magistrates, and security required of them as if they were the disturbers of public good. We are met in peace and joy ; and freely share the bounties of a liberal hospitality from those with whom we meet. Let gratitude fill our hearts, and praise employ our tongues for these happy changes, and let our fervent prayers ascend that the day may soon come when all men shall have a part in the same holy joys, and partake of the same unspeakable blessings.

The accusation which the enemies of the Gospel made against Paul and Silas, that they had turned the world upside down, was based on the fact that the Gospel has a mighty power of transforming men. It works great changes. This we freely admit, and we rejoice in this di-vine power of the Gospel. It is not an idle tale, nor a romantic legend, but it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. We believe also, that every one of the doctrines and principles of the Gospel of Christ is important, and is_ designed for the good of man. Hence all church organizations should be upon the model of the primitive churches, and should embrace and advocate the same truths for the reformation of the world.

It will be an agreeable duty to me to call your attention to SOME LEADING FEATURES IN WHICH THE CHURCHES ASSOCIATED HERE TODAY ARE AFTER THE MODEL OF THE PRIMITIVE AND APOSTOLIC CHURCHES, and secondly To SHOW THAT THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THESE CHURCHES ARE THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF ALL TRUE RELIGIOUS REFORMATION,

I. THE BAPTIST CHURCHES ARE AFTER THE MODEL OF THE PRIMITIVE AND APOSTOLIC CHURCHES. In making this declaration, let me also express the joy I feel that the churches of other evangelical denominations have embraced so many of the truths of the Gospel as they have ; grand, glorious, precious truths, for some of which, Baptists were compelled to contend alone for a thousand years before any of the modern denominations of christians had an existence. We rejoice that we do not now stand alone in advocating a number of these doctrines, and we hope the day will speedily come when our christian brethren of other. denominations will advocate and adopt not only a part, but the whole of the grand truths of the Gospel, " and under one Shepherd the world be one fold."

When Luther began to preach in 1517, he began to advocate some of the doctrines which had been held and advocated by the Baptists from the days of John the Baptist until that period. These Baptists lived and preached, and many of them bled and died for the Gospel in Piedmont, amid the Pyrenees mountains, in obscure places throughout Germany, France, Italy, Britain, and many other countries.*, These were the apostolic churches, driven into the wilderness by, the beast, the Papal Antichrist, and with the blood of these saints was Rome drunken. Luther accomplished a great work, but left great errors in his reformed churches, which have wrought their spiritual death. Calvin, the great originator of Presbyterianism,[^] strongly advocated in 1536, at Geneva, Switzerland, some of those apostolic doctrines, long neglected by all except the Baptists, and he accomplished a great work, while he still held some great errors ; such as persecuting dissenters, as the. blood of Servetus testifies, and advocating the union of church and state.

Two hundred years after the origin of Presbyterianism, Methodism arose. It was originated and advocated by the

* See Benedict's History of the Baptists, the first three chapters on Foreign Baptists. Also Jones' Church History, Vol. 2.

[^] See Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge, articles, " Calvinism," " Presbyterianism," and " English Presbyterians,

great and excellent Wesley, and the eloquent Whitefield. These men and their followers have advocated with great power and success many of the doctrines of Christ and the apostles: and yet we believe a number of serious errors were adopted by them, departures from the principles of Christ and the primitive churches.

While it is the conviction among us that these modern denominations have, in some respects, failed to come up to a full conformity to the model of the primitive churches as they were established by the apostles, and have failed to teach some important doctrines of Christ, and substituted others in their stead ; we rejoice that there has been so great an approximation to the divine standard, and that many of these doctrines have such able and successful advocates besides those found in our ranks. We rejoice and ever will rejoice in the prosperity of truth and righteousness and the salvation of souls, whether Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Quakers, Episcopalians, Campbellites or Roman Catholics are the means of accomplishing it. But let me proceed to the subject.

1. Baptist churches are after the model of the primitive and apostolic churches in respect to their membership, the materials of which they are composed.

They consist entirely of those who have professed to be converted, anti regenerated by the Holy Spirit ; not of believers and their unconverted, baptized children, their babes,* nor of those who are merely inquirers after salvation. The primitive churches were always addressed by the apostles as saints, believers not as saints and their unconscious, baptized infants ; nor as saints and inquirers or six months probationers ; nor as saints and catechumens. Paul, in addressing his first letter to the Corinthians, addressed it " To the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus. called to be saints." In his second epistle to the Corinthians his language is the same: So he addressed the saints in Ephesus. Philippi, and Colosse. Never was the slightest intimation

* See Appendix to this Sermon. I. Church Membership.

given that the apostolic churches included any but professed believers, saints, sanctified, faithful. To this fact we have the testimony of the most eminent church historians. Says Neander, " Baptism was administered at first only to adults.; as men were accustomed to conceive baptism and faith as strictly connected. We have all reason for not deriving infant baptism from apostolic institution." *

It must always be a matter of great importance that the churches of Christ consist of such material as he has appointed. The history of nominal christendom, with its corruptions and perversions, furnishes us the sad proof of this. Unconverted members desire an unconverted ministry, and the introduction of any but professed converts into the church tends to destroy its spirituality and life.

Baptist churches are after the model of the primitive and apostolic churches in respect to the discipline and government of their members.

Christ established no monarchies nor aristocracies in his churches. The members all had equal rights and equal authority. They were republican in their form of government. Their business affairs were determined by a vote of all their members, not by the minister in charge, nor by class leaders, stewards, sessions, synods, presbyteries and such like. Christ says, in Matt. 18 chap. " If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone ; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the *church*," not to the minister, session, presbytery, vestry, nor to the priest, nor anybody else : tell it to the CHURCH. We cannot adopt any other regulation instead of this, without disobeying Christ. No church has a right to let a minister, class leader, session or presbytery take the power of discipline out of the hands of the church into their own bands to administer it as they please ; admit members, exclude

* Church History, Vol. I., page 311.

members, or suspend them. This responsible business should be performed by the church as a body.

Our church relationship is one of the most dear and precious relationships we sustain.. Christ has not left it to depend upon the caprice- or whim of a single individual. Those who sustain the relation of members in the same church should have a voice in the admission of new members, a voice in the discipline of members, and a voice also in the choice of their own spiritual teachers, their preachers and pastors. - Every church has a right to. choose its own preacher, its own deacons, and all its officers.. No church ought to surrender this right into the hands of provincial bishops, presbyteries, or conferences. No bishop, conference or presbytery has any scriptural right to say to a church, '." You. must have this or that; man for your preacher,' and he shall appoint your ' under leaders, &c." It is the very essence of popery to usurp such authority. Yet how many excellent christians there are in our - own country who tamely submit to these systems, of lording it over God's heritage, because they have never seriously. thought of this subject. They give their hands to the minister as members of the church, or make their request. to the session,. without ever .. thinking whether .the church government to which. they are subjecting themselves is scriptural or unscriptural. The evils of these departures from the simplicity and republicanism' of the Gospel are not fully seen in a few years ; nor are they ever seen their full extent in a land like ours, where so much of re publicanism will show itself in religion, as well as in politics, in spite of .opposing creeds and systems. But let one of these erroneous systems of church government become the only one in any country and it will in a great. degree destroy the spirituality of the churches over which it is exercised and result in a rigid despotism.

3. Baptist churches are after the model of the primitive and apostolic churches in respect to the kind and grade of their officers.

The New Testament establishes but two classes of per-

manent church officers. These are *Bishops* or *Pastors*, and *Deacons*. The term *Elder* was a common one applied to apostles, evangelists and bishops. Evangelists and apostles labored in the capacity of missionaries, and were not church officers. A bishop was not one who had authority over all the churches and ministers of a province, state or district of country. But a bishop was the pastor, shepherd or overseer of a congregation.

Paul, in writing to the Philippians, addressed the saints - in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." There were several of these gospel bishops residing in that city, perhaps two or three in one church, or perhaps they were pastors of several different congregations in that city. The New Testament has established no bishops to control the other ministers in a given section of country, no class leaders, no deans, curates, vicars, rectors, priests, prebendaries, archdeacons, archbishops, monks, confessors, cardinals or popes ; but simply bishops or pastors and deacons.

Whatever pleas worldly policy or expediency may make in favor of dragging in a host of unscriptural officers into the churches, we say they lack divine authority ; away with them. Shame upon the impudence of man who would attempt to correct the Almighty in the plan of organizing his churches.

4. Baptist churches are after the model of the primitive and apostolic churches in regard to the ordinances of the Gospel.

Baptists believe Christ to be the only lawgiver in the church. What he commands, that we are bound to do. *What he has not ordained, that we are equally bound NOT to practice as an ordinance of his.* For the baptism of believers we have his plain and positive command. For the baptism of infants we find not one syllable of command, nor one solitary example in the scriptures. Infant baptism was a thing utterly unheard of in the days of the apostles. To this fact, the best historians of every denomination testify.*

* See Appendix II. Infant Baptism Unscriptural,

We dare not baptize infants in the name of the *Father*, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; because, baptizing them in the name of the Trinity implies that it is done by the authority of the Triune God. That authority has never been given. Not one syllable of command *for* its observance can be found. To perform it in the name of the Holy Trinity, and yet without any authority from God, is indeed a serious act. Were any man to transact business in your name, as if doing it in your behalf and by your authority, and yet you had never said a word to him about the matter, you would think he was doing very wrong. How much more serious does the wrong become when men do that in the name of the Lord for which the Lord has given them no authority ! Let every administrator of religious ordinances pause and inquire, " Am I doing what my Lord has commanded me ? Were Jesus present to speak his will audibly to me now, would he command me to do what I am about to do ? Could I point him to certain, positive authority in his word which requires what I am about to perform ? "

Baptists follow the plain, positive teachings of the New Testament in administering the ordinances. They baptize believers, and not infants. Moreover, they do not attempt to substitute something else for the act of baptism. When they pretend to baptize, they do baptize, they do not sprinkle nor pour as a substitute for baptizing. They want no substitutes. They follow Christ's commands and Christ's example. This is infinitely better than any substitute. As Jesus was baptized in the river of Jordan, and came up out of the water, as Philip and the Eunuch both went down into the water, and came up out of the water, when the Eunuch was baptized, and as all who were baptized were buried by baptism, so Baptists, like John, seek a place of much water — at least enough to bury the candidates in baptism ; and they, like their glorious Master, come up out of the baptismal grave.

I need not say one word in proof of the divine authority for immersion, or of the fact that it is valid baptism. This

is fully conceded by every christian scholar of every denomination who is worthy of note. I will not introduce, as it would be easy to do, the full admission of Calvin, Luther, Dr. Chalmers, Archbishop Leighton, the Presbyterian Board of Publication, Wesley, and many others, that it was the primitive and apostolic mode.* But I would inquire, since it is admitted by all that immersion is valid baptism, why will not all practice it, and thus harmonize in practice as they do in opinion? Let it not be thought that the fault of the division among christians, in reference to the mode of baptism, lies at the door of Baptists, for they invariably practice the only mode which all christendom acknowledges to be valid. Many in other churches cannot submit to anything but immersion, and those who are not immersed, admit the validity of immersion. All are agreed to this. But they are not agreed as to the validity of any other mode. Let all practice this mode which all acknowledge to be valid, and the world will be in harmony as to the mode of baptism.

Baptists also administer baptism only for the specific object for which Christ appointed it. They administer it, not to regenerate souls, not to confer grace, not to save men, not to forgive sins, not to purify from original sin, not to signify native holiness of the one baptized, not to bring persons into the Abrahamic covenant, nor for any other such purpose.^ But they administer it simply because Christ has commanded it, as the initiatory ordinance into the christian church, to show forth the faith of the one baptized in a crucified, buried and risen Savior, with the purifying power of that faith.

Moreover, while they will neither baptize infants nor even adults until they give evidence of having been truly converted and regenerated, yet, whenever the evidence of this change is given, they do not require the believer to wait six months, nor any other specific period, and neglect

* See Appendix III. Mode of Baptism.

^ See Appendix IV. Design and Efficacy of Baptism.

the commands of his divine Redeemer for that length of time. But they say as Philip did to the Eunuch, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest."

Baptists administer the ordinance of the supper, not to make a new sacrifice for sin, not to show their love or their charity to man, not to show their liberality of feeling toward other denominations, but for the one simple, glorious object for which alone it was instituted. They administer it in remembrance of Christ, "to show the Lord's death till he come." In observing the ordinance of the supper, they have no consecrating of wafers, no refusing the cup to private members of the church, no kneeling before the bread and wine, as if to worship them, but they simply do as Christ has directed them. They eat the bread and drink the cup to "show the Lord's death till he come."

They do not bring to the supper those who have never been scripturally baptized, nor those who teach and practice doctrines for which they would be compelled to excommunicate them if they were members of Baptist churches. Neither do they refuse to admit to the supper those whom they have baptized and received as members of the church, unless such persons are suspended or excluded from the church. They will not be so close and restricted in their communion as to refuse to admit to the supper those whom they have just baptized, as it is done by those who baptize infants and then refuse to commune with them. Those who are entitled to one ordinance are equally entitled to the other. The scriptures nowhere authorize us to baptize some, and then, without any fault on their part, to refuse them the ordinance of the supper. How much better is a faithful adherence to the truths of the Gospel, than any deviations which man can suggest! Paul said to the Corinthians, (I Cor. xi. 2.) "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things anti" keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you." So let us, like the Corinthians, follow Christ and the apostles.

5. *Baptist churches are after the model of the primitive and apostolic churches in maintaining liberty of conscience.*

This has invariably been a doctrine of Baptists. Christ commanded his disciples simply to *preach* the Gospel, not to employ fire and sword and dungeons to enforce it. When the papal persecutions were carried on, Baptists were the severest sufferers. They always denied the right of any class of men to punish others for their religious opinions and acts, so long as they did not interfere with the rights of their fellow men. For our duties to man, we are accountable to man: but for our duties to God, we are accountable only to God. Baptists have always opposed religious persecutions, and always advocated liberty of conscience. Under the Catholic persecutions, they suffered in France, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, and many other places. Under the Lutheran dominion they have been cruelly persecuted in Germany, Denmark and Sweden. The Church of England also long persecuted the Baptists. Much of their history has been written in their blood. The Puritans of New England also fined, imprisoned, whipped and banished the Baptists.*

The great reformers of modern times have advocated persecution for conscience sake. Says an eminent writer, ^

There is not a confession of faith nor a creed framed by any of the reformers which does not give to the magistrate a coercive power in religion; and almost every one, at the same time, curses the resisting Baptist." Thus it has been their honor to advocate liberty of conscience, and to suffer for advocating it, from the days of the apostles until now.

6. *Baptist churches are after the model of the primitive and apostolic churches in advocating the purity and spirituality of the church, and have always opposed the union of church and state.*

* See Benedict's History of the Baptists, part 1. Also, Backus' Ch. History of New England, and Jones' Church History, vol. 2. Life of Roger Williams; Life and Times of Menno; Hague's Historical Discourse, &c.

^ E. B. Underhill, Esq., of London, in "Straggles and Triumphs of Religious Liberty," page 87

It has been the bane of nominal Christianity to be connected with the state. The church, governed by political and worldly men, soon loses all its efficient vitality, makes a mock of true piety and introduces a dead formalism. Baptists have stood aloof from such connections and uniformly opposed them. They have remembered that Christ said, My kingdom is not of this world." They never could consent to the alliance of the church and the world. They could not so far depart from the principles of the Gospel as to give the faith, order and government of the church into the hands of kings and human legislatures, for them to dictate and control. " One is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." The Romish church has everywhere, as far as possible, established itself by political power. We deeply regret that Luther and Calvin left their reformed churches connected with the state : that Episcopacy in England, Presbyterianism in Scotland and Congregationalism in New England, made this unholy alliance with the state.

We rejoice, however,- that many members of those churches at the present time as heartily disapprove of such a connection as the Baptists do. They have very extensively adopted those very sentiments on religious liberty for which Baptists contended and suffered and bled for many centuries. May the day speedily come when all the world shall acknowledge that Christ's kingdom is not of this world, and that Christ is the only lord of the conscience.

7. Baptist churches are after the model of the primitive and apostolic churches in making the Bible the only standard of faith and practice.

They acknowledge no authority in any body of men to adopt and prescribe confessions of faith and discipline for them. The Bible, and the Bible only, is their book of authority and order in faith and practice. They subscribe to no article of faith because it is adopted by a general as-

sembly or council, or handed down by tradition, or decreed by ecclesiastical courts, or dictated by bishops, conferences, synods or presbyteries. They have no books of discipline

but the Bible, no creed but that given in the inspired Word. If they have printed articles of faith, these are not adopted as authority in place of the Bible, but are simply to explain to others, who wish to know, their understanding of the teachings of the Bible upon leading doctrines of the Gospel. Articles of faith, other than the Bible itself, are always regarded by them as explanatory and not authoritative.

They mean to give God and his Word entire supremacy over their faith and practice, and allow no earthly authority, such as conferences, synods, courts and general assemblies to step in between them and God to interpret his will for them, or to introduce human systems of doctrine and church organization instead of the simple, glorious doctrines and organization which Christ himself has given. Simplicity, independence and efficiency were leading traits in the organization of the primitive churches. They are leading traits also in Baptist churches.

8. Baptist churches are after the model of the primitive and apostolic churches in teaching the doctrine of personal responsibility.

They have always held that every individual is himself accountable for his own obedience or disobedience to God : that our duties cannot be performed by others. They hold that men must repent and believe for themselves, or they cannot be saved. They hold that a man must be baptized as his own voluntary act, or he does not do what God requires of *him* in that ordinance. If he is baptized in his infancy, without his knowledge or consent, it is no act of obedience on his part. Baptists do not believe a man can be religious by proxy, nor obey God in his ordinances by proxy. He must do it for himself or it is not accepted of God for obedience. They do not pray by proxy, in reading the prayers of others from stereotyped books : but they choose rather to render to God a broken and con-trite heart, uttering its language of penitence and gratitude, devotion and supplication from the depths of its own feelings.

Neither do they trust their religion and the salvation of their souls to ministers and ecclesiastics to manage for them. They feel that they have obligations to discharge toward God, duties to perform and blessings to receive, or they cannot be recognized as Christians nor hope for eternal life.

9. *Baptist churches are after the model of the primitive and apostolic churches in their efforts to spread the Gospel.*

They have been indefatigable in this work from the days of the apostles until now. In the ages immediately after the apostles, they did much toward spreading the Gospel among the destitute. When a large number of nominal churches were gradually adopting various errors and developing the mystery of iniquity, which, when perfected, was the Romish Antichrist ; the pure churches after the primitive model were raising the voice of warning and protestation against these errors. Thus they became op-posed to the papal church ; and while popery held its horrid sway over the nations for a thousand years, Baptists were suffering the bloodiest persecutions, tortured, imprisoned, burned, drowned, hanged, peeled and hunted every-where. Yet they spread over large parts of Italy, Lombardy, sometimes into Greece and Asia Minor, into the Pyrenees mountains, in Piedmont, France, Germany, England and Wales.*

The amount of their labors, their travels and their success in preaching amid such fiery trials, is almost incredible. Century after century were these faithful disciples laboring to spread the Gospel far and wide, before Luther and Calvin were born, and before any of the modern de-nominations had an existence. And when it pleased the Lord to stay the cruel hand of persecution in England, and give to the Baptists some good degree of liberty of conscience, and freedom of effort, so that they could more completely organize missionary societies for the spread of the Gospel among the heathen, he raised up a Baptist

* See Benedict's History of the Baptists.

shoemaker, Wm. Carey, to lead the van in the noble work.

In 1792, the English Baptist Missionary Society was formed, and in 1841, thirteen years ago, its missionaries had translated the Scriptures into forty different languages and spread the Gospel far and wide in different parts of India, Africa, and the West Indies. Other denominations have also done nobly in this great work : and we rejoice that a general activity in the enterprise of missions is now awakened. We trust the work will go on

"Till o'er our ransomed nature,
The Lamb fur sinners slain,
Redeemer, King, Creator,
In bliss returns to reign."

I need not mention. the labors of American Baptists in the cause of missions : suffice it to say that their missions encircle the globe, and their missionaries are preaching the Gospel on every continent and in almost every clime.

I have now shown that the Baptist churches are built on the foundation of Christ and the apostles, and after the model of the primitive churches in regard to the materials of which they are composed, baptized believers : in their discipline and government, maintaining republicanism and equality : in their officers, bishops or pastors and deacons : in their administration of the ordinances : in their maintaining liberty of conscience : in their opposition to the union of church and state, advocating the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom : in making the Bible the only standard of faith and practice : in the doctrine of personal responsibility- in religion, allowing no set-Vice of God by proxy : and in their efforts to spread the Gospel through the world. Several other religious denominations have adopted more or less of these doctrines and principles : and we believe all evangelical denominations, as they come more and more near to the simplicity and purity of the primitive churches, will embrace more and more of these divine truths. I remark,

II. THAT THESE PRINCIPLES OF ' BAPTIST CHURCHES, FOUNDED AS THEY ARE UPON THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, ARE FUNDAMENTAL IN EVERY GENUINE RELIGIOUS REFORMATION.

Some of these principles have underlaid every true reformation in religion. Some of them have been but partially adopted and imperfectly carried out by the great reformers of modern times, and consequently their reformations now need reforming. For example, Luther brought forth the Bible as the standard of faith and practice and arrayed it against the claims of the papal church. But Luther did not make it the only standard, and did not bring every doctrine he taught to the test of the Bible. He still maintained the unscriptural doctrine of infant baptism, and thus he brought all classes and characters into the reformed churches ; an amalgamation which led to the corruption of their purity and the destruction of their vital piety. He held also to the union of church and state, and thus placed the control of the church in the hands of the ungodly, and established an unholy despotism over the consciences of men.

Wesley taught with great power and success the doctrine of individual _accountability in religion, and urged with holy zeal his followers to seek holiness of heart and personal experience of the grace of God. But he did not fully carry out the doctrine of personal responsibility, for he continued to baptize infants, thus denying them the privilege of obeying Christ themselves in the ordinance of baptism, unless they forsook his creed and church. In the organization of his societies, we think he departed widely from the model of the primitive churches, introducing a variety of officers and organizations wholly unauthorized in the Word of God.

Luther, Calvin, Knox, Wesley,. Whitefield, Edwards, and the leading reformers in every age, have adopted more or less of these fundamental principles, and in advocating them as far as they did, they accomplished glorious results. The errors which they retained in connection with these truths, in many instances, deprived the truths of their

power, and, in a considerable degree, prevented the happy results which otherwise might have been realized.

But as evangelical and enlightened piety advances, the various denominations are adopting, more and more, these Bible truths. They are becoming more and more clear in their views in regard to the materials of which churches should be composed : and although in their *creeds* they still say the church consists of believers and their baptized children, yet many have practically abandoned the error and do not regard baptized children as members, do not commune with them, nor grant them a single privilege as members, not a single privilege which unbaptized children would not equally enjoy. And although they continue to baptize infants, they regard it as being done out of the pale of the church, and to subjects whom they will not admit as members of the- church until they give evidence of conversion. While many, whose creed asserts the propriety of infant baptism, entirely neglect it. And the number of such is constantly increasing. The Bible doctrine that the church should consist only of professed converts, and that the ordinances should be administered only to such, is rapidly gaining ground wherever vital religion is making progress.

Chnrches are becoming more and more scriptural in their discipline and government. They are breaking the bonds of spiritual despotism ; repudiating unscriptural church offices and officers, calling for the reform of abuses and are searching the Scriptures more and more earnestly for divine authority to guide them in all things. Let us pray that all those systems of church government and discipline, which are founded in error, may soon give place to the simple, divine and glorious organization which Christ established, that all unscriptural offices and officers may may be abandoned, and that all the disciples of our Lord come and sit at the feet of Jesus, not as masters and servants, not as lords and underlings, but as brethren, as equals.

The ordinances are being administered more and more

frequently in accordance with the Bible, and large numbers, not connected with Baptists, will not submit to anything but immersion for baptism, and utterly repudiate the baptism of infants. And the day is coming when many will feel it more important than they now do, to follow carefully the Bible in administering the ordinance of the supper.

The doctrine of religious liberty is fast gaining ground, and will continue to do so, as fast as the pure Gospel of Christ extends its teachings and influence. The union of church and state is fast hastening to its dissolution, and the spiritual nature of the kingdom of Christ is being acknowledged more and more generally. Bibles are being multiplied, and the Christian world is bringing creeds and doctrines and practices to the test of Bible authority, and regarding with less and less reverence the decrees of councils, the opinions of men, and human substitutes instead of divine originals.

Personal responsibility is being pressed with more and more power upon the hearts of men, and fewer and fewer are willing to accept of religion by proxy either in prayers or ordinances. And the whole Christian world is engaging with hopeful and gratifying energy in spreading the Gospel by missions.

Thus, as enlightened piety advances, the various denominations are adopting and advocating these glorious truths more and more. May God speed the day when all shall know the truth and obey it, from the least to the greatest, and find it their meat and drink to do the will of the Lord, and "Under one Shepherd the world be one fold." Amen.

APPENDIX.

I. — CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.

What other denominations teach *on this subject*.

PRESBYTERIAN CONFESSION OF FAITH, pages 134, 135. "The visible church consists of all those who profess the true religion, together with their children." Also, pages 504, 505. "Children born within the pale of the visible church and dedicated to God in baptism, &c." "The years of discretion in young Christians cannot be precisely fixed. This must be left to the prudence of the eldership." As if they were Christians from their birth and before they reached the years of discretion.

CONGREGATIONAL ORDER, page 130. "These church members that were so born or received in their childhood before they were capable of being made partakers of full communion, have many privileges which others, not church members, have not." This says plainly that infants are church members.

METHODIST DISCIPLINE, chap. 3, sec. 2, on baptism of infants, the minister exhorts the people to pray "That he, (the infant.) may be received into Christ's holy church and be made a member of the same," the same form of expression as is used when a believer is baptized.

JOHN WESLEY, in his *Preservative*, page 146-50, says, "By baptism we are admitted into the church." "As it admits us into the church here, so into glory hereafter."

EPISCOPAL PRAYER BOOK. Prayer after the baptism of an infant. "We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to receive this infant for thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into thy holy church."

LUTHERANS. Knapp's *Theology*, vol. 2, page 522. "By means of this rite, (baptism,) we are received as members of the visible Christian society. As soon as a person was baptized he was considered a member of the church."

II. — INFANT BAPTISM UNSCRIPTURAL.

NEANDER, in his *Church History*, translated by Torrey, vol. 1, page 311. "Baptism was administered at first only to adults, as men were accustomed to conceive baptism and faith as strictly connected. We have all reason for not deriving infant baptism from apostolic institution." In his "Planting and Training of the Church," page 101, 102, he says,

It is in the highest degree probable that infant baptism was unknown at this period. Not till so late a period as Ireneus, does *a trace* of infant baptism appear, and it *first* became recognized as an apostolic *tradition* in the course of the third century,—more than two hundred years after Christ, and when many other corruptions had been introduced.

PROF. JACOBI, in Kittos's *Cyclopedia*, article Baptism, approved by Neander, "Infant Baptism was established neither by Christ nor his apostles."

LIMBORCH's Comp. Sys. Div., book 5, chap. 22, sec. 2, "No instance can be produced from which it may be indisputably inferred that any child was baptized by the apostles."

BAXTER's Disput. of Right to Sacram. page 156. "All examples of baptism in the Scripture do mention only the administration of it to professors of saving faith, and the precepts give us no other direction."

MR. T. BOSTON's Works, page 384. "There is no example of baptism recorded in the Scriptures, where any were baptized but such as appeared to have a saving interest in Christ."

BISHOP BURNETT's Expos. of the Articles, art. 27. "There is no express-precept or rule given in the New Testament for the baptism of infants."

LUTHER, in Paed. Exam., vol. 2, page 4. "It cannot be proved by the sacred Scriptures that infant baptism was instituted by Christ or begun by the first Christians after the apostles."

BLOOMFIELD, in his Greek Testament, at the end of Matthew, vol. 1., page 152. "Nothing is said in Scripture to enjoin infant baptism"

KNAPP's Theology, vol. 1, page 535. "There is no express command for infant baptism found in the New Testament, as Morus justly concedes. Infant baptism has often been defended on very unsatisfactory grounds."

REV W M. MITCHEL, Congregationalist, in his Doctrinal Guide, page 286, 287. "The silence of the Scriptures and of ecclesiastical history is one of the strongest arguments in favor of this ancient custom," infant baptism. If this is the strongest, what must be the others! The silence of the Scriptures to prove that God has instituted infant baptism as a perpetual ordinance!! The silence of God to prove that he has not been silent!!!

III.—MODE OF BAPTISM.

CALVIN. In Paed. Exam., vol. 1, page 194. "From these words, John iii. 23, it may be inferred that baptism was administered, by John and Christ, by plunging the whole body under water." "The word baptize signifies to immerse, and the rite of immersion was used by the ancient church." In his comment on the baptism of the Eunuch, Calvin says, "Here we perceive how baptism was administered among the ancients, for they immersed the whole body in water."

LUTHER. "The term baptize is Greek, and may be rendered a dip-ping, as when we dip anything in water so that it is covered all over. They ought to be wholly immersed."

KNAPP's THEOLOGY, (Lutheran) vol. 2. page 516, "Immersion is peculiarly agreeable to the institution of Christ and to the practice of the apostolic church, and so even John baptized, and immersion remained common for a long time after."

D R. CHALMERS, on Rom. vi. 4. "The original meaning of the word baptism is immersion. The prevalent style of the administration in the apostle's days was by an actual submerging of the whole body in water."

ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON's Works, page 277, speaking on Rom. vi. 4, "The dipping into the waters representing our dying with Christ, and the return thence, our rising with him."

PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION, Philadelphia, in Pictet's Theology, published by them, page 411. "They immersed the whole

body in water. Now John the Baptist administered the rite among the Jews in the manner above described." Also, page 413, "Immersion in the water, and emerging from it, as practiced by the ancients, signify the death of the old man and the resurrection of the new. In the water, says Chrysostom, as in a kind of grave, the old man is buried, since, being wholly immersed, he is concealed under the water; then, when we emerge from it, the new man rises up."

Jena WESLEY. Note on Rom. vi. 4. Alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion, "Whitehead's Lives of the Wesleys, page 73, "MR. CHARLES WESLEY, as well as his brother John, was so fully convinced, at this time, that immersion was the ancient mode of baptizing, that he determined to adhere strictly to the rubric of the Church of England in relation to it, and not to baptize any child by sprinkling unless it was sickly and weak."

ADAM CLARKE and LIGHTFOOT. In Clarke's Commentary, at the end of Mark. "That the baptism of John was by plunging the body seems to appear from those things which are related of him; namely, that he baptized in Jordan, that he baptized in Enon, because there was much water there, &c."

BLOOMFIELD's Greek Testament, on Rom. vi. 4, vol. 2, page 35. "By which the rite of immersion in the baptismal water, and egress from it, were used as symbols,

MACKNIGHT, on the Epistles, vol. 1, page 263. "He, (Christ) submitted to be baptized, that is, to be buried under the water by John, and to be raised out of it again, as an emblem of his future death and resurrection." "The burying of Christ and of believers first in the water of baptism, and afterwards in the earth, is fitly enough compared to the planting of seeds in the earth."

THOLUCK, on Rom. vi. 4. "The candidate in the primitive church was immersed in water and raised up out of it again."

PROF. LANGE, on Infant Baptism, page 81:—"Baptism in the apostolic age was a proper baptism—the immersion of the body in water."

IV.—DESIGN AND EFFICACY OF BAPTISM.

WHAT EPISCOPALIANS TEACH.

EPISCOPAL PRAYER BOOK. The Christian Catechism. "Question. How many Sacraments bath Christ ordained in his Church? Answer. Two only, as generally necessary to salvation, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord. Q. What is your name? A. N. or M. Q. Who gave you this name? A. My Sponsors in Baptism; wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven."

Eisner BEVERIDGE's Sermons on the Ministry and Sacraments, page 187. "Baptism is necessary to salvation." Page 182. "That we may be born of the Spirit we must be born of the water," that is, as he interprets it, baptized.

PALEY's Works, London edition, 1823, vol. 2, page 479. "We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it bath pleased thee to regenerate this infant, (just baptized,) with thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into thy. holy church."

EPISCOPAL SUNDAY School. Falor, of New York, in "Thy Vows Are Upon Me." page 34. "In baptism the infant is regenerated by God's Holy Spirit." Similar expressions are found on page 38, 40, 55 and 111.

WHAT PRESBYTERIANS TEACH.

CONFESSIO*N* of FAITH, page 148. "By the right use of this ordinance, the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and CONFERRED by the Holy Ghost."

PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION, in Pictet's Theology, p. 410, The sacraments are two. Baptism and the Lord's Supper. No more are required *to generate and strengthen spiritual life.*" Page 411. "Baptism is the threshold of grace." Page 418. "The Lords supper is the sacrament of nutrition, bat *baptism is the sacrament of regeneration.*" Page 419. "God displays his grace to them the moment they remember their baptism."

PRESBYTERIAN CONFESSIO*N* OF FAITH, page 334. "The Sacraments become the effectual means of salvation by the work of the Holy Spirit and the blessing of Christ."

CONGREGATIONALISTS, in the Book of Congregational Order, page 235, use the same language as the Presb. Con. of Faith, that "By the right use of this ordinance. the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and *conferred.*"

WHAT METHODISTS TEACH

METHODIST DISCIPLINE, chap. 3, sec. 2. At the baptism of an infant or adult, the minister says, "Call upon God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that of his bounteous mercy he will grant to this child, (or person,) that thing which by nature he cannot have: that he may be baptized with water and the Holy Ghost, and be received into Christ's holy church."

WESLEY's Preservative, page 146-50. "By baptism we are admitted Into the church, and consequently *made members of Christ, its head* — By baptism we who were by nature children of wrath, *are made children of God*— By water, then, as a means, the water of baptism, *we are regenerated or born again*, -as it admits us into the church here, so into glory hereafter. If infants are guilty of original sin in the ordinary way, they cannot be saved unless this be washed away by baptism,"

WHAT CAMPBELLITES OR CHRISTIANS TEACH.

The author recently heard one of their ministers make the following statements in a sermon, and he wrote them down .as he heard them.— Forgiveness of sin is not grunted until a change of state takes place. Baptism is the act through which a change of state takes place. Pardon is remised in the act of baptism. In the act of baptism God brings justification. There is but one way of salvation. There arc three steps into the kingdom of eternal life — faith, repentance and baptism."

B A P T I S T S

Ascribe no such efficacy to baptism as is mentioned above : but they administer it simply because Christ has commanded it, as the initiatory ordinance into the visible Christian church, to show forth the faith of the one baptized in a crucified, buried and risen Savior, with the purify-lag power of that faith.

CONSTITUTION.

I. The name of this body shall be "THE ILLINOIS RIVER BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.'

II. It shall consist of Baptist Churches, which are already united, or may hereafter be united, under this constitution and declaration, of our faith.

III. The objects to be promoted by this Association are the following, and these only, viz: to promote intercourse and friendship between the Churches by stated meetings; to receive and furnish a record of their numbers and annual changes; and to receive and apply the contributions for benevolent purposes which may be forwarded from year to year.

IV. The officers shall be a Moderator, a Recording and Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer; who are to be chosen by ballot, and act until their successors are chosen. The person receiving the largest number of votes shall be declared elected.

V. The annual meeting shall be held successively on the second Wednesday in June, at half-past 10 o'clock, A. M. The Association shall open with devotional exercises and a sermon; then the Letters from the Churches shall be called for, and the messengers enrolled. After which the officers shall be chosen.

VI. The Association shall publish annually minutes of its proceedings.

VII. This constitution may be amended at any annual meeting by a vote of two-thirds of the members present.

BY-LAWS.

I. In the absence of the moderator and clerk of the previous meeting, the preacher of the introductory sermon shall call the meeting to order.

II. All sittings shall be opened and closed with prayer.

III. No subject shall be discussed without being first presented on a motion being made and seconded.

IV. If when a motion has been made and seconded a member opposes the discussion of it, the presiding officer shall put the question,

"Shall this question be discussed" and the majority shall determine without debate.

V. All questions shall be propounded in the order in which they were moved, except in filling blanks, when the largest sum, highest number, and longest time shall be put first.

VI. The moderator shall nominate all committees, unless otherwise ordered by the Association.

VII. Any member dissatisfied with the decision of the moderator may appeal to the house without debate.

VIII. Whenever it is desired by any two members, the vote upon any question shall be taken by churches, each having one vote; and all questions vitally affecting the Association shall be referred back to the churches for their action thereon.

IX. The Constitution and Rules of Order shall be read immediately after being organized for business.