

Confirmation:

An Explanation, Defense and Refutation of the Rite _____

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"Who will also confirm you unto the end."-I Cor. 1. 8.

All the great Episcopal churches attach much importance to the ceremony which they agree in naming "confirmation." Every week hundreds are confirmed in England alone, and the service is looked forward to with interest by all the parties concerned.

Baptists, and all the other non-Episcopal churches, have refused to observe this rite. They consider it unscriptural, and, on the whole, mischievous.

In this discourse I purpose to lay before you the explanation, the defence, and the refutation of the rite of confirmation.

I THE EXPLANATION OF THIS RITE

1. The signification of the rite.—This we ascertain from the names given to it; the definitions which the various churches accept, and the various parts of the

rite itself.

(1) *The names given to it.*—It is called "*consecration*," for it is the setting apart of a person or persons to the service of God. These persons are no longer common or unclean; they are now consecrated to the divine life. It is called "*perfection*," for it perfects that which was commenced in baptism.

Baptism pointed forward to this rite, and was completed, perfected in it. This is the final stage of baptism. It is called "*unction*," because of the solemn anointing with oil, which takes place in it in some churches. It is called "*sealing*," for the candidate is sealed—marked off as the possession of God. They are now His, and not their own. It is called "*confirmation*," for here the candidate confirms all that was promised in his or her name in baptism, and in this service he is confirmed in the grace supposed to have been imparted in baptism.

All these ideas are perfectly scriptural. We are sanctified, consecrated, set apart ones; but we are set apart by no mere outward rite, such as our Episcopal friends observe.

We are set apart by the Holy Spirit, and the evidence that we are so is not the observance of any human ceremony, but our living the consecrated life. We are sanctified by the Holy Spirit of God, and not by the manipulation of man.

We ought, after our baptism, to go on to "perfection," but the perfection we must seek after is spiritual. It is not the observance of a mere mechanical rite; our baptism points forward to a life of holy endeavour, and not to the mere submitting to some religious ceremony. We ought to have an "unction, a sacred anointing; but it is not oil put on our foreheads by the fingers of a, bishop. It is an unction from the Holy One." It is a spiritual anointing. It is the act of the Holy Spirit on our spirits. We ought to be "sealed," but it must be the "sealing of the Holy Spirit;" "the Holy Spirit of promise, by whom we are sealed." It is the Holy Spirit of God marking us off as God's people, and God's possession. We ought to be "confirmed;" but this is not and cannot be done by a mere outward ceremonial. The rite of confirmation cannot effect nor occasion confirmation, in the Scriptural sense of the term.

It is God Himself who confirms, anoints, and seals us. "Now He, who *establishes* us with you in Christ, and who *anointed* us is God; who also *sealed* us, and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

We must look to God alone for confirmation, and if we look to any man or human institution to confirm us, we err. *Man*, by exhortation, can confirm us instrumentally, but he cannot by any mere mechanical act, such as that observed by Episcopal churches, confirm us.

(2) *The definitions given to it.*—*The Roman* church defines it as " unction by chrism (accompanied by a set form of words), applied by the bishop to the forehead of one baptised, by means of which he receives increase of grace and strength, by the institution of Christ." But:

- (a) Christ instituted no such ceremony;
- (b) Christ never commanded any of His ministers to put oil on the forehead of any believer;
- (c) Christ never promised to afford any special strength to persons thus anointed.

There is not the slightest evidence that people receive any grace or strength from observing this ceremony, and, if they did:

- (1) That would not justify us in establishing a sacrament not appointed by Christ; and
- (2) The same strength would be vouchsafed to us by the observance of those things really established by Christ and His apostles.

The Greek Church defines it as "a mystery in which the baptised believer, being anointed with holy chrism in the name of the Holy Ghost, receives the gifts of the Holy Ghost for growth and strength in the spiritual life." But:

- (1) .The Lord and His apostles say nothing about this chrism.
- (2) .The Lord and His apostles refer to another kind of anointing altogether. The "confirmation" of the Greek Church is unknown in the Bible.

The Anglican Church defines it as "a rite, by means of which the regenerate are strengthened by the manifold gifts of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, on the occasion of their satisfying the baptismal vow."

We ask, who required this service at your hand? What authority have you for asserting that the regenerate are strengthened at this rite and by it, by the manifold gifts of the Spirit? The Bible is silent about this "ratification of their baptismal vow."

The three definitions substantially agree, but they *define* a rite that sprang from human ingenuity, and is nowhere taught in the inspired volume.

(3). *The several parts of it.*—*The parts of the ceremonial* are four:

- (a) The anointing with oil in the case of the Roman and Greek churches only;

- (b) The making the sign of the cross, which is also largely confined to these two churches;
- (c) The laying on of hands, which is observed by the Roman, Greek, and Anglican churches;
- (d) Prayer, which like the former item, all three Episcopal churches agree in observing.

Three of the ceremonies above-named have no grounds in Scripture, and their introduction as religious acts was simply to exalt the priest, at the expense of the people. They added to the importance of the priest, and the dependence of the people; and only where the pastors are considered, and called "priests," is the ceremony observed.

When people are declaring themselves by a scripturally warranted act to be on the Lord's side, prayer is comely, and hence, when we baptise we always expressly pray for the candidate or candidates. While the minister audibly prays, all the brethren and sisters unite in silent supplication to God that those about to put on Christ, by baptism, may prove faithful unto death. We have scriptural authority for thus commending all converts to God; but there is not the slightest authority for observing the rite of confirmation, as practised by all the Episcopal churches.

2. *The person who must perform the rite.*—The ancient church taught that the rite must be performed by (1) the bishop; (2) The bishop was permitted to give a priest a *special* commission to perform the rite; and (3) The bishop could even give a *general* commission for this purpose. The bishop must perform the rite, or else it must be performed by one who had his distinct authority for doing so.

The whole rite, in all its varied and changing aspects, has been much debated, and yet the Bible contains not a single word on the subject.

It will be seen from this brief notice, that as the priests exalted themselves above the people, so the prelates exalted themselves above the priests, and the Pope exalted himself above all; and thus the church became gradually a huge hierarchy, alien alike to the spirit and the methods of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the Roman and Anglican churches only the bishop can confirm. The priest is permitted to generally manage the spiritual affairs of the parish. He can preach, teach, and prepare the candidates for confirmation, but he cannot confirm. The bishop, who knows nothing of the spiritual history of the candidates, and cannot have the same love for and interest in them, and may even differ widely from them and their spiritual guide in religious matters, he and he alone can confirm.

The man who has had all the preparatory work to do must stand aside, while a stranger comes in and confirms the candidates. No one can confirm in the Anglican Church but the man who has been sent there by the prime minister of the day.

The Scripture nowhere warrants such an authority of one pastor over another. It is alien altogether to the gospel ministry.

The Greek and Lutheran churches permit the priests to confirm, and in this way preserve the ancient custom of the Christian church, which allowed all the pastors to confirm; but the bishop's authority is seen in the former of these two churches, by the arrangement that the chrism must be prepared and consecrated by the bishop alone.

By departing from the simple rite of Scripture baptism, these Episcopal churches have opened up for **themselves** fruitless controversies, and adopted barren ceremonies.

3. *The time to observe the rite.*—In ancient times the candidate, as he came out of the water, was consecrated by the bishop, who was often present, and, if not present, he confirmed the candidates as soon after their baptism as possible. The baptism and the confirmation were considered the two parts of the one rite, and were not divided by any delay, except when it could not be avoided.

The Greek Church still baptises and confirms at the same time, and regards the two rites as really one.

The Roman, Lutheran, and Anglican churches purposely allow several years to intervene between the baptism and the confirmation, but the arguments which justify their doing so would equally justify their delaying the baptism itself. It is as

incongruous to baptise, as to confirm the unconscious. Both ceremonies ought to be postponed, till the candidates know their import. This course would be at once scriptural and reasonable.

The Roman church alone has elevated this rite into a "sacrament." The other Episcopal churches consider the rite to be one of great importance. It is the way of entrance into the church and to the Lord's Table, and those who neglected it were, at one time, severely punished; now, they are denied church fellowship.

The personal profession of faith made at confirmation, is the one that ought to be made at baptism and by baptism; but this rite of confirmation, which is oftener a collapse than a confirmation, is a ceremony which all who take the Scriptures as their rule of faith must repudiate, and fall back upon the gospel rite of baptism.

II DEFENCE OF THIS RITE.

Though Episcopalians are unwilling to defend "confirmation" from Scripture, yet they do sometimes quote a text or two which they fancy, in some way or other, will support them.

Tradition they also quote; but the voice of tradition is contradictory, and is bound to be, for one voice speaks concerning the confirmation of *believers* who have just been baptised, and the other refers to the various forms of *paedobaptism*. There is sure to be variety of practice when men allow tradition to share, in any measure, the authority which belongs alone to the Scripture.

The Episcopalians point to the evidence of three classes of texts, which they find in God's Word.

1. *The texts where the term "confirm" occurs.*

(1) *Acts 14:22* "Confirming the souls of the disciples." There is no word here about a religious rite or ceremony; there is nothing about anointing with oil; there is nothing about the sign of the cross; nothing about the laying on of hands; nothing about the absolute necessity of a bishop confirming the disciples.

The term used (*epiaterizon*) means to strengthen, to establish, to *confirm*. The text itself tells us the means used to secure this end; "*Exhorting them* to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations, we must enter into the kingdom of God."

The converts referred to were much exposed to the sin of apostasy, and so Paul uses these spiritual means to confirm their character and to consolidate their creed.

That is the true confirmation, and these are the means of it, and they are the means which we Baptists use in every case, and must use, if we are to be truly confirmed in the faith.

(2) *Acts 15:32* "And Judas and Silas being themselves also prophets, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them." These men are described as "prophets," that is, preachers, and in keeping with this they are represented as exhorting the brethren, and so confirming them. Judas and Silas used the same means as Paul, and as all Baptists used in former times, and still use.

These men were neither priests nor prelates, and yet they confirmed; and here we read, not about a ritual, but of "exhortation," with a view to a deepened spiritual life. This is confirmation.

(3) *Acts 15:41* "And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches." That is, in all these districts he did what has been already somewhat fully described (*Acts 14:22*) He exhorted the brethren to hold fast by their principles, and to sedulously endeavour to develop their spiritual character and life.

The speeches and the letters of Paul and Peter show us the kind of exhortations the heroes of the cross gave the brethren, with a view to their being confirmed in the faith; but nowhere in the Book do we read of any rite resembling that of

confirmation, as practised by the Episcopal churches.

2. The texts where the word "unction" occurs.

(1) *1 John 2: 20.* "And ye have an anointing from the: Holy One."

(2) *1 John 2:27.* "...the anointing which ye received of Him abideth in you...but as His anointing teacheth you all things."

The prophets, priests, and kings of ancient Israel were anointed; and Jesus Christ, as the great Prophet, Priest, and King was spiritually anointed. We, who are prophets, priests, and kings, in Him, are also anointed: but it is by the Holy Spirit of promise, and not by Roman, Greek, or Anglican bishops. The latter unction is a poor substitute for the former; and if we have the former, we need not the latter, which is at once useless and unscriptural. Let us, therefore, seek the "anointing of the Holy One," and reject the vain unction of the bishop.

3. The texts where the phrase "laying on of hands" occurs.

(1) *Acts 8:14-17.* "Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit."

It seems that it was a subject of surprise to the Christians at Jerusalem that the Samaritans had so extensively received the gospel of Jesus; and so Peter and John went down to that city, at the request of the other apostles, to see what kind of spiritual work was going on. Peter and John were evidently satisfied that a work of grace had been *going* on in the hearts of the people; but they saw that though the Samaritan brethren were partakers of the Spirit's "grace," they had none of the Spirit's "gifts," which were so common in those days; so they prayed that the people might receive these gifts, and in answer to their prayers and laying on of hands, gifts fell on the people.

The term used, "fallen on them," seems to point to some visible outpouring of the Spirit—as on other occasions—and not merely to the invisible coming of the Spirit into the heart.

The fact that Simon Magus, a great magician, was so struck with the power of the gifts, that he offered money for it,—the fact that he thought that such power would be of supreme service to him, shows that we are here reading of the miraculous display of the Spirit's energies, and no such vain ceremony as that performed by prelates.

A bishop in any Episcopal church would be amazed beyond all utterance at any one who should be so struck with anything he gave at confirmation, as to offer money for it. The bishop knows he gives nothing, and the confirmed know that they receive nothing. A mere mechanical ceremony is gone through, which may or may not prove a means of grace. The bishops go through a form, but impart no power.

(2) *Acts 11:1-7.* "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came upon them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied."

This was a similar case to the one just considered. When the hands were laid on the people, the Spirit entered their hearts and minds with miraculous power. This was soon made evident by the gifts which the converts at once displayed. When the apostles laid their hands on the people, miraculous gifts were imparted; but the bishops cannot impart these gifts, and they know it. The bishop goes through a ceremony unknown to the apostles, and *he* fails to do what the apostles did when he does lay on the hands. He confers no gifts or graces, whereas the apostles did both.

(3) *Heb. 6:2.* "And laying on of hands."

- A. Jesus laid His hands on children, but it was to "bless them," and not simply as part of a religious ceremony.
- B. The apostles laid on their hands in healing the sick (*Acts 28:8*), but this has nothing whatever to do with any rite of "confirmation."
- C. The apostles laid on their hands in ordaining to office (*Acts 6:6*; *1 Tim. 5:22*)
- D. The apostles laid on their hands when imparting any special gifts (*2 Tim. 1: 6*)

Patriarchs in blessing their children, penitents in offering sacrifices for their sins, priests when consecrating any person to the sacred office, laid on hands; but none of these things has anything whatever to do with the rite of confirmation.

The apostles, when they laid on hands, conferred substantial gifts, which we cannot do. Hence we have not been commanded to observe the custom; yet bishops, though they know that the power is gone, keep up the empty form. It will be time enough to use the form when God indicates His will by giving the power to impart spiritual gifts with it. Till then, our wisest course is to abolish the ceremony. It will thus be seen that the custom or rite of confirmation cannot be supported by the Scriptures, nor by common sense nor reason.

III THE REFUTATION OF THIS RITE.

1. *The Lord neither preached nor practised it.*

The Lord taught substantially every Christian doctrine, and any doctrine not taught directly or indirectly by Him is not to be received by us. An institution not founded by our Lord nor by His authority, is not a Christian institution. It may be a useful ceremony; it may be wise, politic, safe, but it is not a Christian institution, and must not be so named. The Lord founded baptism and the [Lord's Table], and taught us how to observe them but He nowhere, directly or indirectly, says one word about confirmation, as practised among the Episcopal churches.

He says nothing about the rite itself, nor how it is to be observed, nor who are to observe it, nor who ought to officiate at it, nor what oil to use, if oil is to be used at all. Surely, it is unwise to have among our religious institutions a rite on which our Saviour said not a single word.

2. *The apostles neither preached nor practised it.*

(1) *The apostles sometimes had hands laid on them. Acts 13:8.*

The apostles were sometimes the messengers of the churches. It was the church that sent Peter and John to Samaria, and it was the church which sent Paul and Barnabas on a missionary tour; when the church at Antioch did so, she laid her hands on them.

Surely, the church was not confirming Paul and Barnabas; but, if not, then no argument on behalf of confirmation can be founded on passages of Scripture, containing a reference to the laying on of hands. Besides, the laying on of hands might be a perfectly scriptural practice, and yet the rite of confirmation be altogether unknown to the apostles.

The two things are quite distinct and different.

(2) *The apostle tells us distinctly who it is that really confirmed, anointed, and sealed the disciples.*

"Who shall also confirm you unto the end."-1 Cor. 1:8. The two Greek words used in this controversy on confirmation are:

A. *Bebaioo*. This term, when applied to persons, means "to establish," "to make steadfast." When applied to things, it means to corroborate, ratify, establish; and hence, in both cases, really to confirm in the true sense.

B. *Epiderizo*. This term means "to place firmly upon," "to rest on," "lean upon," "to be supported on," and hence, tropically, "to confirm."

It is God that converts and confirms. He does both, and both alike, and the one in order to the other; conversion must ever look forward to confirmation. God does both, and He does both through His ministries of the Spirit and the Word, and so we have to look up to Him, and not to prelates and priests, for both conversion and confirmation.

We must be confirmed, but it is God who confirms us. He establishes our Christian character and creed, and we co-operate with Him in this by attending to all the means of grace. Thereby do we deepen our spiritual life, quicken our spiritual

instincts, and inspire our spiritual activities. Devotion and duty alike become a pleasure when we are truly confirmed. We are thus "made steadfast and moveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." This, and not the vain ceremony performed by a bishop, is scriptural confirmation.

3. *The early Christians neither preached nor practised it.*

We have the record of the early church in the *Acts of the Apostles*, but this record never refers to the rite of confirmation. We have letters addressed to pastors, such as Timothy and Titus, and yet no mention is made of this rite. We have letters addressed to several churches, whose names are given, and yet there is not one reference, however dim, to this rite. We have letters to the scattered of many countries, and yet never once is this rite brought before us.

The believers everywhere were baptised, and the baptised were added to the church without the intervention of prelates. It was only when a pastor became a lord bishop, with priests under him, and the Christian ministry had degraded itself into an unscriptural hierarchy, that the preacher of the gospel was denied the privilege of confirm-mg, even according to the dead ceremony.

How contrary to all God's Word is the dogma that the man who has taught you, guided you, counselled you, warned you, and been the means of your conversion, and prepared you to declare yourself on the Lord's side, should be set aside; and a stranger whom, perhaps, you have never seen before and may never see again—one who cannot know you and love you as your own pastor does—should come forward, and he alone receive you into the church. Surely the one who has been your spiritual guide is the one best fitted to confirm you in the faith, and that is the only confirmation recognised in the Word of God.

All the confusion, and all the display of tyranny and ambition in our Episcopal churches, arise from the introduction of infant baptism, and the adding to the simple ordinance of God. Let us exhort all to return to the apostolic teaching and example. We can baptise only believers, and confirm these not by a dead ceremony, but by the living words of the gospel of Christ.



The Necessity of the Sinner's Destruction_____

W. H. Jordan

Take from the book, *The Baptist Pulpit of the United States*, 1860, Joseph Belcher, Ed.

There is a necessity for the destruction of those who reject the gospel, resulting from the moral character of such persons. There is no fitness in them for the enjoyment of heaven. *They are fit only for destruction.* What employment will they find in heaven adapted to their taste? The angels of God are engaged in studying the eternal and unsearchable mysteries of redemption. *They* are singing the praises of Jesus. The pillars of heaven are trembling, and its vault resounding, with the mighty song of the great congregation, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, are gathering around the throne, in joyful acclamation, to put the crown upon the head of Him who has been despised, rejected, and crucified by the gospel-slighter.

He cannot lift his song; *he* cannot bend his knee amid that glorious multitude. *He* does not love the Saviour. The guilt of his blood is upon his soul. *Where* will he find society? If he go to Abraham, *he* has no heart for any other song than the praises of that Redeemer, even whose distant day gladdened his heart. If he turn to Moses, *his face* is shining with a brighter glory than on that eventful day when he returned from communion with God in the holy mount, as he *now* looks upon the face of Him of whom he once did write. The strains of seraphic animation and profound adoration, breaking from the harp of Paul, in the praises of Him who came into the world to save the chief of sinners' rebuke the hope of any companionship with him. He has already pronounced, with what he saw of the Redeemer's glory, even amid the impurities of this mortal state.

"If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed." Where will he seek repose for his guilty heart and his unblessed feet? Every place is fragrant with the love of Christ, resplendent with the beauties of holiness, and perfumed with the breath of the Lord. The unsullied flowers of paradise strike an awe upon his guilty soul, and remind him that this is no place for the enemy of God and the despiser of the Lamb. *Where* will he find companionship? Not until he sinks into that dark abyss, where are to be found, "weeping, and wailing and gnashing their teeth," the enemies of God and the despisers of Christ. Ah! little does the sinner know what he is doing, when he is rejecting a crucified Saviour. If there be such a thing as responsibility—if men be not above it as gods, or below it as brutes—the rejection of the gospel must involve *a* fearful responsibility.

But, after all, objects, perhaps, the unwilling sinner—seeking rather to justify himself in his sins than to be saved from them—it is severe, it is hard, it is *unjust*, to condemn a creature to eternal misery for the sins of this short life. Hard and severe I will acknowledge it to be. Such it will be found—to a degree of which, at present, we can form no adequate conception—by all who shall unhappily fall under so disastrous a doom. But that it is not *unjust*, I think, all that has been said is calculated to show.

Let it, furthermore, be asked, is the condemned criminal a proper judge, either of the nature of his crime, or the degree of its criminality? Sin, let it be remembered, consist, not so much in action as in principle. It needs not years for a man to prove whether he be a thief, a liar, a traitor, or a murderer. Let principle display itself in one single characteristic act, and his character is confessed, his doom pronounced. He is just then what, without an entire revolution in the moral elements of his character, he will *forever* be. By one single act—indeed, by one unholy thought—as well as by years of protracted profligacy, may 'a creature expose himself to eternal damnation.

This view agrees, too, with all the analogy with which we are conversant, By *one* false leap, may a man precipitate himself into a bottomless abyss. It requires not many—nor does the nature of the case admit of it—but by *one* false step, he falls from the greatest height to the lowest depth. Such has been the unhappy fall of man. Such the depth from which the Son of God came to rescue him.

As in the natural, so also in the moral aspect of the subject, we are supplied with analogy illustrative of the *decisive* character of a single act. Who would acknowledge any force in the complaints of the condemned criminal, with his hands bloody with the murder of his brother, and ready, when freed from their manacles, to repeat his crime, arguing the injustice of depriving him—for one single act—of his life, which can never be restored to him? What shall redeem lost character, or brighten tarnished reputation?—reputation lost by one *foul*, one damning act? How many, by *one* false, *one* fatal step, stamp upon their character indelible disgrace? It will be in vain to complain that it is hard. Such is the natural course of things. There is no remedy for it.

But, says the sinner, I cannot *understand how men should deserve* to be damned for the sins they commit in this world. What then? Is it, therefore, not true? Is the proposition to be admitted, that nothing is true—in physics, in morals, in religion—which men do not understand? Is our understanding the rule by which to ascertain the dimensions, the line by which to sound the depths of all truth.

Can we see no necessity, with our very limited faculties—blinded and depraved as they are by sin—for an infallible revelation, that we may both know and do our duty? Alas! how great is the folly—how great, too, the danger, rejecting the sure word of God—of betaking ourselves to the bewildering and delusive glare of human reason! God has mercifully given us a light, to which, if we take heed, we shall do well. If we neglect it, we shall stumble in darkness.

It only remains, my friends, that I press upon your minds the solemn subject of this discourse—the *certain and just destruction of those who refuse submission to the gospel of Christ*. If you reject "the glad tidings of great joy," the publication of peace and love from God to man—upon the authority of that Saviour who *came* to redeem you from hell, and who will judge us all in the last great day, you will be damned.

Oh! fearful doom of the impenitent sinner! Think of it *now*, before it is too late! Think of your souls! Think of the love and blood of Christ! Think of the terrors of an avenging God! What will become of the sinner, if he shall despise the grace of the gospel?

Soon will he be ripe for the sickle of avenging justice! *Soon* the Spirit of God will be gone, and all holy influence have forsaken him! The measure of his iniquity now full—the willing and fast-bound captive of the devil—he stands for a time to attract upon his guilty head the lightning of the Divine wrath! Miserable man! He has rejected Christ! Such is his awful doom! May God, of his infinite mercy, save us from such a guilt, and from such a doom. Amen.



Points to be Remembered

Roy Mason

From the book, *The Church That Jesus Built*, 1923 (Chapter 8)

It is certainly true that, judged by the doctrinal test, Baptists validate their claim of church perpetuity!

"Some say that Baptists cannot trace their history through the centuries because of the irregularities of beliefs among the dissenting sects. Well, when we remember that the true church of Christ have been persecuted in every age and driven into the dark caves and fastnesses of the mountains, with what their enemies state concerning them we might expect some differences to appear among them. But are Baptists today free from these little differences? The fact is we have many Unitarian Baptists among us at the present time which we are trying to get out of our communion."

—J. L. Smith, in *Baptist Law of Continuity*

We have seen in a former chapter that all churches and denominations, with the single exception of Baptist churches, originated in post-apostolic times, and moreover that their origin may be traced to a human head and founder. Applying Jesus' historical test, which requires that the true church must have had Him for the Founder, and must have been perpetuated through all ages, we eliminated all churches save those of the Baptists.

In the preceding chapter we applied the doctrinal test, with the result that we found Baptist churches alone to be apostolical in doctrine, form and practice. Other denominations, we saw, failed to meet this test; each of them showing wide departure from apostolic doctrine and practice. Already it has become apparent that Baptist churches are identical with the churches of the New Testament era, and consequently may rightly claim to be the true churches of Christ. However, we shall not stop here. We proposed in the beginning to devote some time to proving Baptist church perpetuity by *statements of reliable historians*.

Before we hear the testimony of these historical witnesses, it might be well for the sake of clearness to deal briefly with several matters bearing more or less on the subject. These points, indicated numerically, follow:

1. Let it be borne in mind as indicated at the beginning that Baptists do not attempt to establish their claims *by the Baptist name*. Some say that Baptist churches are not the true churches because they are not *called* by the name Baptist in the New Testament. The plain fact is that they were not called by any distinguishing name at that time, but were simply spoken of as "churches." And why? Plainly because *all* churches were then of one faith and consequently needed no name, except the church at such and such a place, as for example, "the church at Antioch," "the church at Corinth," etc. But it can be readily seen that as time passed, and spurious organizations calling themselves churches sprang up, distinguishing names came to be used as a matter of necessity.

As for Baptists, they have during the course of centuries been all called by different names. These names were usually bestowed upon them by their enemies and persecutors, as I have previously tried to show. Sometimes in one land a certain name was applied to them while at the same time in another land, they were being called by another name. The same kind of churches existed, characterized by the same evangelical doctrine and life, but the names they bore were different.

It is very easy to understand how this could be in a time when churches were widely separated and when there was little

intercommunication. As late as colonial days in America, Baptists were often termed "Anabaptists" and "Catabaptists." Indeed, in reading some historical documents relating to the early history of Kentucky, I found that the Baptists were referred to as Anabaptists. Most surely the dropping of the "Ana" in no wise changed the characteristics of the churches. No more were the Waldenses changed when in the course of time they came to be called Anabaptists. So the thing insisted upon is not identity of name, but rather continuity of doctrine and life, held by peoples meeting as bodies of baptized believers in Christ.

2. Let it be remembered that those who deny Baptist perpetuity *differ widely as to when Baptists had their origin*. Their very uncertainty, and their complete divergence of opinion about the matter, is in itself, a good argument for the thing they oppose. Dr. W. A. Jarrell, in preparing his manuscript for his book on perpetuity some years ago, wrote a number of letters to high officials and scholars of the Catholic and various Protestant churches, asking the question, "When, where, and by whom was the first Baptist church originated?" The answers received showed hopeless confusion and uncertainty. These men, unwilling to concede that the first church that ever existed was a Baptist church, were hard pressed to find an answer, and their answers failed to correspond with each other.

Permit me to further illustrate on this point: I have here on my writing table two books written by men who violently oppose the Baptist perpetuity idea. In dating the origin of Baptists, one says that the Baptists were started in Germany in 1521 by Nicholas Stork. The other says that the first Baptist church was founded in Amsterdam by John Smyth, an English-man, in 1607. The fact is, those who deny that Jesus started the first Baptist church at Jerusalem simply cannot place their finger on the date of the beginning of the first Baptist church, and the man who started it. They cannot correctly name the date because it doesn't exist! They cannot name the man this side of Christ, because he never lived!

3. Note the confusion that prevails among those who claim that Jesus did not found the local assembly, but a "universal, invisible Church." For instance, Dr. C. I. Scofield, in his "Synthesis of Bible Truth," says that *ecclesia* is used in the New Testament in *four* different senses, as follows: "To designate the whole body of the redeemed during the present dispensation, to designate a local church, to designate groups of local churches, and to designate the visible church or body of professed believers without reference to locality or numbers."

Confusion is here worse confounded! Who can read the New Testament with unbiased mind and get the impression that Jesus founded several different kinds of churches? This teaching could only have arisen as a theoretical necessity. Further, we find that the Westminster Confession contains still another conception of church, in which those who have never become believers are members. This Confession says that the church consists "of all those throughout the world who profess the true religion, together *with their children*."

4. There are those who readily admit a *perpetuity of Baptist principles* but who are not willing to admit perpetuity of Baptist churches. For instance, H. C. Vedder, in his *Short History of the Baptists*, devotes most of his introduction to an argument against Baptist perpetuity, then, strange to say, begins his history of the Baptists in the New Testament times! He does not admit the continuance of Baptist churches, but devotes upwards of two hundred pages to what he calls a "history of Baptist principles." There immediately arises this question: If Baptist principles have had continuous existence from apostolic times, then surely there must have existed people who held those principles. For the perpetuity of Baptist principles necessarily involves the fact that there lived individuals who held them. Were not the individuals who held Baptist principles Baptists? And were not the churches made up of such individuals Baptist churches? If not, I am greatly concerned to know what kind of churches they were. The position that there has been a perpetuity of Baptist principles but not of Baptists is illogical, and it ill becomes a person of thoughtful mind to hold such a position.

5. None deny that there have existed from the days of the apostles on, companies, congregations, and sects of Christians dissenting from the established and commonly accepted forms. When the prevailing churches fell into errors, and departed from the gospel teaching, those who continued godly separated themselves from the multitude and worshipped and served God according to their understanding of the Scriptures. These people, true to apostolic teaching, constituting in the strictest sense what remained of the true church of Christ, were bitterly persecuted, termed "heretics," and had applied to them all sorts of odious names. And because they usually wore the names applied to them in hatred by their enemies, the names varied. Consequently, it would be foolish for one, because the name Baptist cannot be traced back successively to apostolic times, to deny that people holding Baptist principles and in a real sense Baptists have existed.

6. Objection is often made to tracing Baptist descent through the so-called dissenting "sects," that existed from the New Testament times on, *upon the ground that there were irregularities among them as to doctrine and practice*. Some of the churches included under the same name as that of the peoples through whom Baptists trace their perpetuity, practiced things out of harmony with the things that Baptists practice today. Therefore, it is argued that Baptists err in claiming kinship with them. Let us think about this objection for a few moments.

It ought to be evident to anyone who will think it over that churches, absolutely independent, bound together in no close organic way, driven into seclusion, scattered and separated by persecution, would in all probability come to differ somewhat in minor matters of doctrine and polity. Moreover, some might even depart so far from the Scriptures' teaching as to become unworthy of the name borne by them. There is no doubt that this very thing happened in many instances among the peoples through whom the Baptists trace descent. Biased historians have seized upon these more or less isolated instances, and have magnified them in an attempt to show that the whole "sect" was not baptistic in its doctrines and practices.

Upon the same principle it could be argued that certain churches of the apostolic era were not true churches. For instance, the church at Corinth was very imperfect; irregularities existed, yet no one asserts that it was not a true church of Christ. One could magnify the irregularities and variations that exist between Northern and Southern Baptist churches, or between Southern Baptists and the Baptists of Canada or England, and erroneously conclude that they are not to be classed as the same people. And, indeed, there are churches calling themselves by the name "Baptist" that have without doubt so far departed from the Scriptures as to no longer be true Baptist churches. It is quite unfair, however, to judge a people as a whole by the actions of a few churches that go astray from the truth. In properly estimating them we must find out what they in the main stand for. We must ascertain what the principles were that *generally* characterized them.

It should be remembered that much of what is on record concerning those who held Baptist views in ages past has come from the pens of their bitter foes. Those who wrote about them generally hated these "dissenters" with deadly and malignant hatred and did not scruple at persecuting them to the death. Can the testimony of such witnesses be considered as trustworthy? All too often have historians, even some who bear the name Baptist, been willing to characterize Baptists of ages gone by according to the records of their persecutors, who delighted in nothing more than to exaggerate their faults. Strange to say, some historians seem to give more credence to the statements of their enemies than to those contained in the extant writings of these Christians themselves.

It seems to me that the histories of Newman and Vedder go to this extreme just mentioned. As I have compared their writings concerning the various bodies of Christians who withstood Rome in the earlier days with the writings of other Baptist historians, I have been unable to keep from feeling that they do these peoples a deep injustice. Those noble men and women who kept alive the great doctrines of the New Testament faith through bloody times of persecution, who maintained evangelical religion in the face of Romish apostasy, often at the cost of life—surely they bore enough during their lifetime without having perpetuated against their memory, by biased historians, the calumnies of their enemies.

7. It might well be asked at this point, *How far can a church depart from the truth and still be a New Testament church?* Those who claim that Montanists, Novatians, Paulicians, Waldenses, etc., were too heretical for Baptists to claim kin with, might well ponder this question. Even Dr. A. H. Newman recognizes that churches may have irregularities and still be true New Testament churches, for in his *History of Antipedobaptism*, page 28, he says: "That a church also may make grave departures in doctrine and practice from the apostolic standard without ceasing to be a church of Christ, must be admitted." If we can determine just how far a church may depart from the truth and still remain a New Testament church, we shall then be prepared to examine the beliefs of the various parties and "sects" of ancient times to determine whether or not we may justly trace the Baptists through them.

On the matter of what constitutes a true New Testament church I wish to quote with approval the words of Dr. T. T. Martin, as found in his splendid book on the New Testament Church. He says: "*Only two doctrines are essential to a New Testament church. Other doctrines are important, precious, but only two are essential to a New Testament church. They are the WAY OF SALVATION and the WAY OF BAPTISM.*" The Commission makes this clear. Matthew 28:19-20, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them...."

A body of people holding these two doctrines and in this New Testament order may be in error on other doctrines; yet it is a New Testament church. For instance, if there is in the West a church called a 'Baptist' church that holds immersion for baptism, but does not hold the New Testament way of salvation, then it is not a New Testament Church. If there is a church in New York or England called a 'Baptist' church that holds the New Testament way of salvation but does not hold immersion as baptism, then it is not a New Testament church. If there is a church called a 'Baptist' church that holds the New Testament way of baptism, but that one ought to be baptized before being saved, then it is not a New Testament church."

There have been Baptist churches within recent times that practiced foot-washing. Others have held erroneous views relating to the Sabbath. In our day, I have known of Baptist churches in the North having a woman for pastor, and I have known churches to adopt various unscriptural plans for the carrying on of their work. But the point is, none of these things kept them from being New Testament churches. Just as a Christian may be disobedient and still remain a Christian, so a church may be disobedient and yet remain a New Testament church—though admittedly an unworthy one. For, let us repeat, according to the terms of the Commission, *two doctrines and two only are essential to a New Testament church: THE WAY OF SALVATION AND THE WAY OF BAPTISM.*



The Tabernacle of the Hebrews ---

Taken from the book, *The Baptist Children's Magazine*, 1852, Joseph Foulkes Winks, Ed.,

We should feel both surprise and regret if any of our young readers, who are able to read these pages, had never read in the Bible about this very remarkable place of divine worship). - We believe that nearly all of them have done so, but if only one of them has not, we hope he will at once, for we assure him he will be very much interested.

We shall, however, to help those who have read about it to remember, and to induce any who have not to lose no time in doing so, give all our young readers a brief description of it. But a few words about what took place before the Tabernacle was erected will be necessary.

When Moses, by the power and under the protection of JEHOVAH, had led the Hebrews from a land of slavery into the wild and rocky regions of Arabia, he was divinely directed how to manage them. For having been slaves in Egypt, they were what we might call a half-barbarous race—ignorant, and often impatient. God, by his servant, undertook to instruct and rule them.

After giving them the Great Law at Sinai, other laws and rules were given to teach them lessons of order and purity ; and thus they were taught to reverence the holiness of God, and their duty to each other as the children of one Father.

Moses was then directed to make a large tent, or tabernacle, which was to stand in the centre of their encampments, and thus form a central point to which they might all look, and to which they might all gather at stated times.

This Tabernacle was a moveable fabric, so contrived as to be taken to pieces and put together again at pleasure, for the convenience of carrying it from place to place, during the forty years migration of the Israelites in the wilderness. Though sometimes called a "tent," probably because it was a moveable building having no proper roof, but merely covered with canopies of cloth and skin, it was nevertheless constructed with extraordinary magnificence, and at a prodigious expense, that it might be in some measure suitable to the dignity of JEHOVAH the monarch of Israel, who took up his residence in it as his palace, and corresponding also to the value of those spiritual and eternal blessings of which it was designed to be a type or emblem.

The value of the gold and silver alone, appropriated to the service of this holy house, and of which we have an account

(Exodus 38: 24, 25) amounted, according to Dr. Cumberland's reduction of Jewish talents and shekels to sterling coin, to more than one hundred and eighty-two thousand five hundred and sixty-eight pounds. If to this we add the vast quantity of brass, or *copper*, that was used about this fabric for its court and furniture; the rich wood of which the boards of the tabernacle, as well as the pillars which surrounded the court, and other utensils, were made; the rich embroidered curtains and canopies which covered the Tabernacle, divided the parts of it, and surrounded the courts; and if to these we add the jewels that were set in the high priest's ephod and breast-plate, and which consequently constituted a part of the furniture of the Tabernacle; the value of the whole materials, exclusive of the workmanship, must amount to an immense sum. It was raised partly by voluntary contributions and donations, and partly by a poll-tax of half a shekel per head for every male above the age of twenty; even this tax alone produced 235,359 7s. 6d. sterling.

The Tabernacle was thirty cubits long, ten broad, and ten in height; which, reduced to English measure, according to Dr. Cumberland—who supposes it the Egyptian cubit, nearly equal to twenty-two inches—was fifty-five feet long, eighteen broad, and eighteen high. The boards and the bars were all overlaid with gold; and their rings for the staves, and their hasps at top, were all of the same metal. The foundation on which they stood was also very costly and magnificent. It consisted of solid blocks of silver, two under each board; they were each about sixteen inches long, and of a suitable breadth and thickness; each weighing a talent, or about an hundred weight. Of these there were about an hundred in number, ninety-six of which were laid for the foundation of the Tabernacle under the forty-eight boards; and the other four were the bases of the columns that supported the vail or curtain which divided the inside of the Tabernacle into two rooms.

The Tabernacle, thus fitted and reared, had four different coverings, or curtains, or carpets, thrown one over the other, which hung down the side near to the silver foundation. The first and lowest carpet was made of fine linen, richly embroidered with figures of cherubim, in shades of blue, purple, and scarlet. It is reasonable to suppose, that the right side of this carpet was undermost, and so it formed a beautiful ceiling in the inside of the Tabernacle. This carpet consisted of ten breadths, which were joined together with blue loops and clasps of gold. The next carpet, which lay over the embroidered one, was made of a sort of mohair; the breadths of these were joined together with clasps of brass.

The third carpet was made of ram's skins dyed red; and the uppermost of all, which was to fence the rest from the weather, was made of tachash or badger's skins.

The inside of the Tabernacle was divided into two rooms, by means of a vail or curtain, hung upon four pillars, mentioned before. This vail was made of the richest stuff, both for matter and workmanship, and adorned with cherubim and other ornaments, curiously embroidered upon it.

The room beyond the vail, which was called the holy of holies, was exactly square, being ten cubits each way; and the first room, called the sanctuary, was twice as long as it was broad.

Round the Tabernacle there was a spacious area, or court, of an hundred cubits long and fifty broad, surrounded with pillars, set in bases of brass, and filleted with silver, at the distance of five cubits from one another. There were twenty pillars on each side, and ten at each end of the court. These pillars had silver hooks, on which the hangings were fastened, that formed the enclosure of the court. These hangings were of fine twined linen. The entrance into this court was at the east end, facing the Tabernacle; where richer hangings, for the space of twenty cubits, were supported by four of the pillars; and these were not fastened like the rest of the hangings, but made either to draw or lift up.

In the sanctuary, or first apartment, there was the altar of incense, the golden candlestick, and the table of shewbread. Passing through the vail which separated the holy from the most holy place, we find "in the holiest of all, "the ark of the testimony, or covenant, and its lid or cover, called "the mercy seat," with the two cherubims of glory fixed above it, and forming a kind of throne for the *Shechinah*, or bright cloud, the visible emblem of the Divine presence.

Here, in this holy place, did the Most High take up his abode from time to time, to receive the offerings of his people by the hands of the high priest, who alone was permitted to enter it, and that but once a year, and never without blood,—that is, never without having first offered up an animal by shedding its blood, and taking some of the blood with him when he went into the holy place, to make atonement before the Lord, for his own sins and the sins of the people. And having done this, he would come forth dressed in his splendid robes, and lifting up both his hands, bless the assembled thousands in the

name of the Lord.

Now go and read the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, and learn that it was thus JESUS, our great High Priest, who entered into the holy of holies in heaven for us, taking with him his own blood, and there he presents it before the throne. God smells a sweet savour, and accepts it; and the day is coming when he will return, dressed in the coronation robes of his Imperial Majesty, to bless his faithful followers with eternal life.

A more splendid scene was perhaps never beheld, than the thousands of the Hebrews presented when in their encampments in the order of their tribes. The position of each tribe—as, that of Reuben, Simeon, Judah, and the rest were all fixed; every tribe or family knowing its own place. In the midst of all these tents stood the Tabernacle, the dwelling place of God their King. Well might Balaam, when he lifted up his eyes from the top of the rock, and "saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes," exclaim, with wondering admiration, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes, which the LORD hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters." (Numbers 24:5, 6)



Baptists Exalt the Word of God Above Tradition

John Quincy Adams

Taken from the book, *Baptists: The Only Thorough Religious Reformers, 1854 (Lecture IV)*

"Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." — Matthew 15 6.

Every Reform in religion, presupposes the existence of errors, evil in their tendencies and results, which have gradually crept into ecclesiastical organizations, and which, need to be removed in order that such organizations may become pure and scriptural. A Reform is not the introduction of a new system of religion, but rather the revival of the old system, and the assertion of its supremacy over the innovations of men. It is not a movement based on the pretended reception of a new revelation, conflicting with previous ones from an unchanging Jehovah, but it is the enforcement of the commands and precepts which have already been revealed, but which have been obscured, and invalidated, and made of none effect by human tradition.

Thus it was with the Great Reform introduced by Jesus Christ. He declared that he came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. In the prosecution of his mission, he utterly disregarded the religious rites which owed their origin to mere human invention, and, by a studied non-observance of the traditions of the Jewish rabbis, he constantly exhibited his disapprobation of them. At the same time, he taught principles, which, if carried out, would restore the supremacy of God's law, and effectually remove every vestige of this usurpation of authority by man.

This course brought down upon him the displeasure of those who were wedded to the rites of tradition, while they neglected the more important commands of God. They therefore came to expostulate with him in reference to the course pursued by him, saying, "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?" But Jesus, in reply, asked them a far more pertinent and weighty question: "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" and then, after citing a case in point, he charged them, in the words of the text, with making void the law of God, by substituting their unscriptural observances for His divine commands:— "Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition."

There exists to-day a body of Christians, who are laboring to affect the same kind of reform as was engaged, more than eighteen hundred years ago. That body, though designated since the days of Christ by various names, is known, at the present time, by the name of Baptists. The theme of this, and several succeeding Lectures will be,

The Distinguishing Features of That Reform in Which Baptists Are Engaged

Many persons suppose, that the only difference between Baptists and other evangelical denominations, is respecting the mode and subjects of baptism. This is, indeed, the principal external difference: but this difference exhibits the adherence, on the part of Baptists, to a great and important principle, which is involved in their action, and which they believe to be violated by those who differ from them in this matter.

An illustration of their position is found in the text and its connection. The washing of a person's hands before eating, was, in itself, a small matter; but it involved, in this instance, a sinful obtruding of human tradition in the place of divine commands. This is just the principle that is involved in the practice of infant sprinkling. We announce, then, as the first feature of the Reform in which Baptists are engaged,

The Exaltation of the Word of God above Tradition, in all Matters of Religious Duty

There has always been a conflict between Divine revelation and human tradition; and yet the advocates of the latter have almost invariably endeavored to reconcile it with the former, and thus the Word of God is often distorted in vain efforts to make it support that which is of merely human origin. The ultimate effect of these efforts is to divide the Bible against itself, and to cause it to be utterly disregarded as the standard of appeal in matters of religious duty.

It was thus with the traditions of the Jewish elders. Those who followed them, and practised their rites, ceased to regard the Scriptures which they possessed as the standard of duty; they became a dead letter, and the tradition of the elders—not the Scriptures—was the authority they cited for their support. "For God commanded, saying, Honor thy father and mother; and he that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, and honor not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition."

The same result followed, when the disciples listened to the voice of tradition. On one occasion Christ said, in reference to John, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" Tradition immediately distorted the question into an assertion: "Then went that saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die." (John 21:22, 23) Here Tradition uttered a falsehood, and taught, as usual, a lie.

It is thus, also, in reference to the Church of Rome. Tradition after tradition has been received; human invention after human invention has been adopted, until it becomes dangerous to the interests of that church to permit her deluded members to read God's Word—so directly are life traditions opposed to that Word. And, in order to sustain herself, she vainly arrogates to herself infallibility, and exalts herself above the Bible, and makes the commandment of God of none effect by her tradition.

The will of the Pope, and the decisions of councils, are made the standards of appeal, and the Bible is a dead letter. And yet this same church, in all her corruption, endeavors to reconcile her traditions, in some instances, with the Bible; but, in order to do it, she distorts and invents Scripture to suit herself. As an evidence, look at the following question and answer from a Catechism, recently introduced into Catholic schools, as a substitute for the Bible:

"Q. Can the souls in purgatory be relieved by our prayers and other good works?

"A. Yes; being the children of God, and still members of the church, they share in the communion of the saints; and the Scripture says: 'It is a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins.'"

On what does the Papacy rest to support its penances, and image-worship, and prayers to the saints, and priestly absolutions, and, in short, its very existence? I reply in one word, Tradition. Let the Bible become her standard, and she would cease to exist. She has made almost every, commandment of God of none effect by her tradition.

Thus it is, also, with Protestant Pedobaptist churches. Tradition is the basis on which infant sprinkling rests. We look in vain

for any command in reference to it in the Bible; the Scriptures utter not a word in support of it. The most able Pedobaptists have themselves admitted this. Says Dr. Woods, an eminent Pedobaptist:

"Whatever may have been the precepts of Christ or his apostles, to those who enjoyed their personal instructions, it is plain there is no express precept respecting infant baptism in our sacred writings. The proof, then, that infant baptism is a divine institution, must be made out some other way." He says further, "The want of an express, positive command of Scripture that infants should be baptized, is not to be considered as a valid objection against infant baptism."

It is here plainly admitted that there is no command for infant baptism in the Word of God. But we do not need these admissions to substantiate our assertion. We simply appeal to the Bible itself if it was there, we could see it for ourselves. We ask anyone to show us the first instance of the sprinkling of an infant, or any command to administer baptism to infants. It cannot be found. Thousands of dollars have been offered for the production of a single text, authorizing the practice; but these premiums have never been claimed.

On what, then, does it rest? I reply on Tradition. Dr. Woods says that authority for it "may be afforded particularly by an unwritten tradition." It is a human invention, having no higher authority than that of man. It is one of the traditions which the Protestant Reformers brought from Rome. It is the main "pillar" on which Popery rests; for, if you take away the baptism of infants, Rome would soon fall; its defence necessitates Romish arguments; sad instances are not wanting where Pedobaptists, in combatting Romanists, have either been compelled to use arguments fatal to their own practices, or else be defeated. And it is a matter of history, that Protestant arguments against Baptists have often been used by Romanists against Protestants themselves. Says the President of the famous Council of Trent—a Roman Catholic Pope—speaking of the Baptists: "And surely, how many soever have written against this heresy, whether they were Catholics or Reformers, they were able to overthrow it, not so much by the testimony of the Scriptures, as by the authority of the Church."

And Bayle, in his *Critical Dictionary*, says that the Protestants were obliged to meet the Baptists with arguments which were turned against them by the papists. Dr. Woods furnishes us an illustration of this assertion. He says:

"It is unquestionable, that the knowledge of some extraordinary events of providence, or of some divine injunctions, may be as truly and as certainly communicated in this way, [by an unwritten tradition] as in others; and we should, in many cases, consider a man, who should refuse to admit the truth and authority of a tradition, to be as unreasonable, as if he should refuse to admit the authority of written or printed records." (*Lectures on Infant Baptism*, p. 17)

Now I ask if this is not giving up to Rome all she claim. "We should consider a man who should refuse to admit the authority of tradition, to be as unreasonable as if he should refuse to admit the authority of written or printed records!" Will not Archbishop Hughes say "Amen" to that?

And, on what kind of traditionary authority does infant sprinkling rest? Why, upon the same as every other corruption of Rome; and if Romish tradition be followed in this case, why not in all others? Thus, we have clearly shown that infant sprinkling requires Romish arguments. Now the simple reason of this is that, like the other rites of Popery, it is founded in tradition.

Further, the commandment of God is made of none effect by this tradition. God has given express and plain commands, in reference to every duty and ordinance. He has commanded believers to be baptized; he has extended the command to none others. Those baptized in infancy, in the majority of cases, grow up in unbelief, and never become believers. But where they do become converts, they are taught, by the tradition of the church, that their infant baptism is sufficient, and they are not expected to be baptized after believing. And even when persons sprinkled in infancy are led, by the study of the Bible, to desire baptism after they have believed, strong efforts are always made to dissuade them from it, and they are often compelled to go to the Baptists in order to be baptized. These things are of such common occurrence, that it is unnecessary to relate instances in proof Thus the Word of God is made of no effect.

Again, Pedobaptists, like the Jewish elders, endeavor to reconcile their tradition with the Word of God. Look at their

reasoning: "Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, and honor not his father or his mother, he shall be free." Pedobaptists say: "If any person be sprinkled in infamy, and be not baptized after they believe, it is sufficient." There is an exact parallel. Here you perceive the reasonings of men, in both instances, though opposed to the express command of God, are made the standard, instead of His Word. Would it not sound strange to hear a Pedobaptist minister urge his people to simply follow the teaching and example of Christ, in reference to baptism? Yet this is right; but this comes directly in contact with their tradition.

Now Baptists are opposed to tradition, anywhere and everywhere; whether they find it in the Church of Rome, or in Protestant churches, they aim to elevate the Word of God above tradition, as the standard of duty in all places. It is professedly the grand doctrine of Protestantism—which Protestants themselves have abandoned - that Baptists steadily maintain. They aim to bring all to this standard. They, themselves, have always adhered to the Bible. Did anyone ever hear of Baptists being charged with following tradition? The charge would be ridiculously absurd; for they have always opposed tradition as a guide in matters of religious duty.

From these remarks it will be perceived, that while the subjects and mode of baptism is the external ground of difference between Baptists and others, that difference involves a great principle; and the primary question, is not, Shall infants be baptized, but whether God's Word or Tradition shall be our guide. God has uttered His will in the matter. That will we follow, as we find it in His Word. Those who oppose us, by their own showing, follow tradition. We are laboring to affect a Reform. In doing so, we refer all to the Bible. We assert its supremacy above all human teaching, our own, as well as that of others. This, then, is a prominent feature of the Reform in which Baptists are engaged. And, I observe, it is most important and necessary. Especially is it necessary:

1. In combating error. If tradition be allowed in one particular, who will prohibit it in another? Romanism is gaining ground in this country; it is a religion of tradition. Who will oppose it? Those who are themselves trammelled by tradition? To every argument they can retort, as they have done, "Where do you get your infant sprinkling?" The most staunch Romanist asks nothing more than the adoption of the principle, contained in the language already quoted, of a Protestant Pedobaptist in support of infant sprinkling; "We should consider a man who should refuse to admit the truth and authority of tradition, to be as unreasonable as if he should refuse to admit the truth of written or printed records."

No Pedobaptist can consistently oppose Romanism. There is no consistent position between the Romish and the Baptist church. Tradition leads to the one—the Word of God to the other.

Infidelity and Rationalism, also, are rearing their heads in our midst, and who shall meet them? Their cry is, "Priestcraft, and ministerial dictation!" Who shall meet them? Those who suffer their ministers to tell them what to believe, and to dictate whether they shall investigate a subject or not? No, but those who are prepared, by an independent investigation, and a manly appeal to the Bible, to show the falsity of their charges. This feature of Reform is necessary

2. *To the purity of the Church.* No organization can be pure, without a pure standard. Tradition is liable to perversion; there is no certainty about it. To-day it assumes one position, tomorrow an opposite one. Thus it has ever been. The Church of Rome, though claiming infallibility, has constantly changed her ground of action, because governed by the variable standard of Tradition. This is no less true of Protestant Pedobaptism. To-day, infants are sprinkled on one ground; tomorrow that ground is abandoned, and another, directly opposite to it, is urged, as a reason for administering the rite. Anon, both these are abandoned, and a new position, with a new set of arguments, is introduced. Can the church be pure with such a contradictory guide as Tradition? Never!

Finally, I inquire, does the charge of the text lie against any of my Christian brethren? If you have neglected baptism since you believed, because you were sprinkled in infancy, it most assuredly does. Your sprinkling rests on Tradition. The Bible says, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." "Repent and be baptized, every one of you." If, because sprinkled in infancy, you refuse now to obey Christ, we say to you, in His own truthful language, "Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition!"



A Soldier in the Army of God

Al Hughes

I am a soldier in the army of God!
 The Lord Jesus Christ is my Commanding Officer!
 The Bible is my code of conduct!
 Faith, prayer and Word are my weapons of warfare!
 I have been taught by the Holy Spirit, trained by experience, tried by adversity, and tested by fire!
 I am a volunteer in this army and I am enlisted for eternity!
 I will either retire in this army at the rapture or die in this army.
 But I will not get out, sell out, be talked out or pushed out!
 I am faithful, reliable, capable and dependable.

If my God needs me, I am there! If He needs me in Sunday School to I teach the youth, help adults, or just sit and learn, He can use me because I there!
 I am a soldier!
 I am not a baby!
 I do not need to be pampered, petted, primed up, pumped up, picked up or pepped up!
 I am a soldier!
 No one has to call me, remind me, write me, visit me, entice me, or lure me!
 I am a soldier!
 I am not a wimp!
 I am in place, saluting my King, obeying His orders, praising His name and building His kingdom!
 No one has to send me flowers, gifts, food, cards, candy or give me handouts!
 I do not need to be coddled, cuddled, cradled, cared for or catered to!
 I'm committed! I cannot have my feelings hurt bad enough to turn me around!
 I cannot be discouraged enough to turn me aside!
 I cannot lose enough to cause me to quit!
 When Jesus called me into His army, I had nothing!
 If I end up with nothing, I will still come out even!
 I will win! My God shall supply my needs!
 I am more than a conqueror!
 I will always triumph!
 I can do all things through Christ!
 Devils cannot defeat me!
 People cannot disillusion me!
 Weather cannot weary me!
 Sickness cannot stop me!
 Battles cannot beat me!
 Money cannot buy me!
 Governments cannot silence me and HELL CANNOT HANDLE ME!
 I am a soldier!
 Even death cannot destroy me!
 For when my Commander calls me from this battlefield, He will promote me to captain and then bring me back to rule this world with Him!
 I am a soldier in the army, and I'm marching, claiming victory!
 I will not give up!
 I will not turn around!
 I am a soldier, marching Heaven bound.
 Here I stand!
 WILL YOU STAND WITH ME?
 Guess what?
 If you've accepted Jesus as your Savior, you are already enlisted!
 QUESTION IS, are you on:
 Active Duty: Serving the Lord faithfully, daily and on duty 24-7?
 Reserve Status: serving only when called upon, or twice a year at Christmas and Easter?
 Guard Status. Backing up the Active Duty group?
 Or a you
 AWOL: Absent Without the Lord!?
 Think about it!

