

III. THE EFFICACY OF ORDINANCES.

I. Baptism. The standard catechism of the Episcopal church speaks of baptism as that "Wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." This language is clear, and appalling; baptism by this teaching is a means of changing the character of people; of taking them from a state of nature as children of wrath, and making them, as Bishop Brownwell says, "in deed and in truth, children of God, and heirs of the Kingdom."

No wonder that many intelligent persons who happen to be connected with the Episcopal church through

sentiment, or the force of circumstances, rather than conviction, shrink from this simple statement of Episcopal doctrine, and try to explain it away or break its force by conditions of which the catechism gives no hint. To the loyal Episcopalian the language means what it says. Bishop Seabury, quoted and endorsed by Bishop Kip (*Doub. Wit.*, p. 211), says: "The benefits of baptism are remission of sins, regeneration or adoption into the family of God, the presence of the Holy Spirit, the resurrection of the body and everlasting life." All this as the result of a ceremony in which the infant takes no conscious part, but is brought by others, and simply smiles or frowns, coos or cries, and so forth, according to natural rather than spiritual impulses!

The clear statement of this doctrine is a sufficient refutation; but there are certain considerations which will be helpful to those who honestly seek the truth.

(1) Children who have been sprinkled in infancy give no evidence whatever of being different from other children. That any change has been wrought by the christening process is purely a matter of credulity, as no proof can be adduced either from experience, observation or revelation.

(2) Persons duly baptized on profession of faith sometimes give evidence of being anything else than children of God. The only rational conclusion is that baptism is not a process for making Christians.

(3) A child is the child of his father, and no power on earth can alter that fact, or change that relationship. Voltaire and many others as wicked in spirit and as filthy in conduct were christened in very early infancy. If they were thus made children of God, who unmade them? And how was it done?

The Baptist view is quite simple. (1) Whether born of atheistic or infidel, heathen or Mohammedan, Jewish or Christian parents, all infants, or other irresponsible persons, who die before attaining unto the intelligence necessary to accountability, are saved. This belief is based on the general idea of the justice and mercy of God, and on the specific declarations that Christ takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29), and that by the obedience of the One the many are made righteous (Rom. 5:19).

(2) Baptism, which makes no appeal to reason, but rests solely on the authority of Jesus was designed as a token of simple faith in Him and of complete surrender to His will, and is essentially a voluntary act. The New Testament records no case of baptism administered by force, or without the consent of the baptized. Faith brings salvation (John 3:1_5, 16 18 36; 5: :24; 6:47; Acts 10:43; 13:38, 39 Rom. 5:T ; Gal.3:26; Eph. 2:8, 9, et al.), and this salvation is symbolized (I Pet. 3:20, 21) in baptism as a washing away

of sin (Acts 22:16), as death to an old life and resurrection to a new (Rom. 6:3, 4; Col. 2:12), or as union with Christ (Gal. 3:27).

The candid reader will ponder these truths, and decide for himself whether Episcopalians or Baptists hold the true view as to the design of baptism.

2. The Lord's Supper. The Episcopal church holds what is called the doctrine of consubstantiation, the gist of which is that while the bread and wine of the supper remain unchanged, "the whole human nature of Jesus is really united with the bread and wine, so these exist together, and both are distributed to the communicant." Dean Goulburn says: The elements are not only the sign and symbol of the body and blood of Christ, but also the instruments of conveying an actual participation in his crucified human nature;" and he asserts that this is done in "eating and drinking the consecrated elements of bread and wine, which pass into and are absorbed in our living frames" *Far. Conn.*, p. 92). Our learned friend Mr. Sadler, says of the supper: "In it we have offered to us the greatest benefits of redemption; and these benefits become ours through the communication of partaking of His lower nature, his flesh and blood" (*Ch. Doc.*, p. 158) ; and it is not strange that he felt constrained immediately to say, "A moment's consideration of all this must be unutterable and in explicable," and he might have added absurd.

The extent of the absurdity is suggested in the following considerations based upon the utterances of these Episcopal brethren:

(1) The crucified human nature of Christ was in a material body manifest to the physical senses (Heb. 2:16; 6:5; John 20:20, 27); yet contrary to all observation these learned brethren assure us that this human and lower nature is present with the bread and wine and is distributed to the communicant.

(2) The eating of human flesh and blood is not usually regarded as a religious exercise; yet these brethren solemnly insist that cultivated and loyal Episcopalians are in the habit of actually partaking of the lower and crucified flesh and blood of Jesus as an act of deep devotion. In the expressive words of Mr. Sadler, this is "unutterable, and inexplicable."

The Baptist view of this solemn ordinance involves nothing shocking, unutterable, or absurd, but conforms to the simple teachings of the Scriptures (Matt. 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:19, 20; 1 Cor. 10:16, 17; 1 Cor. 11: 23-34.)

(1) The bread and the wine are symbols of the flesh and blood of Jesus. The Scriptures positively and clearly state that Jesus is a Door, a Vine, a Way, a Rock, a Lion, a Lamb; but a literal interpretation of these terms stultifies reason and fosters infidelity. Equally absurd is it to hold that, while sitting alive and sound in the presence of his disciples,

Jesus broke his own body and shed his own blood. Baptists think he broke bread and poured wine, as symbols of his flesh and blood.

(2) The Lord's Supper, as an institution extending backward to the guest chamber in Jerusalem (Mk. 14:14, 15) and destined to continue until the end, is a perpetual monument to the life and death of our Lord (I Cor. 1 :26).

(3) It is a means of grace in no peculiarly mysterious way, but only as obedience to any command, "Eat," "Drink," is a means of grace, and as it turns the thoughts toward death, and stimulates adoration, gratitude and renewed consecration by fixing the mind on that Death through which the soul escapes eternal death (Matt.26:28; I Cor. I 1:24, 25).

In conclusion the intelligent reader is reminded that in a little while (job 16:22) the name by which persons are known here will be a small matter; the supreme issue will be their standing before the Lord. No tradition, or sentiment, or human creed will then avail; but the Word of God will be the test of faith and character (John 12:48). Search the Scriptures. Fight the good fight of faith. Lay hold on eternal life (I Tim. 4:16: 6:12).

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