

DIVINE ORDINANCES,
OR
POSITIVE LAW IN RELIGION.

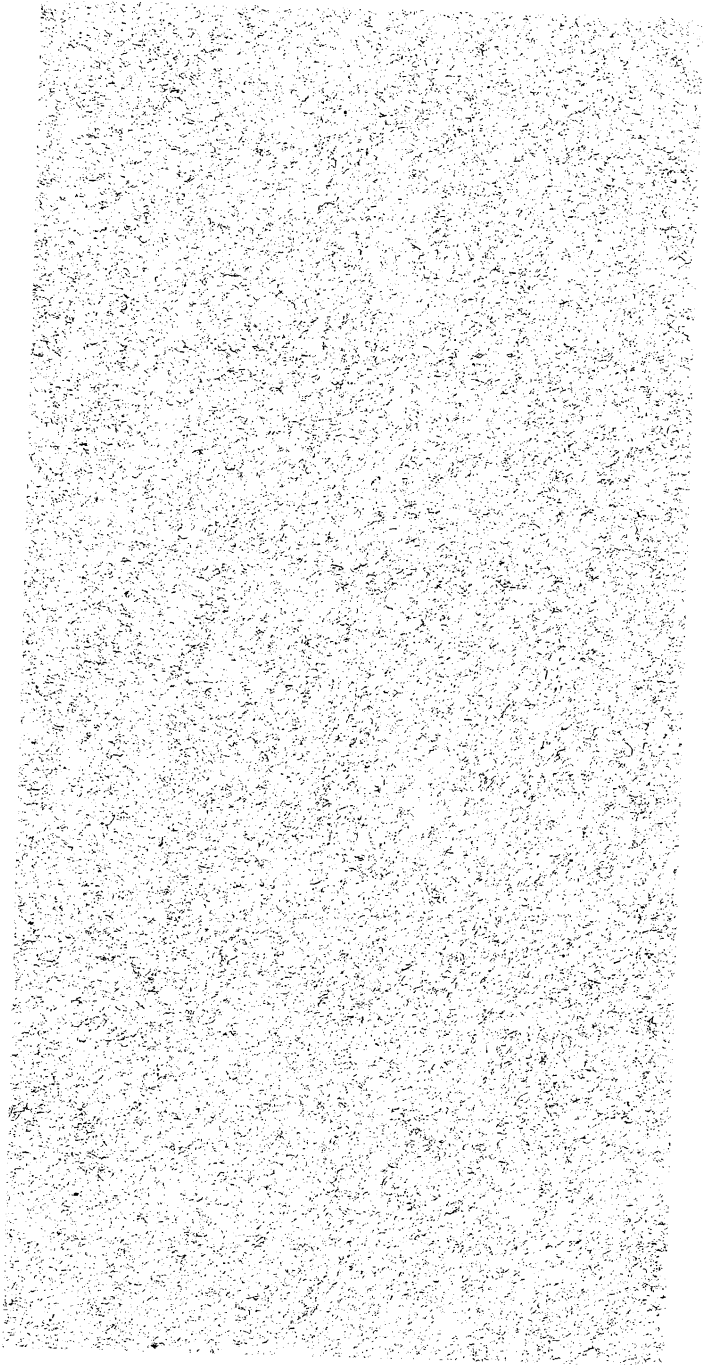
A Sermon

PREACHED AT MARTHA'S VINEYARD, AUGUST 10, 1879,
BY W. W. EVERTS,
PASTOR BERGEN BAPTIST CHURCH, JERSEY CITY,
and published by request.

“And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the
commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless.”

LUKE I : 6.

NEW YORK :
AMERICAN AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY,
116 NASSAU STREET.
1879.



DIVINE ORDINANCES,
OR
POSITIVE LAW IN RELIGION.

A Sermon

PREACHED AT MARTHA'S VINEYARD, AUGUST 10, 1879,

BY W. W. EVERTS,

PASTOR BERGEN BAPTIST CHURCH, JERSEY CITY,

and published by request.

“And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless.”

LUKE I: 6.

NEW YORK :
AMERICAN AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY,
116 NASSAU STREET.
1879.



DIVINE ORDINANCES,

OR

POSITIVE LAW IN RELIGION.

“And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.”

LUKE I : 6.

Zacharias and Elisabeth are commended in this text, not for walking in all the doctrines of the Lord, though that might be high praise. Every one should dread the reproach of heterodoxy, or dissent from the accepted faith of God's people. Nor yet are they praised for walking in all the moral teachings of the Lord, though virtues are a resplendent characteristic of true piety ; and immoral saints would be a contradiction in terms. But they are praised for walking in “all the commandments and ordinances” of the Lord—terms which comprehend all religious observances, worship and obedience. The subject suggested by this commendation is the value of Divine ordinances ; and this value we propose to illustrate by a three-fold argument :

1. Showing the important place ordinances hold in the scheme of religion.
2. Showing that departure from them is the approximate measure of moral apostacy.

3. Showing that their restoration is the only promise of the reunion and triumph of Christ's Church.

I.

The important place ordinances hold in the scheme of religion.

1. Divine appointment gives exalted rank to ordinances. An ordinance is something ordained; as rules of families; by-laws of corporations; constitutions of States, and rituals of religion. The sanction of ordinances is derived from the authority enacting them. Family rules are enforced by the authority of the family; corporate regulations by the authority of the corporation; civil constitutions by the sovereignty of the State; ecclesiastical canons by the authority of the Hierarchy imposing them. But Divine ordinances are enforced by supreme authority. An ordinance clearly ascertained to be from God as sacredly binds the conscience as any precept of the Decalogue. The positive commandment, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," is as palpable a regime of the conscience as the moral precept, "Thou shalt not steal." The Lord's baptism is as binding upon His followers as the moral law, "Thou shalt not bear false witness." The prestige of Christ's appointment therefore gives His baptism and the order of His Church paramount claims upon the observance of all believers.

2. Only through positive law is religion instituted and made historical. Buddhism is religion instituted by Buddha; Mohammedanism is religion instituted by Mohammed; Judaism is religion instituted by

Moses; while Christianity is religion instituted as well as taught by Christ. Before institution religion exists only as undefined conviction, uncertain feeling, variable sentiment, and with nothing to distinguish palpably one faith from another. Skeptics plausibly and persistently deny that the moral distinctions of Christianity alone are sufficient to identify and perpetuate a separate system of religion; but they cannot deny, Christianity is clearly and broadly distinguished from all other faiths by its organic law and ordinances. Its holy baptism, its symbolic supper, and its local and independent discipline and fellowship, make it a unique institution, easily distinguished and perpetuated. But if denied definition and discipline of positive law, Christianity losing historical identity, might have sunk into a mere school of philosophy, and Christ risen in the sway of His teachings little higher than Socrates. Ordinances celebrate and perpetuate the Lordship of Christ and the Divinity of His mission over the world and to the end of time.

3. Only through positive law or ordinance, does moral law define itself in standard of duty, discipline and fellowship. Though the family is a natural alliance, it is enforced and guarded only by civil statute and conventional observance. Civil government arises under natural or moral right, but it is maintained only by external conditions. Divine revelation is a moral necessity, but it comes to the world through designated people, prophets, and ordinances. Worship is a moral homage, but its expression is authenticated only by conditions of time and place. The Sabbath may be shown to be a moral law, but its true uses are attained only by regulation and sanction of positive ordinance. Obedience arises from the relation of creature to Creator, children to parents, and

subjects to ruler. But obedience was tested in the garden by positive law, and it is cultivated in family, school or State by conventional rule. No religion can enforce moral discipline without ritual. Ordinances, therefore, must share the precedence, importance and sanctity of the religious feelings, sentiments, and virtues they guard and cultivate.

4. The organic force of religion is formulated and measured by ordinances. As commerce is administered and built up in all its varied and stupendous interests, upon rules and system; or as military power is built upon organization, and without the most exact regulations and most vigorous discipline, would relapse into the uncertainty and weakness of a mob; so the disciplinary and aggressive power of religion must depend upon ordinances; and in their abrogation or general neglect, religion would cease to be recognized as a power in the world. All faiths alike define their creed and constitutions by them; all alike base discipline and worship upon them. Only unhistorical, undefined, undisciplined, casual and ever-varying classes or communities, have renounced or disparaged ordinances. Christianity as well as Judaism seeks organic power through them, and exalts them to the moral rank of her mission in the world.

5. Finally, the great teacher Himself confirms this importance of ordinances. Because Christ condemned the abuses of ritualism and exalted spirituality to its supreme rank in the kingdom of heaven, many have classed Him with "destructionists" or "communists," seeking the overthrow of the established order of society. But He "came not to destroy but to fulfill" all primitive and Divine institutions. While

His moral teachings would ameliorate civil government, like His apostles He taught that existing states have a Divine sanction. "The powers that be are ordained of God." While pointing out abuses of the family, He recognized the external contract of marriage as the true foundation of society. While repudiating misinterpretation of the Sabbath, He nowhere annulled its divine appointment, but commended it as made for man universally. "The Sabbath was made for man"—to be observed and honored by him in higher culture and religious worship, to the end of time. The discipline of these primitive divine ordinances He supplemented by a ceremonial, declaring and celebrating His Lordship, and the order and discipline of His kingdom to the end of time. He appointed the baptismal profession with its symbolism and covenants; the supper with its renewed pledge of loyalty, cooperation and fellowship. Never was positive law set forth in more impressive circumstances or enforced by more solemn sanctions than in the great commission, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28: 18-20.) This is the formal declaration of the supremacy of Christ in religion, His Lordship over the conscience and faith of the world. It is the organic law of His Kingdom, defining terms of discipleship to Him and the order of His Church. This is the great commission, to christianize the race and organize them into churches for the worship and glory of Christ, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Thus, ordinances, as alone giving historical character to religion and a standard

to its discipline—as made by all faiths and social orders alike the basis of their institution and organic power—and especially, as solemnly sanctioned and enforced by Christ Himself—are shown to be of the greatest value and importance. They are so essential to religion, it could not propagate itself, nor even exist without them. They are so important, that those neglecting them are always and essentially irreligious. That professing interest in religion while never observing them, would be as absurd as to profess proficiency in philology while not conversant with the structure and history of any language—proficiency in literature while ignorant of all books—or proficiency in astronomy while unacquainted with the discoveries of Kepler, Newton, or any map of the heavens. It would be as absurd as to boast of being a traveller, while confessing never to have crossed continent or sea, nor ever to have appeared on any steamboat, railroad, or other thoroughfare of travel. Without ordinances, men are without commerce of religious thought, feeling, sentiment and promise—“without God and without hope in the world.”

II.

Irreligion and immortality proximately measured by departure from Divine Ordinances.

Before the restriction of positive law, our first parents were free to eat of all the trees of the Garden alike (Gen. 2: 16, 17). But after the prohibition of the fruit of one tree, partaking it was deliberate disobedience, and entailed guilt and misery upon their latest posterity. Putting forth the hand to steady the Ark of the Lord, when jostled by the motion of the

cart (1 Chron. 13 : 9, 10), might seem an act of pious vigilance ; but, after all approach to the Ark except by the priests had been explicitly forbidden, the act of Uzzah betrayed the thoughtlessness and presumption of irreverence and disobedience ; and he was smitten with leprosy, as a warning to all Israel. The way an old prophet should return home after delivering his message to a corrupt court, seems a matter of indifference ; but when, for reasons not explained to himself, he was forbidden to return by the way he came, his disobedience was signally punished. A lion left him torn by the wayside, and the mercenary prophet who deceived him, buried and mourned him alone (1 Kings, 13 : 24).

The Jewish ritual, before ordained, was no more sacred than any other ceremonial ; but enforced by Moses, it was as sacredly binding in all its circumstantial detail of kind, age and color of sacrifice, of time, place and form of ceremonial, as any precepts of the Decalogue (Leviticus, first chapters). Hence the signal punishment of Nadab and Abihu (Levit. 13 : 1, 2) ; and the sins of Israel most frequently complained of and signally avenged, were neglect of this ritual. "They fear not the Lord, neither do they after the statutes or the ordinances" (2 Kings, 17 : 34). "Because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord their God, but transgressed his covenant, all that Moses the servant of God commanded, and would not hear nor do them" (2 Kings, 18 : 12). And the last of the prophets (Mal. 3 : 7) in bitter lament, exclaims, "Ye have gone away from my ordinances, and have not kept them." In like manner Christ, in His more spiritual teaching, traces the impiety and sins of His times to the perversion of the ordinance of the Family, the ordinance of the Sabbath, and the ordinance of special revelation. "Ye have made void the law of God through your

traditions." They had departed from the teachings of Moses and the Prophets by false interpretations of all they taught and enjoined. Before instituted by Christ, baptism was no more sacred than any Jewish or Pagan rite: but after its formal solemn exemplification and institution by Him, and appointment to supersede the cumbersome ceremonials of the world, to be a condition of discipleship and a test of loyalty and love to Him, and the organic law of His church and kingdom, and the celebration of His Lordship to the end of time, baptism became binding as the decalogue. Neglecting it involved all the consequences of rejection of the Lordship and salvation of Christ. Not receiving Christ as preached unto them, men continued in unbelief and sin, and perished. The rejection of baptism may disclose estrangement from God's method and mercy, which dooms the soul eternally. If men sinned in turning away from Jewish ritual, much more do they sin in turning away from the order, ordinances and discipline of Christ's church. The spiritual ignorance, superstition, hypocrisy and spiritual despotism of Papacy may be traced largely to departure from Divine ordinances. She has tampered with the family, and by interdicting its lawful union, demoralized society. She has tampered with the Sabbath, yielding its sanctity as compensation for loyalty to her ceremonial and supremacy. She has abrogated the organic law of Christ's kingdom to build up Hierarchy. By displacing the order, ordinances and discipline of Christ's church, she became Antichrist, and opened the flood-gates of superstition and vice. Protestants have followed Papacy in annulling and displacing Christ's laws.

Dean Stanly only represents the candid scholarship of England and Germany, when, in recent utterance, he confesses, substantially, that "Immersion was un-

questionably the primitive and apostolic observance ; that it was the universal practice for thirteen centuries ; that it is still the practice of all Eastern Churches ; that it is recognized in the standards of the English Church, though not honored in her practice.' Thus this illustrious churchman confesses, Protestantism ignores the great commission, the terms of discipleship to Christ ; abrogates the ordinance of baptism, the prescribed order of the Church. Is not this a public, prolonged and organized treason against the Lordship of Christ ? Though baptism be as falsely reputed "least" of Divine Commandments, it must be sin to break it, and a double sin to teach others also to break it. May not the felt weakness of Christian reforms at home, and of missions abroad, be traced to the weakness of love and loyalty to Christ, manifested in this wide indifference to His ordinances ? But the most formidable attack upon Christ's ordinances is made by modern Bible Societies. As Papacy does not make the Bible a standard of religious faith and practice, any discrepancy between her creed, ceremonial or polity, and the New Testament, does not concern her ; she has always claimed and used the right to change Divine laws. But Protestantism, boasting the Bible, and the Bible only, as her creed, is always annoyed when her departures from the New Testament are pointed out. She feels increasingly the necessity of conforming her ecclesiasticism to the Bible, or the Bible to her ecclesiasticism. When a Bible was demanded for the English people, King James required in the translation, transfer, suppression and addition, to protect the honor of the English church. In like manner Protestant missionaries bearing miscellaneous ecclesiasticism to the Heathen, are required to protect their denominations by bearing the organic law of the Church untranslated in the Bible,

thereby inaugurating among the Heathen, as among English speaking people, endless controversy over ordinances, offices and polity of the church. As Christendom has blotted out the ordinances and order of Christ's church, why need they be revealed to the Heathen? The Bible Societies decide they should not be revealed, and refuse to circulate any version of the Scriptures in any part of the world where the great commission, the organic law of Christ's church, is not suppressed or obscured. As if, when the people transgressed the precepts of the Decalogue, Moses had ordered their erasure from the tables of stone. As Papacy has changed the organization of Christianity, and the majority of the Protestant world accept the change, it is now proposed by the Bible Societies to change the Bible, and make antichrist constitutional.

Judson would not, for his right hand, thus suppress in the Bible for the people, the ordinances of Christ. Can other translators make such suppressions innocently? Can Bible Societies order, or even permit such suppressions, without sin? Yet against the authority of scholarship, the precedent of early versions, the conscience of translators, and the right of all men to the Bible without concealment or alteration, Bible Societies require the suppression or obscuration of Christ's great commission, the organic law of His Church, and the terms of discipleship to Him in all versions of Scriptures they circulate. This blotting out of ordinances from the New Testament seems to us the crowning treason of antichrist. Is it not conspiracy against the Lordship of Christ and the union of His Church? Is it not the adding to or taking from the word of God so fearfully menaced in the last chapter of the last book of the Bible? Will not this breaking of Christ's commandment, and teaching countless millions to do so, bring retribution upon Christendom,

continuing waste of talents, means and influence through rivalry of sects, and entailing sectarian controversy upon Heathen lands? Can the Church conquer the world before united? Can she be united before miscellaneous ecclesiasticism is replaced by the simple order and discipline of Christ's kingdom?

III.

*Reunion and triumph of Christ's Church assured
only by the restoration of His ordinances.*

As religion has declined everywhere through neglect of Christ's ordinances, it must be revived through their restoration and enthusiastic observance. The greatest early religious reformation in the world was inaugurated by Moses through the discipline of an elaborate ceremonial. Through it the people were recalled from Paganism, and exalted in spiritual knowledge and culture. The restoration by Ezra and Nehemiah was sought primarily through restoring the long neglected appointments and ceremonial of the House of God. And in exaltation of religious feeling in this renewed celebration of the feast of tabernacles, the people were reminded that its proper observance had been neglected through a long period of their apostacy from God and their captivity in Babylon.

The revival of religion during the reign of Josiah, the most pious of the kings of Israel, was inaugurated by ritualistic reform. The groves of Baal were cut down and his altars overthrown. The altars of God were restored, and the ritual of Moses restored and celebrated. The evangelizing mission of Christianity was inaugurated with baptism; repentance and faith

were attested and celebrated by it ; all the experiences, trusts and hopes of religion were associated with its observance. Baptism should still be preached to all nations, to disciple them to Christ and unite them in His Church. As men are enrolled in a military, civic or beneficial order by the same initiatory rite, so believers are enrolled as followers of Christ by baptism. Men of different countries, diverse languages, culture and condition, are baptized into one body. As the unification of the Church was first sought and celebrated through baptism, it must be restored and confirmed throughout the world by the same ordinance. Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and Romans, men of remote nationalities and diverse culture will confess common discipleship and hope through the same baptism. As the same banner distinguishes remote divisions of the same national army, so the same baptism will distinguish the Churches of Christ throughout the world. As Antichrist was developed primarily through displacing Divine ordinances, must it not be overthrown primarily by their restoration ? Before the voluntary baptismal order, discipline and fellowship of the Church, no hierarchy could have been established, no fagot lighted, no prison opened, no despotism or antagonism of sects existed. The voluntary baptismal order of the Church, restored in Italy, Austria and Spain, would be the most comprehensive reform of Christendom. The unification of sects in Protestant countries in one order of Church would avert the scandal and evils of schism and hasten the evangelization of the Heathen. But this unification must be attained through common polity and ceremonial ; while no common polity and ceremonial can be agreed upon, not in the New Testament. Only through simpler institution and the prestige of apostolic precedent can the Church become one. New

theories, new systems may attract the curious, but only the old Church of Christ can pledge the loyalty and devotion of His people. Nothing is more abhorrent to the New Testament than that Christ authorized miscellaneous institution of His Church. The Papists are right in declaring that there can be but one order of the Church. The reunion of Christendom therefore is possible only by returning to that order of Church formulated by Christ's ordinances. Departure from it filled Christendom with sects. Restoring it may fill the world with Apostolic Churches. By the act and spiritual impulse of returning to Christ's baptism, all believers of all lands might be "baptized by one spirit into one body."

Other men following the example of Judson, Oncken and Noel, sundering ties of tradition and worldly advantage, to honor the Lordship of Christ and the order of His Church, may inaugurate the true movement to unite the divided Church.

When there is but "One Lord," one exclusive sovereignty, "One Faith," one simple doctrinal confession, and "One Baptism," one baptismal profession and order of the Church, the Church of Christ will, necessarily, become one in glorious unity throughout the world !

REMARKS.

1. We see from the range of this discussion, why ritualism fills the world and enslaves the race. It springs up as noxious weeds, in boundless profusion over neglected lands. It can be replaced only by seeding of useful plants and fruits. It is a volumin-

ous issue of counterfeit coin seeking the place and credit of a genuine and universally needed currency. This excessive formalism is condemned in the New Testament, as in Hebrews 9 : 10, and Ephesians 2 : 15. But as religion is a necessity to men, and rites are necessary to religion, any rites are preferred to bald atheism or impalpable speculations of rationalism. Superstitious formalism therefore can be banished from the world only as replaced by Divine ordinances. Those neglecting Christian institutions encourage the reign of superstition. When Protestants show the same reverence and devotion to Divine institutions, the Sabbath, the Bible and the ordinances of Christ, as Papists to their traditions, superstitions may be swept from the land and the world.

2. The irreligion of Protestant countries may be traced primarily to neglect of Divine ordinances.

One generation or community may decline in piety, primarily, through temptations of culture and speculative unbelief ; another generation or community may become estranged from religion, primarily, through temptations of materialism, the enthrallment of passion and appetite ; but Protestants generally, like the Hebrews complained of in Malichi, fall into irreligion, primarily, through neglect of Divine ordinances.

The ordinance of the family, of civil government, of the Sabbath and of the Church of Christ, are perpetually discredited and threatened with overthrow. Deseccration of the Sabbath alone opens flood-gates of iniquity. Mount Zion is made the devil's play-ground. Instead of bridging the temptations of the weak, the Sabbath, especially in large cities, becomes a hebdomadal descent into hell. Whole communities, through impatience of restraints of Divine ordinances, plunge

headlong into the abyss of irreligion, crime and misery.

Ordinances are disparaged as mere ceremonialism, binding the conscience only of the weak and superstitious. As if the ancient mariner had spurned the guidance of the north star, because shining like other stars and from the same firmament, forgetting that a Divine hand placed it in the heaven exactly when it became a sure guide to voyagers of the sea ; or, as if the wise men had refused to follow the star over Bethlehem, because possibly it was composed of common vapor made luminous, overlooking its providential structure, appearance and movement, transfiguring it with the glory of Divine presence and purpose ; or, as if the Hebrews, speculatively enquiring whether the cloudy pillars they were required to follow, were not constructed of the same vapor as the clouds often floating along the horizon, refused their providential guidance through the wilderness. Thus, because Divine guidance is symbolized and formulated through ordinances, though transfigured by Divine presence and purpose, a prayerless and irreligious race discard them, and perish.

3. The need of our times is a true ritualistic revival. The loyalty to ordinances characterizing Paganism, Mohammedanism, Judaism and Papacy, should now be concentrated upon the ordinances of Christ's kingdom in all Protestant lands. The hearts of men turned to the Bible, the Sabbath, the Church and the House of God, would inaugurate and carry forward religious revival throughout the world. We need the Sabbatarianism of the Jews, of Scotland and early New England, to arrest the general demoralization of our times ! We need the devotion to the Bible, characterizing the early part of this century, but now reproached as

Bibliolatry, to impart the "wisdom and knowledge," which may give stability to our distracted times! We need a new enthusiasm in public worship to draw the thoughtless from the broad way of irreligion and destruction! We need more men like Judson, Oncken and Noel, leaving traditional ordinances of men, to follow and honor the appointed order of Christ's Church! Loyalty to Christ will inflame a passion for all obediences and all virtues. When all men are eager to know and obey Christ's Commandments, the reign of sects ends and the union and triumph of Christ's Church begins! So long as professed Christians neglect, and teach others to neglect, Christ's Commandments, the progress of Christianity will be slow! Nations and races will not receive Christianity while discarding Christ's Lordship and ordinances. Christ's ritual sums up in itself all the true reverence, sanctities, symbolisms, covenants and Holy uses of all the ritualisms, of all the faiths of all ages! No person or people can follow Christ and maintain His Lordship, rejecting His ceremonial. That is the material hand by which Heaven would guide a pilgrim race to the Heavenly Canaan.

As the body is essential to the functions and welfare of the soul, so Divine ordinances, the only method of formulating moral obligations, are essential to the existence, progress and promise of religion! And when all men are baptized into Christ's Lordship, as He was baptized in Jordan, they will be pledged to all obedience and virtues, all charitable reforms and missions! In leaving the orders of Christ, they will perish in the mazes of unbelief and disobedience, as Israel, if, before beleaguering enemies, they had turned away from the pillar of cloud and of fire, and the fellowship and defence of the Court people, to wander in the uncertain mazes of the wilderness!

4. We see what may be the special mission of Baptists. Through the ages and against the usurpations of Antichrist, they have contended for the sufficiency and supremacy of the Scriptures, as creed, liturgy and ceremonial of the Church. Gradually all Protestants have been won to this theory of the Word of God, if not to a consistent application of it.—Through the ages they have exalted the exclusive Lordship of Christ over individual conscience and the Church. In theory the Protestant world accepts that Lordship. But while Papacy discrowns Christ, Protestantism generally divides His sovereignty with tradition. The Baptists from the apostolic age have insisted on the exclusively spiritual character of the Church, precluding all mere birthright or national membership. Many Protestants now join with Baptists in maintaining this theory of the Church, though through their traditions and discipline still dishonoring it.

Religious liberty has ever been maintained with martyr devotion by Baptists. They have never persecuted, though often persecuted by Papacy and anti-christian sects. But now religious liberty is honored in theory if not in practice, over all Protestant lands. But while now sharing with others the honor of these great reforms they inaugurated and chiefly promoted through centuries, there is another comprehensive reform to which they alone are now devoted—the restoration of the apostolic ordinances, order and discipline of the Church. These Papacy has striven to abolish, and through her traditions Protestants have widely departed from them. So that the order of Churches the great commission authorized, and the apostles instituted, is nowhere found except established by Baptists. It is their special and exclusive mission to replace all anti-christian and miscellaneous ecclesiasti-

cism by this primitive, simple and sufficient organization of Christianity. This local and independent Society, in its clear New Testament authority, its simplicity and availability to all times and places, its constitutional defence alike against despotism and schism, is the only true, holy and apostolic Church in the world.

In pursuance of this mission, Baptists feel bound to found the model apostolic Church everywhere, even where the traditional organizations of Papists and Pedobaptists already exist. They establish journals and publication societies to defend this exclusive apostolic order of the Church. They found theological seminaries to educate and train ministers to serve and defend this simple order of Christianity. Especially to guard the ordinances of Christ's Church, Baptists have protested against suppression or obscuration of its organic law in the Scriptures. While jealous for the purity of all God's Word, they would especially guard the New Testament, and more especially Christ's great commission defining the terms of discipleship to Him and the order of His Church to the end of time. As in military strategy position is half the battle, the pure Bible is the great vantage ground for all contending for the baptismal order and discipline of Christ's Church.

In vain do we seek to build up that Church through the pulpit, publications, or theological seminaries, if we abandon it in the translation of the Scriptures. The defense there is more imperative and important than anywhere else. If the New Testament allows miscellaneous organization and ordinances, it may fairly be claimed as the charter of existing sects. But if it provides only for one order, polity and discipline of the Church, sooner or later its prestige and sanction will restore them in the reunion of the divided Church

of Christ. The most stupendous and beneficent reform of Christendom would be replacing Hierarchy in Italy, Spain, Austria, and other Papal lands, by the regime of the Apostolic Churches. That reform may be reached by agitation of free thought and independent opinion through several stages of progress. The Hierarchy may in other States, as in England and Germany, be replaced by State Churches; the State Churches, by gradual disintegration and amelioration, may disappear in the order of equal and independent denominations; and at last, the independent denominations, by diffusion of scriptural intelligence and charity, and assimilation to the truth, may all be merged in the same simple apostolic order of Churches. The "One Lord"—or supreme sovereignty; the "One Faith"—or simple and sufficient creed; and the "One Baptism"—or baptismal order, discipline and fellowship of the Church; may be universally recognized and celebrated throughout the world.

Then, as described after the first persecution, the Churches shall have "rest"—the Churches of the Eastern Continent, and of the Western Continent, and of all the islands of the seas; and "walking in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Ghost," shall be "multiplied," till Mongolian, Caucasian, African, and aboriginal American races, from least to greatest, shall know the Lord. All Heathendom will be regenerated to Christ, and unite in replacing their idols, idol temples and ceremonies by His name, ordinances and discipline; and the world will be filled with independent Churches, amenable only to Christ.

In this restoration of the Baptismal order of the Church how much is gained! The organic law of the Church, as expressed by Christ, is restored. German, and all competent English scholarship, agree that immersion was the original observance; that for thir-

teen centuries it was the exclusive observance ; that it is still the only observance of the Eastern Churches. In its universal restoration, the Lordship of Christ will be more palpable, recognized and celebrated.

The spiritual cleansing of regeneration will be more suitably and impressively symbolized by the copiousness of the ablution in the true baptism. A Chinaman in San Francisco had attended a Pedobaptist Sunday School and Church, and was a hopeful candidate for Christian profession. After he had been misled for several weeks, his teacher, meeting him on the street, enquired anxiously, "John, where have you been so long?" He replied, "Me go Baptist Church. Much water. More water ceremony. More clean for the Lord." Millions, besides the Chinaman, have been impressed by the administration and significance of the Holy Baptism.

In the true Baptism, every believer enjoys the delightful consciousness of not only obeying but also of following the example of his Divine Lord.

A little girl was asked why she preferred baptism to sprinkling, if neither could save her, replied, "I wish to get as near Jesus as I can." If salvation depended upon being baptized as Jesus was, who would be satisfied with sprinkling or pouring?

In the true baptism, how glorious the assurance and celebration of the resurrection! In its omission, the Church is, in the act of Christian profession, left in the grave without any symbolic promise.

Finally, the restoration of its organic law may assure the reunion of the Church throughout the world. A Pedobaptist deacon said to his neighbor, a Baptist deacon, "I wish we could enjoy Church fellowship as we have so long enjoyed Christian communion." "With all my heart I join in the wish ; only a stream divides us, and you have a boat to cross in ; I have no

boat." If those confessing immersion is right, would observe it, believers would soon enjoy a common Church fellowship. Baptists restrict their Church fellowship only to the baptismal order of the Church. If their view of the Church is correct, their restriction of the supper is logically inevitable. If guarding the order of the Church by its fellowship is narrow, then all constituted society is narrow. If Baptists are bigoted in maintaining the New Testament Church, Christ was bigoted in instituting, and the Apostles in observing it. If rigorous observance of Christ's ritual is fanatical, Judaism was a stupendous fanaticism. If insisting on Christ's baptism and order of the Church is an unworthy appeal, Judson, Noel, and hosts of others, were weak fanatics in suffering so much to observe and honor them. All claiming Jesus as Saviour and Lord, should, with martyr devotion, defend and honor His Church, as that minimum of positive law, or institution, without which Christian teaching, discipline and fellowship would be impossible, and Christianity itself might disappear from the world's annals.

JAMES HUGGINS,
PRINTER AND PUBLISHER,
372 Pearl Street, N. Y.
