

THE PASTOR IN HIS WORK.

NOTE.—In the preceding article on this subject, published in the July issue of the QUARTERLY, a transposition unhappily occurred in the printing. The article ought to begin with the first paragraph on p. 183.

III. Administration of the Sacraments.

In the work of a pastor the administration of the sacraments is next in importance to the preaching of the Gospel. This is evident from the relation which they bear to the Word of God. The Word of God is in them and makes them means of grace through which the Holy Ghost works. Baptism is "the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost," and instituting His Supper the Lord says, "For the remission of sins." To those who are already in the faith the sacraments are seals to strengthen them in the assurance of grace and forgiveness. Abraham "received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith," Rom. 4, 11. The sacraments being means through which souls are brought into the kingdom of Christ and by which they are nourished unto eternal life they belong to the chief treasures over which the pastor is made a steward, and he will assuredly be held responsible for the manner in which he has dealt with these *media salutis*.

To come up to his duty in this respect the pastor must be diligent, both in the pulpit and elsewhere, to carefully instruct the people on the nature, use, and benefit of the sacraments, and how they ought to be received. A thorough instruction of old and young on this subject is all the more necessary because of the woeful ignorance of the great mass of our American people with regard to the right doctrine of the sacraments. Our sectarians and churchless people do not know what the sacraments are, and for what purpose they have been instituted. Many ten thousands know, when they join the church they must be baptized, and that is all they do know about Baptism. And as to the Lord's Supper they have no idea what it is and what it is

for. And there are not a few who are called Lutherans with whom a similar ignorance is found.

This deplorable state of things is by no means surprising. The ministers of the various denominations do themselves not know the Scripture doctrine on the sacraments. When whole assemblies of denominational divines can solemnly declare that the Lutheran church teaches consubstantiation, this is certainly a strong testimony of great ignorance. How are those to teach the people who themselves are in the dark? When preachers habitually minimize the importance of the sacraments and cry out against "sacramentarianism"—whereby they mean the receiving of grace in and through the sacraments—we may not wonder that so many count it an indifferent thing whether they are baptized or ever receive the Lord's Supper. Why is it that our country, which is called a Christian land, is so full of unbaptized persons? One chief reason is because neither the parents nor the children have ever been instructed on the necessity and usefulness of this sacrament. When preachers pronounce the sacraments nothing more than external ceremonies, or, at best, outward signs of inward grace; when a preacher after administering Baptism to an infant can turn to the parents and say, "Now you must not think that this will do the child any good," it is no wonder that the people have no veneration for these sacred institutions.

Frequently preaching on the sacraments a Lutheran pastor should not content himself with presenting the doctrine in general terms. He will do well to enter into details, showing both what the peculiar object of each sacrament is and what specific comfort it gives. The grace offered in the sacraments is the same which is offered in the word of the Gospel, and if the people are to appreciate the sacraments, if they are not to count them a more or less superfluous addition to the Word preached, if they are not to regard them something not so very necessary, the

preacher must set forth their special usefulness and the particular assurance which they convey. When we were once speaking to a Methodist of the high esteem with which we Lutherans regard the Communion, he remarked, "I think it fully sufficient for the salvation of my soul if I hold the merits of Christ in a living faith, and I do not see why I should also eat Him with the mouth in the sacrament." This man gave expression to an idea which is quite common and which can be met and remedied only by expatiating on the distinctive usefulness and the specific assurance which is characteristic of the sacraments.

We wish here to insert the following words of Martin Chemnitz: "To the attacks and clamors of the fanatics we properly reply from the Word of God, that the sacraments, which God Himself instituted to be aids of our salvation, can in no way be considered either useless or superfluous, nor can they safely be neglected or despised. It is impious to despise that without which piety cannot be perfected. But this must be diligently explained from the Word of God, in order that the true doctrine may be rightly understood and the right use of the sacraments may be appreciated and fervently loved." And further on he says: "God who is rich in mercy, that He might show and commend the riches of His goodness unto us, desired to exhibit His grace to us not in one way only, by the mere Word, but also to aid our infirmity by certain helps, namely, by the institution of the sacraments which are annexed to the Gospel promise." (Ex. Conc. Trid., P. II, canon V.)

The present articles not being intended for dogmatical dissertations, but only to show the pastor in his work we append some practical remarks on the administration of *Baptism*.

The essence of Baptism being the immersing of a person in water, or the applying of water to the person, in the name of the Holy Trinity, the words: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy

Ghost," should be spoken with a distinct voice and in an impressive manner, so that to the auditors these words are made the most prominent thing in the whole act. Self-evidently the words must never be altered. Even such variations which do not affect the essence of the sacrament are to be avoided. In saying this we do not mean to contend that using the formula: "I baptize thee in the name of the Holy Trinity," without naming the Persons, would invalidate Baptism, but there is no scriptural warrant for the use of such a formula. Instituting this sacrament the Lord named the three persons of the Godhead individually, and a departure from this form is therefore not justifiable. The formulas, in the name, *ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι*, and into the name, *εἰς τὸ ὄνομα*, are both scriptural, Acts 10, 48. Matt. 28, 19, hence both allowable. Herein the pastor should accommodate himself to the usage of the church in which he officiates, and should then constantly use the same form.

The opinion that the formula: "I baptize thee in the name of Christ," might properly be used rests on a misapprehension of Acts 2, 38: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." This passage does not say that the apostles used this form of words in the act of Baptism. Peter's words were the answer to an inquiry of the multitude. When those people who had been received into the covenant of God by circumcision and many of whom had, doubtless, been baptized by John, asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter replied, they should now be baptized into this faith that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, seeing He was crucified and is risen again, and, "being by the right hand of God exalted, hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." Peter told the people they should repent of their sins and should receive this new sacrament of the New Covenant. The mode and the words in and with which Baptism is to be administered did not at all

come into consideration, and to so construe the words as to make them imply that the apostles in the act of baptizing used the formula: "I baptize thee in the name of Jesus Christ," is both doing violence to the connection in which the passage is found, and is against John 14, 26. The Spirit whom the Lord sent and of whom He said, "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you," could not prompt the disciples to change the form of Baptism which they had received so recently.

When the words of institution are preserved unchanged in letter and sound, they must also be used in their proper meaning. When the pastor who administers Baptism, and the people with whom it is administered, use and understand the words as meaning that the Father alone is God, and that the Son and Spirit, however high, are not equal with the Father, then the act is performed in the name of another god than the God of the Bible, and hence it is not Christian Baptism and is not valid. A Lutheran pastor can therefore not acknowledge baptisms which have been performed by Antitrinitarians. Though they preserve the sound of the words, yet by putting a foreign meaning into them they deny the divinity of the Son and the Holy Ghost, and what they do is blasphemy and not Christian Baptism. Unitarians, Universalists, Campbellites, Seventh Day Adventists, Quakers, Mormons, and some other small sects do not believe in the Triune God, and their baptisms are not actually performed in His name. When such as have been members of an Antitrinitarian sect are received into the Lutheran church, they must be baptized, because they have never yet received Christian Baptism. Besides the organized sects named there are some liberal, rationalistic, broad-gauge congregations with regard to which the doctrine prevailing publicly among them must be examined into carefully to determine whether their baptisms can be recognized. But the Baptism performed in denominations

that teach wrong concerning the nature and the effect of this sacrament, but use the words of institution in their proper meaning, is valid in whatever way, shape, or form it may have been administered.

To baptize requires water, and the word βαπτίζειν will not admit of the use of any other element. Substituting another element for water is not baptizing. Yet if a small quantity of a strange element, such as salt, lime, perfume, is contained in the water, this will, as a matter of course, not invalidate the sacrament. But neither impure nor perfumed water should be used in this sacred rite. The pastor should see that limpid water is provided, and in baptizing infants it is well to have it lukewarm.

As to the mode of Baptism, which has been the subject of so much contention in Christendom, the Lutheran church occupies a very liberal standpoint. The Lutheran will recognize every Baptism in which water has been used with the words of institution. However, as a minister of the conservative Church of the Reformation, the Lutheran pastor will be set against the two extremes. He will not sanction too scant a use of water and he will always reject the idea that to be a true Baptism the whole body *must* be buried in water. We once saw a Presbyterian minister sprinkle a very little water with the tips of his fingers at a distance of fully a yard from the infant, so that it seemed doubtful whether a single drop actually touched the child. This is certainly spiritualizing Baptism with a vim. When a boy, we saw an aged preacher on a cold winter day wade into a creek from which thick cakes of ice had been removed to baptize two women, one of whom took to her bed the day following and remained there for seven long years. The same Dunkard preacher refused to baptize a dying young man who begged for it with tears, for no other reason than because he could not be immersed. These are samples showing to what extremes men will be carried by fanaticism. Agreeably to the custom prevailing in our Lutheran church

the person administering this sacrament fills the hollow of his hand well with water and applies it to the forehead by pouring or washing.

When a Lutheran minister presents his doctrine on the mode of Baptism he is very apt to be asked the question, whether he would baptize by immersion if requested to do so. In answering this question regard should be had both to existing circumstances and to the character of the interlocutor, Prov. 26, 4. 5. In these days when Immersionists are so numerous and so audacious, a Lutheran pastor will naturally be loath to express any willingness to immerse. Yet as the mode of baptizing belongs to the category of *adiaphora* it must be said that *per se* there would be nothing wrong in a Lutheran minister's granting a request for immersion. *Aliis paribus, i. e.*, if resident Lutherans were not offended, if Gal. 2, 4 would not come into consideration, and if the request were made for right reasons, it would be perfectly proper for a Lutheran to baptize by immersion.

Many on hearing the doctrine preached that Baptism is necessary for the regeneration and salvation of children, because they are born flesh of the flesh, are quick to conclude that the Lutheran church condemns all infants which die unbaptized. Therefore every pastor should be ready both publicly and privately to state the position which the best Lutheran theologians have always held on the question of the salvation of unbaptized infants. Those born in the church, which would have been brought to Baptism had they lived, certainly are not to be condemned, as little as the infants dying before the eighth day under the Old Covenant. But as to infants born outside of the church, which never, or perhaps never, would have been baptized, a Lutheran pastor should withhold all judgment beyond what St. Paul says: "What have I to do to judge them also that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth," 1 Cor. 5, 12. 13. The judgment over the infants of the infidels belongs not to us

but to God, who is both rich in mercy and whose righteousness is like the great mountains. If a minister wishes to express any further opinion, he should give it only as his own personal belief and not as the teaching of the Scriptures.

On this subject Dr. M. Luther says: "Who would doubt that the infants in Israel which died before the eighth day uncircumcised were saved through the prayers of their parents and the promise that He would be their God? We likewise say that God has not so bound Himself to His sacraments that without them He would not be able in some other way, not known to us, to save the unbaptized infants. Under the law of Moses He saved many (also kings) without law, as Job, Naaman, the kings of Niniveh, Babylon, Egypt, etc. Nevertheless, He would not have His Law despised openly, He wanted it kept, threatening the punishment of everlasting curse. Even so do I hold and hope that the thoughts of the good and gracious God are good over against those children who are deprived of Baptism without their fault and without despising His revealed command. Yet, on account of the world's wickedness, He does not and did not will that this should be publicly preached and believed, lest all which He has ordained and commanded be despised." In the following paragraph Luther goes on to say: "Therefore those children with and over whom are the sighs, wishes, prayers of believing Christians must not be straightway condemned, like others with whom are not the faith, prayer, and sighing of Christian and believing persons." (See Luther's *Comfort to Pious Women*, etc., § 6.)

This position holds forth sweet comfort to a pious mother whose infant has died before it could be baptized, and yet it leaves a great responsibility on all parents concerning the Baptism of their infants, and this responsibility should be pressed home. A pastor who will not see to it that all the children in his parish are brought to Baptism

is not deserving of the name Lutheran. Also on neighboring churchless people the pastor may and ought to urge the duty of having their children baptized and of sending them to a Christian school or Sunday school, and frequently this may be made a strong mission argument. Of course children are not to be baptized against the will and without the consent of the parents or guardians, but the necessity of Baptism and the duty of parents must invariably be insisted on, not only because of the responsibility falling on parents, but especially also because of the great blessing which a baptized infant may bring to a house.

When it is uncertain whether a person has been baptized or not, and no certainty can be obtained, the sacrament should always be granted. Neither should it then be administered in a qualified form, as: If thou wast not baptized before I now baptize thee, because this might render the present Baptism dubious to the mind of the applicant.

Baptism as a solemn act should be performed with due solemnity. Never should the pastor go through with it in a perfunctory manner; for thereby it loses much in edification to the parents and other witnesses. And the proper place for the performing of Baptism is the church, and the proper time, the time of public worship, that it may serve for the edifying of all.

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CHRIST'S ATTITUDE TOWARD ERROR AND ERRORISTS.

Indifferentism and unionism are two prominent traits of the Church of our times. In constantly widening circles pure doctrine is viewed as a matter of little importance, while error in doctrine is deemed an innocent trifle. We are constantly told in our day that the Christian who differs from us in religion merely sees truth from a different standpoint, and that we should not deny him the right hand of