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ARTICLE I.

THE HISTORY OF BAPTISM.

What is baptism? How should it be administered? Who are its subjects? What is its meaning? We propose to answer these questions, by tracing the history of the ordinance as unfolded throughout the Scriptures, first in the Old Testament, and then in the New. “To the law and to the testimony.”

1.—THE PRIMITIVE SACRAMENTS.

Baptism is one of the two sacraments retained by Christ in the New Testament Church from that of Israel. “A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.” It is an *ordinance*, and not a mere sign and seal. The bow in the cloud, the shechinah of glory overshadowing the mercy seat, the manna and rock in the wilderness, and many other things mentioned in the Scriptures, were sensible signs and seals of grace, but were not *ordinances* to be observed, and so were not sacraments. Extreme unction is an ordinance and sensible sign; but it is of man’s devising, and not *instituted by Christ*, and is therefore no sacra-

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regeneration by his Spirit; of adoption and resurrection unto everlasting life; and whereby the parties baptized are solemnly admitted into the visible Church, and enter into an open and professed engagement to be wholly and only the Lord's."

ARTICLE II.

WHAT IS A CALL TO THE GOSPEL MINISTRY?

In the October number of this *Review* for the year 1869, there appeared an article on this subject, which seems to us to yield too much to the prevailing tendencies of the age. Often while perusing the current literature of the day, have we exclaimed, Surely this is a rationalistic age! Men reason God out of regeneration, out of inspiration, out of providence, out of creation, and, finally, out of existence. There is perhaps no surer proof of the deep-seated, inherent depravity of the human heart than this disposition, so constantly manifested, and so frequently cropping out where least expected, to put God as far away from us as possible. We do not like to come into contact with him; and, therefore, if we allow his existence, we are ever denying his immediate, personal direction of his creatures.

The Christian science of this day is exhibiting unmistakeable indications of this tendency. In its "Reign of Law" and enthronement of nature, it has practically legislated Jehovah out of his own kingdom. When professedly Christian men write a "Philosophy of Religion," they dogmatically announce that there can be no such thing as a direct revelation from God to man, and that inspiration is nothing more than a high, though natural, elevation of the intuitional consciousness. When they attempt to treat of that most hallowed, most sublime, and most mysterious work, the regeneration of the soul by the Holy Spirit, they dissect and analyse it with the utmost *nonchalance*, and announce that all of its ineffable facts can be explained by the

natural influences of truth. So, we shall find ere long that our religious belief and religious life have become a statue, exquisitely chiselled perhaps, but, after all, nothing but cold, unbreathing, lifeless marble.

Man's mind has a threefold aspect: his intellect, which gives him opinions; his sensibilities, which are exhibited in the affections; his will, which forms his purposes, under the influence of the first two, and leads him to action. The religion of the Bible has a corresponding threefold aspect, showing that he who made man, also provided for him a religion just suited to his nature. Revelation teaches us truth, all needful truth, and this is the *pabulum* for the understanding. Here faith is the leading thought. It also presents to us the most exalted, purifying, stimulating objects for our affections and desires; addressing itself to the heart; and stirring the innermost depths of the soul. Here love attains its prominence. But it stops not here. It not only says, Believe, love; it also thunders, Do.

Many of the errors which have existed in the Church, have been errors of partiality. By this is meant that only a part of the truth has been received and taught. There have been tendencies, more or less strong, in every age to errors of this nature, by an undue attention to each one of the three aspects above noted, to the exclusion of the other two. Those minds, in which the intellectual faculties have predominated—the Athenian mind—have too often yielded to the temptation to ignore the emotional and the practical in Christianity, and have thus become Sadducees, Rationalists. The warm-hearted have underrated precedent truth and subsequent duty, and have become Essenes, Pietists, Mystics. The energetic, practical mind, by the same natural but evil process, has been led to a deification of outward formal duty, and has thus produced a perpetual race of Pharisees, Ritualists.

There can be no doubt to the intelligent observer that the tendencies of civilised Christendom, in the present period, are very decidedly to an apotheosis of the reason, and a corresponding neglect of the mystical and the practical in religion.

The article above alluded to, seems to us to tend decidedly in

that direction. It is proposed to go carefully through this paper, and notice as far as may be necessary all its salient points.

After quoting the following clear and forcible statement of the true doctrine from the pen of the sainted logician of the South—"That a supernatural conviction of duty, wrought by the immediate agency of the Holy Ghost, is an essential element in the evidence of a vocation to the ministry, seems to us to be the clear and authoritative teaching of the Scriptures"—it proceeds to say: "If this theory be true, the conclusion seems to us irresistible that ministers are, *quoad hoc*, inspired, since they receive a knowledge of their duty immediately from God, instead of learning it from his word."

It is for us to admit and justify the inference thus drawn, or to show that it is a *non sequitur*. The former is the true course. Ministers, in their call to the work, are, *quoad hoc*, inspired; with a decided emphasis on the *quoad hoc*.

This is nothing more than is taught in the word, and believed by all God's people, with reference to regeneration and sanctification. All believers are, *quoad hoc*, inspired; they are the temple of God, an habitation of God through the Spirit. Is it the mere natural force of the word, sacraments, and prayer, which makes them effectual unto the elect for salvation? No; it is the direct putting forth of the energies of the Holy Spirit which carries these home with a sanctifying power to the human heart. Our children who die in infancy are regenerated by the same heavenly agency, *without the use of any means* whatever. Will our author object to this, because it makes infants thus regenerated, *quoad hoc*, inspired? Many rationalists do, on similar grounds.

What is meant by inspired? Who are inspired? They in whom the Spirit of God dwells, whether as a revealer of truth, or a teacher of duty. The agency of God's Spirit, in the call to the ministry, is an influence extraneous to the ordinary power of the means employed. The influence accompanies the means, but is something entirely independent of the means. This influence is exerted only on those whom God has selected for his

work; so that it is a direct, an immediate, voice from him to them, saying: "Go work in my vineyard."

This article next affirms that the practice of the Presbyterian Church does not correspond with its theory. In a subsequent part of this article, it is denied that the theory is authorised by our standards. As to the first statement, it is a question of fact. Our observation is not very extensive, but we would be greatly shocked if we were made to believe that the practice of our Presbyteries is as stated by the reviewer. We do not, we cannot believe it. On the contrary, it is our decided conviction that it is the well-nigh universal custom of our Presbyteries to examine candidates closely as to the divinity of their call.

As to the second point, it is asserted that there is not a sentence or a word in our Church Constitution which suggests the theory for which we contend. More than this—it is affirmed that it is there excluded. If this be so, what is meant by the book, where it requires Presbyteries to make a close and particular examination of a candidate as to "the *motives* which influence him to desire the sacred office?" Taking into consideration the established practice of the Church, the almost uniform teaching of its representative men, is not the call suggested and authorised here as one of the motives—as *the* motive which should influence our candidates to desire the sacred office? Such we are sure has been the constant interpretation of this passage by the Church. Just here perhaps we may briefly explain more clearly what we mean by a supernatural call. We believe that whatever God does is supernatural; whether it is the germination of a mustard seed, the harmonious adjustment of a solar system, or the resurrection of the dead. There is nothing in the inherent capacities of his creatures to accomplish any of these results. They are all alike due to the direct exertion of his power. There is nothing, in our view, different between a miracle and what are called the works of nature, except that the one is the ordinary, and the other the extraordinary work of God. When, therefore, we speak of the call to the ministry being supernatural and divine, our idea is clearly expressed by the statement, that no man is authorised to take this work upon himself, who has not



received a direct, special, personal commission therefor from the Lord himself.

Passing over some points which will come up hereafter for consideration, we observe that the reviewer objects to the supernatural call as "inconsistent with our theory of the Church." This inconsistency appears in the fact, that each individual church is "a free corporation," and therefore has a right to determine "what sort of a man" it "wants for a minister." This is true just thus far: it is free and independent with respect to its fellow-creatures, or fellow-Christians. But it is not free in the only respect in which it can avail in this argument. With reference to God, with reference to Jesus, the only King in Zion, it is not free. His will is its law. Whom he chooses to bear office in his Church, them that church must receive. It has no right to accept any other. Of those whom he commissions, and of them alone, each church, in the exercise of its liberty, can make its own selection.

Our reviewer bewails the paucity of the ministry, especially in our Church, which he attributes to two causes: 1. Our popular theory of a supernatural call; and, 2. Our rigid requirements as to learning. We are particularly concerned with the first of these, upon which we would remark:

1. How does his attributing this as a barrier to young men entering our ministry, agree with his assertion that it is the uniform practice of our Presbyteries to make no such requirement?

2. If this should prevent conscientious, suitable men from applying to our Presbyteries for licensure, why does it not operate as a hindrance in the Methodist and Baptist churches? Are they not, equally with us, believers in a supernatural call? Yet their ministers are found upon every mountain, in every valley, over every prairie.

3. Our author thinks that the thin ranks of our ministerial force should be filled, by throwing down the barriers, abating the requirement of a supernatural call, and allowing all who may seem to have natural qualifications for the work to enter upon it. It seems to be forgotten that this is no new difficulty in the

history of the Church and world. There was precisely the same state of affairs in our Saviour's time—a great spiritual harvest, ripening for the sickle, and but few laborers to gather the golden sheaves. What was *his* counsel in such a crisis? Did he tell his people to search amongst themselves for suitable persons to engage in this holy work? Did he say that the Church would spontaneously produce men for the emergency? So he should have done, if the views of this paper are correct. Such, however, is not his counsel; but he says: "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. *Pray ye therefore the Lord* of the harvest, that *he* will send laborers into his harvest." Matt. ix. 37, 38. Here is what we need—more prayer to the Master, and more reliance on him to carry his work prosperously on. Instead of our pressing needs driving us from him, they should lead us humbly to his feet, that he may raise up chosen men to whom he would be pleased to give the victory.

4. While upon this point of the causes which have led to the alleged fewness of the ministry, we would give as our opinion that they are manifold. (1.) God chooses as many men as he needs, and gives to each Church its proportionate share for the accomplishment of its chosen or appointed work. (2.) A lack of prayer on the part of God's people to him for the supply of the ministerial deficiency. (3.) If we seek for human causes, they are to be found in the rigidity of our mental requirements, and the meagre, sometimes starving, support which is given to the ministry.

The other points requiring notice will be suggested during the examination, which we now propose to make of the Scriptures for the final settlement of this question. Here we make our decisive stand. Put the theories into the crucible of God's word, and thus see which stands the test as pure gold.

We do not fully agree with the remark quoted from Dr. Dabney, to the effect that the solid proof of the supernatural theory is not to be sought in those places of the Scripture where a special divine call was given to Old Testament prophets and priests. This is indeed not the most satisfactory or strongest proof; but yet it is applicable to the case before us, from the

consideration that the principle in the divine selection of either Old Testament priests or New Testament preachers, is the same. We will confine ourselves, however, to an examination of the light which the more recent parts of the divine revelation throw upon it; and must of course limit ourselves to a few texts.

Matt. xxviii. 18, 19: "All power (*i. e.* authority) is given unto me in heaven and earth. Go ye therefore and teach (or Christianize) all nations." Upon this, let it be remarked: 1. It is a commission general in its application, though addressed particularly to a few individual ministers. 2. It emanates from the source of all authority in the Church, its King and Head. 3. It is a clear declaration that the duty and the right to bear this commission can come alone from this central or supreme authority.

Along with this passage take two others: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you," John xv. 16, and xx. 21. The following observations suggest themselves: 1. These words were not addressed to the apostles, as apostles. There is nothing in them which would so limit them. 2. They distinctly assert that it is not our province to choose the ministerial service of our Master. 3. They as clearly affirm that our Lord has reserved to himself the privilege of selecting and sending forth his chosen servants.

In the first chapter of the Acts we are told how the primitive disciples attempted to fill the place of Judas in the college of apostles. Dr. Addison Alexander was of the opinion that their action was altogether unauthorised; for this, among other reasons, that Jesus alone could choose his own apostles. This he thought that Christ did when he chose Paul to take the place of the traitor. However that may be, even admitting that their action was not a mistaken interference with the prerogatives of the Master, we can see from an examination of the narrative that their views were correct, although they may have erred in the application of them. Acts i. 24: "They *prayed* and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two *thou* hast chosen." They then appealed to the lot that the Lord might decide whom he had called to the work.

The case of the apostle Paul is one altogether in point. No reference is intended to the unusual incidents connected with his induction into the Church and the Christian ministry. But the Apostle Paul received a direct, special, personal commission, as we may clearly see from the history given in the 9th chapter of the Acts. We maintain that Paul was not singular in this. The circumstances of his call were peculiar, extraordinary; but there is nothing to justify the belief that the call itself was so.

Upon the familiar passage, 1 Cor. ix. 16, the reviewer makes very extended and very appropriate comments. Its idea he has very correctly apprehended. Paul says: "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me." The reviewer very pertinently remarks: "The preaching of the gospel 'had been committed to him as a *trust*, and to neglect it would be dishonorable. * * * If his preaching had been a matter *purely voluntary*, he could have gloried in it; but as it was *not assumed, but imposed upon him by immediate revelation from God*, it was a matter of *specific duty*, and if he failed to perform it to the best of his ability, he would incur the curse of the Master who employed him." To all this we give a hearty assent, and say that just such is the position and the feeling of every gospel minister.

1 Cor. xii. 4-11, and 28, and Eph. iv. 1, 11, contain valuable instruction upon the question under consideration. We are here taught: 1. That the Lord in his wisdom has adopted in his Church what is known in modern times as the principle of the division of labor. He does not expect any one of his servants to fill every post of duty, or occupy every position of privilege. 2. That the Lord exercises a sovereignty in these matters, assigning to each of his people that portion of the work which pleases him and for which he qualifies him. 3. That in the divine economy, it is the province of the Holy Spirit to make these selections and bestow the corresponding endowments.

2 Cor. v. 20: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ."

Eph. vi. 20: "For which I am an ambassador in bonds." We are here greatly pleased with the reviewer's approval of Dr. Dabney's remarks upon the office of ambassador. "The sovereign alone is competent to appoint such an agent." He, however, makes three objections to the applicability of these texts: 1. He is not sure that Paul meant himself, or the college of the apostles, or the Church itself. We apprehend that the reviewer is the only one who has ever been seriously troubled with doubts on this question. Paul undoubtedly refers to himself and his fellow-laborers in the ministry. 2. But if this be so, our brother does not see how gospel ministers can be ambassadors of reconciliation, from the fact that the church to whom they are sent is already reconciled. If he had kept in view the great commission, Matt. xxviii. 19; if he had only carefully observed the immediately preceding verse, 2 Cor. v. 19, he would have seen that we are ambassadors for Christ "unto all nations," "to every creature," to "the world," whom we are to "beseech, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God." 3. There is, however, the still further difficulty that these ambassadors are provided with no supernatural credentials to attest their heavenly appointment. Let Paul meet this. 2 Cor. vi. 4-10, he gives us one series of divine proofs, by which the true ministry may be recognised. 1 Cor. ix. 1, 2, he gives us another. In this last passage, he says to the Corinthian Christians: "The *seal* of mine apostleship are *ye* in the Lord." So every divinely called ambassador can point to his spiritual children, and say, "Behold the credentials which my Master has given me." That these credentials may be given is the cause of the interval between licensure and ordination.

Having removed the objections conscientiously urged to the application of the term ambassador to the Christian ministry; we must say that its scriptural employment for the designation of those who preach the gospel of reconciliation, is an unanswerable proof that they must receive their appointment directly from the court of heaven.

We have but one more text to examine. Heb. v. 4, 5: "No man taketh this honor (*i. e.* of the priesthood) unto himself, but

he that is called of God, as was Aaron: so also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high-priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son," etc. We are taught here:

1. That neither Aaron, nor any other Old Testament saint, dared to assume the duties of a minister of the sanctuary, except by virtue of a direct divine call. Uzziah tried it, and was smitten with leprosy for his sacrilege. 2 Chron. xxvi.

2. That *our blessed Master himself*, the minister of the new covenant, of whom we are all most unworthy successors, did not *of himself* assume this station. Even he exercised the functions of the priestly office only by virtue of his Father's appointment.

4. May we not, must we not, infer from these things that it would be the height of presumption in us to dare handle the sacred vessels of the sanctuary, unless we are "called of God, as Aaron also was?"

In conclusion of the argument on this interesting question, is there not a significance in the very *names* employed in the Scriptures to designate the holy office?

1. "Who also hath made us able *ministers* of the New Testament." 2 Cor. iii. 6. This word, here rendered "ministers," is elsewhere translated servants. If we are God's servants, who has a right to appoint us a place in his service but himself? Surely he must be allowed the privilege, which each one of us claims, of choosing his own ministers.

2. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you *overseers*," *i. e.* bishops. Acts xx. 28. This is also a relative term. An overseer is one who inspects and governs another's servants. What Southern planter of the olden time would have allowed any man to come upon his plantation and, without any direct authority from him, undertake to manage his business and his servants? Shall we be less respectful to our "one Master in heaven?"

3. In the Old Testament, and frequently also in the New Testament, as 1 Pet. v. 2, God's people are compared to a flock of sheep, and his ministers to *pastors* or shepherds. Here again we find the same essential idea of agency apparent, making it necessary for the spiritual shepherd to have some direct commis-

sion from the owner of the flock, before he can properly undertake its supervision.

We have written with some feeling on this subject, but not with more than its importance has deserved. It is no question of policy or human expediency. It is no isolated question, whose solution affects no other interests than those peculiarly its own. It is, we are sure, no unsettled question, about which God's people are allowed to differ. It is a question of the very life of the Church; a question involving the very spiritual relationship between God and man; a question which our Master has determined for us, and whose determination we are bound to respect.

It is our solemn conviction, that, so far from its being true that there are scores of men who ought to be in the ministry, and are not, because they have no divine call, we fear that there are scores in the ministry *who ought not to be, because they have no divine commission*. In these days of superficial piety, of the extensive spread instead of the intensive permeation of religion, so far from the Church lowering her standard of mental, spiritual, or divine qualification, it should more than ever heed the injunction: "Lay hands suddenly on no man," and beware of putting men to work who will build the walls of Zion with untempered mortar. May the Lord save his Church from the temptation of sacrificing quality to quantity! May he spare us the untold evils of an unsanctified and uncalled ministry!



ARTICLE III.

PROVIDENCE AND PRAYER.

All believers have a secret creed of some sort. In general terms, there is an acquiescence in the Confessions of the organisation to which one belongs—something similar to the New School adoption of the Westminster Catechisms, "for substance of doctrine." The professed creed has, of course, certain prom-