

BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has among its distinguishing tenets the doctrine of baptism for the dead, and the question arises, is this a scriptural doctrine? That it is among the grandest conceptions within the whole range of the human mind, all who thoroughly understand the subject willingly admit, but is it entirely new to this age, or was it preached and practiced in former ages as well?

Paul, in 1 Cor. xv: 29, uses the following well known argument:

Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?

By reference to the context it will be seen that there were some of the Christians in Corinth, who were inclined to skepticism on the doctrine of resurrection, probably the first resurrection, and the Apostle argues to set the doubts at rest. In doing so he first proves the resurrection of Christ and then states that those who belong to Christ shall be raised at His coming, after which event comes the end, when everything shall be subject to His reign. If this is not so, he argues, our preaching is vain, the dead have perished and, above all, those who are baptized for the dead are performing a vain labor, and every suffering in the cause of Christ is unprofitable.

Here is an irrefutable proof that the doctrine of baptism for the dead was so well understood and practiced among the primitive Christians, that it could form the logical basis for an argument in favor of the resurrection from the dead.

We are aware that various interpretations have been given to this passage by theologians who admit that they do not understand it. Lightfoot thinks the word baptism here is to be taken in a figurative sense as meaning martyrdom. He paraphrases it thus: "What shall they do, who have undergone, and do undergo, martyrdom, if there be not a resurrection?" This rendition, however, is valuable only as showing to what absurdities even the profoundest scholars will go when they encounter insurmountable obstacles. Martyrdom is indeed, in Matt. xx: 22, 23, referred to under the name of baptism, metaphorically used, but "baptism for the dead" is never so employed. On Lightfoot's theory it would be martyrdom for the dead, a phrase still more inexplicable than baptism for the dead. Griesbach with his usual ingenuity proposes to amend the text and read: "What shall they do that are baptized from dead work?" But this destroys not only the present text but the evident argument of the Apostle. The ordinance he refers to must form some connection between the living and the dead, or else there is no force in it as an argument for the resurrection. There are numerous other proposed interpretations to which we cannot here refer.

The baptism spoken of by the Apostle is an ordinance performed by the living instead of, or in behalf of, or for the advantage of the dead. The idea of substitution is clearly expressed in the Greek original of the passage where

the preposition *yper* is used. It is the same idea of substitution that is found in numerous places in relation to the work of Christ for mankind. Christ became a curse "for" us; He was made to be sin "in our behalf;" He gave Himself up "for" us, etc. These are instances of the true meaning of that preposition.

The doctrine that the ordinance of baptism can be performed on behalf of another should not startle anyone who believes in Christ, for as His work was largely vicarious so also must the ordinances typifying that work be. Baptism is indeed (Rom. vi: 5) the holy ordinance by which the believer is united with Christ in His death, and as such entitled to the benefits accruing therefrom. How can it be but of the same vicarious nature as the atonement with which it identifies the believer? And when it is remembered that the Gospel is not limited to the living but reaches out also to the vast masses behind the veil, it becomes clear that baptism for the dead is a doctrine without which Christianity would be incomplete.

That it was preached in the first ages of our era, we have shown; its restoration in this age is another proof of the Divine character of the message delivered to the world by Joseph the Prophet.

AS TO SILVER.

Notwithstanding that silver is in a somewhat drooping attitude just now, it is still an object of interest to many and of solicitude to not a few. Whatever be the outcome of the congressional struggle now going on regarding it, there can be no denial of several things favorable to the white metal—it is lustrous, incorruptible, indestructible and not so plentiful as to become altogether common; the wares made of it are valuable to have, convenient to use, beautiful to behold, and not likely to be displaced by any as souvenirs or heirlooms. It is an attractive substance wherever or however seen, and whether money or no money, is sure to hold a place well to the front among the things of life elected to possess intrinsic value as well as ornate capacity.

But little is known by the people generally as to the process by which silver is formed in the bowels of the earth. The process by which the accumulations are made is very interesting. It must be kept in mind that the crust of our planet is filled with water and this percolates everywhere through the rocks, making solutions of elements obtained from them. These chemical solutions, we are shown, take up small particles of the precious metal which they find scattered here and there. Sometimes the solutions in question are hot, the water having gone so far down as to be set abolling by the internal heat of the globe. Then they rush upward, picking up the bits of metal as they go. Naturally, says an authority, neat assists the performance of this operation. Now and then the streams thus formed, perpetually flowing hither and thither below the ground, pass through the cracks or crevices in the rocks, where they deposit their loads of silver. This is kept up for a

great length of time, perhaps thousands of years, until the fissures of the pocket are filled up. Crannies permeating the stony mass in every direction may become filled with the metal, or occasionally a chamber may be stored full of it, as if a myriad of hands were fetching the treasure from all sides and hiding away a future bonanza for some lucky prospector to discover in another age.

When the discoveries of lodes or ledges rich in silver were first made in sandstone formations at Silver Reef in this Territory there was considerable surprise expressed, the opinion being general that this was a geological eccentricity, while previously those who regarded such a thing as an impossibility were neither few nor all unlearned. But when twigs of sagebrush, pieces of cedar bark, etc., in a state of petrification and running up high in silver were found and exhibited, old notions of geology in many quarters received a setback from which they have not yet recovered. The above explanation, however, makes everything quite clear; geology was not at all at fault but we were, for assuming conditions which did not exist for no other reason than that we had never seen them under any other conditions or in any other forms. We live and learn and that is exactly what we ought to do.

THE "CONTRIBUTOR."

In all its talks upon and commendations of home industry, the making of home newspapers has received, from motives of modesty, but slight mention in the News. For reasons nearly related to this, the preparation of home periodicals and magazines and books has not had much attention in our column, save when specially demanded by reason of some article that called for criticism or applause.

But this neglect to refer to the important business of home printing must not be taken as neglect to recognize it. We believe no sounder policy can be impressed upon the community, not only in times of scarcity but also in times of plenty, than to cease sending money out of the Territory for trashy literature, which is but only a waste—a waste of money to buy it, and a waste of time to read it. The thousands of dollars that have gone out of local circulation in this way would have been more than enough to establish and maintain in our own midst magazines superior to any to be found in the world, filled with sense and truth, both in prose and poetry, and embellished with all the skill of the printer's and engraver's art.

If what has or has not been done in the past can only be discussed in the light of the effect it has upon the present and may have upon the future, this reference will not be inopportune; for we have in our city and Territory publications every way deserving of patronage and worthy the most generous support of the community; and these, let us hope, will not fail them in the future.

We have in mind just now, probably because before us lies the announcement that a new volume is about to begin, the *Contributor*, a monthly that needs no introduction at