

not all as good as they should be, and that there is a lack of system in either the construction or maintenance of highways is painfully apparent. The thing to be done, therefore, is to expend less money in theorizing and circulating documents and more in work of a useful character. A bureau in every state and territory having this subject in hand and being charged with the full responsibility of it, would amount to very much more than an executive department at Washington whose occupants might or might not know something of the matter committed to them and who, under any circumstances, would run so largely to red tape and gold seals that little good would be accomplished. If ever there was anything strictly practical in this life—a thing in which neither romance, theory, poetry nor the fine arts could find a lodgment anywhere—that thing is a western wagon road. And yet the consequence of such roads has never been fully comprehended. They are not only the avant-couriers of the steel-clad highways in the frontier districts, thus constituting for the time the only channels of travel and commerce, but they continue to be used after the railway has paralleled and crossed and burrowed under them. Besides, it is not always desirable to travel by rail, even when we can do so. Let us by all means look to our roads.

BAPTISM NOT CIRCUMCISION.

In the brief narrative of the childhood of our Savior, as given by Luke, it is stated that "when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus, which was so named by the angel." This text generally furnishes the Pedobaptists of the Christian world with an apparently strong argument in favor of the doctrine of infant sprinkling. It is customary in many places to preach on this subject on New Year's day, particularly where speakers deem it necessary to endeavor to refute those who believe in the scriptural doctrine of baptism. The idea conveyed by them is that as Jesus was circumcised when eight days old, so infants ought to be baptized, because baptism has by the Lord been instituted as a substitute for the Mosaic rite.

Is this so? A comparison of the two ordinances in the light of the Scriptures will be a sufficient answer to the question.

Circumcision in the old dispensation was given as a token of God's covenant with Abraham. "It shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you," is the signification given to it when first instituted. It marked the descendants of Abraham and reminded them of the promises given to their great progenitor, promises that extended to his descendants for all time.

It was sufficient to apply this ordinance to the male child, since the men according to the law of the ancients were the representatives of the people. The covenant made was not one with every individual of the people separately, but with the people as a whole.

The covenant made with Abraham, and of which circumcision was the token, contained chiefly two conditions. Abraham promised for himself and descendants to abstain from idolatry: to acknowledge only God as God; and the Lord promised to give the country of Canaan as an everlasting possession to Abraham and his descendants. The covenant was therefore of a national character chiefly. It dealt with the establishment of a certain form of government—theocracy—among the Jews and it gave them, if willing to accept this form of government, a beautiful country.

In all these respects there is a wide difference between baptism and circumcision. Indeed, the dissimilarities are more numerous and more essential than the points of similarity.

Baptism is not an ordinance whereby one nation is to be distinguished from another. So far as it is an outward sign, it is a token of a covenant between the Almighty and each individual person. It is therefore administered to men and women alike, to living and dead, the latter by proxy.

The covenant which it typifies is, briefly stated, this: the person baptized promises to live a new life according to the laws of the Gospel as given by God and exemplified by Jesus, while God promises to forgive all past transgressions and provide the means of reaching eternal exaltation. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." "We are buried with him (Christ) by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Anyone who will reflect on the meaning of these Scripture statements will easily perceive how impossible it would be to say the same of the Old Testament ordinance. The two have almost nothing common in signification.

But we happen to know still more positively that the Apostolic Church, the members of which were favored with the presence of inspired teachers, did not look upon baptism as a substitute for circumcision. Very early the question arose whether it would be necessary to command the Gentile converts to be circumcised previous to baptism. Certain Christian missionaries, converted Jews, taught that it was and caused some dissension among the disciples. Finally it was decided to settle the matter in a general conference, which was held at Jerusalem. There was much dispute about the matter, but the decision of the assembly was that no other "burden" from the Mosaic law should be laid upon the Gentile converts than to abstain from "meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication."

Now, the question is this: If the first Apostles and Elders had believed as modern Pedobaptists do, that baptism had come instead of the Mosaic ordinance, why did they not say so at that conference and thereby end the dispute? It would have been the most forcible argument they could have brought up, as it is today among infant sprinklers. But neither Paul nor Peter nor any of the other speakers at the conference, if the record in Acts xv is reliable, knew anything about this modern theory, a

sure proof that it is of later origin than the Apostolic age.

But by the historian of the first Church we are further told that Paul when he desired to bring a converted Greek, Timothy, with him on his mission among the Jews, be circumcised him, although he was already baptized and had good reputation among the brethren in Derbe and Lystra. This is again a sure proof that the Mosaic ordinance was not considered abolished on the ground that baptism has come in its stead. The fact is that the Jewish converts continued to keep the Mosaic law as long as they could, while they accorded to their Gentile brethren the liberty given to them by the decision of the first general conference. When the Jewish nation had been scattered in all directions, Jewish influence on the affairs of the Church naturally ceased and with it the importance of the Mosaic ordinances.

Pedo-baptism as practiced by some Christians today has therefore not the slightest foundation in the Mosaic law, nor in any other inspired Scriptures. It is one of the proofs of the divine mission of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, that he perceived the full truth concerning the ordinance of baptism and that he dared to proclaim it, notwithstanding all opposition. Had he been an impostor, he would have taught a doctrine to please men. He was not. He preached the truth, no matter what the world thought thereof.

VON MOLTKE'S BOOK.

Choice selections from the late Count Von Moltke's review of the Franco-German war appear now and then in the press of the country. The language in which these extracts are couched is devoid of redundancy, circumlocution or apparent labor, each sentence being simply worded, straight as an arrow and destitute of obscurities or ambiguities; while the dramatic manner in which many of the more stirring situations is told—notably the charge and recharge of the French at Sedan—and the color and vividness imparted to all his word-paintings, go to show that the count's literary qualifications were abreast of his military skill, his place being well to the fore in either.

The recollection of that brief but bloody and crushing contest will go on through and down the generations of France while memory remains the warder of the brain. Not because it was a defeat altogether. Not because it was inflicted by the hereditary enemy who formerly went down all but ingloriously before the triumphant eagles; but because, through treachery, incompetency and lack of preparation the Germans were given an almost unobstructed turnpike over French bodies to Paris, and then exacted from the prostrate foe indemnity so vast, so far-reaching and so (apparently) impossible to raise, that it looked like, as it was doubtless intended to be, an enfeebling blow whose effect would not be worn off during the generation at least. This treatment, added to the forcible taking away of Alsace and Lorraine, will