No. 153.

On Baptism.
Acts 1:48. "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."

From these words, it is my intention to call your attention at present to the subject of baptism—a subject, which if it have not the recommendation of novelty, is at least entitled to no small consideration from its relative importance among the topics of Christian instruction. Our text is the conclusion of an account of the first opening of the eyes to the Gentiles: furnishing us with an occasion for suggesting a few reflections on the origin, use, and obligation of the divine ordinance of baptism.

Every religion is necessarily connected with some sort of institutions and ceremonies, by which itself is emblazoned with emblems of figurative performances to strengthen its efficacy and depose its impressions. It is more than can be expected of the
weakness of man, that religion should be merely an
abstract operation of the mind, deriving no aid from
the senses or from outward ceremonies. Signs must be
employed, that the thing signifyed may not be lost out
of notice or remain only a feeble hold on the attention.

The use of water as a religious emblem is of high antiquity.
It was supposed to be typical of purity; washing the
body is any part of it, since water is emblem of making
the mind clean. Accordingly we find that among the
pagan nations, washing in water was a preliminary to
the worship of the gods, or to the performance of sacred
rites (see E. G. E. V. IV, 255, P. 22, 11, 15, etc.). And since it was
supposed to remove pollution, the archpriests came to
the altar of the temple in the most sacred vestments.
The
kind of sacred ceremony is more common or more strictly per-
formed among the eastern nations than this; inasmuch
that the Hindus regard their great river, the Ganges, as
consecrated by the. In this respect, as in many others, there
is a striking similarity in the sacred rites of the different
nations of antiquity. Nature seems, as it were, to have
printed on its own mind nearly the same signs of expres-
sing their desire of reverence. Among the Jews, the
use of water in sacred ceremonies was very observant.

The ark commanded that there should exist in every place
a place of prayer for their religious services. Moses

Indeed ablutions, ablutions of various kinds, were very common
in the ritual part of the law; after the establishment of
the temple, we are told that the priests were entreated
in the first washing their bodies. But the form of
this ceremony, in which the priest, nearest to the chair of
altar was that used at the accession of presbyters to their
religion. Persons born of heathen parents were sometimes
allowed to become Jewish; the cases of this kind occu-
ed, the converts were solemnly admitted to the com-
munity of the new religion by circumcision, by sacrifice,
by baptism; their children might be received in the
same way, in condition that when they grew up they should
distress the faith of their fathers. One, who had been
thus admitted to a fellowship in their religious power, was de-
ignated by an expression which signifies being born again

Hab. 2, 17.
of this circumstance may furnish a clue to the interpretation of the same expression in some parts of the N.T.

By the right of baptism to Judaism were supposed to be imparted from the infancy of Judaism. It was derived into a new religion, a new life. It was a symbol of baptism from darkness to light, from ignorance to knowledge, from a bond of nature to a unique desire to the service of the one living true God.

This mode of using states in sacred ceremonies was first introduced among the Jews during or after the captivity of Babylon, as we have already seen it among them by John Baptist. And so, when they made use of it, there seems little reason to believe that the fact was so. One evidence of it is the manner, in which the baptism of John was received. When the people flocked around him, he announced to them that they must repent and be baptized if they manifested their surprise, as they would have done, if he had professed some strange thing ever strange. They did not ask him, what he meant by being baptized, nor in any way intimate that they were not perfectly acquainted with the use of water, as a religious rite. This certainly intimates that it was an old and long established ceremony; if John made the same use of it, as they had done with regard to proselytes to their own religion. He announced it them that the kingdom of the Messiah was at hand; that if the kingdom entered the kingdom, they must repent, by an external sign that they were willing to pass from Judaism to the new dispensation. So it was with regard to proselytes from paganism to the kingdom of Israel, so it was with regard to those, who were the pass from the old dispensation to the new reign of the Messiah; in both baptism was the same expression, sign of a change, it was the sign of quitting away of things, of adopting new in their religious views, feelings, such as at least one does not challenge the meaning of John, when he came as the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "The Lord of hosts is about to visit the earth!"

Such was the state of the site of baptism at the time of our Lord. It had been used these years by his countrymen, as an initiatory site of their religion, John had availed himself of it, to give solemnity to his
communication of the Messiah. How natural was it, then, that our Saviour should adopt it, as an introductory step to the profession of this religion. He came to make the most sublime and interesting discoveries to man, to teach truths, which were at once so unspeakably important, so sublime, so perfectly, so completely in the nature of the being of heaven to man; to communicate a religion, establish a pure and holy mode of intercourse between man and the creature of God, the Creator. Nor to such a religion, it cannot be supposed, more would be introduced without some form of solemnity, some things, which should impress on their own minds, by which they might publicly testify, the importance of the change, through which they were passing from one religion to another. For this purpose our Saviour selected the rite of Baptism, which was appropriate and impressive, and had the advantage of being already known, therefore of giving no shock or exciting no alarm by the introduction of a new religious ceremony. "Go ye," says he, "and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, receiving them into my kingdom, verily, verily I say unto you, of the Saviour, his character, government, and providence, concerning me, the Son of God, the Messiah of his love, the medium of his mercy to mankind, veering the holy spirit, that divine, powerful agency, which dispelled and will dispel itself in miraculous energies for the confirmation of the religion, which I have taught. Such was the commission, which Jesus gave them. Apostles, from whom their have derived their obligation to the practice of the same rite. At first it was doubtless intended to be used, when converts were made to Judaism as a paganism. The candidates for admission to the new religion thus professed their faith in such a way, this outward symbol signifying their desire to be made inlet the doctrines, duties of this religion, to imbibe its spirit, to obey its laws. Such seems to have been the origin of the first application of the rite of Baptism. In after ages, the practice of the Jewish church shows that it was expressly directed from its original purpose, subjected to all the abuses of priestcraft, of selling of salvation. But it is painful to dwell on such dark pages of the then record. Let us rather use the subject to our own improvement, to instruction. Though Baptism was at first intended as a mark of...
look to the adoption of it by those, who had before been
lost in the darkness of heathenism, though it is now not generally useful
that it previously existed. Its utility and propriety have by common
sense. It is still a very important symbol of the ceremony by which it is
reserved; and religion is deeply connected with, and
always manifested to be of the number of its disciples.
There are many things, as we cannot use in the same
manner as the same one used, not for the same objects; as
were contemplated at the first institution, but
which nevertheless may be of great service to the propo-
sition of the same views of feelings. Different circumstances
in different ages may require various applications
of the same things. Some rites and ceremonies are as neces-
sary now, as ever, to express the strength of the sense
of our obligations, as disciples of it. We are bound dedica-
ted as such, we grow up in the midst of these institutions
and instructions: if it has not been done for us in infancy
by our parents, it becomes us, by the ordinance of rap-
turn in our mature years, to recognize the name of the
profession of others, publicly to acknowledge that we
value the light of the Gospel, under which we have, of course,
to walk in the faith and in works that light shines, that
we regard it, as the only, the truth, the light. I would
be anything in our religion of great concern to us. It must be
the symbol of a pledge, by which institutes? You will see, per-
haps, that a man may be a very good man, a join lover
without being baptized. And so be many. But would
be not better honor the cause of this Master of give the
weight of influence of his example to religion, by continu-
ing it to fulfill with institutions? For the same reason
you might neglect the religious observances of the Sabbath
for a man may be a sinner, a believer, without going to
meeting. But I would say, that his religion would
remain without, and perish. Make a dead, heartless branch, front
of our sentiment... Nay, let me entreat you not to dis-
prise the ordinations of the Gospel, nor to think that he
cause a good life is of more importance, they are of one.
They are important, as means... He, who knows the man.
man, would like to have instituted it, had it not
been so: if the twain, who profess to listen to the voice of
his Master, will find it hard to justify it, to discern,
if the leaves, in one that he has commanded, to do,
but to an inferior source for the rules of duty, he
refers his heart to the purposes of peace, glory. - If
...
Baptism then, when administered to adults, is an external sign of faith in Jesus, as the reception of this great act of faith and practice in religious subjects. But there is another point of view in which this ordinance is peculiarly interesting, I mean, as it is the ordinance in which children are dedicated to God. In this light, there is, it seems to me, in baptism something unusually solemn, tender, affecting. It is an expression of one of the best feelings of the heart, in a simple and touching rite of adoption. The affection of the parents unites with the devotion of the time, the solemnity of the offering to God, is often likened by the Psalmist to the giving of a child to the Lord. In baptism, the parents present this child to God, at the altar of the sanctuary, he suffers his little one to come into that house, who know of such as the kingdom of heaven; he thus externally expresses a wish that the offering may be educated in the broad, liberal principles of life, under the influence of its helpful powers; that all its seeds of promise may be nurtured till they ripen into flowers fit to be planted to the paradise of God. And what can be more natural, appropriate, interesting, than such a rite performed with such views? To consider a moment what is the height in which you should view these little ones. You are not to regard them only as so many animal existences. No, they have a far higher destination. They are young immortal. They have launched forth on a course of existence, as shall our parallel with the endless ages, that forever roll on. There is a height within them, an intellect, an immortal soul. There is a spark of undying intellect. Is the child not, then, though the stars should perish as it were, in the presence of decay? From their stateliness in the heavens, is the goodly frame of this earth be shaken to ruin? Though the beauty of glory of things around us should be as the morning that passes away, nature should lay down in the funeral pile - yet still that spark in the breast of the little child lives on, undimmed by decaying, for it is a flame which shines brighter as the dews of eternity more and more are the child of God, with whom are connected...
of your best and dearest hopes. Providence is in your minds associated with them. You look forward to the time when they shall reflect honour on your country for all the care and anxiety you have endured in this account. They shall bear up your name and characters, stand around you in old age to admire and comfort your decline, to brighten the evening of your life, when they shall receive what you have accumulated for them; and above all when they shall pass beyond the grave to receive the consequence of the characters they have formed of you, at it is in most solemn thought of prayer. Henceforth the children, however many may regard them as objects of compassion, are to be the subjects of moral culture, which will affect their condition forever; they are to pass through all the mistsy influ-
ences of the world, to be exposed to the innumerable sides of temptation: their young minds will be beguiled to develop this power of falsethink, they will gradually open and expand, stretch themselves out to the contact of various objects, companies, some good, some bad, they will be gladdened by hopes and gratified by fears; they will be for-
in God, with an abiding conviction, that its is their duty to look to Him for strength to assist their weak-ness, for wisdom to enlighten their ignorance, for courage to sustain their own; knowing that this habit of faith is the best defence they can have amidst the storms & temptations of life. That the shield of faith in God will not repel the fiery darts of有时在恶风暴中，他们有时会感到无依无靠。

They are to go forth amidst scenes, where they will need every support, or religion can give to preserve them unshaken; scenes where affliction will push to task their submission, their faith, & their trust; scenes will break them away to every delight of hollow gratification. Would you not, then, that they should have the presence of the Cross as a safeguard & ornament; to them a heaven-sent, bright arm? By the love of parents, make it break open with blessings in their hearts, so to restrain the fiery darts of Satan, that come into their heads, to subdue the raging passions, that beare their sorrows at last the victims of necessity press upon? Would you not that they should take upon them the yoke of virtue, learn of them, the mark of Christ, set in their hearts, that they may find rest in the minds amidst the agitations of the world? If you desire these things for your children, feel that you are under an obligation as their parents, to train them to all habits of feelings, why will you not present them to Him?

Do not forget that the sense of this obligation. Do not forget that the most abstract of baptism performs any thing for children, is no better blessed for having passed through this act; but if you say that you are bound to connect a sense of religious duty with their children, you can say in no way can the children of the state of baptism. When you present your children at the baptismal font, you do not expect that a simple ceremony is to be an instrument of mysterious efficacy, that your offering by that act are to become sanctified with the heirs of grace. Nor, you come to perform an offering & act for yourselves; if you feel as you ought, you bring your children. These children, we have received from God to be our moulds, and to bear them in a religious manner. We would thus engrave, that God is their propriety, of that tie to Him they must be resigned. We look forward to the future, not knowing what may befall them there, whether their course on earth shall be bright or dark, whether they shall be spared to the age of gray hairs whetting their
of be pleased with in the simplicity and strength of youth, common, so be joined in the kind, of suffering, which depends on the respect we have no control, but we bring them to that God who loves them with something better than parental fondness, more cheerfully submit them to Him, where they are out of our thoughts, and this way as our way. We devote them to God in baptism, as we thus show that we should strengthen and guide us in the performance of our important duty toward them, that we may be enabled to train them in the way which they should go, in the virtues of自制," of the soul, that we may so install in their minds the truths of nature, to thoroughly imbue their hearts with the spirit of temper of religion, as to afford them a protection against the rules of allegiance, science, to enable them to walk in freedom and light, in the path of virtue, in defiance of the opposition and treachery of temptation. By presenting them for baptism, we signifying that we would have them enter on the school of God, that we would make them the disciples of him, wherein on earth were the friends of little children, who took them to his affectionate embrace, pronounced upon them his kingly blessing. We would seek to fill the airy hearts with a portion of the spirit, which dwelt in Jesus, when as grown in stature, he grew in favor with God and man, that when he was prepared to ascend to dwell with his God and the Lord, with His angels... Finally, by offering them in baptism, we express our gratitude to God for his goodness in giving these children. He has so abundant a store of light and affection. Whatever happiness we may receive from a love of those children, to God we give all the thanks. All the bright hopes which they inspire, all the kind affections and bright hopes, all the joy with which we look forward to the future years, and all the support that we will yield us in any future years, and all the bright and future, and all the associations we have, all the bright, and future, and all the associations we have, are derived from the parents of God, the parents of children, are derived from the parents of God. We therefore, publicly consecrate them, praying that they may serve him acceptably, in their day generations, at least, be welcome to perform, as in his kingdom among us, with the hope that they may not be snatched away, with the hope that they may not be snatched away, with the hope that they may not be snatched away, with the hope that they may not be snatched away, with the hope that they may not be snatched away, with the hope that they may not be snatched away, with the hope that they may not be snatched away, with the hope that they may not be snatched away.
of adults or children have been baptized. Reproof is
not for reproach, but in earnest; for it gives one more
pain to expose the defect, than it can gain to bear it.
And in this connexion Jeannett bluntly mentions the neglected
the Sunday school is the general indifference, so friends
with regard to it, as a source of disgrace and pain. Any
thing, on indicates that the interests of the young are slight
if the younger generation suffer to grow up without atten-
tion, must be distressing to one, who regards with admira-
tion the wellfare of society. My dearest, treat them to seri-
sous things. The young are the seed from which the
future harvest of our country is to be gathered. Will you
suffer this growth to be choked with weeds, grown wild without-
out cultivation? I trust not. May God grant, that you
may never be tempted to neglect the vital interests of your
families. Offspring. May each member may see more
more of your children brought to the knowledge of the
truth, than to be consecrated to God, if may you be enabled both
from their minds and hearts in this world, that when death
shall have dissolved as of all our pretensions of false profes-
sions, we shall stand before an Omniscient Judge, may
be able to sing in the joy of humble hope, "Behold!"
At home, Aug. 4th, 1822 - afternoon.