

of denominational zeal and enterprise. Denominationalism, intense, intelligent and loyal, forcing itself into power by saving men, is not a curse, but a blessing." This and much more he gives in answer to the question, repeated today as never before, "Why should the 'seamless coat' of Christ be rent through obstinate clinging to divisive externalisms?" and sayings like Macaulay's, "I have lived too long in a country where people worship cows to think much of the differences that part Christians from Christians."

The book deserves and will command and repay an earnest reading, whether one agrees with it in every detail or not.

GEO. B. EAGER.

Regular Baptism. By S. M. Brown. The Western Baptist Publishing Co., Kansas City, Mo., 1914. Paper, 63 pp.

The well known author and editor of "The Word and Way" tells in the preface what has led him "to take the risk of writing this book." He recognizes that there is "divergence of opinion upon the subject," and "prejudice against the discussion of it," "partly due to the ugly spirit which has sometimes characterized those who have debated it," and that Baptists "have tacitly agreed to disagree concerning the matter,"—that one may insist upon "regular baptism" as preliminary to church fellowship and yet "have fellowship in churches and associations with those who receive members upon what is called 'alien immersion'." Yet he is convinced that the question still needs to be discussed, "that the reception of these 'alien immersions' logically compromises Baptist churches in such a way as to render their advocacy of certain other practices for which they stand inconsistent and therefore powerless"—and so he "takes the risk" of making this "appeal to the reason and conscience of our Baptist people." He further says by way of self-justification, apropos of what he recognizes as "the very proper and intense desire of Christians generally to get together," that "nothing is more conducive to that in the real sense very desirable end than open, unrestrained, fraternal dis-

cussion." Certainly, to those of us who know the author, he is to be credited with making a frank, sincere and measurably "fraternal" contribution to the discussion which had so nearly fallen into "innocuous desuetude." Moreover, we most sincerely pray that his "appeal" may aid even beyond his highest hopes, in the fulfillment of our Lord's prayer "that they all may be one," and the realization, in a way which the Master can approve, of "the desire of Christians generally to get together." We both hope and pray that all who are "born from above," "created anew in Christ Jesus," "may be led" as the pleader says, "to throw away their quibbling as to the teaching of God's Word on the subject, design, mode and administrator of true baptism," and that they may be truly and perfectly "one in Christ Jesus."

The question is a serious one when, as in this case, it is conceived of as involving the whole theory of the church and the ordinances. Honored names appear on both sides, and as Dr. E. C. Dargan says, they demand respect. The teaching of Scripture is not clear or conclusive on that phase of the question most contended for by those of the "strict view," being chiefly a matter of inference. There inevitably comes into view that age-long diversity among Christians as to what is a true church. Each body must decide that question for itself without imposing its decision on others. Even the "strict Baptist" does not deny "the natural right of other Christians to call themselves churches and to practice and authorize their modes of observing the ordinances," nor does he seek otherwise than by example and persuasion to urge on others his own views of truth and practice. He contends as earnestly as any other for the sovereignty (under Christ) and independency of the churches. As Dr. Dayton,* in avowed agreement with Dr. John L. Waller and others, says: "It is a question of church duty, which must in each case be decided by the church, and from that decision there can be no appeal to any earthly tribunal." "The receiving of improper baptisms," he says, is "an error which does not destroy the true Scriptural character of the church, or give ground for withholding fellowship from it."

* (Pedobaptist Immersions, Chap. I.)

Dr. A. H. Strong, quoted by Dr. Brown in another connection, says: "As the profession of a spiritual change already wrought, baptism is primarily the act, not of the administrator, but of the person baptized." And "since baptism is primarily the act of the convent, no lack of qualification on the part of the administrator invalidates the baptism, so long as the proper act is performed, with intent on the part of the person baptized to express the fact of a preceding spiritual renewal." (Sys. Theol. p. 532.) Yet all admit, expressly or virtually, that it is ordinarily best for each denomination, especially Baptists, to do its baptizing in its own way, according to its own convictions of Scriptural requirement and denominational propriety. In view of such diversity of opinion it is wise that Baptists have "agreed to disagree" on this question of receiving irregular immersions as baptism, and that as a rule they have settled down in the view that it is not to be made a test of denominational fellowship, or a subject of undue and schismatic agitation. After all it is largely a question of emphasis, as to which element shall have the ascendancy in our thought and teaching, the spiritual or the formal. The conviction is growing that there is urgent need to-day, as in certain epochs of the past, of more emphasis upon spirituality, of a more dominant spiritual note in our teaching and preaching. Under such agitation as this controversy represents the churches are easily turned aside into other than spiritual activities and cease to be fruitful in good works. Joy in service, success in service, fidelity to the end in service, turn chiefly, surely, on the question of the increasing appropriation and inworking into character of those great spiritual elements which make us "partakers of the divine nature." Here the emphasis falls upon the essential and personal rather than upon the sacramental and institutional. Likewise, as regards the valuation of the various species of church or denominational life, a kindred and worthy aim would be to bring out the contribution of each to the common religious and civic life in the several national units, and of the larger whole of the Christianity of to-day which they jointly constitute.

GEO. B. EAGER.