

beast spoken of by John in Revelation, who declares the number of the name of the beast to be 666.

In a debate, some years ago, between Alexander Campbell, the founder of the Disciples or Reform Baptists, and Bishop Purcell, of Cincinnati, on the Catholic religion, Mr. Campbell undertook to prove that the numeral letters that composed the name of the beast would answer to the name of the Catholic Church. Bishop Purcell made a very facetious reply, saying that he could find the same numeral letters in the name of Alexander Campbell, and could find in these numerals, he thought, the beast with a hump on his back.

Now, though all these sects professing Christianity differ on various points, there is one peculiarity belonging to the whole of them—they all unite in declaring that God has ceased to give revelation and that He has ceased to inspire men with the spirit of prophecy. While they are all united on this point, they are divided on other points, such, for instance, as the doctrine of Transubstantiation, or the belief entertained by the Catholics, that the bread and wine consecrated for the Sacrament become the actual body and blood of Christ. I suppose that tens of thousands of men have died on the field of battle endeavoring to settle this question by the sword. Another point of difference is in relation to the form of baptism, some contending that to dip the finger into a cup of water and sprinkle an infant will answer as well as for an adult to go down into the water and be immersed as the Savior was. Thousands of learned men have exhausted their ingenuity trying to determine whether a certain Greek word, from which the word baptism is derived, means to immerse, to sprinkle or to pour.

In consequence of these differences

of opinion societies and churches have been organized, not one of them having knowledge enough to inquire of the Lord and get a revelation to decide the matter. And if anyone tried to think of it and proposed such a thing he would subject himself to the ridicule of the whole, for they say, “all these things are done away with.”

When Joseph Smith was about fourteen or fifteen years old, living in the Western part of the State of New York, there was a revival of religion, and the different sects in that portion of the State—principally Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists—preached the necessity of belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, and repentance in order to be saved, declaring that unless men and women did this, and obtained what they termed, “a hope for the future,” they would be cast into a lake of fire and brimstone, and there remain forever. I have heard men spend hours in endeavoring to explain how long this hell would last. It was frequently illustrated in this manner, “Suppose a bird could carry a drop of water from this planet to another, and be gone a year on the journey, and continue this until every drop of water on the earth was carried away, and then should take a particle of sand and go to another planet and be gone a thousand years, and carry one article of sand at a time until every particle of matter of which this globe is composed was carried away, that then this eternal punishment would have just commenced, and that the torture and pain there inflicted were so great that no mortal could conceive anything about it.” The general effort in their preaching was to scare men into the road to heaven by such descriptions of eternal punishment. When eloquent men deliver such discourses they produce, especially upon ignorant people, more or less agitation,