

~~BATTLE CREEK, MICH.~~

# THOUGHTS ON BAPTISM.

BEING

AN EXAMINATION OF

## CHRISTIAN BAPTISM:

ITS ACTION, SUBJECTS, AND RELATIONS.

ALSO,

A BRIEF CONSIDERATION OF THE HISTORICAL EVIDENCES  
FOR TRUE IMMERSION.

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BY ELD. J. H. WAGGONER.

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SECOND EDITION, REVISED.

"Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in  
Jordan." MARK 1:9.

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# PREFACE.

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THE work of Dr. Carson is, perhaps, unequalled as a thorough consideration of the *action* and *subjects* of baptism. But it is too extensive for general use, not being read to any great extent even in the denomination by which it is published. Besides this, being confined to these two ideas, it does not fully meet the wants of the present time.

And every work of this kind has a local interest. We cannot deny that circumstances have much to do with the success and usefulness of a book. As error takes different forms at different times, to meet error successfully books need to be written *for the times*. In writing this book I have tried to hold this in view.

In all the works which I have read, the relations and order of baptism have been too much neglected. I have therefore given these special attention.

It was not my intention, at first, to notice the subject of *trine immersion* further than to offer proof that the practice is inconsistent with Scripture. But it was urged that they who practice trine immersion rely so largely upon history that it was necessary to examine history on that subject. At the time of preparing the first edition I had very little of the literature of that faith at hand, but have read some of it in years past. I consider the pamphlet of Mr. Moore, frequently noticed, as strong as anything I have seen on that side. Mr. Thurman's book is larger, but it

is characteristic of its author: a very weak production, dealing in the wildest and most fanciful interpretations.

In speaking of Chrystal's "History of the Modes of Baptism," I first took it as it was presented in the writings of Mr. Moore and others, not having the work at that time. Having procured the book and carefully read it, I find my former views of it confirmed. It advocates the cause of tradition and the practice of infant baptism as strongly as that of trine immersion. In this it is consistent; the two practices rest upon the same foundation, and they must stand or fall with the acceptance or rejection of tradition. Those who quote Chrystal in favor of trine immersion have thus far been careful to conceal his real views.

It has been the intention to be brief in writing these pages; and yet I trust that reasons have been presented on the various points discussed, sufficient to satisfy any candid person who wishes to be guided by "the Bible, and the Bible alone." But because it is brief it does not follow that it is a work hastily done. I have bestowed much time and thought and labor upon its preparation, and commit it to the reader, hoping that the labor may not prove altogether vain.

J. H. W.

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA,  
May, 1881.

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# THOUGHTS ON BAPTISM.

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## INTRODUCTION.

THE influences of association and education, brought to bear upon us even from childhood, are so many, so varied, and often so subtle, that it seems impossible to find an investigator who is entirely free from prepossession or prejudice. But this should lead us, not to excuse this unhappy state of things because so many are involved in the same difficulty, but, rather, to distrust our positions and always be willing to have them tested anew by the great detector—the Bible.

Brought up under the influence of the Presbyterian Church, I had no views of baptism which I could call my own, that is, which were received by *conviction* instead of *tradition*. At the age of twenty-three I made a profession of faith, and was then requested to read "Dwight's Theology." At that time I had never read a work or heard a sermon on baptism which was opposed to the faith of the church of my parents. By carefully and prayerfully examining the arguments of Dr. Dwight, and all the passages referred to by him, together with their contexts, I became thoroughly convinced that his conclusions were not just.

On the *mode of baptism* (as it is improperly expressed), a very extended argument seems hardly needed at this day. The Baptist authors, Carson and others, though they have not exhausted the subject, have well established the principles from which safe conclusions may be drawn. The Baptist denomination, as also the "Christian," is worthy of our high regards for the service they have done to the cause of truth on this subject, under reproach, opposition, and often persecution, if not always open and violent, none the less keen and cutting to the conscientious and sensitive, when it comes from those who ought to be friends, and to whom Christian charity would indicate a different course.

The "Disciples" also, led out by Alexander Campbell, have shown an earnestness and zeal worthy of commendation in their efforts to extend the truth concerning the *action* and *subjects* of baptism. But they have, unfortunately, so related these to certain errors, especially that of antinomianism, as greatly to detract from the value of their efforts on these important points. Because of the prevalence of this "antinomian delusion," as Rev. Andrew Fuller aptly called it, the *relations* of baptism need now to be specially considered.

Many are ready to justify the differences of opinion which exist in regard to Scripture truth, while they deplore and condemn the controversies which are the necessary result of such differences. Every conscientious person will en-

deavor to spread the views which he holds, as long as he considers them connected with the will and glory of God, and the well-being of his fellow-men. These differences show that *error prevails*, and as it may be with ourselves, we should never refuse to bring our faith to the test of examination by the light of the word of God, ever remembering that it is the truth alone which can sanctify us. John 17:17.

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## CHAPTER I.

### WHAT IS BAPTISM?

It is often claimed that words, when used in the Scriptures, have a different meaning from that which they have when used elsewhere, and this claim is especially made in regard to the word *baptizein*, the Greek infinitive, *to baptize*. Our understanding of language is gained only through our knowledge of *the meaning of its terms*. If these are not clearly defined, then we can have no clear understanding of the language. If words in the Bible do not have the meaning which is established by usage and given in the lexicons of the languages in which they were written, then it follows evidently that we cannot understand the things which are professedly revealed unless we have a *special lexicon* to give these *unusual meanings* of the words. Such a claim really de-

stroys the efficiency and sufficiency of the word of God as a revelation. By connection with a certain doctrine or ordinance, a term may come to have a technical or restricted *application*, but its *meaning* is not thereby changed.

This is illustrated in the common use of the word *millennium*. Webster says, "A thousand years; used to denote the thousand years of the twentieth chapter of Revelation." No particular thousand years can be indicated by the meaning of the word; yet in all discussions of the Scriptures it is at once understood that it refers to that thousand years mentioned in the Scriptures. While the word has acquired such a restricted application as to direct the mind to that particular period, its signification is not at all changed by that use. True, by that use we have been accustomed to associate with the word the idea of *peace*, etc., but such ideas have no necessary connection with the term. They are but the result of a certain *accepted description* of the thing specified. A millennium may be either of joy or of sorrow. Neither is indicated by the word, and it is only by arbitrary association that we attach the idea of joy and peace to the millennium, for the term itself could never convey any such idea to the mind.

And such is the case with the word baptism. When spoken in Christian lands, and especially in discussions of the Scriptures, the mind at once turns to *the ordinance of Christian Baptism*. But in the phrase, "Christian baptism," we have added to

the word baptism all that we have associated in our minds with the act or thing *as a Christian ordinance*. Of course, much that is foreign to the simple meaning of the term is attached to it by association. When searching for the meaning of a term we ought to free it from all such associations or foreign elements. In this case the word had an established meaning before it was used to designate a Christian ordinance. And if the ordinance was not made to conform to the meaning of the word, then the word so used did not convey a correct idea to the mind of the hearer or reader; and such a use would be well calculated to create confusion.

We cannot suppose that the Institutor of the ordinance designed to be obscure in his directions for the discharge of a gospel duty. Then the question arises, was there any word in use in our Saviour's time which would specify any particular action in the administration of this ordinance? We answer, There was; and such a word was chosen by him; one having an established and unmistakably definite signification.

It should be borne in mind that it is not safe to trust to modern dictionaries for the meaning of words *adopted* from other languages. They aim to give the signification of words *as they are now used*. And here it is proper to remark that *usage* takes precedence of the lexicon as authority. When use has established the meaning of a term, the dictionary gives that meaning. A dictionary cannot *make meanings*. It is a standard only so

far as it gives correctly the meaning established by the best usage. If we wish to ascertain the true meaning of words in other languages, we must resort to the usages and lexicons of those languages. We have an illustration of this point. We have an English dictionary published in Scotland in which the only definition given of baptize is "to christen." That was the idea attached to the word at the time when, and the place where, the book was published. But insert that definition in a Scripture text, as Mark 16 or Acts 2, and it is found to be, not only erroneous but, ridiculous.

Again, we should never try to settle the meaning of the word by our ideas of the intention of the ordinance. The intention of ordinances is always more or less a subject of controversy; and the occasion of controversy is increased by confusion in regard to the meaning of the terms used. We do not learn the meaning of words by the intention of ordinances; but we learn, rather, what the ordinance is by the meaning of the words which define it.

There are *eight words* in the Greek of the New Testament referring to the *several actions which are supposed* to be admissible in the administration of the ordinance of baptism. These are,—

1. *Baptizo*. This word is *never translated* in the Authorized Version, that is, in our Bible, commonly known as King James' Translation. It always appears under its anglicized form, *baptize*. We pass this for the present to briefly consider the others.

2. *Rhantizo*. This word is used *six times* in the New Testament and is translated *sprinkle* every time. It has no other meaning. It is found in Heb. 9: 13, 19, 21; 10: 22; 12: 24; 1 Pet. 1: 2.

3. *Proschusis*. This occurs but once in the New Testament, Heb. 11: 28, rendered *sprinkling*. The lexicons give it the definitions of *pouring upon*, and *sprinkling*.

4. *Ekcheo*. This word is used eighteen times, and is translated *pour out* and *shed forth*. The lexicons give this definition. *Ekchuno* is considered a form of the same word, having the same signification, and is rendered in the same manner. It occurs ten times.

5. *Epicheo* is used but once, Luke 10: 34, and is rendered *pouring in*.

6. *Kutacheo* occurs twice, Matt. 26: 7; Mark. 14: 3, and is rendered *pour*.

7. *Kerannumi* (*kerao*) occurs three times, Rev. 14: 10, and 18: 6 twice. In the first-named text it is rendered *poured out*, and in the latter is used thus: "In the cup which she hath *filled*, *fill* to her double." The lexicons give it the definition, to *mix, mingle, or pour out*, as "from one vessel to another."

8. *Ballo*. This word has the definition of *throw* or *cast*. It is used one hundred and twenty-five times; rendered *cast*, ninety times; *pour out*, twice, Matt. 26: 12, and John 13: 5.

Of the seven words last noticed, *not one of them is ever used in referring to the ordinance of baptism*. The word *ekcheo* is supposed to be an exception,

but it is not; for the ordinance is a subject of commandment, but *the baptism of the Spirit*, to which the word is applied, is not a subject of precept. But this will be noticed more particularly hereafter.

We come now to consider the word *baptizo*. This is defined *immerse* in all the lexicons. We say, in *all*, for we have never seen or even heard of an exception. We might give authorities to any length in justification of this statement, but as it would only lengthen our remarks needlessly, we forbear, contenting ourselves with some quotations from Prof. Moses Stuart. We choose to offer Prof. Stuart as authority, for several reasons: 1. He occupied a prominent position in the Presbyterian denomination, and his admissions will therefore carry more weight than the claims of Baptist authors, though their testimony may be in perfect agreement. 2. His ability and learning were unquestioned; he long stood as a distinguished teacher in a theological school. 3. His writings being of recent date, he was in possession of all the advantages of the investigation on this subject, ancient and modern. Of the Greek he says:—

“*Bapto* and *baptizo* mean to *dip*, *plunge*, or *immerge* into anything liquid. All lexicographers and critics of any note are agreed in this. My proof of this position, then, need not necessarily be protracted; but for the sake of ample confirmation, I must beg the reader's patience while I lay before him, as briefly as may be, the results



of an investigation which seems to leave no room for doubt."

He then proceeds to quote Greek authors, beginning with Homer, and gives thirty-seven instances of the use of the original with this signification. Giving five instances from Hippocrates, he remarks:—

"And in the same way in all parts of his book, in instances almost without number."

Closing his list of citations, he adds:—

"It were easy to enlarge this list of testimonies to this use; but the reader will not desire it."

Leaving the classics, and coming to the records of the church, he says:—

"The passages which refer to immersion are so numerous in the fathers, that it would take a little volume merely to recite them."

He gives no instance where it is used with any other meaning than *immerse*.

The investigations of others, especially of Dr. Carson and Prof. Conant, were no less exhaustive than that of Prof. Stuart, and all give the same results. And while we consider the vast number of instances given where it refers unmistakably to immersion, there is no instance found where the Greek word *baptizo* means anything but immerse. Now, where the lexicons are agreed, and the usage is uniform and unvarying, we think the question is settled beyond all chance of reasonable dispute; baptism is immersion, and that only.

Of the figurative use of the word *baptizo*, Prof. Stuart says:—

"Inasmuch, now, as the more usual idea of *baptizo* is that of *overwhelming, immersing*, it was very natural to employ it in designating severe calamities and sufferings."

It is a great mistake, yet made by many, to suppose that, because words are used in figures of speech, therefore they have a *figurative meaning*. There is no such thing as the figurative meaning of words. They must have a definite and fixed meaning in order to an understanding of the figures which they represent to us. The use of a word in a figure of speech works no change in its signification.

Having given such decided testimony from Prof. Stuart in favor of immersion, we should not do him justice did we not notice the reasons he gave for deviating in his religious views and practice from the meaning of the word. The paragraphs following contain the gist of his reasonings on the subject:—

"For myself, then, I cheerfully admit that *baptizo* in the New Testament, when applied to the rite of baptism, does in all probability involve the idea that this rite was usually performed by immersion, but not always. I say *usually*, and *not always*; for to say more than this, the tenor of some of the narratives, particularly Acts 10:47, 48; 16:32, 33; and 2:41, seem to me to forbid. I cannot read these examples without the distinct conviction that *immersion* was not used on these occasions, but *washing* or *affusion*."

We must again commend the frankness of his

admission, but are constrained to express our conviction that he viewed the texts specified rather in the light of his *theology* than of any necessary construction, to find in them an argument for affusion. On Acts 2, he states what appears to him *probable*, but which every one knows is not *necessary*, and adds:—

“I concede that there are some points here which are left undetermined, and which may serve to aid those who differ from me in replying to these remarks.”

On Acts 10, he thinks Peter’s words imply this:—

“Can any one forbid that *water should be brought in*, and these persons be baptized?”

And yet he is constrained to say:—

“I admit that another meaning is not necessarily excluded which would accord with the practice of immersion.”

On Acts 16: 33, he speaks more at length, and is more unfortunate in his statement:—

“Here it is said that the jailer, after the earthquake and other occurrences, and when brought under deep convictions of sin, took Paul and Silas at midnight and washed them from their stripes, *i. e.*, washed off the blood which flowed from the wounds made by their stripes; and *straightway* (*parachrema*, forthwith) *he was baptized*, and ALL HIS. Where was this done? At the jail, or in the jail, where he met Paul and Silas; at any rate, within the precincts of the prison; for *after* the whole transaction was completed, he

brought Paul and Silas to his house and gave them refreshments."

Yet here, also, he admits that there might have been a bath in the jail wherein they were immersed; and so admits that his construction of the text is not necessary. *The order of the events* is not fully and correctly stated by him. It is as follows:—

1. *He brought them out* of the prison. Verse 30.
2. They spake unto him the word of the Lord, *and to all that were in his house.* Verse 32.
3. He washed their stripes, and he and all his were baptized. Verse 33.
4. *He brought them into his house,* and set meat before them. Verse 34.

Thus the record does not give countenance to the idea that all this took place in the jail; for he brought them out, and they preached to all that were in his house, before his baptism. And after his baptism he brought them into his house and gave them food. The baptism took place neither in the prison nor in his house.

But we appeal to every candid, God-fearing reader, against all such reasonings. While it is admitted that the meaning of the word is *immerse*, and it is admitted that the text *may be* explained in harmony with that meaning, genuine reverence for the word of God should lead every inquirer to search for that exposition which is in harmony with the evident meaning of the word used, and not to inquire *if an exposition may not also be found, not in harmony with the meaning of*

*the word used.* The latter course is subversive of divine revelation, and is calculated to engender strife and cause division. For, it must be confessed, the nearer we keep to the literal meaning of the text, the greater is the probability of uniformity in our faith and practice. And when we diverge from the true meaning of the words of the revelation, and admit *supposed meanings*, confusion is the unavoidable result, for each one is equally authorized to bring in his own supposition. But "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace." We ought, then, to pursue that course which will shut out confusion, and bring peace and union to the household of faith.

The *import* or *design* of baptism is the main point, however, on which Prof. Stuart relied for his argument in favor of sprinkling; and as he expressed the view of a large class, which ought to be noticed, we give at some length his remarks on this point:—

"Is it essential, in order that baptism should symbolize *purification* or *purity*, that it should be performed by *immersion*? Plainly not; for in ancient times it was the water which was *sprinkled* upon the offending Jew, that was the grand emblem of purification. So Paul considers it, when he gives us, as it were, a summary of the whole ritual of purification, by specifying the most significant of all its usages, viz., that of the ashes of a heifer mixed with water (Num. 19 ; 17), with which the unclean are sprinkled. Heb. 9 : 13. So too, he decides, when he speaks of drawing near

to God, in the 'full assurance of faith, having our hearts *sprinkled* from an evil conscience.' Heb. 10: 22.

"It is then a perfectly clear case that the *sprinkling* of water or of blood was altogether the most significant mode of purification or atonement, or of consecration to God, under the ancient dispensation."

From this he infers that *sprinkling* is preferable to *immersion* in the rite of Christian baptism! But the whole argument is exceedingly defective, and the inference inadmissible. How do we learn that the water of purification was to be sprinkled on the unclean? By the use of a word in the law which always means sprinkle—never immerse. And how do we learn how the ordinance of baptism is to be administered? By the use of a word in the law which always means immerse—never sprinkle.

If the terms of the law are to be set aside, and speculations or suppositions substituted for them, then we may as well lay aside the Bible at once. In every text and instance which he cites, the word sprinkle is used, and the apostle shows that it is a symbol of the application of the blood of Christ, having no reference whatever to the ordinance of Christian baptism.

We insist, and none can deny, that if the priest had *immersed* the unclean person in the water of purification, he would not have obeyed the law of that ordinance, for the commandment was *to sprinkle*. And we likewise insist that *to sprinkle*

a person with water for Christian baptism, is not to fulfill the law of the ordinance, for the commandment says *immerse*. Prof. Stuart admitted that a word was used by our Saviour which signifies *immerse*. Did Prof. Stuart, and do all of like faith and practice, know the mind of our divine Lord better than he knew it himself? Do they understand the import and significance of his own ordinance better than he understood it? Or, if sprinkling is preferable, why did Jesus and his apostles never use a word signifying *to sprinkle* when they spoke of the ordinance? They understood such words, for they used them in reference to other things. Or, if they wished to leave it indefinite, and to let the rite cover every method of application of water to the person, as many now teach, why did they not use the various words which signify sprinkle, pour, and immerse? This would be absolutely necessary if it was designed to give the rite so wide a range, for *no one of these words expressed all these modes*. Hence, to use invariably, *one word*, confines it definitely to *one action*.

These inquiries and statements may be better appreciated when it is considered that the word *baptizo*, in its various forms, is used one hundred and twenty times in the New Testament. It is used at least seventy-eight times in direct reference to the ordinance; and if we add to that fifteen times in which it is applied to John as *the Baptizer*, which title he received solely because he administered the rite, we have ninety-three times

in which it refers to the ordinance. If sprinkling were the better method, it is amazingly strange that the speakers and writers of the New Testament never once used a word which signified to *sprinkle*, though referring to the ordinance so great a number of times. It would certainly detract much from our respect for the record as a divine revelation if it could be shown that, in referring to the ordinance nearly one hundred times, it always says immerse, and yet means sprinkle.

#### WASHING AND BAPTIZING.

It has been said, and often said, that Scripture usage shows that *wash* is the equivalent of baptize; and as washing may be performed by various methods, so may baptizing. The fallacy of this is easily shown.

In 2 Kings we find the commandment of Elisha, given to the Syrian, to "wash in Jordan;" and accordingly he "dipped himself in Jordan." Where the preposition is thus used,—*in* Jordan,—the mind is naturally led to *dipping as the method of washing*. But washing may be performed by other methods, or without dipping; therefore washing and dipping are not equivalents. Washing designates neither dipping nor pouring, but may include both. Thus in signification it materially differs from either. Washing indicates *an action*; dipping or immersing indicates *a method of action*. The latter is specific; the former is not. The *latter* is always used in reference to the



gospel ordinance; the former is *never* so used. There is no necessity for mistake in this matter.

But the objection is based chiefly on Mark 7 : 4: "And when they come from the market, except they wash [*baptisontai*], they eat not. And many other things there be which they have received to hold, as the washing [*baptismous*] of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables," or couches.

Here it is assumed that *baptism* is used where immersion is, at least, improbable. The reader will be interested in the following extracts from Clarke's comment on the text:—

"*Except they wash*] or *dip*; for *Baptisontai* may mean either. But instead of the word in the text, the famous *Codex Vaticanus*, (B) eight others, Euthymius, have *rhantisontai*, *sprinkle*. However, the Jews sometimes washed their hands previously to their eating; at other times they simply *dipped* or plunged them into the water."

"*And of tables*] *Beds, couches—kai klinon*. This is wanting in BL, *two* others, and the *Coptic*. It is likely it means no more than the *forms* or *seats* on which they sat. A bed or couch was defiled if any unclean person sat or leaned on it,—a man with an issue, a leper, a woman with child, etc. As the word *baptismous*, *baptisms*, is applied to all these, and as it is contended that this word, and the verb whence it is derived, signify *dipping* or *immersion alone*, its use in the above cases refutes that opinion, and shows that it was used, not only to express dipping or immersion, but also sprinkling and washing. The cups and pots were

*washed*; the beds and forms perhaps *sprinkled*; and the hands *dipped* up to the wrist."

This is the most that can possibly be said on that side of the question. It would have been well for his opinion if facts would have permitted him to say more than "*perhaps sprinkled*." More than a "perhaps" should be inquired for by every one who seeks a "full assurance of faith." Heb. 10: 22. On this subject we have "the law," which settles all controversies.

Lev. 6: 28: "And if it be sodden in a *brazen pot*, it shall be both scoured, and *rinsed in water*."

Chap. 11: 32: "And upon whatsoever any of them, when they are dead, doth fall, it shall be unclean; whether it be any vessel of wood, or raiment, or skin, or sack, whatsoever vessel it be, wherein any work is done, *it must be put into water*, and it shall be unclean until the even."

Chap. 15: 12: "And the vessel of earth that he toucheth which hath the issue, shall be broken; and every vessel of wood shall be *rinsed in water*."

Here is the requirement for *putting into water*, or *baptizing* the very articles specified in Mark 7: 4. And not only those vessels, but raiment, and "whatsoever" was rendered unclean by contact. And thus every conjecture and "perhaps" which is designed to obscure the plain truth of this passage, is shown to be gratuitous. No reason exists for giving *baptizo* any other definition than *immerse*.

It should be noticed that the Saviour did not say a word against the baptisms required in the

Levitical law; but he spoke against their *traditions* in connection with them, or their making void the commandment of God by their traditions.

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## CHAPTER II.

### DIP AND SPRINKLE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

INASMUCH as the advocates of sprinkling endeavor to bring the Old Testament to their aid, by citing to those passages which state that water or blood was required to be sprinkled on certain things, it may be of use, certainly it will be of interest, to inquire whether the language of the Old Testament is definite in its distinctions between the two actions; whether *immersion* and *sprinkling* are so separated that one cannot, in its language, be mistaken for the other. We affirm that the order to *sprinkle the blood* on the mercy-seat would not have been obeyed if the priest had *immersed the mercy-seat* in blood. It was no mere chance by which the apostle spoke of the blood of *rhantismos*, instead of the blood of *baptismos*; for the former, or sprinkling of blood, was required and practiced, but the latter, baptism of blood, was unknown to the Scriptures, both of the Old and the New Testament, except in such cases as Lev. 4:6, where the priest was required to *dip* his finger in blood, and *sprinkle*

the blood before the vail. But here the *two actions* are clearly and necessarily distinct. So, also, it is no mere chance, but by evident design, that the rite of *baptismos* is so often, and so definitely enjoined in the gospel, while that of *rhantismos* is never mentioned. But to the Old Testament terms.

	<i>Tah-val.</i>	<i>Common Version.</i>	<i>Septuagint.</i>
Gen.	37 : 31	dipped.	emolunan.
Ex.	12 : 22	dip.	bapsantes.
Lev.	4 : 6	dip.	bapsei.
	17	dip.	bapsei.
	9 : 9	dipped.	ebapse.
	14 : 6	dip.	bapsei.
	16	dip.	bapsei.
	51	dip.	bapsei.
Nun.	19 : 18	dip.	bapsei.
Deut.	33 : 24	dip.	bapsei.
Josh.	3 : 15	dipped.	ebaphesan.
Ruth	2 : 14	dip.	bapsais.
1 Sam.	14 : 27	dipped.	ebapsen.
2 Kings	5 : 14	dipped.	ebaptisato.
	8 : 15	dipped.	ebapsen.
Job	9 : 31	plunge.	ebapsas.

This embraces the entire use of the Hebrew word *tah-val* in all its forms. In the first instance, *emolunan* is used in the Septuagint, which, in the New Testament, is rendered *defile*. This does not conflict with the meaning of the terms, as it (Joseph's coat) might be defiled with the blood by being dipped in it. And so our version renders it. And no objection can be raised in that *bapto* is used instead of *baptizo*; for they both proceed from the same monosyllabic root, and the

first meaning of *bapto* is *to dip*, or *immerse*, and *baptizo* has no other meaning.

This last statement has been contradicted by some authors, who have endeavored to make *baptizo* carry the two definitions of *bapto*, namely, *to dip*, or *immerse*, and *to dye*. The *method* of the last of these meanings of *bapto* indicates its relation to and derivation from the first meaning, as it was common *to dye by dipping*. Dr. Carson has very clearly proved that *baptizo* does not take this second meaning of *bapto*, but, for obvious reasons, we prefer to quote the conclusions of Prof. Stuart on this point. In examining the inquiry "whether *bapto* and *baptizo* are really synonymous, as they have often been asserted to be," Prof. Stuart says:—

"Let us now inquire whether, in actual usage, *baptizo* has a different meaning from *bapto*. In particular, is it distinguished from *bapto* by the writers of the New Testament?

"The answer to these questions will be fully developed in the sequel. I have already intimated that *baptizo* is distinguished from *bapto* in its meaning. I now add, that it is not, like this latter word, used to designate the idea of *coloring* or *dyeing*; while in some other respects, it seems, in classical use, to be nearly or quite synonymous with *bapto*. In the New Testament, however, there is one other marked distinction between the use of these verbs. *Baptizo* and its derivatives are exclusively employed *when the rite of baptism is to be designated* in any form whatever; and in

this case *bapto* seems to be purposely, as well as habitually, excluded."

And in another paragraph he says:—

"The idea of *plunging* or *immersing* is common to both the words *bapto* and *baptizo*, while that of *dyeing* or *coloring* belongs only to *bapto*."

This is worthy of the most careful consideration. Not only is every word which signifies *pour* or *sprinkle* excluded from the texts in the New Testament which speak of the rite of baptism, but a word which signifies *dip* or *immerse*, in common with *baptizo*, is also excluded because it has another meaning also; and a word is chosen to designate the ordinance which has the signification of *immerse*, and that only. Such is the remarkable precision of the Greek language used by our Saviour to designate the duty of his followers in this rite. The foregoing table plainly shows that the idea of *sprinkling* is not contained in the Hebrew word *tah-val*.

There has much ado been made over the use of *bapto* in Dan. 4 and 5, rendered in our version, "*wet* with the dew of heaven." But it is admitted by all that *bapto* has *acquired*, or secondary, meanings, which *baptizo* has not. And inasmuch as *baptizo* is always used for the ordinance, from which, as Prof. Stuart remarks, *bapto* is carefully excluded, we cannot see that the opponents of immersion gain anything at all on this scripture. It is scarcely an outpost of the citadel of baptism, which stands solely on the use of the word *baptizo*. This is the only case, however, in all the Script-

ures in which even *bapto* carries any other signification than that of *dip*.

*Dip* is once derived, in the Old Testament from the Hebrew *mah-lhatz*, which occurs fourteen times, and is rendered *wound*, seven times; *smite*, three times; *pierce*, twice; *strike*, once; and *dip*, once; viz., in Ps. 68:23. where the Septuagint has *baphe* (*bapto*). Its use in the latter text is peculiar, though may stand related to its signification, as *pierce* does to *smite*. This is the entire use of the word *dip* in the Old Testament.

Sprinkle is from two words only in the Old Testament, namely, *nah-zah* and *zah-rak*. The first is quite uniformly rendered both in the English and Greek, as will be seen by the following table:—

	<i>Nah-zah.</i>	<i>Common Version.</i>	<i>Septuagint.</i>
Ex.	29:21	sprinklo.	rhaneis.
Lev.	4:6	sprinkle.	prosrhanei.
	17	sprinkle.	rhanei.
	5:9	sprinkle.	rhanei.
	6:27	sprinkled.	epirrhanthisthe.
	27	sprinkled.	rhanthisthe.
	8:11	sprinkled.	errhanen.
	30	sprinkled.	proserghanen.
	14:7	sprinkle.	perirrhanai.
	16	sprinkle.	rhanei.
	27	sprinkle.	rhanei.
	51	sprinkle.	perirrhanai.
	16:14	sprinkle.	rhanei.
	14	sprinkle.	rhanei.
	15	sprinkle.	rhanei.
	19	sprinkle.	rhanei.
Num.	8:7	sprinkle.	perirrhanais.
	19:4	sprinkle.	rhanei.

*Nah-zah. Common Version. Septuagint.*

Num. 19 : 18	sprinkle.	perirranci.
19	sprinkle.	perirranci.
21	sprinkleth.	perirrhaiion.
2 Kin. 9 : 33	sprinkled.	errhantisthe.
Isa. 52 : 15	sprinkle.	thaumasontai.
63 : 3	sprinkled.	kategagon.

Here we find the same definiteness, and nearly the same uniformity, of rendering. In all the instances except the last two, the Septuagint uses the same word, or different forms of the same root, while the English has the same word throughout. As the idea of *sprinkling* is not found in *tah-val*, so the idea of *immersion* is not found in *nah-zah*.

The Hebrew word *zah-rak* occurs thirty-four times, as follows:—

*Zah-rak. Common Version. Septuagint.*

Exodus 9 : 8	sprinkle.	pasato.
10	sprinkled.	epasen.
24 : 6	sprinkled.	prosechee.
8	sprinkled.	kateskedaso.
29 : 16	sprinkle.	proscheeis.
20	sprinkle.	(wanting.)
Lev. 1 : 5	sprinkle.	proscheousi.
11	sprinkle.	proscheousin.
3 : 2	sprinkle.	proscheousin.
8	sprinkle.	proscheousin.
13	sprinkle.	proscheousin.
7 : 2	sprinkle.	proscheei.
14	sprinkleth.	proscheonti.
8 : 19	sprinkled.	prosechee.
9 : 12	sprinkled.	prosecheen.
18	sprinkled.	prosechee.
17 : 6	sprinkle.	proscheei.



<i>Zah-rak.</i>	<i>Common Version.</i>	<i>Septuagint.</i>
Num.	18 : 17	sprinkle.      proschecis.
	19 : 13	sprinkled.    pericerrhantisthe.
	20	sprinkled.    pericerrhantisthe.
2 Kin.	16 : 13	sprinkle.      proschec.
	15	sprinkle.      ekhecis.
2 Chron.	29 : 22	sprinkled.    proscchean.
	22	sprinkled.    proscchean.
	22	sprinkled.    periechcon.
	30 : 16	sprinkled.    edechonto.
	34 : 4	stowed.       errhipsen.
	35 : 11	sprinkled.    proscchean.
Job	2 : 12	sprinkled.    katapassameno.
Isa.	28 : 25	scatter.       speirei.
Eze.	10 : 2	scatter.       diaskorpison.
	36 : 25	sprinkle.      rhano.
	43 : 18	sprinkle.      proschec.
Hos.	7 : 9	here: and there— sprinkled.      exonthesan.

This word is somewhat more variously rendered, both in the English and in the Septuagint but the same idea obtains throughout. Its signification, *to scatter, hence, to sprinkle*, admits of a variety of renderings; but in this, as in *nah-zah*, the idea of dipping or immersing is not found.

We think nothing more is required to show that the language of the Scriptures admits of no such ambiguity as to put *baptizo* for *rhantizo*, or *immerse* for *sprinkle*. In Lev. 4 : 6, we find both; *dip* and *sprinkle* used, and it is easy to see that they cannot be interchanged.

There are two texts in the Old Testament which have been greatly misapprehended, and from which unwarrantable inferences have been drawn. Eze. 36 : 25, reads thus—

"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean."

On this, Dr. Scott remarks:—

"In allusion to the divers washings and sprinklings of the ritual law, the Lord promised to sprinkle clean water upon his people, and to make them clean from all their filthiness and idols." This reference is correct, as may be seen by examining a few passages. In Num. 8:7, they were commanded to "sprinkle water of purifying" upon the unclean. In chap. 19:18, it is commanded that, if any one touch the dead body of a man, he shall be unclean; "and a clean person shall take hyssop and *dip* it in the water, and *sprinkle* it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave."

This was for what is denominated "ceremonial uncleanness," having no relation to moral defilement. Paul refers to it in Heb. 9:13: "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh." It was not as an ablution to cleanse from filth, but it was figurative, ceremonial, and typical; and the gospel fact which it prefigured is stated by the apostle thus: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Verse 14. And for this reason Paul speaks of "the blood of

sprinkling," and "having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." Heb. 12 : 24; 10 : 22.

Thus it is seen that these sprinklings of the ritual law, to which reference is made in Eze. 36 : 25, have no relation to any New Testament ordinance; they looked to a different object. And while that object is so definitely stated, there can be no excuse for the error of applying them to baptism in order to give countenance to sprinkling for that ordinance. The sprinkling of the conscience by the blood of Christ is declared to be their antitype, and a gospel duty is as clearly shown in connection therewith: "Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and *our bodies washed with pure water.*" Heb. 10 : 22.

Isa. 52 : 15, "So shall he sprinkle many nations," has been the ground of much speculation, and from it have been drawn some very erroneous conclusions. Even Dr. Clarke, who approves the rendering of the Septuagint, which is quite different from our common version, asks, in brackets, "[Does not sprinkling the nations refer to the conversion and baptism of the Gentiles?]" Scott, who offers no objection to the translation, much more appropriately refers it to the blood of sprinkling, the same as Eze. 36 : 25; to the sacrifice of Christ, to which so plain reference is made in the context. But the translation in the Authorized Version cannot be defended.

It should be understood that there are different *forms* or *species* of every Hebrew verb; and some of these have significations peculiar to themselves,

which do not belong to any other species of the same word. Gesenius gives two definitions to that form of *nah-zah* used in this text: 1. To cause to leap for joy, to exult, to make rejoice. 2. To sprinkle, *e. g.*, water, blood; also oil, with *upon* or *towards*. He accordingly renders this text, "So shall he cause many nations to rejoice in himself."

The Septuagint has *thaumasontai* from *thaumazo*, to wonder, marvel, or admire. This very well preserves the idea of the original, and preserves the parallelism of the composition in the original. "*As* many were *astonished* at thee, . . . *so* shall he cause many to *wonder*, or *admire*." And this Gesenius notices and approves, thus: "Gr., Syr., Vulg., Luth., Eng., 'So shall he sprinkle many nations,' see No. 2., *i. e.*, my servant the Messiah shall make expiation for them; but this accords less with the parallel verb, *shah-mam*." *Shah-mam* is the verb used in verse 14, and means, to be astonished.

A translation of the Old Testament by Isaac Leser, a Jew, gives this text as follows:—

"Just as many were astonished at thee, so greatly was his countenance marred more than any (other) man's, and his form more than (that of) the sons of men. Thus will he cause many nations to jump up (in astonishment); at him will kings shut their mouths," etc.

Dr. Clarke says, "I retain the common rendering, though I am by no means satisfied with it." He notices several authors who are equally dissatisfied with it, and finally says, the "Septuagint

seems to give the best sense of any to the place." He quotes a very judicious comment of Secker, in which he says, *Yaz-zeh*, frequent in the law, means only to sprinkle; but the water sprinkled is the accusative case; the thing on which has *al* or *el*. *Thaumasontai* makes the best apodosis." Dr. Clarke also quotes a criticism of Dr. Jubb, who renders it, "So shall many nations look on him with admiration; kings shall stop their mouths," etc.

This criticism, or rendering of Dr. Jubb, as well as others noticed, preserves the *general idea* very well, which seems to have been the only aim of the authors. But it is not a close rendering, as it gives the *active form*, which the original is not. *Thaumasontai*, which is used in the Septuagint, and which Dr. Clark says gives the best sense, is the *passive voice*, and, of course, more nearly corresponds to the original than does our version. The original is the *causative form*; therefore the rendering of Gesenius (and Leser, so far as the form is concerned) is not only preferable, but necessary or unavoidable. To translate it "he shall sprinkle," is to change it from its grammatical form, the *causative*, and give it the first or *simple active form*. And it also destroys the harmony of the construction by ignoring the parallelism, so beautifully wrought into the original. The rendering quoted from Dr. Jubb, while it preserves the parallelism and gives the true general idea of the verb, is yet open to this further objection, that it gives the *active (kal) plural*,

("they shall admire"), whereas, the Hebrew original is the *causative (hiphil) singular*, ("he shall cause them ") etc. Now if we endeavor to preserve the idea of the common version, and give it the causative singular form, we will at once perceive the incongruity of the rendering. The text should certainly not be rendered sprinkle.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT—SCRIPTURE ILLUSTRATIONS—INSTANCES.

ONCE more we let Prof. Stuart speak, as he professes to settle the whole question *on a principle* which he considers most decisive proof against confining our practice to *immersion*, according to the word *baptizo*. He refers it to the spirit of the gospel, as follows:—

"Whenever an enlightened Christian wishes to make the inquiry, what is *essential* to his religion, should he not instinctively open his Bible at John 4, and there read thus: 'Believe me the hour cometh, when ye shall, neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. . . . The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.'"

It seems strange indeed that such a man as Prof. Stuart could find any warrant in this text for departing from the plain, literal reading of the divine record. The principle here stated covers all worship and all duty. This is freely admitted. But we read also, "Thy word is truth." Therefore John 4 is only perverted when, under pretense of worshiping God in spirit and in truth, we set aside *his word*, which is *truth*, and which is the only true measure of religious duty. With as good reason the Romanist might quote John 4 to justify the worship of images contrary to the express declaration of the word of God. The Friend (Quaker) quotes this to set aside the precept of baptism altogether, and his conclusion is certainly as just as that of Prof. S., and of all those who press it into the service of changing this ordinance of our Saviour. If we can set aside one duty under pretense of worshiping in spirit, we may others, and our worship becomes a mere matter of choice or will worship. However much we might regard the intention of Prof. Stuart, we are compelled to condemn his reasoning, which, if accepted, would turn our religion into antinomian sentimentalism.

## BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

AN argument in favor of *pouring* is supposed to be found in this baptism, because the Spirit was *poured out*, or *shed forth*. See Acts 2. But there are two decisive difficulties in the way of this

conclusion: 1. The word *ekcheo* is never once used in the numerous instances in the New Testament where the ordinance of baptism in water is referred to. 2. Though the Spirit was *poured out* on the day of Pentecost, *it filled the whole room* wherein the disciples were. If water were *poured out* into a room until the room was *entirely filled*, all the persons in that room would be *entirely surrounded with* or *submerged in*, the water. And this was the case in the pouring out of the Spirit. When speaking *of the Spirit* the word *ekcheo* is used, which is defined, *poured out*. But when speaking *of the persons* the word *baptizo* is used, which in all the lexicons is defined, *immerse*. This was literally accomplished by the Spirit filling the whole room wherein they were.

#### SCRIPTURE ILLUSTRATIONS.

The Apostle Paul twice speaks of baptism as a *burial*. This expression is just, according to the meaning of the word *immersion*. But the term is not well chosen if it is intended to represent *sprinkling* or *pouring*. It is likened to the burial and resurrection of Christ, to which the ordinance has undoubted reference. "Therefore we are *buried* with him *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." Rom. 6 : 4. "*Buried* with him *in baptism*, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised



him from the dead." Col. 2 : 12. The most eminent scholars among those who advocate and practice sprinkling, have been constrained to admit that these illustrations have undoubted reference to the *primitive practice* of immersing in the rite of baptism.

The reader will pardon us for noticing the effort that has been made to evade the force of these scriptures. Because this baptism is *a burial*, and cannot be made *a sprinkling*, it has been denied that it refers to *water baptism*. Perhaps, said the objector, it refers to the fact that the disciples were buried in the love of God ! Were that the truth, it would not destroy the force of the statement that *baptism is a burial*. The meaning of the word is the same, no matter what element is used. But that cannot be true, for this consideration: In whatsoever a person is buried, when he is raised he is raised out of the same. If we are buried in the earth, we are raised out of the earth; if buried in water, we are raised out of water; and if buried in the love of God, we are raised out of the love of God ! Said the apostle to his brethren, "Buried with him in baptism, *wherein also ye are risen* with him." Were they raised *out of the love of God* ? Would such a resurrection lead them to seek those things which are above ? See chap. 3 : 1. Again we ask pardon for noticing such an objection. And we must express our astonishment that men of eminence and learning have presented this idea as against immersion. It is sometimes necessary to show how utterly

idle is the effort to evade the force of the plain testimony of the word of God. And this shows what positions men are willing to take, and what conclusions they will risk, to support their theories against the plain reading and evident meaning of the Scriptures.

Under this head should be considered 1 Cor. 10 : 2. Dr. Clarke sanctions the idea that the Israelites were sprinkled by the cloud over them, and that this indicates that sprinkling is baptism. It is to be deplored that one so ripe in scholarship—so able as a critic—should so suffer himself to be blinded by the theology of a church. The language and the facts do not admit of such a construction. Shall we read it, “Sprinkled *by* the cloud and *by* the sea?” We cannot. “Sprinkled *in* the cloud and *in* the sea?” That is impossible. Prof. Stuart is much more reasonable on this point; he says:—

“The suggestion has sometimes been made, that the Israelites were *sprinkled* by the cloud and by the sea, and this was the baptism which Paul meant to designate. But the cloud on this occasion was not a cloud of rain; nor do we find any intimation that *the waters of the sea sprinkled* the children of Israel at this time. So much is true, viz., they were not *immersed*. Yet, as the language must evidently be figurative in some good degree, and not literal, I do not see how, on the whole, we can make less of it than to suppose it has a tacit reference to the idea of *surrounding* in some way or other.”

Granting that they were not immersed, certainly they were not sprinkled. And granting that the word *baptize* is used figuratively in some good degree, yet the figure must be so construed as most nearly to conform to the actual meaning of the word, *i. e.* immerse. And this is done by the idea of *surrounding*, as Prof. Stuart has it; and it meets the conditions stated far better than any other construction.

INSTANCES OF BAPTISM.

John baptized *in the river Jordan*. Christ, our pattern, was baptized in the Jordan. The record says, "And Jesus, when he was baptized, *went up straightway out of the water.*" Matt. 3:16. Alas, how many professed followers of Christ would be ashamed to go down into the water to be baptized; be ashamed to be seen coming up out of the water, as Jesus their Lord was seen!

"John also was baptizing in Ænon, near to Salim, because there was much water there." John 3:23. The reason here given for baptizing in that place looks unmistakably to the same action as we find indicated in Matt. 3, baptizing in a body of water. We may safely leave it to the judgment of every reader that this reason would never be offered in favor of the modern practice of *rhantism*, if it can even be called that; as we recently saw a minister barely touch the ends of his fingers in water, and lay them upon the head of a child. Water is not even sprinkled upon the

child. Nothing of that kind is found in the language of the New Testament.

The circumstances attending the baptism of the eunuch afford important evidence on this subject. First, we notice in this case the importance of baptism in the preaching of the gospel. Philip "preached unto him Jesus," and in the same interview the eunuch desired baptism, which proves that the preaching of Jesus included preaching baptism in the ministry of the apostles and evangelists. How different was this from the teaching and preaching of many at the present day.

Secondly, we notice that they both went down into the water, and there Philip baptized the eunuch. And together they came up out of the water. This is not consistent with the idea of any administration but that of immersion. The only remark we find in Prof. Stuart on baptism which gives occasion to doubt his candor as a writer, is on this text. He says:—

"If *katabesan eis to hudor* is meant to designate the act of *plunging* or *being immersed* into the water, as a part of the rite of baptism, then was Philip baptized as well as the eunuch; for the sacred writer says that BOTH *went into the water*. Here, then, must have been a rebaptism of Philip; and what is at least singular, he must have baptized *himself* as well as the eunuch."

These remarks are entirely uncalled for by the record; they are as unworthy of the man who wrote them as of the subject on which they are written. Going down into the water is a necessary

prerequisite to baptism (but not to sprinkling); but no one ever claimed or even thought that *katabesan eis to hudor* expresses "the action of plunging or being immersed." We fear the idea sprung up in the mind of a *theologian* rather than of a critic; for almost the next sentence says "*kai ebaptisen auton*," "and he baptized him." This excludes every possibility of obscurity.

It is true that they both went down into the water, and this is always the case when immersion is practiced. The administrator and subject both go down into the water. But going down into the water is not and was not baptism. Does the record say they both went down into the water and *were baptized*? No. "They went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; *and he baptized him*." It is no part of candor nor reverence for the Scriptures to raise a dust over such plain and unmistakable testimony as this.

A doubt has been raised about there having been sufficient water for immersion in this instance, because verse 26 speaks of the country as being "desert." The word desert (*eremos*) does not necessarily mean a dry, barren place, destitute of water or vegetation, as may be supposed, but a solitary, uninhabited region. See Greenfield, and compare Matt. 14:13, 15, 19. This scripture says they were in "a desert place apart," and because it was desert, and the day was passing, the disciples requested Jesus to send away the multitude that they might go into the

villages and procure food. But he commanded the multitude to "sit down *on the grass*," and he fed them there. So far the point is proved. In the case in question, Acts 8, they came to standing water, as is indicated by the sudden exclamation of the eunuch,—“See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” Travelers who have passed “from Jerusalem to Gaza,” say there were springs and pools on the route quite sufficient for the purpose.

“The Bourdeaux Pilgrim, less than three hundred years after the event [A. D. 333], described with care its situation. His note is (as he advances from Bethlehem): ‘Thence to Bethazsora is fourteen miles, where is the fountain in which Philip baptized the eunuch. Thence to the oak where Abraham dwelt, is nine miles. Thence to Hebron is two miles.’ Eusebius, on the word Bethsur, has the following note: ‘Bethsur of the tribe of Judah or Benjamin. There is also now a village Bethsoron, twenty miles distant from Jerusalem toward Hebron, where also a fountain issuing from a mountain is shown, in which the eunuch of Candace is said to have been baptized by Philip.’ Jerome in like manner says on the same word: ‘Bethsur in the tribe of Judah or Benjamin. And there is at this day a village Bethsoron, to us going from Jerusalem to Hebron, at the twentieth milestone; near which a fountain, boiling up at the foot of a mountain, is absorbed by the same soil from which it springs, and the Acts of the apostles record that the

eunuch of Queen Candace was baptized in this by Philip.’”

These quotations are taken from a recent American traveler, Rev. G. W. Samson.

IN regard to the facilities for immersing on the route from Jerusalem to Gaza, the following is the result of Mr. Samson’s own observation:—

“Starting now from Jerusalem on the route thus indicated, let us view the facilities for immersion along its course, and especially at the spot where history has fixed the eunuch’s baptism. Proceeding on horses at the ordinary rate of three miles an hour, in two hours and thirty minutes we reach the three immense pools of Solomon, from which water was conducted to Jerusalem. In Christ’s day they were little lakes of water, for the three cover about three acres of ground, and when filled they furnished all needed facilities for immersion, lying open, as they do, and in a retired valley. Even now, such is the quantity of water in the lower pool, that a more convenient place for the sacred ordinance could hardly be desired. Proceeding thence over hill and dale, and through one long valley, which, from the number of its wells, the muleteers call *Wady el-Beer*, the Valley of Wells, in one hour and fifty minutes more we stopped on a hillside to water our horses, and to drink at a large reservoir with an arched roof, from which the water is drawn up with a bucket. Of this place Dr. Robinson says: ‘The road up the ascent is artificial; half way up, is a cistern of rain-water, and

an open place of prayer for the Mohammedan travelers.' At this spot, immersion would not be difficult. Descending thence into the fine valley before us, crossing it, and ascending on the opposite side, in thirty-five minutes more we reached the ruins of an ancient town, which our muleteer calls *Howoffnee*, but which Dr. Robinson has marked *Abu Fid*; mentioning 'olive trees, and tillage around, and a reservoir of rain-water.' This reservoir lies in the open field, with a grassy brink around it. It is fifty or sixty feet square, and it is now, in the last of April, full of water, the depth being apparently from three to five feet. It is evidently ancient, the walls being built up of large hewn stones. A fitter place for immersion could not be desired. Proceeding onward, through a country quite open and considerably cultivated, in one hour and five minutes we reach, at the foot of a long, steep hill, the ruins of a fortress or church on the left of our road. . . In front of the fortress by us is a fine gushing fountain of sweet water, and broad stone troughs in which we water our horses. This spot has been fixed on by Dr. Robinson as the *Bethsur* mentioned by Eusebius and Jerome as the place where the eunuch was baptized. . . . The ground in front of the fountain and of the structure behind it is so broken up and covered with stones, that it is difficult to determine what was once here. There is now a slightly depressed hollow with a sandy or gravelly bottom. It is hardly conceivable that, in the days of Herod, the foun-



tain builder, this most favorable spring should not have been made to supply a pool in this land of such structures; and even now water sufficient to supply such a reservoir flows from the troughs and soaks into the soil."

Omitting notice of all other places, we give evidence only in regard to the route traveled by the eunuch "from Jerusalem to Gaza," as on this there has been so much doubt and misapprehension. We find:—

1. The word *eremos* (desert) signifies an uninhabited region, and not necessarily an arid, barren plain. Proved also by Matt. 14.

2. The route traveled by the eunuch is a land of hills and dales, mountains and valleys, much of it fit for cultivation.

3. There are on this route numerous springs and pools of water; some of the pools are open to this day, while appearances indicate that others were open in the days of the Saviour.

This shows how needlessly wrong it is to doubt against the plain language of the Scriptures.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### ONE BAPTISM OR THREE BAPTISMS.

THERE are those who affirm that three immersions ("trine immersion") are necessary to the full consummation of the ordinance; and they are

accustomed to refer, with great confidence, to the *practice* of certain people or churches, as proving the correctness of their views. We have no regard whatever for the practice of churches, except wherein they conform to the specified requirements of the sacred word. Neither age nor popular consent gives warrant to error. Our inquiry is not, What has been practiced? but, What is truth? We care nothing for what people *have done*, but for what they *ought to have done*. We know that many grievous errors were brought into the church at a very early age. But we have no more confidence in, or respect for, a practice or an institution which can be traced to the darkness of the third century, than if it could be traced only to the fifteenth century. "What say the Scriptures?" is our sole inquiry.

But it is urged thus: "The Greek Church practice trine immersion, and we ought to give place to them in the understanding of their own language." We reply to this, There is no mention of trine immersion in the Greek of the New Testament. There is a commandment to *be baptized* (*baptistheto*), and the Greeks, in obedience to this precept, are *immersed*. So far we safely trust their knowledge of the Greek tongue. But the Greek also says, Eph. 4:5, there is one baptism (*hen baptisma*), and if they depart from this and practice *three baptisms*, then they depart from the text of their own language, and we may not follow them. For *trine immersion* is nothing else but *three baptisms*, as the following will show:—

1. They who practice trine immersion never sprinkle; they agree with us that the Greek word is properly translated *immerse*; and therefore we are agreed that baptism is equivalent to immersion. Hence, if Eph. 4:5, were translated throughout, it would read, "One Lord, one faith, one immersion." Therefore their system is clearly contrary to this scripture; for they really have three baptisms. To reply as they always do, that they have *one baptism with three immersions*, is only to contradict their own avowed faith, that baptism is immersion. For if baptism is properly translated immersion, then the expression, "one baptism with three immersions," is as much of a paradox as if they said, one baptism with three baptisms, or one immersion with three immersions. This is certainly so, unless we admit that baptism is not identical with immersion. But if we do this we concede the entire ground, and the question of *mode* has yet to be settled; that is, it will remain to be proved that immersion, and that only, is baptism; if indeed, the concession would leave us any chance for an argument.

2. It does not appear reasonable that three baptisms are required because there are three names given in the commission. That view involves too much separation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Even in commercial transactions, anything done by an agent for a firm of three parties is done once for them all; as a debt of one thousand dollars could not be collected three times, once for each one of the firm, if *one thou-*

*and* were the sum specified. But the union of a firm in business comes far short of representing the unity existing between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and *one baptism* is the specified requirement.

3. It is not correct to claim that the ellipses of the language of the commission can only be supplied by the reading, "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and baptizing them in the name of the Son, and baptizing them in the name of the Holy Ghost." It is against the fact of Scripture and the analogies of language. Separately baptizing in each name is *three baptisms*, and it cannot be denied. As to analogy, we read that Jesus will come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and in that of the holy angels. Their method of argument would make it read thus: "When he shall come (once) in his own glory, and come (twice) in the glory of his Father, and come (three times coming) in the glory of the holy angels." But that is not the truth. It is but *one coming* in the three-fold glory.

There is full better reason to affirm on Ex. 3: 6, that there are *three Gods*,—"the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." There is a just difference between *the use* and *the abuse* of language, and all should recognize it.

4. But, again, their practice is not consistent with their theory. They insist that three immersions are necessary to one baptism. Then if we read the commission as they do, and apply the definition of baptism as they claim it, it will

stand thus: baptizing them (thrice immersing) in the name of the Father, and baptizing them (thrice immersing) in the name of the Son, and baptizing them (thrice immersing) in the name of the Holy Ghost. And thus nine immersions are necessary to fulfill the commission! They cannot possibly avoid this conclusion unless they acknowledge that they properly and truly baptize in each name by one immersion in each name, which is to say that one baptism is truly administered by one immersion, which is fatal to their theory.

5. Heb. 6:2, is quoted by them ("doctrine of baptisms") as proof that there is a plurality of baptisms. But if this is proof in point, why do they deny that they practice three baptisms? and what is the necessity for their inventing the paradoxical expression of "one baptism of three immersions"? The text quoted is truth, but not in the sense in which they take it. The Scriptures speak of one baptism of water and one baptism of the Spirit. To admit of *three of one kind* most surely contradicts Eph. 4:5. Whether Eph. 4:5, speaks of the baptism of water or of the Spirit, it certainly proves that there is but one of the kind of which it speaks.

6. Paul, in Rom. 6:3, says we are baptized into the death of Christ, or planted in the likeness of his death. 1 Cor. 15:3, 4, says that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again. This is the order. And that it is this to which the apostle refers in Rom. 6:1-3, is plain,

for he gives our baptism or *burial* as proof that we are *dead*; he makes death (very properly) precede the burial. We inquire, then, did Christ die three times? We insist that he died as often as he was buried. And if we are buried three times, we are not planted in the likeness of his death; for he died and was buried but once. This is decisive on the subject.

Whether a person should be buried *face downward*, as the trine immersionists baptize, may be, perhaps, a matter of taste, but we think no such method of burial was ever known. One author says we cannot safely appeal to custom in this matter, because the Romans cremated or burned the dead instead of burying them! But *the Saviour was not cremated*, nor was this a custom with the Jews. Could it be shown that Jesus was laid in the grave face downward, there would be some show of reason for that practice. But we do not think he was; nor do we think burial in that manner is at all seemly, and we shall ever follow that which appears to be a more proper way.

Tertullian mentioned three immersions, by which we learn that such a practice was introduced as early as his day. But Prof. Stuart quotes him as saying on this subject:—

“Thence we are thrice immersed, *answering, i. e., fulfilling, somewhat more than the Lord has decreed in the gospel.*”—*De Corona Militis*, § 3.

If we can rely upon the language of the gospel, Tertullian was right in thus saying. Three immersions were never decreed by our Lord in

the gospel. To the contrary, by specifying "one immersion," the other practice is positively forbidden.

But one more point we will notice, to show somewhat the nature of the proof on which they rely. One of their prominent authors affects to find trine immersion in the supposed fact that the Jewish nation were three times baptized, once at the Red Sea, once by John, and once in the gospel commission. Weak, indeed, is that cause which must put forth such arguments to support itself. We will examine this briefly.

1. The assertion which it contains is not true. The *same individuals* were not baptized in the Red Sea and by John; nor was the *Jewish nation* baptized under the gospel commission. Individuals of that nation received baptism in the gospel, but in doing this they renounced all that separated them from the Gentiles. See Rom. 2, and Eph. 2.

2. If they were three times baptized, then again the claim is put forth in favor of *three baptisms*. But this they deny.

3. If there is no true baptism without three immersions, as they claim, then, inasmuch as Paul says they were baptized in the cloud and in the sea, they must have been immersed three times in the cloud and in the sea. But they were not; and this again proves that one immersion is baptism, according to the Scriptures.

4. If we apply to this text the rule of language which they apply to the commission in Matt. 28,

it would read, they were all baptized (once) in the cloud and (once more) in the sea; one baptism for each. But they were not; as it took both the cloud and the sea to inclose them or surround them once. Here, again, their rule is shown to be erroneous.

5. Once more applying both their rule and their definition to this instance, namely, one baptism for each, and three immersions for one baptism, and we then have them baptized (thrice immersed) in the cloud, and baptized (thrice immersed) in the sea—six immersions at the passage of the Red Sea. To deny either branch of this conclusion is fatal to their theory.

While we dismiss the theory as one hedged in on every side by its own absurdities, we cheerfully acknowledge our respect for the German Baptists (Dunkers) who teach and practice trine immersion. They are generally found to be a quiet, orderly people. But this should not prevent our exposing the error into which they have fallen. To the contrary, our regard for them, our interest in them, increase our desire to see them set right on this important subject.

We have remarked that they confidently refer to the practice of certain early Christians as proof of the correctness of their views. But we know that "historic mention is not divine institution," and indicates duty to no one. However, we will examine the historical branch of the subject in another place,



## CHAPTER V.

NON-BAPTISM OF THE FRIENDS, OR  
QUAKERS.

WHILE noticing prevailing errors on the subject of baptism, we must briefly notice that of the Friends, who ignore the rite altogether. This error is not so much founded on a misconstruction or false exhibition of particular texts, as on the adoption of a *false principle*, which is applied, professedly, to all that pertains to Christianity. We say *professedly*, for *actually* they come far short of uniformly applying the principle.

They profess to believe that all true worship is *internal*, and that the only baptism required is that of the Spirit. Outward forms or externals they regard as being vain, or as carnal substitutes for the internal and the true. Therefore they entirely discard the Sabbath, the Lord's supper, and baptism. They might, we think, with equal propriety, discard public assemblies for worship, and audible prayer. While they reject that which is plainly commanded because it is *outward* and *seen*, with a strange inconsistency they attach great importance to a particular phraseology of speech, and even to the cut of a coat or the fashion of a bonnet. They chide us (kindly, it is true) for not using the same forms of speech used by the Saviour, as *thee* instead of *you*, seeming not to understand that neither of these forms

was used by the Saviour, because he did not speak the English language.

A correct translation into any language at a certain time is a translation according to the proper usage of that language at that time. The present method of speaking the English language gives as correct a rendering from the Greek as the form used two or three centuries ago. For a people to plead for either in preference to the other, while they discard explicit precepts given by the Saviour, is like tithing mint and cummin, and omitting the weightier matters of the law.

Usage and association have caused us to regard the English language as it was spoken three centuries ago, as the *sacred style*, only because the *sacred Scriptures* were given to us by translation into that style. It would seem now to be quite irreverent to address the throne of grace in modern English, or in the form of speech commonly used in addressing our fellow-mortals. But if our reverence is fostered by such a discrimination in forms of address, it is proportionally decreased by addressing our fellows in the more solemn style now specially appropriated to devotion. One no more than the other gives the form used by our Saviour; but one is by custom or usage only, adapted to devotion, while the other, being the present form of the language, is properly used in every-day life.

We are led to make these remarks on the views of the Friends, as it seems necessary to understand their method of applying the principle which they have adopted.

Every *principle* which conflicts with the plain testimony of the divine *word* is of a surety a false one. Applied to the subject of the Lord's supper, their principle must be disapproved. The Saviour commanded his disciples to drink the fruit of the vine, and eat the bread in remembrance of him. Luke 22:17-20. Paul corrected abuses of the ordinance, and further explained its use, showing that it should continue till our Lord comes again. 1 Cor. 11:23-26. A principle must be false by which a duty so plainly enjoined is rejected. No matter how much is claimed for spirituality in worship, there is neither spirituality nor worship in disobedience. As if man could better understand what is pleasing in the sight of God than we can learn from his word, which is given as a lamp to our feet; and a light to our path. "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." John 17:17. Thus our Saviour prayed to his Father. The closer we cling to the word, the more perfectly we walk in the truth. The more perfect our obedience to his commandments, the greater our sanctity. 1 Pet. 1:22; John 14:15; 1 John 5:3.

As in regard to the Lord's supper, so we reason in regard to baptism. Our Saviour commanded it, and his apostles taught and practiced it. The assertion that the baptism of the Spirit is the baptism required in their teachings does not at all meet the case, for both Christ and his apostles commanded baptism. But the baptism of the Spirit is a *blessing promised and to be received*;

while baptism in water is *a duty commanded and to be performed*. This truth is evident to every reader of the Bible. The spirit is called "the Holy Spirit of promise," because it is purely *a matter of promise*, and is distinguished, not only in this reason, but by direct Scripture proofs, from baptism in water, which is *a matter of precept*.

The Saviour, in his commission to his disciples, enjoined baptism. The first sermon under this commission, as we argue elsewhere, is recorded in Acts 2. In this sermon, *baptism is made a condition of the promise of the Spirit*. "The gift of the Holy Ghost" is *the blessing promised*; repentance and baptism are *the duties commanded* in order to receive the blessing of the promise. Here is a relation of the two which cannot be ignored without ignoring the commission and its fulfillment, and thereby ignoring the authority of our divine Lord.

Philip the evangelist went and joined himself to the chariot of the eunuch by special direction of the Spirit of God. Acts 8. What he said and did was by the inspiration of the Spirit. Having preached Jesus to the eunuch, on their coming to water the eunuch requested baptism. Philip must have preached baptism in the preaching of Jesus. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. And the Spirit, under whose direction Philip had baptized the eunuch, caught him away that the eunuch saw him no more; and the eunuch went his way rejoicing.

Peter, also by special direction of the Lord, went to the house of Cornelius. An angel told Cornelius to send for Peter, saying to him, "He shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." Peter preached the gospel to all those assembled, and they believed, and the Spirit fell upon them, even as it had fallen upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost. Then Peter said: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." In this instance the heavenly messenger referred to what Peter would tell him as something which *he ought to do*. And Peter commanded him to be baptized. That which he ought to do was to be baptized in water, for so Peter said, and the baptism of the Spirit they had already received. Peter, under inspiration and the direction of Heaven, did not tell them that the baptism of the Spirit was all that was necessary, but gave the receiving of this as proof of the propriety of their being baptized in water.

Paul came to Ephesus and found certain disciples who had not been properly instructed in the doctrine of the gospel, who had not received the Holy Ghost. Under his teaching and by his commandment, they were baptized; and, after they were baptized, Paul laid his hands upon them and the Holy Ghost came upon them. Here this inspired apostle, by whose interposition the Holy Ghost came upon them, required them to be

baptized before he laid his hands upon them. The order, in relation to *the duty* and *the gift*, here followed, is that laid down by Peter in Acts 2:38, 39.

We have now presented five points of Scripture, each plain and positive in its teachings, which show that the apostles, acting under the inspiration of the Spirit, taught and practiced water baptism, and Jesus commanded them so to do. They who reject baptism in water, reject the counsel of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, as shown in the teachings and actions of the Lord and his apostles. The wisdom of such in this respect is not according to the word of the Lord, and therefore cannot be from above.

Of this class we say, as of the one last referred to, By a staid and quiet demeanor they have generally won the respect of their acquaintances. But no amount of pious bearing will excuse a departure from the plain requirements of the Scriptures. Our Saviour said, "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." No matter how great the appearance of sanctity, it is quite possible to make all our worship vain by making void the commandments of God by human traditions, or by walking according to the doctrines of men contrary to the precepts of the Scriptures.

We believe, as firmly as any can, in the necessity of receiving the Holy Spirit. But the promise is to the obedient. Disobedience grieves the Spirit and forfeits the blessing,

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE BAPTISM OF JOHN.

**THERE** has been much questioning in regard to the relation of John's baptism to the gospel,—whether or not it was gospel baptism. It may not be of much importance, having but little practical bearing on present duty, but a brief notice of it may not be out of place. Our opinion is, that there is not so much difference between the baptism of John and that of the disciples of Jesus as is generally supposed.

Speaking of "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ," Mark commences with the baptism of John, and the proclamation of John was identical with the first proclamation of Jesus. John said, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Matt. 3:2. The Saviour's first preaching was this: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel." Mark 1:15. John said he preached the baptism of repentance, and faith in him that was to come, that was, Christ. The first sermon after the resurrection of Christ was of repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus. It appears that the whole period from the beginning of the preaching of John until the time when the apostles turned to the Gentiles, about three and a half years after the death of Christ,

was one of *transition* from one dispensation to the full establishing of the other. The two dispensations were for a time interwoven, as the following will show.

Jesus and his apostles preached the gospel, and their baptism was certainly gospel baptism. But Jesus, when he healed a certain person, commanded him to show himself to the priests and to offer the offering required by the law of Moses. And thus he recognized the validity of that law of the Levitical dispensation at that time. And the apostles were not permitted to preach to the Gentiles, even after the death of Christ, until they had offered the gospel to the Jews, or until the seventy weeks of Daniel 9 were fulfilled. Yet the New Testament was ratified by the death of Christ, Heb. 9:15-17, and the rites of the Levitical law were taken out of the way by his death, being nailed to the cross. Col. 2:14.

It may be asked how baptism can commemorate the resurrection of Christ if it began to be observed before his death. If we consider the ordinance of the Lord's supper, we shall find certain facts in regard to its origin which will help to solve this difficulty. This ordinance commemorates the breaking of Christ's body, and the shedding of his blood. No one doubts that it is the memorial of the death of Christ. But it was observed for the first time before the death of Christ. Jesus said of the bread, "This is my body, which is broken for you," though it was



certainly given in anticipation of the breaking of his body, and the shedding of his blood.

The ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, though designed to commemorate the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, were first, by divine authority, observed in anticipation of those events, and as expressing the faith of the disciples that those events should actually take place. But from that time to the present, they have been observed in memory of these events.

Acts 19 does not afford so clear proof that they who were baptized unto John's baptism were again baptized by the apostles as has been supposed by many. This was an unusual case, according to the record. On being questioned by Paul they said, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." They had not been baptized by John, but by Apollos, who was converted at Ephesus a short time before the visit of Paul. Though this was twenty-five years after the resurrection of Christ, Apollos knew only the baptism of John, and baptized just as John had administered the ordinance, unto a belief in a Messiah who was yet to come. That they were unacquainted with the facts concerning Christ, and the fulfillment of John's predictions of Christ's work, is evident from their answer to Paul, "We have not even heard whether the Holy Spirit is given." (Anderson's translation). It was an error on the part of Apollos to teach the people that Christ was yet to come, when he had already died and was risen from the

dead. This error of Apollos was corrected when Aquila and Priscilla expounded to him the way of God more perfectly.

Those who were baptized by John in the faith of a coming Messiah, did not need to be baptized again when they accepted him. But those who were baptized in the faith of a coming Messiah after he had died and risen from the dead, needed to be baptized again, inasmuch as their first baptism was nearer to a denial of him who had come, than of a belief in him. It every way seems just and fitting that Paul should commence with them as novices.

But this instance does present satisfactory proof that it is right to re-baptize those who have not met the requirements of the gospel rite in their first baptism. Of this we may speak more particularly hereafter. Intimately connected with this subject is

#### THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST.

We do not by this mean that baptism which was taught or administered by Christ, as in the case of John, but that which he received at the hands of John in Jordan. On this also there has been much conjecture. It is mostly supposed to have been merely for an example. Jesus truly was our example; but we think his baptism has a significance beyond that of mere example. And here again, if John's baptism was so essentially different from that of the gospel, as most people suppose, his example under one would carry no

weight in favor of obedience to the other. To this point we would call particular attention.

Christ was not our example merely, but he came into the world to be our substitute and our sacrifice. They who deny (as some do) the substitutionary or vicarious nature of the work of Christ, set aside the efficiency of his work unto our salvation. His suffering for us was not altogether on the cross; his whole life was one of trial, of temptation, and of affliction. In the garden his soul was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death; but an angel strengthened him that he might not then sink under the heavy burden of suffering. When Paul said, "He hath made him to be sin for us," he evidently meant he was made to occupy our position, or be a partaker of our condition. And again when he said, "He was made under the law," he must have meant that he was subjected to our condemnation; the apostle's argument on the need and work of justification shows that this expression—under the law—signifies under its condemnation. He was made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law. Not *under obligation to the law*, as some vainly urge, for that condition does not call for redemption. Adam was subject to the law before he fell, but not a subject for redemption. It is a sinful condition, or being condemned by the law, which calls for redemption. It is evident that Christ was "made under the law" in this sense: as "the wages of sin is death," he was "made sin for us," to fall under death for our

sakes. And this condition must have dated from his taking upon him the nature or "seed of Abraham." And if he died because our sins were upon him (Isa. 53), and suffered under temptations and sorrows in our behalf and on our account, we must conclude that he was baptized for the same reason. And this is yet more evident when we consider that John's baptism was "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sin." Mark 1:4. There could be nothing appropriate to this purpose in his being baptized for himself; for he had no sins to confess, and needed no repentance. But inasmuch as the Lord "laid upon him the iniquity of us all," it seemed suitable that he should be baptized, even as sinful men, for whom he stood, should be baptized.

There is a wonderful significance in his baptism which seems to be entirely lost if we lose sight of this momentous truth. "He bore our sins;" he acted and suffered as our substitute—in our stead. They who pervert or lightly esteem baptism, must lightly esteem the sufferings and the cross of Christ, as well as his example.

#### BAPTISM IN THE NAME OF CHRIST.

Because it is said in Acts 2:38; 8:16, and 19:5, that they were baptized in the name of Jesus, some have inferred that the apostles baptized in the name of Christ *only*. But this conclusion is very lame. To discover the fallacy of this idea, it will only be necessary to examine the

terms of the commission under which they acted.

1. The Saviour told them to teach all nations, and to baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

2. He commanded them to tarry at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. They were neither to preach nor to baptize until the Holy Ghost came upon them.

3. The promised power came upon them on the day of Pentecost; and on that day was preached the first sermon after the great commission was given.

4. If they did not baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, they did not obey their Lord's commandment—they did not fulfill the commission under which they acted and by which alone they had authority to baptize. We trust none will be willing to risk such a conclusion as this.

If the record in Acts was the only evidence in the case, the omission of the names of the Father and of the Holy Ghost might be taken as decisive. But knowing that they were acting under a commission, the specific terms of which required the use of the three sacred names, the case appears quite different.

When we consider the prejudice which existed among the Jews against the person and the name of Jesus, we see good reason why his name should be presented with peculiar emphasis to them, for no such prejudice existed against the names of the Father and the Holy Spirit. But

to conclude thence that they did not obey their Lord's commandment—that they did not fulfill their commission to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—is more than the inspired record will warrant.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### THE COMMISSION STILL IN FORCE.

THERE is a large number of persons who appear to be zealous for the rite of baptism, in regard to both its form and its subjects, who yet, to avoid the evidence of the continuous direct presence and influence of the Holy Spirit, affirm that the commission of Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15-18, was given to the apostles alone and expired with them. But this affirmation places its advocates in a very unenviable and inconsistent position. That commission was the authority by which the apostles baptized; and if the commission has expired, there remains no authority to administer the rite of baptism. It will not then do to say, as they say, that we must follow the example of the apostles in this; for the example of the apostles, when they acted under a special commission given only to them,

gives no warrant to others, who never received the commission, to follow in the same action after the commission has expired. Such a course would indicate the boldest assumption of authority under any government,—and a dangerous one under the government of God.

Thus it is easy to see that, when any individuals declare that the commission under which the apostles baptized has expired, it is equivalent to an admission that they administer baptism without divine authority. If the Lord suffered that commission to expire, as it contained the only warrant ever given in the gospel to baptize, then they who continue the practice are acting in defiance of the authority of Him who gave and withdrew the commission. They are usurpers of authority under the divine government. That they act *according to* that commission which they declare to be obsolete, is shown by their using the formula in baptism prescribed only by that commission.

We would fain hope that a consideration of this important truth might open their eyes to the inconsistency of their teachings and practice. If their teaching in regard to the great commission is correct, then surely their baptism is invalid, and their use of the sacred names in such a manner, without any authority, is exceedingly sinful—it is taking the name of Deity in vain. And if they persist in their practice of baptizing, then let them acknowledge the force and obligation of the commission, and accept all the con-

sequences which the acknowledgment logically involves.

BAPTISM IS NOT CIRCUMCISION.

Baptism has, by very many, been considered the antitype of circumcision, or as filling the same place in the New Testament that circumcision did in the Old. Popular theories have been projected on this hypothesis, and Dr. Clarke incautiously says, It has never been proved that baptism does not supply the place of circumcision. That is not the correct method of viewing the argument. The question is this, Has it ever been proved that baptism is in the place of circumcision? We know it has been inferred, it has been supposed, it has been asserted; but it has not been proved. If the negative could not be proved, that would not be conclusive evidence that the affirmative is true. But in this case it is easy to prove that baptism is not the circumcision of the New Testament by showing what is that circumcision.

In Rom. 2:29, it is said circumcision is that of the heart; in the Spirit, and not in the letter. In chapter 4:11, circumcision is called both a *sign* and a *seal*, which, indeed, are the same thing. Eph. 1:13, 14, says, "Ye were *sealed* with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the *earnest* of our inheritance." When circumcision was first given to Abraham, it was called the *token* of the covenant, in which the promise was made that he should inherit the land. Gen. 17:11. *Token*



is the same as *earnest* or assurance; equivalent also to *sign* or *seal*. Eph. 1:13, but confirms Rom. 2:29;—circumcision is of the heart, in the spirit. And this is further confirmed by Eph. 4:30: "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are *sealed* unto the day of redemption." Also by 2 Cor. 1:22: "Who hath also *sealed* us, and given the *earnest* of the Spirit in our hearts."

The Lord said to Abraham that the uncircumcised man child should be cut off; he had no part in the covenant, because he had not the seal or token of the covenant. Even so, we are told in Rom. 8:9, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." He has no part in the new covenant because he has not the seal of the Spirit—the circumcision of the heart, which is the seal of the new covenant. This is a point of the utmost importance, involving our relation to the covenant of grace. And there is this difference under the arrangements of the two covenants: under the first, circumcision related to the men children; but under the second, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female;" that is, no such distinctions are recognized in the provisions of the gospel, but "ye are all one in Christ Jesus." All classes, all nationalities, must alike receive the circumcision of the heart, and are all, in Christ, "Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Gal. 3:28, 29.

There is yet further proof on this point. It

has been inferred from the close connection of the statements in Col. 2:11, 12, that baptism is shown to be circumcision, but the proof is decisively to the contrary. "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision *made without hands*." But baptism is administered by hands, as entirely as was circumcision under the old covenant.

Rom. 2:28 says, "For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh." This exactly corresponds to the evidence already presented, that circumcision or the seal is that of the Spirit —of the heart. But baptism is an *outward ordinance*, and therefore cannot be that circumcision which is not outward; and such is the circumcision of the New Testament.

Thinking to relieve themselves of this difficulty, the advocates of that theory say that baptism serves now, as circumcision did then, as "an outward sign of inward grace." But this is really no relief at all; it makes baptism fulfill the place of circumcision, the very thing which Paul says it does not, he showing that something else does take its place. That statement is very incautiously and imprudently made.

The Abrahamic covenant, identical with the gospel, ran parallel with the first covenant made with Israel. There was no salvation in the covenant with Israel, only as it led to faith in the offerings and promises of the Abrahamic covenant. Heb. 9:8-12; 10:4. "Circumcision of the

heart" was taught in the law and the prophets, see Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4, etc., because it was their object to direct to the faith and blessings of the new covenant. Of this, outward circumcision was the sign. But Paul shows that there is no such outward sign now; circumcision of the heart, the antitype, alone remains.

To baptism is never ascribed the place, nor is it given any of the titles, which the Scriptures apply to typical circumcision. They who give it such place and titles commit two errors; they assign to it that which the Scriptures never assign to it, and destroy the distinctions which exist between the two covenants in regard to the sign or seal, as shown by Paul.

This theory that baptism occupies in the new covenant the place which circumcision occupied in the old, was invented to uphold the doctrine of infant baptism. It is a pity that first impressions are so strong in any, that, while they renounce infant baptism, they are slow to renounce the means which have been devised for its support.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM.

THE saying is very old—"There are two sides to every question," and no one will contradict it. But when we come to examine the two sides, we

find that they resolve themselves into a *right side* and a *wrong side*. There cannot be two sides equally right to any question.

We have said, and firmly believe, that in Biblical questions, the path of safety lies in keeping as strictly as possible to the exact terms of the Scriptures. But besides those who adhere to this principle and rest only on evidence positive or direct, there is, unfortunately, another class who place strong reliance upon that which is suppositive or inferential. Few Bible doctrines are difficult to understand if we confine ourselves to that which is revealed. They become difficult, and the ground of confusion, when *inference* takes the place of *statement*.

In regard to *the subjects of baptism*, we have some plain, undeniable statements in the Scriptures.

1. Jesus said, "He that *believeth* and *is baptized* shall be saved." Belief is here presented as preceding and prerequisite to baptism. Over this text there is no chance for dispute.

2. Peter said, "*Repent* and *be baptized*." Here repentance also precedes and is prerequisite to baptism. With so plain a statement, denial is impossible.

No text of Scripture is to be taken alone when others speak on the same subject. The two here quoted, one in the great commission and the other in its fulfillment, agree in their testimony, and they teach us that,—

3. *Penitent believers* are proper subjects of baptism.

But the texts quoted are given in an authoritative manner, and come with the power of a precept or law; and therefore we learn from them that,—

4. The requirement of baptism is *a commandment*; it is presented as *a duty to be performed*. Of course to be performed by the parties to whom reference is made,—penitent believers.

Thus far we stand on safe ground. The testimony challenges the approval of every reader. No one can, with the least show of reason or of reverence for the Scriptures, say that baptism is *not* a duty to those who believe the gospel; or that baptism is *not* a duty to those who repent; or that baptism is *not* a precept, and does *not* demand obedience. No one dares to assume these positions.

But now comes a class of persons who say they do not deny these statements; they only *go beyond them*, and insist that baptism is appropriately administered also to those who cannot believe, who cannot repent, and who cannot obey a precept. No direct or positive evidence is offered in favor of these positions; and we are called upon to examine whether the suppositions or inferences presented in their favor are just and necessary, or unjust and unnecessary. We think that, in the execution of a law, we have no more warrant to go beyond than to come short of its requirements. It is presumption, and opens the way to every usurpation of authority.

First in the order of inferential arguments in

favor of the baptism of infants is this, that baptism stands related in the gospel as circumcision did in the first covenant; and as that related to infants, so must this. But the premise is defective, and the argument has no foundation in fact. A positive duty of the gospel must have *some* direct testimony in its favor. A small work in our possession lays down as the foundation of the argument for infant baptism this proposition: "Baptism is both a sign and a seal." No Scripture proof is offered to establish this proposition. The argument proceeds on the hypothesis that as circumcision, which was a sign and seal, was applicable to infants to bring them into covenant relation to God, so baptism, which is a sign and seal, and thus answers to circumcision, is also necessary to bring infants into like covenant relation in this dispensation. The serious and fatal defect in this argument is, that baptism *does not* occupy, in the new covenant, the place which circumcision occupied in the old covenant. The advocates of that idea are justly held to bring some Scripture evidence to support it, as a supposed likeness of one to the other is no proof at all in such a case; but the Scriptures afford direct and positive disproof of it, by plainly declaring that the circumcision or seal of the new covenant is something else, namely, the Spirit of God in the heart of the believer.

We are well aware that in these statements we come into conflict with the *feelings* of many parents whose early training and constant thought

in that direction, together with the idea that a *real benefit* is imparted to children in the rite, causes them to feel very deeply on the subject. Said an aged friend, while the tears were starting from his eyes, "Would you not let us seal our children to the Lord?" We should readily answer in the affirmative if two necessary conditions were proved or could be proved: 1. That it is *possible* for us to seal our children, and, 2. That it is *required* of us in the Scriptures. It is not enough to show that it gratifies even our *pious feelings*, or to claim a *pious use* for the rite. All this has been urged in favor of every innovation and every error that has been brought into the church from the days of Tertullian and of Constantine to the present time. When we learn that the sign, or seal, of the new covenant is *not outward*, but is the circumcision of the heart by the operation of the Spirit, we perceive that it is impossible for us to *affix* the seal to any one. As we are not required to do that which is impossible, the Scriptures never intimate that any duty exists in that direction; but all religious observances, in the absence of Scripture requirement, are will-worship.

Paul makes an important statement in regard to the relation of the seal, which is in perfect harmony with all the evidence that has been presented, but fatal to the idea of sealing infants. He says, "*After that ye believed, ye were sealed.*" Eph. 1:13, 14. This is the only order admissible according to the Scriptures. And this text at

once reverses the conclusion, and destroys the premise, of those who contend for infant baptismal sealing; it says: "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the *earnest* of our inheritance," the same as the *sign* or *token*, which *outward circumcision* was in the old covenant. No scripture says, Ye received the *sign*, or *seal*, or *token*, or *earnest*, of baptism; and no scripture says, Ye were sealed *before* ye believed. All that kind of talk is sheer assumption, and all assumptions on Bible doctrines are only hindrances to the progress of simple revealed truth.

The statements of the Scriptures in regard to the two rites of circumcision and baptism, are so different as to preclude any reasoning from one to the other. Were there *no conditions stated* concerning baptism,—were it left on conditions previously given, or were there any reasons given why the facts relating to one rite could be referred to the other,—the case would be quite different. It is distinctly stated that circumcision is to be performed when the subject is eight days old, and, of course, repentance and faith are not given as prerequisites to circumcision. It is never stated that baptism is to be administered at the age of eight days, or any number of days or years, but when the subjects receive the word preached, and repent of their sins. All efforts to enforce baptism, or to define the extent of its relations and application because of its supposed likeness to circumcision, are not only without



any warrant of Scripture, but directly against the plainest statements of the Bible, where the two rites are defined.

Second in this line of inferences is the supposed reference to infants in certain promises made to *your children*, especially in Acts 2:38, 39; "The promise is unto you and to your children." But this argument is defective also, and the conclusion gratuitous. The term children *need not* refer to infants, and in this and kindred texts *does not* refer to them, as may easily be shown.

"To you and to your children" refers to the Jewish people then present and to their posterity; while "all that are afar off" refers to the Gentiles. The first statement is proved by such texts as Gen. 45:21; "*the children of Israel*" referred *only* to the adult sons of Jacob who went into Egypt to buy food; and so in numerous instances. So also in the New Testament. "They which are *of faith*, the same are *the children of Abraham*." Gal. 3:7. "Ye are *the children of the prophets*." Acts 3:25, and others. The second statement, that the Gentiles are referred to as "*afar off*," is proved by Eph. 2; the apostle declares to the Gentiles that the gospel was preached "*to you which were afar off*, and to them that were *nigh*," by which means Jews and Gentiles are made both one, the Gentiles being also "*made nigh by the blood of Christ*." Nothing may be inferred from Acts 2:39, in reference to infants, or to irresponsible little children.

The inference is not only *unnecessary*, but is actually *forbidden* by the connection.

The promise is so related to *conditions to be fulfilled* that an application to infants is out of the question.

1. The promise is made to those whom the Lord our God shall call. But infants are not subjects of any calling.

2. The promise is on condition of repentance. But infants cannot repent.

3. The promise is on condition of *obeying the precept* to be baptized. But infants cannot obey any precept.

4. The requirement to repent refers only to sinners, and that to be baptized is for the remission of sin. But infants have no sins of which to repent, or to have remitted. The last two propositions call for more extended notice.

No one can possibly deny that baptism is always presented in the New Testament as *a commandment to be obeyed*, and never as *a blessing to be passively received*. The writer once asked an aged friend if the duty to be baptized is not found in a commandment. The answer was promptly given in the affirmative. Next the question, "Does an infant when it is baptized (if it were baptized), obey the commandment?" The answer was, "No; it is not the obedience of the child; it is obedience on the part of the parent." Then followed the important question, "When the child grows up to manhood and personally accepts the Saviour, will you baptize him in your church, if he asks for baptism?" "No," was the answer; "for he was once baptized, and it is wrong to repeat it."

The conclusion is evident; it is even in the answer. It was not obedience on the part of the child, and if he grows to age, and believes and repents, *the church will not permit him to obey*; the action of the parent having forestalled his obedience! Can this be right? How can it be defended? Can a church lawfully adopt rules which are not laid down in the Scriptures, which *prevent obedience* to those which are given in the Scriptures? But this is exactly the case with infant baptism. Religious duties cannot be discharged—commandments cannot be obeyed—by proxy. “Repent and be baptized, *every one of you*,” is the authoritative precept which sounds in every sinner’s ears; and no action of man, either priest or parent, can absolve from the duty to obey this precept. Here is an indictment of infant baptism from which its friends can never rescue it.

Again, as baptism stands related to repentance on the part of the subject, and the remission of sin, it cannot be appropriately administered to infants; for they have neither ability nor need to repent. Repentance is for sin committed, and remission is for those only who have committed sin; and these do not apply to innocents. To relieve the practice from this difficulty, the weak pretext has been framed that they are baptized because of the sin of Adam! for to this amounts the assertion that they are baptized for original sin, or to obviate natural depravity. This last idea has led further to a wrong estimate of, and

false dependence on, baptism. The idea of *baptismal regeneration* is inseparably connected with infant baptism. They are not only connected by logical sequence, but they stand connected in the writings of the advocates of the practice. On this point we must make some quotations.

Rev. R. Pengilly, of Ireland, author of an excellent tract on Baptism, says:—

“From my earliest childhood, I was taught to say that, ‘in my baptism, I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven.’ See the Church of England Catechism, and Baptism of Infants. My instructors would readily admit, and in effect taught, the following sentiments, lately given to the world by different writers.

“One affirms: ‘With the water of our baptism, the grace of regeneration, the seed of the Holy Ghost, the principle of a higher existence, is committed to the soul; it grows with us as an innate impression of our being. . . . As long as the believer trusts to his baptism as the source of life, all is well.’ Mr. W. Harness, minister of St. Pancras’ Chapel, London, in a sermon on Baptismal Regeneration. .

“Another adds: “On a topic so interesting I might have well enlarged. I might have told you that only by baptism we are admitted into Christ’s flock on earth; by baptism we are adopted into his covenant, incorporated into his church; . . . that in baptism all our sins are pardoned, and the Holy Ghost bestowed.’ W. B. Knight,

Perpetual Curate of Margam, and Examining Chaplain to the Lord Bishop of Llandaff, Letter on Baptism."

These teachings are not confined to the Church of England. Dr. Clarke says substantially the same thing, as follows:—

"Baptism brings its privileges along with it, is a seal of the covenant, does not lose its end through the indisposition of the receiver."—*Com., at the end of Mark.*

In the baptismal service of the Methodist Episcopal Church are the following words of prayer for an infant, at its baptism:—

"We beseech thee, for thine infinite mercies, that thou wilt look upon this child; wash him and sanctify him with the Holy Ghost, that he, being delivered from thy wrath, may be received into the ark of Christ's church."

And hymn 259, of the Methodist Hymns, says:—

"Now to this favored child be given  
Pardon, and holiness, and Heaven."

Wesley says: "If infants are guilty of original sin, then they are proper subjects of baptism; seeing, in the ordinary way, they cannot be saved, unless this be washed away by baptism. It has been already proved, that this original sin cleaves to every child of man; and that hereby they are children of wrath and liable to eternal damnation." And again, quoting the "rubric" of the church, he says: "It is certain, by God's

word, that children who are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are saved."

These are sufficient to show, and conclusively show, that salvation is based entirely upon baptism—"baptismal regeneration." The remark of Dr. Clarke is singular,—the indisposition of the receiver is no bar to receiving the benefit of the ordinance. It must then remain a question, What is necessary, on the part of the receiver, to invalidate baptism or to forfeit its benefits? Who shall determine this?

And it is evident, also, that, if these teachings are true, unbaptized children are certainly lost! If, by baptism, sins are pardoned, the Holy Ghost received, the principle of a higher existence is committed to the soul, a child is made a member of Christ and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven, it follows that without baptism none of these benefits can be received. For how shall an infant receive *pardon* who is not thus "favored"? How else is an unconscious babe delivered from the wrath of God and brought into the church? The Arminians are accustomed to speak sharply against the Calvinists on account of their belief in infant reprobation, but the parties are not so very far apart so far as "infant damnation" is concerned. In effect, both parties teach it.

But the whole system is wrong, in every particular. Wrong in principle, and wrong in its methods of proof. The salvation of little children stands on a different basis. The infant of days has committed no sin, cannot repent or believe,

and needs no remission. Or else, of what is it pardoned? As it has no sin of its own, it must be pardoned of the sin of another. Of course, then, without such pardon it would stand condemned, and finally be lost, for the sin of its forefather! But the Lord says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father." Eze. 18:20. Each individual of the race must bear his own sin, and the sin of no other. How will the advocates of this theory meet this Scripture truth?

We will now present an argument, which, we think, is justified by reason and the Scriptures.

As no person is answerable for the sins of another, so no person can repent of the sins of another. We may, indeed, be *sorry* that others have sinned. I am sorry that Adam sinned; sorry that my parents sinned; yes, sorry that *you*, reader, have sinned; but I am not required to repent of their sins or of yours. I cannot do it. I can repent of my own sins only. And as baptism is so intimately connected with repentance, I was baptized for my own sins, and for no others. However much Adam may have sinned, I should not have been required to be baptized if I had not sinned. It is *as* unscriptural and unreasonable to be baptized for the sins of another, as it is impossible to repent of the sins of another.

The Scripture says, "In Adam all die." Adam, because of his sin, was shut away from the tree of life, lest he should eat, and live forever; Gen. 3:22, 23; and thus mortality was settled upon

him because of sin; for "the wages of sin is death." Of course his children, and so all his posterity, received from him a nature no higher than his own; with him all were shut out from the tree of life, all became subject to death, all returned to the dust. This death, which we variously call natural death or temporal death, and *the first death* in distinction from eternal death, or "the second death," was a *penalty* inflicted upon Adam for his sin; and it was the penalty of that sin only. As he only was the transgressor, he only could bear the penalty; for "the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father." To his posterity it is a *consequence* of their relation to him, and not a penalty. The "second death" is the penalty for the personal sins of Adam's posterity. When sentence was pronounced upon Adam, a *new probation* was given to man through "the seed of the woman." Through a promise of the Son of God, who should become a son of man, the gospel scheme was opened to the race; and as the race was already involved by the fall of Adam, shut out from the tree of life, and doomed to return to the dust, or to die, *another death* was placed before Adam's race as the penalty for personal sin; for it is true, under all conditions and dispensations, that "the wages of sin is death."

That the death which the race has fallen under ever since the fall of Adam is not the penalty of our personal sins, is proved by the following considerations: They who accept the gospel of Christ are justified through faith in him, and receive



pardon of their sins; yet they die "in Adam," as the unjustified do. But no one can believe that sin is *pardoned* and *punished* also. The remission of sin is the remission of its penalty. The individual who is pardoned by the gospel escapes the penalty of personal sin; "on such the second death hath no power." Rev. 20:6. But they who are not pardoned—are not justified by faith in Christ—shall fall under the second death. This is proof sufficient that the second death is the penalty of personal sin.

Repentance, faith, remission, all combined, will not remove *the consequence* of Adam's transgression. We still die "in Adam," saints as well as sinners; and therefore this death *is not the penalty of personal sin*. The gospel may *bring from it*, as a benefaction; but it does not *save from it* by means of remission. It is remitted to nobody.

As in the case of the saints—the justified—so in the case of infants. They have no sins for which to answer. They cannot fall under a penalty, because they are innocent. Yet they die; of course not as sinners condemned, but as mortal creatures cut off from the tree of life by the action of Adam. His sin brought condemnation to himself, and it was deserved; but it brings no condemnation to these innocent ones; they do not deserve it, and "the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father."

What, then, it may be asked, does the gospel actually offer in the case of infants? We answer, *life*; it offers them a resurrection from the dead.

“As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” Infants die because of their connection with Adam, not on account of any sin of their own; and they are made alive in Christ, not because of their obedience, but as members of the race for whom he died. What they lost in the first Adam is restored to them by the second Adam. See a promise of a resurrection to children, in Jer. 31 : 15-17. This is positive, tangible; it stands on no uncertain inference.

There will be three classes in the resurrection. One, of sinners condemned, who have never accepted the gospel nor received pardon through Christ. The second death claims them as its own. Another, the saints; those who have had their sins washed away by the blood of the Redeemer. Being justified, the law has no claim against their lives. “On such the second death hath no power” The third, infants, who have never sinned. Of course they are not condemned; they have done no wrong; on no principle of justice can they be condemned. Through Christ they are brought up from death, of course to die no more. They stand related to the law as the saints do; not as the saints, pardoned, but as innocents, against whom no charge can be brought. Having no sin upon them, they will die no more. That life they get through Christ as truly as do the saints. Hence they can join the everlasting song of redemption, with all the saints in glory. Had it not been for Christ they would have remained dead. For eternal life, its joys and its glory, they are as

truly indebted to divine love and favor in the gospel as David, or Peter, or Paul. Thus it is easy to see that infants are saved by the gospel, but not by means of faith, repentance, and baptism. These are for sinners, not for innocents.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM.—CONTINUED.

WHEN strong men endeavor to maintain their theories by weak assumptions or flimsy arguments, it may be taken as good evidence of the erroneousness of their theories. They will do the best they can under their circumstances. We are led to these reflections by reading remarks on baptism, by Dr. Lightfoot, copied and approved by Dr. Clarke. He says:—

“To the objection, It is not commanded to baptize infants, therefore they are not to be baptized, I answer, It is not forbidden to baptize infants, therefore they are to be baptized.”

This is one of the strangest arguments ever put forth by anybody. It is as much as to say, Anything which is not expressly forbidden may be properly maintained as a part of the gospel! That the Doctors should think *the absence of a prohibition* is equal in weight to *the presence of a commandment*, does not argue well for their

acumen in matters of duty. Under such a rule, the wildest vagaries and most gross innovations may be maintained as of authority in the church of Christ.

Nor does *the reason* assigned help the case. They assume that the rite was well known to, and practiced by, the Jews in and before the days of John, and was passed over into the gospel without the necessity of a precept. Why, then, was adult baptism so specifically required and so often mentioned? This might have stood on exactly the same ground. But there are two difficulties in the way: 1. If proselyte baptism existed among the Jews at that time, there is no evidence, not an intimation, that the Christian or gospel ordinance was the continuance of it. Certainly not, according to Dr. Clarke, for he argues that baptism takes the place of circumcision, which was ever distinct from proselyte baptism. 2. There is no proof that proselyte baptism existed among the Jews at that time. Many authors think it did, but the proof is far from clear. Prof. Stuart went into a thorough examination of the case, both of Scripture and history, and he sums up as follows:—

“It is a matter of no little interest, so far as our question is concerned, to inquire whether Christian baptism had its origin from the proselyte baptism of the Jews. This we have now done, and have come to this result, viz., that there is no certainty that such was the case, but that the probability on the ground of evidence is strong against it.”

The reason for this conclusion of Prof. Stuart is found in such remarks as the following:—

“We are destitute of any early testimony to the practice of proselyte baptism antecedently to the Christian era. The original institution of admitting Jews to the covenant, and strangers to the same, prescribed no other rite than that of circumcision. No account of any other is found in the Old Testament; none in the Apocrypha, New Testament, Targums of Onkelos, Jonathan, Joseph the Blind, or in the work of any other Targumist, excepting Pseudo Jonathan, whose work belongs to the seventh or eighth century. No evidence is found in Philo, Josephus, or any of the early Christian writers. How could an allusion to such a rite have escaped them all if it were as common and as much required by usage as circumcision?”

He thinks, and not without reason, that the Jews in time adopted the baptism of proselytes in imitation of John's baptism; and that the idea that John borrowed his baptism from the Jews is a mere supposition without foundation in any facts of proof. He admits, also, that the proselyte baptism of the Jews affords an argument in favor of immersion, for no one disputes that their baptism was immersion.

Alexander Campbell, than whom few, if any, were better qualified to judge of a fact of history on this subject, says of the Jewish proselyte baptism, it was “born in the Mishna, or rather, the Talmuds, since the Christian era.”—*Debate with Rice*, p. 288.

Another ground taken by Dr. Lightfoot, indorsed by Dr. Clarke, is equally faulty. He says:—

“Our Lord says to his disciples, Matt. 28:19, ‘Go therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them,’ etc.; *matheteusate*, that is, *make disciples*; bring them in by baptism, that they may be taught. They are very much out who, from these words, cry down infant baptism, and assert that it is necessary for those that are to be baptized to be *taught before* they are baptized. 1. Observe the words here, *make disciples*, and then after, *teaching*, in the 20th verse. 2. Among the Jews, and also with us, and in all nations, those are made disciples that they may be taught. A certain heathen came to the great Hillel, and said, Make me a proselyte that thou mayest teach me. He was first to be proselyted and then taught. Thus, first, make them disciples, by baptism; and then, ‘teach them to observe all things,’ etc.”

When learned and able men resort to such pleadings to maintain their theories, it may well excite our pity. The fact is entirely overlooked that they were to “preach the gospel to every creature.” Mark 16:15, 16. Then follows the promise, “He that believeth”—the preaching—“and is baptized, shall be saved.” The argument of the wise Doctors is on the supposition that *all* the instruction given is *after baptism*. If so, Peter was certainly mistaken in regard to his commission. Acts 2. He should first have baptized

them, and then preached the gospel to them! And the record says, "They that gladly received the word were baptized." This was all out of order, if the Doctors are right. They should first have been baptized, and then received the word.

We notice that the Doctors do not confine these remarks to infants. Their rule applies to adults; they so apply it themselves. A certain man wished to be proselyted (baptized) in order that he might be instructed, which, as they view it, supposes there was no instruction previous to baptism! Was it so in the house of Cornelius? in the house of the jailer? or in the case of the eunuch? or in any case recorded in the Scriptures? It is the very opposite in every instance. We scarcely know at which to be most astonished, the folly or the presumption of learned men in thus setting themselves so directly against the truths of the divine record.

In the foregoing extract there seems to be manifested an entire misapprehension of the meaning and correct use of the term *disciple*. Webster says, To disciple (verb) is to convert to doctrines or principles; and a disciple is "one who receives instruction," or "one who accepts the instruction of another." Greenfield gives the meaning of "a follower." These definitions are in harmony with all the facts of Scripture. They first became disciples by accepting the doctrines of the cross; they "gladly received the word." Then they were baptized. Of course, instruction did not cease with their baptism; they were to be

taught—they were to learn—the truths of God and of the Christian life as long as their discipleship continued, which was as long as they lived. *Every instance* in the Scriptures is according to this order.

The records of the giving of the commission, in Matthew and Mark, sufficiently refute the error into which the Doctors have fallen on this subject. Matthew records the words of the Saviour thus: "Go ye therefore, and *disciple* all nations, baptizing them," etc. Mark records them thus: "Go ye into all the world, and *preach the gospel* to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized," etc. Discipling all nations, in one record, is exactly equivalent to preaching the gospel to every creature, in the other; and in both records, baptizing follows the discipling, or the preaching, and is to be administered to those who become disciples, or who believe the preaching. In frankness we must confess our belief, that, were men as careful to follow strictly the order of the divine injunctions as they are strenuous to maintain preconceived theories, there would be no stumbling over so plain a record as is given to us in the commission of our Lord to his ministers.

To further test the correctness of the position assumed in the foregoing quotation, let us take the case of an infant who is baptized, but who, as he grows up, persistently rejects the offers of the gospel; never becomes a follower of Christ; never believes his doctrines. And such cases are not



rare. In what sense is he a *disciple of Christ*? In no sense whatever. To call one who never believed in Christ, who never accepted the gospel or followed the Saviour, a disciple of Christ, is to abuse the term, and to lower the standard of discipleship to a level with the world.

The Old Testament is in harmony with the New on this view of the subject. The word *disciple*, Isa. 8:16, is derived from the verb *lah-mad*, to teach, or to train; discipline. Neither in the Scriptures nor in the lexicons can a warrant be found for such a use of the term *disciple* as is found in the foregoing quotation.\*

Once more, Dr. Clarke gives the views of another eminent man, whose name (not given), he says, would do honor to his work. His strongest point, and one which he considers sufficient of itself to prove his position, is based on Eph 6:1, as follows:—

“Let the address of St. Paul to the Ephesian children be specially noticed. Children, says he, obey your parents *en Kurio*. How could they obey *en Kurio*, if they themselves were not *en Kurio*? In every instance, this expression marks incorporation into the Christian body.” “Respecting the ages of the persons designated (Eph. 6:1) by the term *ta tekna*, there can be no question; as a subsequent verse distinctly states them

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\*The word *disciple* is found in the English of the Old Testament only in Isa. 8:16. It is translated from an *adjective* derived from the verb *lah-mad*, he did teach. This adjective form is not used many times. Sometimes it is used in reference to lower animals, signifying to *goad* or to *direct* them. In reference to men it is translated *used* (used to), *accustomed*, *the learned*, (plural), *taught*, *disciples*.

to be such children as were subjects of discipline and mental instruction."

We thought to pass over the questions of criticism of the text, but are constrained to copy the following from Clarke's comment of Eph. 6:1:—

"*In the Lord*] This clause is wanting in several reputable MSS. and in some versions. *In the Lord* may mean on account of the commandment of the Lord, or as far as the parents' commands are according to the will and word of God."

This comment robs the argument of all force, and shows that the claim of its author is not just, though he says, "This single passage, even if it stood alone, ought to set the tedious and troublesome controversy respecting infant baptism forever at rest."

But what has he *proved* in regard to this text? Two important points are presented: 1. The children, *ta tekna*, are *commanded to obey* their parents; 2. This author says "respecting the ages of the persons designated," they were "such children as were subjects of discipline and mental instruction." In a word, they were "such children" as were capable of obeying a commandment, and of being under discipline and receiving mental instruction. But what has all that to do with *infant baptism*? Infants neither *obey* nor receive "mental instruction" before or at their baptism. We fully believe in the baptism of "such children" as conscientiously obey the instruction given in Eph. 6. But that argues

nothing whatever for infant baptism. We can but express our surprise that *any man*, much less one "highly intelligent and learned," should choose this text to settle the controversy *in favor* of infant baptism; but such are the arguments, if they can be called so, by which this doctrine is upheld.

It remains to notice one more line of argument on this subject. It is that of the baptism of *households*. The texts referring to such instances are few in number, and require but little time or space in this examination.

1. The house of Lydia. Acts 16:13-15. In this case there is such general consent of pedit-baptist authors that there were no infants in the household, that it is unnecessary to add words to their admissions. Thus Dr. Clarke:—

"She attended unto the things; she believed them, and received them as the doctrines of God; and in this faith she was joined by her whole family; and in it they were all baptized."

Lydia was doing business in Philippi, nearly three hundred miles from Thyatira, by sea and land. That there were children in her household, or that she had a husband, is not stated in the text. Certain it is that all her household were believers, and verse 40 strongly intimates that they were "brethren;" for there is no account of any other believers there at that time except those of the house of the jailer, whose house Paul and Silas left to go to that of Lydia, where they saw the brethren before they departed from the city.

2. The house of the jailer. Acts 16:31-34. On this text there is very slight chance for controversy. They preached to him and *to all that were in his house*; and all were baptized. And he "rejoiced, *believing in God with all his house*." This is both plain and positive. Dr. Clarke says:—

"It appears that he and his whole family, who were capable of receiving instructions, embraced this doctrine, and showed the sincerity of their faith by immediately receiving baptism."

But the Scripture says they who thus were instructed, and believed, were "all his house;" yet in the face of this declaration the Doctor thinks the inference is allowable that "all his" included his infant also! What an inference!

3. The household of Stephanas. 1 Cor. 1:16. Paul says, "I baptized also the household of Stephanas." In chap. 16:15, he speaks again of them thus: "Ye know the house of Stephanas, . . . that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints."

That being the case, no one will dispute that they were all proper subjects of baptism. All had manifested a personal interest in the work of the gospel.

Another text may well be noticed in this connection, which, though it does not speak of baptism, gives further evidence on the use of the term house. Acts 18:8, says, "Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord; with all his house." Paul says that he baptized Crispus, but does not speak of baptizing his

household; but doubtless they were all baptized, for his words prove that they were all proper subjects of baptism, all being believers.

In the case of the jailer, it is expressly stated that they spoke the word of the Lord "to all that were in his house," and that he believed, "with all his house." Dr. Clarke, on this text, as above quoted, says, "All who were capable of receiving instructions, embraced this doctrine." Granting what the Doctor infers, though it is not in proof, that there were some in the house too young to receive instructions in the doctrines of the gospel, it follows that the expressions, "all his house" and "all that were in his house," do not include these little ones. But what, then, do they gain for infant baptism, by inferring the presence of infantile members of the household? The commission, and its fulfillment in Acts 2, etc., confine baptism to those who believe the gospel and repent of their sins. If (as Dr. Clarke claims, and with him all who infer infant membership in the households), the believing of *a household* does not include the younger members who cannot receive instruction, does not the baptizing of a household, under the commission, exclude the younger members who are unable to exercise the faith required in the commission? Or, in brief, if there may be unbelieving infants in a believing household, may there not also be unbaptized infants in a baptized household? And if not, why not? We do not ask that such an exception shall be made. We are willing to

accept the statement as it stands in the sacred record, that *all* the household heard, *all* believed, and *all* were baptized. They who claim that there were infants of days in the households, find a necessity for exceptions to the general statements that the whole households believed. If the exceptions exist, then we claim, on the authority of the commission, that they extend to baptism as well as to faith; for unbelievers were never required to be baptized.

One text more we will notice, only because it has been used in favor of infant baptism—not because it has any relation to the subject. This is 1 Cor. 7:13, 14: “And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.”

In Heb. 9:13, Paul speaks of a sprinkling which “sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh;” that is, from what was called “ceremonial uncleanness.” It was not lawful to touch a person thus defiled. And it appears that some were inclined to apply this Levitical law in the gospel so as to affect the marriage relation. If the husband were joined to Christ, and the wife were not, it was supposed that, she being considered as an unclean person, it was not lawful for the husband to live with her, and *vice versa*. But Paul argues that, if it be unlawful to live thus

together, then are your children the fruit of an unlawful connection, and therefore unclean, and it cannot be lawful for you to touch them. In truth, such an idea was calculated to affect the legitimacy of the children.

No one can fail to see that the terms "sanctify," "clean," and "holy," are used in the same modified (ceremonial) sense in which "sanctify" is used in Heb. 9:13; not in a moral sense. For the children are not *morally holy* by reason of their relation to a believing parent, any more than an unbelieving husband is *morally sanctified* by being connected with a believing wife. If the language of this text be urged as a warrant for baptizing the children because they are said to be *holy*, it will also warrant the baptism of the husband who is *sanctified*—though an unbeliever! For, it might be asked, are not all sanctified persons proper subjects of baptism?

The truth is, this text has no relation to the subject of baptism, and is only perverted when it is thus applied.

We will give a brief summary of the points in evidence on this subject.

1. Baptism does not take the place of circumcision; and therefore it is not allowable to argue from circumcision in the Old Testament to baptism in the New, as is so frequently done.

2. Preaching the word comes before baptism; a candidate for the ordinance must first understand his relation to the divine government, as a sinner.

3. Faith comes before baptism, according to

the terms of the great commission. We must have faith in the name of Christ before we can be baptized into his name.

4. Repentance comes before baptism. This also is in the order laid down by Inspiration. As baptism is for the remission of sin, and is the pledge of a new life, repentance is necessary; for without this there can be no assurance of future obedience.

5. The same is shown further in that baptism is a burial; and death precedes burial. This death is a death to sin; but there is no death to sin without conviction by the law of God, and repentance. Without these there is no walking in "newness of life."

6. Baptism is commanded, and the commandment requires obedience on the part of all who can understand a precept. No others can obey it.

7. Baptism is not a blessing which may be received without volition or obedience. To regard it as a *privilege* merely, and not as a *precept*, lays the foundation for gross errors concerning baptismal regeneration, and its necessary counterpart, the destruction of all unbaptized infants.

8. Baptism is related to remission of sin; it belongs to a remedial system, and is to be obeyed by all those who have sins to be remitted. It applies to no others.

9. Baptism is not for "original sin." The sin of Adam brings no condemnation to his children, and baptism does not stand related to it. The gospel does not save anybody from that death



which we inherit from Adam. Exceptions do not destroy the truth that "in Adam all die." We all inherit mortality from him, but not condemnation. But the gospel saves from the second death, the penalty for personal sin.

10. Baptism does not remove natural depravity, in any case. In this respect, baptized infants are no better than others. It has no power to impart "a higher life to the soul;" it is not "a saving ordinance" in any such sense. Adults are not freed from their fallen natures in baptism, but have to *overcome*, even to the end. Christian life is a *warfare with self*.

11. Infants are brought from the dead by the great Lifegiver, and die no more because they have no sin for which to answer. They are not saved by repentance, faith, and the remission of sin. The first two they could not exercise; the last they did not need.

12. In every instance recorded in the New Testament, the preaching of the word preceded baptism, and they who gladly received the word were baptized.

13. The term "children" does not necessarily refer to infants, nor even to young people; and never refers to infants where duty is enjoined, as in Acts 2:38, 39, and Eph. 6:1.

14. The baptism of households affords no evidence in favor of infant baptism. While there is nothing in the statements from which an inference may justly be drawn in favor of infant baptism, a conclusion against it is justly drawn

from the statements in regard to the faith and labors of the households.

An inference, to be admissible, must have the probabilities in its favor; but in this case the probabilities are decidedly against any just inference for infant baptism. The terms of the commission, the records of its fulfillment, the relations and conditions of baptism,—all lead to a conclusion against it; and the records of household baptisms are such as to shut out such an inference. An inference is necessary only when nothing else can reasonably be drawn from the text; which is not the case in any of the inferences in favor of infant baptism. And an unnecessary inference is worthless, and should not, for a moment, be entertained where questions of duty are involved.

The power of the truth in its simplicity, unalloyed by the theories of the wisdom of the world, is shown in the following incident, which we copy from the Biography of Dr. Carson:—

“In the year 1807, James Haldane, after having sprinkled an infant, was accosted by his little son, a child six years of age, with the pertinent question, ‘Father, did that child believe?’ ‘No,’ said the parent, ‘why do you ask me such a question?’ ‘Because, father, I have read the whole of the New Testament, and I find that all who were baptized believed. Did the child believe?’ It was enough. God’s simple truth which had been hidden from the wise and prudent, was revealed to the babe. The strange

question, 'Did the child believe?' haunted the mind of that father, until, after a thorough examination, he renounced his former errors, and was publicly immersed. His brother Robert soon followed his example. Whole churches saw the light of this ordinance flashing upon them; and thousands of the most devoted men of Scotland, who had taken the Bible as their sole directory, reformed their 'Tabernacle Reformation' and followed the Lord fully."

If left free from the glosses of "theology" and the obscurities of tradition, every one could find what that child found in the New Testament; that they who believed—who "gladly received the word"—were baptized. The conditions of the ordinance, the terms in which the duty is set forth, exclude all besides penitents and believers.

To show that present discussion of this subject is in place we cite a recent occurrence. A clergyman inquired of a young man of his hope in the Lord, and he produced a certificate of his baptism in answer! Such ignorance of the gospel is inexcusable in this age of Bibles; and no man can measure the responsibility of those professed ministers of Christ who teach the people to trust in baptism for saving power—for the impartation of divine life or covenant benefits outside of personal godliness in heart and life.

Though our examination of this branch of the subject has been somewhat brief, we trust such evidences have been presented as will lead the mind, unavoidably, to the truthful conclusion.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE ORDER OF BAPTISM.

IF there is one part of the doctrine of baptism of more vital importance than another, we have that part now presented before us. We say *if*, for we do not wish thus to discriminate where every part is important, and where all is of divine authority. But this point is most intimately related to the most vital parts of Christian life.

Baptism has its *form*. Of this no active duty can be destitute. Paul thanked God that his brethren had "obeyed from the heart that *form* of doctrine" which was delivered unto them; and this was spoken in connection with an argument relating to baptism. To change the form is to change the thing itself. It is not strictly correct to speak of "the mode of baptism," though we often use the expression to conform to the common forms of thought on this subject. Baptism is neither more nor less than immersion; and the "mode of immersion" is an awkward expression.

Baptism has its *subjects*. To destroy the distinction of character in the subjects, and administer it to all without discrimination, would entirely destroy the ordinance as an institution for the followers of Christ. Therefore, it is necessary strictly to keep within the bounds of the

teachings of the Scriptures as to the subjects of baptism, lest we pervert the ordinance and make it merely a means to minister to our own feelings. If we pervert it to such uses, we make it *our own institution*, and it is thenceforth no more the institution of our Lord.

Baptism has its *order*. There is a time in the experience of an individual when it may properly be administered; outside of that order it is not the institution of the gospel.

We heard a person once remark that his charity was of the largest kind; he could fellowship every one who was baptized in the name of Christ. Now this expression is very liable to be misunderstood. Not every one who is immersed in water, even after the formula given by the Saviour, is baptized in the name of Christ according to the Scripture meaning of the phrase. A hypocrite, destitute of faith and godliness, may be so immersed; yet he has not been baptized within the intention of the ordinance. The necessary conditions of the rite have not been complied with in such a case. We cannot subscribe to the sentiment of learned advocates of the baptism of non-believers, that the benefit of baptism is not lost because of the indisposition of the receiver.

There is another expression not so liable to be misconstrued as that of being baptized in the name of Christ; that is, being *baptized into the death of Christ*. This is necessary to Christian baptism. If this is complied with, the ordinance is administered according to its true intent.

We are very far from allowing that there is the shadow of a conflict between these two expressions. We insist that the truth is found in the harmony of Scripture testimony. When we have all that the Scriptures say on a given point, then we have the whole truth on that point. And we are free to express our opinion that if the original were more uniformly translated and rendered *into* his name, as it is rendered *into* his death, the meaning would be more apparent to the general reader.

Paul takes up this subject in his letter to the Romans, and carries it out very thoroughly. His premises and conclusions are so clearly set forth that the expositor has little to do more than to trace the line of his argument.

There were some in the days of the apostle who had such erroneous views of the gospel as to think it allowable to do evil if the result was good! This idea has never been eradicated from the professed church of Christ. It has led into a multitude of false doctrines and wrong practices, and introduced into the church what are commonly known as "pious frauds." According to this view, traditions and doctrines not found in the Bible, may be safely followed if they have a "pious use;" and long-established errors must be let alone for fear of weakening somebody's faith in Christianity. But Christianity is never benefited by compromises with error, under any pretense whatever.

Said Paul, "The law entered that the offense

might abound." Rom. 5:20. Not that sin is increased by the law; but, as he said in chapter 7:13, "that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." The sinfulness of sin is increased by the increase of light. This effect was produced in the giving of the law; for "by the law is the knowledge of sin." Rom. 3:20.

Again the apostle says, "For until the law, sin was in the world." This means until the law was delivered on Mount Sinai, as is shown by this reference, "Death reigned from Adam to Moses." Rom. 5:13, 14. It has no reference to the *origin* of the law at that time, as some assume, for he adds, "But sin is not imputed when there is no law." As by the law is the knowledge of sin, no one can be proved guilty in the absence of law. And if man's knowledge of the law is imperfect, his ideas of sin will be imperfect. Thus is shown the meaning of the expression, "That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." The law does not really increase sin, more than the mirror increases the defilement of the person. That only makes the defilement manifest. It is in this sense that the law entered that the offense might abound; or, as it is expressed again in chap. 7:13, "But sin, *that it might appear sin*, working death in me by that which is good," that is, by the law. In the same connection the apostle says the law is not death; it does not create sin. It proves the sinful nature of sin; it brings death where sin actually exists, and nowhere else.

As there is no guilt, or imputation of sin, where there is no law, so no law will prove a person guilty but that law which he has transgressed. We would not take that law which forbids blasphemy to prove a man guilty of theft. Hence, that law which entered that the offense might abound, or appear sin, was the law which had been transgressed. It was not *the making*, but *the renewing*, of the law, which took place at that time.

But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. Sin called for a special manifestation of grace, and this came through the Son of God. And as God is glorified in his Son, the question is raised, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" Some say, "Yes, we frustrate grace if we keep the law; we restrain the fullness of the gospel, and thereby dishonor Christ." Many to this day reason thus. But Paul gives the question a decided negative; he says, "God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" Life and death are opposites. If we are *living in sin*, we are surely *not dead to it*; it is impossible to be dead to sin, and to live in sin at the same time. And he gives a demonstration of this death to sin: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death."

This ought to be conclusive to every one. If we were not dead to sin, why were we buried?



The proper time for burial is after death, not before death. The proper time for burial in baptism is when we die to sin—to the transgression of the law; for “sin is the transgression of the law.” But they who still live in violation of the law could not have been buried in this order. They were *buried alive*; “the body of sin” was not destroyed; the “old man” in them still lives. This is what is plainly taught in Rom. 6.

Having now fairly introduced this relation, we will go back to notice the instruction previously given by Christ and his apostles.

In our Lord’s sermon on the mount he fully announced the nature and object of his mission: “Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets.” *The law* to which he there referred was not a new law; not one which was yet to be introduced. It was a law then in existence; which was known to his hearers, and which was connected with the teachings of the prophets. He also said that whosoever shall do and teach the commandments of this law shall be great in the kingdom of Heaven.

The “golden rule” was enforced on the authority of the law. “All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; *for this is the law* and the prophets.” The law guards all our rights and all our relations in respect to life, chastity, property, reputation, etc. All that we have, together with ourselves, is protected by the law; and as we desire to have our rights respected, so should we

respect the rights of others. This is the law, and this is the golden rule. The law which forbids our doing any injury to our neighbor, guards our own rights with equal care.

He who breaks down the authority of law, breaks down the safeguard of his own rights, and makes a wreck of his own privileges. To give a warrant to lawlessness is to open the gates to a flood which is sure to overwhelm us. There is no higher morality than that contained in the law of God. The very essence of the gospel—glory to God, and peace and good will to man—is the object and spirit of the law.

We do not here refer to the law of types; to those shadows which find their antitype in Christ. We know that these were nailed to his cross, and done away in him. We are speaking in defense of the law of ten commandments, which God spake with his own voice, and wrote with his own finger on tables of stone; which was deposited in the ark, over which the high priest sprinkled the blood of expiation. This is pre-eminently "the will of God." It is identified as such in Rom. 2 : 17-23, as follows:—

"Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and *knowest his will*, and approvest the things that are more excellent, *being instructed out of the law*; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the

truth in the law. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God?"

This is a decisive vindication of the ten commandments as *the will of God*, through breaking which, God is dishonored. And this casts light on other texts. Jesus said, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will *do his will*, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." John 7:16, 17. Here a distinction is made between the *will of the Father*, and the *doctrine of the Son*; the same as between "the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus;" Rev. 14:12; or the distinction between *the law* and *the gospel*. As Jesus was sent of God, he could do and teach nothing contrary to the revealed will of God. If any man teach a gospel contrary to the will or law of God, we may be assured it is not from Heaven; it is from beneath. It is not the doctrine or gospel of Christ; for he came to do the will of his Father, and to lead men to cease their warfare against the will and authority of his Father. And so he said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that *doeth the will* of my Father which is in Heaven."

The first sermon preached under the Lord's great commission, that on the day of Pentecost, leads us to the same conclusion. After laying before his hearers *the facts* of the gospel system, and convicting them of their guilt, Peter proceeded to declare *the duties* of the convicted sinner. The first is *to repent*; the second, *to be baptized* for the remission of sin. In this our day, the antinomian view is largely believed, that *all law*, the ten commandments as well as the ceremonial law, was abolished at the death of Christ. But it was then true, as it is now, that "by the law is the knowledge of sin," and "sin is not imputed when there is no law. If all law had then been abolished, there could be no conviction of guilt, for there could be no imputation of sin; how, then, could the duty lie upon them to repent, and to be baptized for the remission of sin? It is easy to see that the antinomian view involves an absurdity; we are surprised that men of apparent intelligence and judgment should ever be found to advocate it.

Where moral relations exist, law must exist. To destroy one is to destroy the other. The declaration is no more scriptural than it is reasonable, that "sin is not imputed when there is no law;" for "where no law is, there is no transgression." Rom. 4:15. But sin was imputed on the day of Pentecost, and without this, baptism would have been a nullity. Therefore the law then existed; by it they were condemned as transgressors.

If, then, "by the law is the knowledge of sin," as the apostle says, we are proved to be sinners as long as we continue to transgress the law. He who fails to do the will of the Father, has no interest in the kingdom of Heaven, no matter how earnestly he calls Jesus Lord. Character is determined *by relation to law, and not by profession*. The transgressor of the law is a sinner, whether he is in or out of a church. And this brings us to the subject introduced in Rom. 6. He who is a transgressor of the law, no matter what his profession may be, is *living in sin*, and he has no reason to show why he should be *buried in baptism*.

The condition or relation here brought to view is indispensable to Christian life; for no one can rise to walk in *newness of life* if the *old life of sin* still continues. "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Being planted in the likeness of his death can have respect only to the *form* and *order* of our burial with him, or our baptism into his death. "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; . . . he was buried, and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures." 1 Cor. 15: 3, 4. These are the facts as they occurred, and they present *the pattern of duty* in the gospel: 1. Die to sin; 2. Be buried in baptism; 3. Rise to walk in newness of life. This is "the likeness of his resurrection;" for "in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he

liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 6: 10, 11.

The same idea runs through the illustration and its application in Rom. 7. The woman is bound by the law to her husband as long as her husband liveth. "So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress." Her relation to the law must be changed to enable her to marry another; and this change is effected by death. But death does not change the law: it changes her *relation to the law*. The law remains to convince of sin, the same as before. The application he makes thus: "Wherefore, my brethren, *ye also are become dead* to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

The whole connection shows that becoming "dead to the law," is to become dead to the transgression of the law; the same as "dead to sin." The law holds us under condemnation as sinners, and the wages of sin is death. Where sin is found, death must ensue. And the law in justice presses its demand until the penalty is inflicted. Christ so honored the claims of the law in respect to its penalty that we are now permitted to *die with him, be buried with him, and be raised with him*, Rom. 6:8, 4; Col. 2:12, and so avert the penalty in the future—the second death.

An option is thus afforded us of *dying to sin* or *dying for sin*. By dying to sin, our relation to the law is so changed, through Christ, that we shall escape the curse which the law inflicts on the sinner. For "Christ hath redeemed us *from the curse of the law*." Gal. 3:13. He does not redeem us *from the obligation*, but from the curse. In this sense we "are delivered from the law;" delivered from its condemnation, or curse.

It has been unjustly inferred from the conjunction of the two expressions, "dead to sin" and "dead to the law," that *sin* and *the law* are equivalents. No excuse can be admitted for this inference, for no one can accept this conclusion who takes the pains to read the chapter; for the apostle expressly denies it. "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid." The law is not sin: so far from it, that it condemns sin; it forbids and makes known sin. "I had not known sin but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." That is, he had not known the nature of his propensities or desires if the law had not enlightened him. "By the law is the knowledge of sin."

It is sin that brings the curse of the law upon us. We must not blame the law if we find ourselves under its condemnation. Our complaint must fall upon ourselves. Had we not arrayed ourselves against the law in transgression, it would not be against us to condemn us. *Sin* is the cause of our trouble, and *not the law*. "For

sin," said the apostle, "taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." It is true the law—and it only—convinces of sin. "For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." This is a record of an important part of his experience. His being alive without the law refers to that part of his life wherein he thought he was doing God service in persecuting the church of Christ. John 16:2. His conscience was not awakened, because his mind was in darkness; he did it ignorantly in unbelief. 1 Tim. 1:13. "When the commandment came"—when he was enlightened by the law of God—"sin revived;" he found himself to be a murderer instead of a servant of God; he stood condemned, and as the only alternative, "I died"—died to sin; ceased to fight against God, and found a refuge and a remedy in the blood of the cross of Christ. The commandment was never given to condemn and slay people; it "was ordained unto life;" it was given in love, to form our characters aright, and thus to fit us to enjoy the favor and presence of God. Only when sin enters, is it "found to be unto death."

Paul, using the first person, reckons himself among those who were buried with Christ. And when was he buried? Of course, when the commandment came and *he died*. When else should he have been buried? And when should *we* be buried? It becomes a very important matter for us to determine whether we have died to sin;



whether we have been planted in the likeness of the Saviour's death.

We have said there is no higher morality than that contained in the law of God. The apostle confirms this, saying, "For we know that the law is spiritual." Rom. 7:14. And if the law is spiritual, then obedience to the law is spiritual worship. Some affect to think that it evinces a lack of spirituality to keep the law; that it is mere carnality; or, as before noticed, they say it frustrates grace and dishonors Christ and his gospel. We have seen that Paul gave a very decided negative to the idea that we may transgress the law that grace may abound; and again we find him declaring that the law is spiritual. This ought to silence every cavil against a law which is holy, just, and good. But Paul goes farther: he not only vindicates the law from the charge of carnality, but he turns the charge pointedly against its originators. He says, "*The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*" Rom. 8:7. The carnal mind—literally, the mind-ing of the flesh, or walking after the flesh—is the opposite of obedience to the law, and so it must be, as "the law is spiritual;" for spirituality and carnality cannot agree. And the high morality of the law is further shown by Paul in stating the object of the gospel: "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. 8:4.

The gospel is remedial. It is a cure for sin, or

for the transgression of the law. Had there been no sin, there would have been no gospel; it would not have been needed. Then the righteousness of the law would have been fulfilled in every soul of man, for all would have lived in perfect obedience. It was "to put away sin" that Jesus came; to restore fallen man to obedience to the Heavenly Father. This is accomplished only in the obedient believer in Jesus; who accepts him as his sacrifice "for the remission of sins that are past," and is "reconciled to God by the death of his Son;" who "keeps the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Rom. 5:10; Rev. 14:12. In such, and in such only, is the righteousness of the law fulfilled and the carnal mind subdued.

One point in the apostle's argument in Rom. 7 remains to be noticed. The woman's relation to the law must be changed by death before she can be married to another without being called an adulteress. "My brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; *that ye should be married to another*, even to Him who is raised from the dead." This is a plain declaration that he who seeks such a union with Christ before death has changed his relation to the law—before he has died to sin—is guilty of *spiritual adultery*. And as baptism is the rite whereby we signify our union with Christ ("as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." Gal. 3:27), this rite is *illegally performed* if there is such an impediment to the

marriage as is spoken of in Rom. 7:1-4. And thus we find in this illustration a strong proof of the view introduced in Rom. 6, that death to the transgression of the law must precede burial in baptism. Death to the law—to its condemnation for sin—must take place before we can be united to Christ; for Christ cannot be joined to “the body of sin.”

We think we hazard nothing in the assertion that that is not Christian baptism wherein the conditions of the gospel are not met. We would speak with modesty, leaving it to each one's conscience as to how wide a divergence from the divine plan there must be to justify an imitation of the course pursued by Paul and the believers, recorded in Acts 19:1-5. But we would speak decidedly in favor of having both candidate and administrator look well to the teachings of the gospel on this subject. It is no light thing to trifle with divine ordinances. He who administers them improperly does so at his peril. Paul praised his brethren inasmuch as they kept the ordinances as they were delivered to them; and when they perverted one, he very deeply blamed them for not preserving it pure according to its intention. 1 Cor. 11. The importance of the ordinance of baptism, as presented by the Saviour in Mark 16:16, and by the apostle Paul in Rom. 6 and 7, cannot be overestimated; and the necessity of carefulness in its observance is according to its importance.

Paul to the Colossians speaks in terms equally

direct and decisive on this subject: "Buried with him in baptism, *wherein also ye are risen with him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Col. 2:12. This adds new luster to the ordinance. Dead to sin; buried with Christ by baptism into death; and *risen with him* in the same ordinance. It cannot be possible that they who speak disparagingly of baptism, as some unfortunately do, have ever examined with care this impressive passage. Here it is shown that "the likeness of his resurrection" is not altogether reserved to a future life. "Risen with him." As he died to sin and lives to God, so we must die to sin, be buried with him, and rise with him to a new life—to a life of obedience to the Heavenly Father's will.

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Col. 3:1. This brings to view the entire Christian life,—a life of consecration to God in imitation of the love and zeal of our Saviour. In the present argument it is not necessary to pursue this further, having fully met our design,—to show the important place which baptism occupies in the divine plan for the remission of sin and union with Christ.

We do not present these views in a captious spirit, or with any desire to find fault, but with a deep sense of responsibility for the honor of the cause of Christ, which is so often shamed by the lives of those who consider themselves Christians because they have been baptized and ac-

cepted as members of a church. We deprecate the practice of baptizing people on too slight evidence of purpose of heart,—with a conversion altogether too superficial, or no conversion at all. We have reason to believe, and it pains us to record it, that there are ministers not a few in this land of gospel privileges, who think far more of the numbers they are able to call in and baptize in a given time, than of the Christian walk, of the stability and integrity of their converts after they are baptized. Gathering a mass of unstable souls; who are deceived into the belief that they are Christians because they have assented to certain truths and been baptized, and who show that their convictions of sin were not deep, and that their hearts were never touched by the enlightening and converting power of the Holy Spirit, is not the way to find acceptance with God as a laborer, or to honor the Christian cause and the Christian ministry.

Such workmen would do well to remember that their work is yet to be tried, and if it does not abide they will suffer loss. Gold, silver, and precious stones are the only material which will be accepted, and bring a reward to the builder in the temple of our Master. The “foundation” is exceedingly precious and valuable, and the counsel is worthy of being held in constant remembrance,—“Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.” 1 Cor. 3:9–18. Often have we seen the record set forth that so many scores were baptized during a certain meeting, while

in a year from that time the strength of the church under whose auspices the labor was performed, was not a whit increased by the effort. Wood, hay, and stubble are not accepted for the building, and bring no reward to the builders.

It is true that the Scriptures give no warrant to put off the baptism of the penitent. But we should have some evidence of sincerity and purpose of heart; evidence that the claims of God's holy law, and the requirements of the Scriptures for a holy life, are somewhat appreciated. As the "present truth" for any age should receive our most earnest attention, even so the prevailing errors of any age should be specially guarded against. If there is danger of erring, it is better to even err on the side of carefulness where a want of caution, because of prevailing false teachings, is likely to cause the professing believer to settle down into a state of false confidence and self-deception.

In thus speaking, it is not our purpose to abate one jot of the necessity and importance that the penitent should be baptized. It is because the duty is important—the institution is too sacred to be trifled with—that we so earnestly plead for maintaining it in its purity, and administering it only according to the revealed will and intention of the divine Institutor.

The unity of truth is well illustrated in this subject. To mar it in one part is to injure the whole. No error stands alone; when once it enters, it multiplies, and taints the whole system.

Very few in the present day apprehend how far the truth on the subject of baptism has been obscured by a change of the ordinance. Being accustomed to view it only in the light of tradition or of popular opinion, the thoughts of the majority seldom rise above these to the full intent of the simple but grand truths of divine revelation. It seems fitting that we close our remarks on the relations of baptism, with a few quotations which have in view the same things which we have tried to set forth.

In Conybeare and Howson's "Life and Epistles of Paul," vol. 1, p. 439, are the following remarks:—

"It is needless to add, that baptism was (unless in exceptional cases) administered by immersion, the convert being plunged beneath the water to represent his death to the life of sin, and then raised from this momentary burial to represent his resurrection to the life of righteousness. It must be a subject of regret, that the general discontinuance of this form of baptism (though perhaps necessary in our northern climates) has rendered obscure to popular apprehension some very important passages of Scripture."

These authors, of the Church of England, show the powerful influence of popular error by themselves excusing the wrong they deplore, the evil tendency of which they seem to understand. We leave it to the reverent reader that an error is neither slight nor excusable which "obscures to popular apprehension some very important passages of Scripture."

Chancellor Est, of the University of Douay, (Catholic), on Rom. 6:3, says:—

“For immersion represents to us Christ’s burial; and so also his death. For the tomb is a symbol of death, since none but the dead are buried. Moreover, the emersion which follows the immersion, has a resemblance to a resurrection. We are, therefore, in baptism, conformed not only to the death of Christ, as he has just said, but also to his burial and resurrection.”

Dr. Conant, in his work entitled “*Baptizein*,” published by the American Bible Union, says:—

“The word ‘*baptize*’ is an anglicized form of the Greek *baptizein*. On this account it has seemed to some that it must necessarily express the same meaning. It has been said that no other word can so perfectly convey the thought of the Holy Spirit as the one chosen by himself to express it in the original Scriptures; and that we are, therefore, at least right and safe in retaining it in the English version. A comparison of the meaning of *baptizein*, as exhibited in sections 1-3 of this treatise, with the definitions of ‘*baptize*’ as given in all dictionaries of the English language, and with its recognized use in English literature and in current colloquial phraseology, will show that this is far from being the case. The word ‘*baptize*’ is a strictly ecclesiastical term; broadly distinguished by that characteristic from the class of common secular words to which *baptizein* belonged. It is a metaphysical term, indicating a mystical relation entered into



with the church, by virtue of the sacramental application of water. In both these respects it misrepresents the Saviour's manner and intent. Concealing the form of the Christian rite under a vague term, which means anything the reader may please, it obscures the idea thereby symbolized, and the pertinency of the inspired appeals and admonitions founded on them. The essence of the Christian rite is thus made to consist in this mystical church relation, into which it brings the recipient. With this view associates itself, naturally and almost necessarily, the idea of a certain mysterious efficacy in the rite itself; and, accordingly, we find the belief prevailing in the majority of Christian communions that, through baptism, the recipient is not externally alone, but mystically united to the body of Christ. *Thus the rite ceases to be the symbol of certain great truths of Christianity* and becomes an efficacious sacrament. The tenacity with which this fatal error is adhered to, even in communions not connected with the State, is largely due to the substitution, in our English Bibles, of this vague foreign term of indefinite meaning, for the plain, intelligible English signification of the Greek word."

We have taken the liberty to italicize one sentence in the above. And to these we must add, that it is much to be regretted that many who see the necessity of restoring the ordinance, as to the form, yet lose sight of the "great truths of Christianity" which are symbolized by it.

Ignoring the truth that "sin is the transgression of the law," and that repentance has respect to the law of God as faith has to the Son of God, Acts 20:21, they shut out the idea that death must precede burial, and introduce the very error so clearly pointed out by Dr. Conant. And thus we think we have fully justified our statement that the *form*, without regard to the *order or relation*, does not constitute it the baptism of the gospel. A person may be immersed, and yet so hold the rite in his faith and in his life as to destroy it, so far as it is a symbol of the death and resurrection of the Lord, and of our death to sin and rising to walk in a new life of righteousness or obedience.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### REMISSION OF SIN—WHEN GRANTED.

It is a point that has elicited much discussion, whether or not sin is remitted in the act of baptism. Some—yes, many—have strenuously insisted that we are justified in this rite; and neither before nor in any other way. Or, that remission of sin is granted in this action, and not otherwise. Though we would give the rite all the importance which the Scriptures afford to it, and that is not small, we cannot indorse that view. We find that that idea was held at a very early age in the church; and with it was held the idea of "baptismal regeneration;" the

idea that gifts and graces, even a divine life, were imparted in baptism; that without baptism no one could possibly be saved; and for this reason infants were baptized. Even Cyprian, one of the best of the early African bishops, taught that infants should be baptized very soon after birth, that thus they might avoid the danger of the loss of a soul! Unfortunately, these false views of baptism, very early ingrafted into some parts of the church, have not entirely been put away. The same false application is still made, if not always to the same class, that is, to infants.

On this subject, as on other subjects, injustice is done to the Scriptures by drawing conclusions from a single text, without taking pains to examine other texts, and so secure a harmony of the evidence. The same virtue and power may be ascribed to faith, yet again, it is said to be nothing alone. At first, a penitent is doubtless accepted on his faith alone; but as duties are met, they must be discharged, or our faith is neutralized and we lose the favor we had enjoyed. Faith is the spring of action, and action is the life of faith.

The relation of truths must be regarded. However important a truth or a duty may be, if it is removed from its place and its relation, it is perverted. And a truth perverted is often the equivalent of error.

The word translated "for," in Peter's words, "*for* the remission of sin," (*eis*) is most frequently

rendered *in*, *to*, or *into*; the latter is generally to be preferred. It is translated *into* over one hundred and twenty times in Matthew alone; and is translated nearly twenty different ways. Greenfield gives it the following definitions, and in the following order: On, into, upon; in, among; to, towards, near to, by; in, on, towards *a person*; towards, against; to, even to, until; to, for; that, so that, in order that, for the purpose that; for, about, concerning, as to, in respect to, on account of; in, at, among; before, in the presence of; according to, in accordance with.

We would not by any means convey the idea that either of these definitions might with equal propriety be applied in any given case. We only wish to show the latitude which usage gives to the word, and that a definition may not be selected and applied arbitrarily to the text in question. "In order to" is by no means the first definition, and if it is to be appropriated here, a reason must be given outside of the definition itself. Nor do we deny the importance of accepting the proper definition of words as the means of settling controversies; but when different definitions are given to the same word we need to exercise care in distinguishing between them in any case. In this case we must be guided to some extent by *the doctrine of remission* as presented in the Scriptures. As this is a great subject, we shall be obliged to present some thoughts on the scriptural view of remission as briefly as possible.

We would correct the idea, which is too prevalent and is still growing, that *justification by faith*, and *salvation*, are identical. Paul was certainly justified by faith, yet he found zealous striving necessary lest he should be a castaway. 1 Cor. 9:27. He taught distinctly that we are justified by faith without works. Rom. 3:27. And with equal distinctness he exhorted his brethren to work out their salvation. Phil. 2:12.

It is easy to see the reason of this. In Rom. 3 he is speaking of "remission of sins that are past," over which works, or future obedience, can have no possible influence. From these we must be "justified freely by his grace." Rom. 3:24. But the gospel embraces *prevention* as well as cure. Future obedience cannot remit sin, but it will prevent sin; and, practically, one is of no benefit without the other.

The hackneyed expression, "Once in grace, always in grace," finds not the least warrant in Scripture, and doubtless has been used to the destruction of multitudes of souls. It has been supposed to be the sure foundation of *trust*, but it is the open door to *presumption*. The Lord said by Ezekiel: "When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it." Eze. 33:13. All of God's dealings with man have been based on this self-same principle. The opposite view—the view of the adage

above—makes a man's probation to end with his conversion, which is not the truth. "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Matt. 24:13.

The *remission of sin* is precisely equivalent to the *remission of the penalty*. But, according to the scriptures quoted, the absolute remission of the penalty is contingent on enduring to the end, or on continued faithfulness to the end; as Paul also says, God will render "to them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life." Rom. 2:7. Therefore, "justification by faith" does not place any one beyond probation, but brings him into such relation to God that he is enabled by divine grace to *work out his salvation*; Phil. 2:12; or, by diligence, *to make his calling and election sure*. 2 Pet. 1:10. Of course, all this has reference to the decisions of the Judgment,—*"Judgment to come."*

The difference between justification by faith and final salvation is fully shown by the texts quoted. One changes man's relations during his probation; the other is by the determination of the Judgment, which closes his probation. Then the question will arise in many minds, What is the relation of a person justified by faith? Or, In what sense is remission granted before the Judgment? The Saviour sets this matter clear in his teachings. But before quoting his language we wish to present the following illustration:—

A. owes B. a sum which he is not able to pay, and C. engages to be responsible for the debt on certain conditions. In order to make it sure, C. deposits with B. much more than will cover the amount of the debt. Now it is stipulated that if A. fulfills the conditions prescribed, B. may cancel the debt from the deposit made by C. As long as A. continues faithful to the conditions, so long B. rests satisfied in regard to the debt, and of course he does not trouble A. for it, because he knows A. has not got it, while he himself has it in deposit. Thus A. is accounted just (or justified) in the sight of B., and yet not just *in himself*, because he fails to pay a just debt. He is justified through his surety. If he continues faithful "to the end," till the term of conditions closes, then B. draws from the deposit and cancels the debt. Now he is free *in fact*, as he was before *by faith*; the debt no longer stands against him. But if, to the contrary, A. at any time refuses or neglects to fulfill the conditions, C.'s deposit does not avail for him; his debt is not canceled; he *falls from the favor* which he had enjoyed through his surety, and the debt stands against him as fully as if no deposit had been made. And more than that, he is considered more culpable than before, inasmuch as the means of removing his indebtedness was kindly placed within his reach, and he refused it.

Such is the condition of the believer in Christ. He has received *conditional forgiveness*, being yet a probationer for eternal life, which has been

*placed within his reach* by Christ, his surety. For proof, consider the following:—

Our Saviour, in Matt. 18:23-35, presents the case of a servant who owed his lord ten thousand talents. But having nothing wherewith to pay, and manifesting honesty of purpose, "the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and *forgave him the debt.*" But this servant met his fellow-servant who owed him the trifling sum of two hundred pence, and who pleaded for mercy in the same terms in which he had so successfully pleaded before his lord. But this servant would not show mercy. He thrust his fellow-servant into prison till he should pay the debt. Hearing of this, his lord called him and said unto him, "O thou wicked servant, *I forgave thee all that debt*, because thou desiredst me. Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, *till he should pay all that was due unto him.*" This is our Saviour's own view of forgiveness under the gospel, or justification by faith, while we are waiting for the decisions of the Judgment. And to place this beyond all possibility of doubt, the Saviour made the application, thus: "*So likewise shall my Heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.*"

The teaching of the Saviour in this scripture is in perfect agreement with the word of the



Lord in Eze. 33:13,—if the righteous man turn away from righteousness and commit iniquity, "all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered;" that is, he shall be treated as if he had never been righteous.\*

That baptism is *a means* of bringing us near to God, and placing us where his grace in the gospel is extended to us, no one can deny. That it is *the means*—the only means, as some have taught—is not according to the teachings of the Scriptures. Many have had the experience of Cornelius and his household; if not in the same measure, yet by the witness of "the self-same Spirit," imparting a blessed assurance that the Father has graciously accepted them for his dear Son's sake, before their baptism. Their joy may be increased in obeying this rite, and so it may be by taking up any cross for Jesus' sake.

We are aware of the objection which is here interposed, namely, that we have no just right to claim that we have received the favor of God, been justified, or received the Spirit of God as the Comforter, before our baptism; that it is baptism which secures the blessing, and through which we receive the Comforter; that we know we have the Spirit, not by our experience or consciousness, but because we have been baptized in his name.

This objection is not sustained by the Scriptures. This makes *baptism the evidence*, which it

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\*For a more extended argument on this point, see pamphlet entitled, "The Atonement," for sale at the Office of the Signs of the Times, Oakland, Cal.

is not, and shuts out *the witness of the Spirit* altogether. It is the Spirit—not baptism—which bears witness that we are the children of God. Rom. 8:11-16. And this view is not only unscriptural in its statement, but, as could only be expected, disastrous in its results. It has filled churches with formalists, destitute of the true power of godliness, who are strongly entrenched in vain hopes, who trust to their baptism as the evidence of their adoption into the household of the Lord.

But, it is replied, Ananias said to Paul, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Acts 22:16. And we say also, that Peter, relating the case of Cornelius and his friends, says the Lord *purified their hearts through faith*; Acts 15:6-9; and through faith they received the witness of the Spirit before their baptism. To deny that God may work in this same manner now is to deny the experience of multitudes, in all ages of the Christian church, whose conversion to God and whose genuine piety were beyond all doubt.

On Acts 22:16, Alexander Campbell, in his debate with McCalla, made the following remark: "Paul's sins were really pardoned when he believed; yet he had no solemn pledge of the fact, no formal acquittal, no formal purgation of his sins, until he washed them away in the water of baptism." No fault can be found with this; no one can object to having, in the words of Mr. Rice, "the emblem connected with the grace."

If it be insisted that we must confine ourselves to the order laid down in Acts 2:38, 39, we then reply that according to this scripture the position we call in question is still faulty. That position leaves the professed penitent to *take for granted* his reception of the Spirit, because it is promised on condition of baptism. But not a single instance can be found in the New Testament where such a view obtained. See Acts 8:15-17: "Who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."

Here the reception of the Holy Spirit was a matter of *consciousness* or *experience* with them. Had they taken for granted that they had received it because they were baptized, making baptism their evidence, as many now do, they would have rested under a delusion. The same remarks apply to Acts 19.

This is sufficient to show that too much has been ascribed to baptism, by those who make it the sole means and the evidence of justification, or remission of sin. That it stands related to remission—that it is even *an essential part* of that system by which we receive remission—cannot be denied. It is a gospel duty, and all parts of the gospel are essential. All confess that the gospel itself is absolutely essential; and we cannot suppose that an essential whole is

made up of non-essential parts. While we deprecate the abuse and perversion of the ordinance, we can find no excuse for slighting and disparaging it, or for neglecting it. "Every word of the Lord is pure."

Another instance of the use of the Greek word *eis* deserves a notice. It is found in Matt. 3:11: "I indeed baptize you *with* [*en, in*] water *unto* [*eis*] repentance." It can hardly be supposed that this text will bear the construction put upon Acts 2:38—baptize *in order to* repentance—so as to make the repentance altogether in the future. Indeed, we could not imagine that John would have baptized any if he knew that the work of repentance were not already then commenced. So in Acts 2:38, and in every case where baptism is truly and properly administered according to the gospel plan. Faith lays hold of the grace, already commenced in the heart, of which baptism is the significant emblem.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### "A SAVING ORDINANCE."

It is fitting that we notice an objection which is presented in the form of a query respecting baptism as a saving ordinance.

There may be those who have so often heard the question, "Is baptism a saving ordinance?" asked by those in whom they have confidence, that they have come to think it allowable and

proper. For such we desire to exercise the largest charity; yet we must express our conviction that the question originated in a spirit of rebellion and self-will. Its evident intention is this: If it is saving, if we cannot possibly be saved without it, then we will observe it; but if we can be saved without it, then we will disregard it. Or, in other words, we know that the Lord commanded it, and it is our duty to obey; but if we can be saved some other way, we choose to disregard his commandment. If this is not what the question amounts to, we must confess we cannot understand the language. A heart thus disposed would ask, "Lord, what *may* I do?" and not "Lord, what *wilt thou* have me to do?"

Moreover, this question is almost always asked by those who repudiate immersion and advocate "infant baptism." This is a strange inconsistency on their part. If their views of "infant baptism" are correct, then baptism is to infants "a saving ordinance" to the fullest extent of the term. It is made the means, *the only means*, of *grace* to them. Without faith, without repentance, without any act of accepting the gospel or of following Christ, they are, *by baptism alone*, made heirs of God, partakers of the Heavenly Gift, and inheritors of eternal life. Many, even in our own day, and in our own land, hold baptism in this very light. Yet they are often the very first to blame us for our tenacity in holding to baptism, in its form and design, as we find it revealed in God's word.

It is not our province to inquire whether it is necessary to our salvation or not. We should look to *duties*, and leave *results* with God. It is not the part of a faithful servant to ask, "Why am I required to do this?" It is enough to know that we *are* required to do it. James, the apostle of the Lord, gave a stern reproof to this spirit of caviling inquiry, in condemning those who assume to be *judges* of the law, rather than *doers* of it.

Our answer to the question is both Yes, and No. *Everything* which the Lord requires is saving; yet *no one duty* has salvation in itself alone. If the question means this: Will baptism save me if I neglect other duties? then we answer, No; there is nothing in the Bible which is saving in this sense. Salvation was never made to rest on any such grounds. But if it means: Must I submit to everything which God commands in order to be saved? then we reply, Yes; there is no other way of salvation but conformity to the divine will. Man shall live "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

The spirit which prompts such a question is only a selfish one, and we aver that selfishness has no place in the gospel. The duty of the Christian is to follow Christ; and not a shade of selfishness was shown in all his life. He said he came not to do his own will; and if he, the Lord of life and glory, renounced his own will, is it too much for us to renounce ours? Can we indeed

follow Christ and indulge our selfishness and self-will? If so, his example must pass for nothing.

If we can be saved in a way of our own choice, then did God reveal his will in vain, and Christ died in vain. We could follow our own ways and indulge our selfish feelings without the Bible and without the death of the Son of God. But the querist may say: "It was necessary for us that Christ should die, and open the way of salvation; but since he has died for us it is not necessary for us to be so strict in conforming to the rules laid down in the Scriptures. Before Christ died, in the dispensation of law, men were bound by the express terms of the revelation; but not so in this dispensation of grace, in which a larger liberty is allowed." This statement is no mere supposition, or "fancy sketch." It has actually been urged, not on this subject alone, but on other subjects also. It is equivalent to saying that without the death of Christ obedience to the revealed will of God was necessary; but since he has died we may be saved without conforming to the rules he has laid down. But what is this but making "Christ the minister of sin"? whereas the Scriptures declare that he is the minister of righteousness. Have we yet to learn, in this our age, that he came to serve his Father's will; to "save his people from their sins;" "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself"?

That antinomian position is so far from being true, that Jesus himself shows that sin would have been more excusable (if it be allowable to

use the word in such a case), if he had not come into the world; "but now they have no cloak for their sin." If God would suffer and bear with those times of ignorance, he does so no longer, "but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent," or to turn from sin. Would that men would put aside their lawlessness, and learn to submit to all the divine requirements. It is the self-same spirit which rejects the law of God and the ordinances of the gospel, for the gospel is the means appointed of Heaven to put away transgression and to bring sinful man to obedience to God. And it is the same spirit of submission to divine authority which leads to keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Rev. 14:12. Jesus said, "I and my Father are one;" and men are now to honor the Son *even as* they honor the Father,—neither more nor less. They who do not find the gospel the means of glorifying God the Father, have studied in vain.

Reader, have you followed the Saviour in this ordinance of his own appointment, which he honored by his own example? Have you died to transgression and been buried with your dying Lord in baptism? If not, then we inquire, "Why tarriest thou?" Some say they tremble and hesitate, because it is a very solemn thing to obey this ordinance. True; but is it not a very solemn thing to disregard and neglect it? If we should tremble at the thought of obedience to the divine requirements, much more should we tremble at the thought of disobedience.



We invite the *young*. We believe in baptizing the children when they turn to Jesus, the children's loving friend. As personified by Wisdom, he says, "Those that seek me early shall find me." Prov. 8:17. This is a precious promise; but if you neglect it, you will soon grow beyond it. By and by we may hear him speaking thus: "He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Prov. 29:1. Do not think it a hardship to serve the Lord; Wisdom's "ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Prov. 3:17. There is no peace found in sin. There is no sight more beautiful than to see young people give their hearts to God, and follow their Saviour in baptism. Angels in Heaven as well as saints on earth rejoice at the sight. Do not say that you will wait till you get older; if you are old enough to sin, you are old enough to repent. And remember too, *you are always old enough to die*. There is no time for delay. "You know not what a day may bring forth." Many, very many, have deeply regretted that they put off the work of obeying God. But not one, no, not one of all the multitudes who have served God all their lives, was ever known to utter one word of regret that he early set out to follow his beloved Lord. Come now. "Now is the accepted time."

We invite the *middle-aged*. How often do those in the prime of life say, "When I get more settled in life, and old age comes on, then I will

serve the Lord." Think what this means. Do you realize what an insult this is to your Creator? what a contempt of the claims of the Saviour? It means that you take pleasure in trampling on the law of the great God; though he is the author of every blessing you enjoy, and has a just right to the affection of your heart and the service of your life, you choose to despise his authority and rob him of that which is justly his, as long as you can do it successfully, or can find pleasure in it. But when you have spent the strength of your manhood or womanhood; when you have insulted the love of God and defied his threatenings as long as you can,—then, when your energies are failing, and your power to work in his cause is gone, you will come to him and offer him the *privilege* of taking you, a moral wreck, to save you from the consequences of your unutterable folly and wickedness! Do you not wonder that God, the infinitely just God, spares you to pursue such a course? Is it not surprising grace that he ever saves an aged sinner? Are you *sure* that you will live to carry out your plans; that you will not be cut off in your obstinacy? Is the dear Son of God, who died to open a way of salvation to you, and now pleads his precious blood in your behalf—is he less worthy of your best efforts, of the strength of your manhood, than Satan, who is ever seeking to ensnare you and to lead you on to ruin? Young man, young woman, what are you doing? Whither are you going? Reflect. Stop! your next step

may take you beyond the bounds of mercy. Turn now from sin; die, yes, die to the transgression of God's holy commandments, be buried with your precious Saviour, and rise to live unto God: to enjoy peace—his peace—a peace that passeth all understanding, even in this life, and eternal life and glory in his kingdom. Think of this joy and glory. And can you have it? Yes, you may; but do not delay, for the future has no certainties for you.

We invite the *aged*. What excuse can the aged offer for persisting in disobeying God? What hope of this life—what joy of earth—can stand between them and their duty to their Saviour? They will answer that it is hard to repent of a whole life of sin; hard to overcome habits of life so long settled; hard to change the whole current of thought, of feeling, and of action, when all have been so long established. They say, "If I were only young, how easy it would be to give my heart to God. If my sins were not so many, if my heart had not grown so hard in the years of my trifling and folly. Oh that I had repented in my youth! But now I fear it is too late." Let the youth listen to this and take warning. Too late! it is too late for you to linger, to trifle on the verge of eternity. Too late to waste any more precious time; you have none to spare. Jesus yet calls. Cast yourself on him now, and prove the depth of his love. It may indeed be too late to-morrow. His mercy has followed you all your life. It lingers for you still. You can-

not afford to add to the ingratitude of your past life by spurning the last call of mercy.

“Let youth in its freshness and bloom, come!  
Let man in the pride of his noon, come!  
Let age on the verge of the tomb, come!”

“And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”



# HISTORY AND TRINE IMMERSION.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### INTRODUCTION—THEODORET—SOZOMEN.

WE have been requested to notice the historical argument in favor of trine immersion. It is a well-known fact that history is the main reliance of the trine immersionists. The Greek of the New Testament is decidedly against them. The analogies of the language of Scripture are against them. And the facts of Scripture are against them. But, fortifying themselves with historical statements, tracing the practice, as they claim, almost to the very time of the apostles, they do not find it very difficult to build up inferences from the Scriptures in their favor. The inferences in themselves are very weak, as we have before shown. They think these inferences are justified by the evidences drawn from history. And thus in every way appears that history is their chief dependence.

These people publish a paper in Illinois, at the head of which stands Eld. J. H. Moore.\* He has written a pamphlet of 64 pp., with the following

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\*Eld. Moore has separated himself from the paper since this was written.

pretentious title: "Trine Immersion traced to the Apostles; being a Collection of Historical Quotations from Modern and Ancient Authors, proving that a Three-fold Immersion was the Only Method of Baptizing ever practiced by the Apostles and their Immediate Successors." We think that neither the contents of the book nor the facts justify this flaming title.

Eld. Moore frequently quotes from Eld. James Quinter. Eld. Quinter wrote a tract entitled, "The Origin of Single Immersion." These two works have been forwarded to us with the request that they may be noticed. We will now comply with that request. We wish to make here a few statements which we hope the reader will bear in mind.

1. Nothing can be justly inferred from the *early practice* or the *early mention* of a practice among the successors of the apostles, inasmuch as the wildest errors and boldest innovations are found among the *immediate successors* of the apostles. Dr. Miller, of Princeton, quoted by Campbell in debate with Rice, says:—

"We are accustomed to look back to the first ages of the church with a veneration nearly bordering on superstition. It answered the purpose of popery to refer all their corruptions to primitive times, and to represent those times as exhibiting the models of all excellence. But every representation of this kind must be received with

distrust. The Christian church, during the apostolic age, and for half a century, did indeed present a venerable aspect. Persecuted by the world on every side, she was favored in an uncommon measure with the presence of the Spirit of her divine Head, and exhibited a degree of simplicity and purity which has, perhaps, never since been equaled. But before the close of the second century the scene began to change; and before the commencement of the fourth a deplorable corruption of doctrine, discipline, and morals, had crept into the church, and disfigured the body of Christ. Hegesippas, an ecclesiastical historian, declares that 'the virgin purity of the church was confined to the days of the apostles.'"

Milner certainly could not be accused of undue prejudice against the early traditions and customs of the church, but he says:—

"Superstition had made, it seems, deep inroads into Africa. It was rather an unpolished region, certainly much inferior to Italy in point of civilization. Satan's temptations are suited to tempers and situations; but surely it was not by superstitious practices that the glad tidings of salvation had been first introduced into Africa. There must have been a deep decline. One of the strongest proofs that the comparative value of the Christian religion in different countries is not to be estimated by their distance from the apostolic age, is deducible from the times of Tertullian."

Very many of the innovations which finally gained a footing in the church are traced to Tertullian. He first mentions *sprinkling* in connection with Baptism. In his work "On Baptism," chap. 2, he says:—

"Without expence, a man is dipped in water, and amid the utterance of some few words, is *sprinkled*, and then rises again, not much or not at all the cleaner, the consequent attainment of eternity is esteemed the more incredible."—*Edition of Clark*, Edinburgh; also in chap. 12. He is the first to mention *sponsors* in baptism, and other appendages to the rite, and we shall show that he is the first to mention trine immersion.

2. We are not to infer that an early practice was derived from the apostles because we find mention of the practice, but find no mention of its origin. Scarcely a single innovation or dogma peculiar to the Romish church can be traced to its origin. The Catholics base their argument on this fact, that you cannot trace their origin; that being practiced so early, the practice must have been derived from the apostles. But Archbishop Whately draws an argument *against them* from this same fact; inasmuch as the Scriptures thoroughly furnish the man of God unto all good works, if these dogmas had been promulgated by the apostles we could easily trace them to that source. The following will illustrate this point. Bingham, in *Antiquities of the Christian church*, speaking of the "Baptism of Bells," says:—



"The first notice we have of this is in the capitulars of Charles the Great, where it is only mentioned to be censured."—*Book 11, chap. 4, § 1.*

It was then in practice. Bishops baptized bells, but when and where this originated, how it came to be a *part of Christianity*, we have no means of ascertaining. Shall we therefore conclude that it was derived from the apostles?

3. As it will not be safe to infer anything from a practice because it was *early* mentioned, so we may not infer its genuineness because it was *generally* received. For (1) Party spirit ran high; opposition of parties was most bitter, and the weaker parties were very early crushed out by power, oftener than they were subdued by argument. (2) As it was adjudged by the empire that "the primacy should remain with the elder Rome," so the authority of the empire was called in to put down everything which opposed the doctrines of the bishop of Rome. And by this means *heresies* were extirpated; and the writings of the heretics, being condemned, were destroyed. So now we have only the writings of the *orthodox* party, which then meant, as it now means, the *strongest* party, and all the writings of that age of superstition and error have passed through the hands of those who were unscrupulous in molding everything to suit their purpose.

To show that we may not implicitly follow

that which history affirms so early and so generally obtained, we refer to the fact that the historical testimony in favor of infant baptism makes it to have been both early and general. The evidence in its favor is far greater than that in favor of trine immersion. And with this was introduced *infant communion*. Thus Dr. Schaff:—

“In the Oriental and North African churches prevailed the incongruous system of infant communion, which seemed to follow from infant baptism, and was advocated by Augustine and Innocent I., on the authority of John 6:53. In the Greek Church this custom continues to this day, but in the Latin, after the ninth century, it was disputed and forbidden.”—*History of the Christian Church*, vol. 2, p. 516.

Bingham says infant communion existed in the days of Cyprian, an African bishop in the third century. The Greek Church to which trine immersionists refer with such an air of triumph, affirm that trine immersion, infant baptism, and infant communion, all came down from the days of the apostles, and may all be deduced from the Scriptures. We have elsewhere shown the absurdity of claiming scriptural authority for trine immersion. In history it is not as strongly fortified as infant baptism. Of the three unscriptural rites above referred to, now held by the Greek Church, trine immersion has the least plausible argument in its favor.

And, 4. We must exercise due caution in receiving the statements of historians of the middle ages; for, (1) They knew no more of the facts of the first centuries, personally, than we know. They derived their knowledge from those who wrote before themselves. (2) They lived in an age when almost unbounded confidence was placed in tradition; when almost any writing which was received and indorsed by *the church* was accepted as authority without further questioning. This will be seen as we present our argument.

We will now notice two statements by Eld. Quinter in his tract. He says:—

“Chrystal, in his book entitled, ‘History of the Modes of Baptism,’ quotes Theodoret, Bishop of Cyprus, an author of an Ecclesiastical History and various other works, and who lived in the latter part of the fourth and early part of the fifth century, as follows: ‘He (Eunomius) subverted the law of holy baptism, which had been handed down from the beginning from the Lord and from the apostles, and made a contrary law, asserting that it was not necessary to immerse the candidate for baptism thrice, nor to mention the names of the Trinity, but to immerse once only into the death of Christ.’ ”

This quotation is of no real value in this controversy; for, 1. There is not the slightest evidence in existence that trine immersion was

handed down from the apostles. This was a common method of enforcing any and every practice, even before the time of Theodoret. 2. Theodoret himself was a zealous partisan on the *orthodox* side, who bitterly opposed dissenters; he lived when the controversy on the Trinity ran very high, and regard for the doctrine of the Trinity was the main ground of the advocacy of three immersions. Theodoret wrote more in the spirit of a controversialist than of an impartial historian. 3. That his testimony is of no value on this particular point is shown by trine immersionists themselves, for they offer proof and argue directly that single immersion was both practiced and opposed before the time of Eunomius. This being so, these words, allowing that they were written by Theodoret, are of no worth. We shall refer to this again.

This next quotation is offered from Sozomen. We quote again from Eld. Quinter's tract:—

“The following is the language of Sozomen in regard to the origin of single immersion. It occurs in his Ecclesiastical History. He lived, according to Cave, about the year A. D. 404. ‘Some say that Eunomius was the first who dared to bring forward the notion that the divine baptism ought to be administered by a single immersion; and to corrupt the tradition that has been handed down from the apostles, and which is still preserved by all (or among all). .

. . . But whether it was Eunomius or any other person who first introduced heretical opinions concerning baptism, it seems to me that such innovators, whoever they may have been, were alone in danger, according to their own representation, of quitting this life without having received the holy rite of baptism; for if, after having received baptism according to the ancient mode of the church (*i. e.*, by trine immersion), they found it impossible to reconfer it on themselves, it must be admitted that they introduced a practice to which they had not themselves submitted, and thus undertook to administer to others what had never been administered to themselves (*i. e.*, single immersion unto the death of Christ). The absurdity of this assumption is manifest from their own confession; for they admit that those who have not received the rite of baptism have not the power of administering it. Now, according to their opinion, those who have not received the rite of baptism in conformity with their mode of administration (*i. e.*, single immersion) are unbaptized; and they confirm this opinion by their practice, inasmuch as they rebaptize (*i. e.*, by single immersion) all those who join their sect, although previously baptized (*i. e.*, by trine immersion) by the Catholic Church.—*Chrystal's History of the Modes of Baptism*, p. 78."

These are the words ascribed to Sozomen by the trine immersionists. The following are the

exact words of Sozomen copied from his History:—

“Some assert that Eunomius was the first to maintain that baptism ought to be performed by immersion, and to corrupt, in this manner, the apostolic tradition, which has been carefully handed down to the present day. . . But whether it was Eunomius, or any other person, who first introduced heretical opinions concerning baptism, it seems to me that such innovators, whoever they may have been, were alone in danger, according to their own representation, of quitting this life without having received the rite of holy baptism; for if, after having received baptism according to the ancient mode of the church, they found it impossible to reconfer it on themselves, it must be admitted that they introduced a practice to which they had not themselves submitted, and thus undertook to administer to others what had never been administered to themselves. Thus, after having laid down certain principles, according to their own fancy, without any data, they proceed to bestow upon others what they had not themselves received. The absurdity of this assumption is manifest from their own confession; for they admit that those who have not received the rite of baptism have not the power of administering it. Now, according to their opinion, those who have not received the rite of baptism in conformity with their mode of administration, are unbaptized; and they con-

firm this opinion by their practice, inasmuch as they rebaptize all those who join their sect, although previously baptized by the Catholic Church."

A fierce controversy long raged in the church as to whether *baptism by heretics*, or those who did not conform to the dominant party, was to be accepted as valid. It will be seen above that *every reference to single and trine immersion was put into this extract*, not by Sozomen, but by the man who quoted it in favor of trine immersion. They may indeed say that that is what Sozomen meant, but if Sozomen was not able to say what he meant, and needs to stand corrected at this day, then he is not competent to testify in this or any other case. It needs no words of ours to brand the course of Chrystal as dishonorable in palming on his readers this quotation for the words of Sozomen.

We do not dispute that trine immersion prevailed to a considerable extent in the days of Sozomen; but we strongly object to any controversialist making him many times say that which he never said at all. But our opposers may ask, What else could it mean, if trine immersion then existed? We answer, 1. If we could discover no other meaning, we still denounce the course as unworthy, of weaving into a historical quotation that which *we think it means* while it does not say it. The Catholic Church, in all her *pious*

*frauds*, never went beyond this. 2. We find historical reference to *sprinkling* in the church about two and a half centuries before Sozomen wrote. Now inasmuch as Sozomen spoke disparagingly of *immersion* (not of *single immersion* as Chrystal unjustly makes him say) he may at that time have referred to *sprinkling* as the preferable mode. But, 3. Whatever mode Sozomen meant to indorse, it is condemned by his own words, for he speaks in favor of a "*tradition* handed down from the apostles." He knows but little of church history who does not know that tradition had obtained a *standard* position in the fifth century. And we promise to show also, that the first authority for trine immersion rested it on tradition only.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

JUSTIN MARTYR—CLEMENT—TERTULLIAN—  
MR. REEVES—APOSTOLICAL CANONS—  
MUNNULUS.

ELD. MOORE highly indorses Quinter's efforts in favor of their system, but his own pamphlet is much more ample in historical references. He *says* he has traced it directly to the apostles. The three writers nearest to the apostles given by him are Tertullian, A. D. 160-220; Clement of Alexandria, A. D. 150-220; and Justin Martyr,



A. D. 100-165. These are the most important of all the witnesses, because they lived nearest to the apostles, and those who followed them must have depended on them more or less for any "tradition handed down from the apostles." We shall take them in reverse order and notice first

JUSTIN MARTYR,

Because he was nearest to the apostles. Mr. Moore quotes and comments as follows:—

"Justin wrote 'An Apology for Christians, Addressed to the Emperor, the Senate, and the People of Rome.' In this work he describes the doctrines and ordinances of the church of Christ; and on baptism has the following passage: 'Then we bring them to some place where there is water, and they are baptized by the same way of baptism by which we were baptized; for they are washed in the water in the name of God the Father, Lord of all things, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit.'

"Justin's works were written in the Greek language, and are translated by Mr. Reeves, who, when speaking of the confession usually made in those early times, says of the above passage: 'The candidates were *thrice* plunged under the water at the naming of the Three Persons in the blessed Trinity.'

"This is the candid opinion of the learned translator, that when Justin writes of the Christians being washed in the name of the Father,

and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, he means nothing short of trine immersion. We give Mr. Reeves' convictions and candid opinion as a fair argument in support of the fact that the above passage refers to trine immersion."

Mr. Moore makes his quotations in the above from Pengilly on Baptism. And here, reader, we have the first stone, the very corner-stone of the edifice of trine immersion; the first witness—the one nearest to the apostles—to prove that trine immersion existed in the very days of the apostles. Here we have several points of interest.

1. Justin says *nothing at all* about trine immersion! We are reminded of the case of the lawyer who said he had five reasons to give why his witness was not in court. First, he was dead. The Judge here excused him from giving the other four. So we might stop right here with a clear case, but we will examine a little further.

2. It is Mr. Reeves' candid *opinion* that Justin *meant* trine immersion, though he says nothing about it. Upon what this opinion is based, and what it is worth, we shall presently see.

3. Mr. Reeves' *opinion* is offered as a *fair argument* in favor of the *fact* that the passage refers to trine immersion.

It must be remembered that no other author of Justin's day is cited to prove the existence of the *fact* assumed. The whole burden of evidence lies in *Mr. Reeves' opinion*.

In the "Ante-Nicene Library," published by Clark, Edinburgh, the works of Justin are translated by Dr. Dods. From chap. 61 of his first Apology we copy as follows:—

"I will also relate the manner in which we dedicated ourselves to God, when we had been made new through Christ; lest if we omit this, we seem to be unfair in the explanation we are making. As many as are persuaded and believe that what we say and teach is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting, for the remission of sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them. Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we ourselves were regenerated. For in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the Universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water. For Christ also said, 'Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven.'"

If the translation of Dr. Dods is correct, and Dr. Schaff gives it the same way, then the term *baptism* is used by Mr. Reeves only by implication. However, the idea of *baptismal regeneration* is strongly favored by the language of Justin; so early did erroneous views of baptism begin to find their way into the church. But by no possible construction can trine immersion be inferred from his language.

Chrystal, in his examination of "the Fathers," for whose testimony he entertains a most profound reverence, offers this as proof for immersion, but claims nothing on it in favor of trine immersion. Thus Mr. Moore's first witness utterly fails him.

The next witness quoted nearest to the time of the apostles is

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA.

Mr. Moore quotes and comments as follows:—

"Clement is addressing himself to the churches planted by the apostles—churches composed of members, many of whom were baptized by the immediate successors of the apostles--when he uses the following words: 'Ye were conducted to a bath just as Christ was carried to the grave, and were thrice immersed, to signify the three days of his burial.'—*Wiberg on Baptism*, p. 228."

We cannot say positively that Clement never wrote these words, yet we are left strongly to doubt. No reference is made to any work where they may be found. We think we have had access to and have examined all the writings that are usually ascribed to Clement, but these words are not in them. We have seen what liberty was taken with Sozomen to make him testify to their purpose, and what a strong argument is made out of *nothing* in the case of Justin; and why, if this quotation is genuine, are we not told

whence it is taken? That which is offered in proof must be shown to be proof. We have a right to call in question such loose quotations.

Chrystal, who examines the words of the Fathers at length, and sets down everything he can find in favor of trine immersion, even quoting from writings which he confesses are spurious, makes no mention of this quotation. We cannot think he would omit it if it were to be found in the works of Clement. We have no confidence (as we have no reason to believe) that the quotation is genuine. If it were, yet the reason it offers is contrary to the Scriptures, and it would then only be another proof that trine immersion was recognized in Africa earlier than anywhere else; and Africa was, even at that time, the very hot-bed of superstitious innovations in the Christian faith. See Milner as before quoted.

## TERTULLIAN.

There is no dispute that Tertullian did mention trine immersion; but he referred it only to *tradition*. This is denied by the trine immersionists, but the proof is decidedly against them. Eld. Moore publishes an appendix of *Caution* on this point. He says:—

“In the writings of Campbell, Hinton, Fuller, and Wiberg, Tertullian is accused of stating that, ‘we are immersed three times, *fulfilling* somewhat more than our Lord has decreed in the gospel.’ This, however, is simply an incorrect trans-

lation of the Latin text, the Oxford translation of which reads as follows: 'Then are we thrice dipped, *pledging* [not fulfilling] ourselves to something more than the Lord has prescribed in the gospel.' Before the candidates were baptized they pledged themselves to some things not mentioned in the gospel, and to these Tertullian refers."

These words of Eld. Moore are not warranted by the facts. Tertullian does not speak of what was done *before* baptism, but *in* baptism. And the version of Campbell, Hinton, Fuller, and Wierberg, is most accurate in following the original, which is both followed and given by Stuart, whom we quoted elsewhere. The words of Stuart in full on this passage are as follows:—

"Tertullian himself, however, seems to have regarded this *trine* immersion as something superadded to the precepts of the gospel; for thus he speaks in his book, 'De Corona Militis,' § 3: 'Thence we are thrice immersed (*ter mergitumur*), *answering*, i. e., fulfilling, *somewhat more* (*amplius aliquid respondentem*) than the Lord has decreed in the gospel.'"

Stuart is surely as literal as may be in rendering *respondentes answering*; and no one can possibly object to his making it equivalent to *fulfilling*, in this case; while the whole sentence in Tertullian points unmistakably to the action of trine immersion, and not to anything before baptism.

But there is a decisive test to which we shall now bring this matter. Bingham, "Antiquities of the Christian Church," is one of the witnesses cited by Eld. Moore, in his historical evidences. Bingham has treated the whole subject at length, though he does not directly give his own opinion of the correctness of the method. Of the derivation of trine immersion he says:—

"Some derive it from apostolic tradition; others, from the first institution of baptism by our Saviour; whilst others esteem it only an indifferent circumstance or ceremony, that may be used or omitted without any detriment to the sacrament itself, or breach of any divine appointment. Tertullian, St. Basil, and St. Jerome put it among those rites of the church which they reckon to be handed down from apostolic tradition."—*Book 11, chap. 11, § 7.*

We here learn that *the early advocates of trine immersion were not at all agreed as to its origin.* Some ascribed it to the institution of the Saviour, but these were not its earliest advocates. Others ascribed it to tradition; and still others considered it *an indifferent matter.* There was not among them such an agreement on the subject as the trine immersionists would have us believe.

It will be noticed that "apostolic tradition" is distinguished from that which was appointed by the Saviour. Tertullian, the very earliest

witness for trine immersion, and the prince of traditional innovators, "put it among those rites of the church which they reckon to be handed down from apostolic *tradition*." This shows that Eld. Moore's "Caution" is utterly futile, and that his construction of the words of Tertullian is wrong.

The first name given by Bingham among those who held that trine immersion came from the appointment of the Saviour, is that of Chrysostom; but Chrysostom lived two centuries this side of Tertullian, in a day when traditions were more firmly established as authority in the church. In a review of the whole ground we shall refer to both Tertullian and Chrysostom again. We will briefly notice

MR. REEVES.

This is a witness of great importance to trine immersionists. It is his *opinion* which makes the "fair argument" that Justin Martyr believed in trine immersion! We think, however, that injustice is done to Mr. Reeves by Mr. Moore. He might speak in truth of "the confession of those early times," which is quite indefinite, and of trine immersion in early times, without ascribing that idea to Justin. Mr. Reeves has stated the strong argument, in his own mind, for that practice, in the following words:—

"The ancients carefully observed trine immersion, insomuch that, by the 'Canons Apostolical,'



either Bishop or Presbyter who baptized without it was deposed from the ministry."

That *somebody* believed in and practiced trine immersion at an early age in the Christian church, we do not deny. But we wish the reader to bear in mind that we are now searching for the *authority* for the practice. Mr. Reeves has been quoted with great confidence, and he refers to *his* authority. This same authority is elsewhere given by Eld. Moore, so we will now notice

"THE APOSTOLICAL CANONS."

Of these, Eld. Moore says: "These 'Canons, which consist of eighty-five ecclesiastical laws, contain a view of the church government among the Greek and Oriental Christians in the early centuries of the Christian religion' (*Mosheim*, vol. 4, p. 44), and can be relied upon in tracing Christian baptism back to a very early date. Some learned men, who have made profound researches respecting the origin of these Canons, have assigned to some of them a date much earlier than A. D. 200.

"The fiftieth of the Apostolical Canons reads as follows: 'If any Bishop or Presbyter do not perform three immersions of one initiation, but one immersion which is given into the death of Christ, let him be deposed; for the Lord did not say, "Baptize into my death," but "Go ye, and

make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Do ye, therefore, O Bishops, immerse thrice—into one Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost, according to the will of Christ by the Spirit.'—*Quinter and McConnel's Debate*, p. 114."

This is that to which Mr. Reeves refers; but he does not say one word as to its date, origin, and authenticity. It was of course written by *somebody*, and that *somebody* believed in three immersions. But *who* it was, and *when* he wrote, nobody knows. It was a very common practice in those days of *pious forgeries* to label their writings *apostolical*, or to ascribe them to some worthy Christian, to give them weight among those who did not stop to discriminate between the true and the false.

These Canons are from unknown sources. They did not all come into notice at one time. Notice that Mr. Moore says: "Some learned men . . . have assigned to *some of them* a date much earlier than A. D. 200." But of *the one in question*, the fiftieth, he says nothing. He must have known some of the facts respecting it, and to endeavor to give authority to this by speaking a good word for "some of them," savors much of the same spirit which originated them. Of the Canons, Dr. Schaff says:—

"They are evidently of gradual growth, and

were collected either after the middle of the fourth century, or not till the latter part of the fifth, by some unknown hand, probably also in Syria."

These Canons are found, with notes, in a "History of Christian Councils," by Bishop Hefele, of Germany. Appended to Canon 50, the one quoted above, is this remark:—

"This Canon is among the most recent of the collection. It is not known from what source it is derived."

For the present we dismiss the Canons *Apostolical*, willingly according to the trine immersionists all the honor they acquire by the use which they make of them.

Preceding these Canons, in point of chronology, comes the testimony of

MUNNULUS, BISHOP OF GIRBA.

His words, claimed in favor of three immersions, were spoken in the seventh Council of Carthage, held under Cyprian, A. D. 256. There were eighty-five bishops present. The sole object of this council was to settle the question of the validity of baptism administered by heretics; and the unanimous testimony was that those who had been baptized by heretics must be baptized again, if they would enter the Catholic or orthodox church. Not one word was spoken against their mode or form of administering it;

only that it was invalid, or no baptism at all, because it was by the hands of a heretic. Cyprian preserved on record the decision of each member of the council. We give specimens, that the *animus* of the council may appear. Januarius of Muzzuli said:—

“I am surprised, since all confess there is one baptism, that all do not perceive the unity of the same baptism. For the church and heresy are two things, and different things. If heretics have baptism, we have it not; but if we have it, heretics cannot have it. But there is no doubt that the church alone possesses the baptism of Christ, since she alone possesses both the grace and the truth of Christ.”

Athanasius of Ausvaga said: “We have received one baptism, and that same we maintain and practice. But he who says that heretics also may lawfully baptize, makes two baptisms.”

The following we copy from Eld. Moore's book:—

“A. D. 256, while at the famous Council of Carthage, Munnulus made use of the following language in one of his speeches, preserved by Cyprian: ‘The true doctrine of our holy mother, the Catholic Church, hath always, my brethren, been with us, and doth yet abide with us, especially in the article of baptism, and the trine immersion wherewith it is celebrated; our Lord having said, “Go ye, and baptize the Gentiles, in

the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."—*Works of Cyprian*, part 1, p. 240."

The following, as the words of Munnulus, we copy from Cyprian's records of this council, in his *Works*, vol. 2, p. 204:—

"The truth of our Mother, the Catholic Church, brethren, hath always remained and still remains with us, and even especially in the Trinity of baptism, as our Lord says, 'Go ye and baptize the nations in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.' Since, then, we manifestly know that heretics have not either Father or Son or Holy Spirit, they ought, when they come to the church our Mother, truly to be born again, and to be baptized; that the cancer which they had, and the anger of damnation, and the witchery of error, may be sanctified by the holy and heavenly laver."

We fear the same liberty was taken with the words of Munnulus that was taken with the history of Sozomen. That which was called by him "the Trinity of baptism," is, by those who use his testimony to uphold a tradition, called "baptism, and the trine immersion," etc. The difference is material, there is a reduplication of the term baptism, or immersion, and the duplicate thus becomes *a word of explanation*, just such as we find inserted in the words of Sozomen.

But the query may arise, What did he mean by "the Trinity of baptism"? He explains this himself; we, says he, baptize in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Spirit, while heretics have neither Father, Son, nor Holy Spirit. Thus, instead of *three immersions* he refers to the *three persons* invoked in the act of baptism. And the same idea is still more clearly expressed by other early authors. Thus in Clement's "Recognitions," book 3, chap. 67, as follows:—

"But every one of you shall be baptized in ever-flowing water, the name of the Trine Beatitude being invoked over him."

And again twice in his "Homilies," thus:—

"Washing in a flowing river, or in a fountain, or even in the sea, with the thrice blessed invocation, you shall not only be able to drive away the spirits which lurk in you," etc.—*Hom.* 9, chap. 19.

"For there is something that is merciful from the beginning borne upon the water, and rescues from the future punishment those who are baptized with the thrice blessed invocation."—*Hom.* 11, chap. 26.

We are well aware that the "trine beatitude," or "thrice blessed invocation," drawn directly from the words of the Scriptures, was soon made the foundation of three-fold baptism, not at all based on the Scriptures, but resting on tradition only. Thus do the facts of history completely

demolish the claim of *early practice* of trine immersion, or of tracing it to the days of the apostles. We admit that it was early enough to be found among the superstitions which sprung up even in the days of Tertullian. We have little care to follow the historical testimony further, because volumes of tradition have no weight with us, and this is proved to have no other origin.

The words of Dr. Miller, of Princeton College, are worthy of constant remembrance: "Even suppose you had found such declarations in some of all or the early fathers. What then? *Historic fact is not divine institution.*"

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## CHAPTER XV.

### EUNOMIUS—WEIGHT OF HISTORICAL QUOTATIONS—THE GREEK CHURCH.

THE advocates of three immersions claim that Eunomius, Bishop of Cyzicum, was the originator of single immersion. No sufficient evidence to this effect exists. They profess to prove it by Sozomen and Theodoret. But Sozomen *does not say* what they ascribe to him. Theodoret, in his history, gives quite a full account of Eunomius, of his being condemned as a friend of Arius, of his taking the bishopric, but these words ascribed to Theodoret are not given in his History; they

are derived from another source. He has also recorded a Synodical letter of a council held in Constantinople, A. D. 381, in which are the following words:—

“ We have rejected the hypothesis of Sabellus, which confounds the three persons by denying their characteristics; neither do we receive the blasphemy of the Eunomians, of the Arians, or of the Spiritualists, who divide the substance, the nature, and the divinity of the Godhead, and who, denying the uncreated and consubstantial and co-eternal Trinity, speak of a Trinity which they represent as having been created, or as consisting of diverse natures.”

What these persons really believe will never be known. A brief notice of the treatment of heretics in those times may not be out of place. Bower says:—

“ We shall find very few, if any at all, who, upon their teaching doctrines not approved by the fathers, have not been immediately transformed by them, out of their great zeal for the purity of the faith, into monsters of wickedness, though they themselves had perhaps proposed them before for patterns of every Christian virtue. It behooves us, therefore, to be very cautious in giving credit to what they say of those whom they style heretics.”—*History of the Popes*, vol. 1, p. 150.

On reading the history of those times we have



often been impressed with the idea that ambition, rather than Christianity, prompted the dominant party, and that the zeal of the orthodox was not so strongly roused against the *lives*, or even the *doctrines*, of those called heretics, as against their *persons*. The spirit and temper of the times seem to be well expressed by Gibbon: "Religion was the pretense; but in the judgment of a contemporary saint, ambition was the genuine motive of episcopal warfare."

Eunomius was ordained bishop, probably about A. D. 360. Mr. Moore does not, indeed, *say* that the 50th Canon was of earlier date than A. D. 200, but he evidently wishes to make it appear to be so. Why else plead for its early date, saying that some learned men have ascribed to some of them a date much earlier than A. D. 200? But if the 50th Canon was even nearly as early as that, as they would have us think, how does it then appear that Eunomius originated single immersion nearly two centuries afterward? Here is an *Apostolical Canon*, if not coming from the very age of the apostles yet from their immediate successors, near enough to them to be justly called "Apostolical," which strongly condemns a practice which was not introduced till near the close of the fourth century! Chrystal so highly esteems this Canon that he constantly calls it "Canon 50 of the Apostles," and yet he contends that Eunomius, near the fifth century, was the

originator of single immersion, which this "Canon of the Apostles" so strongly condemns! So does error lean on a "tottering fence" for support.

Bishop Beveridge wrote on these canons and trine immersion. Chrystal quotes considerably from him. He says that Beveridge showed from Sozomen, "that, long before Eunomius, the Monarchians, the Praxeans, and many other heretics, denied the doctrine of the trinity, and that they, on account of this denial, did not baptize into all the persons of the trinity, since this would have seemed to teach the doctrines, nor did they use the trine immersion for the same reason, but they immersed once only, into the death of Christ." Chrystal refers approvingly to the works of Beveridge to show that the canons, including the 50th, were collected in the second century, "or at least at the beginning of the third." How, then, *can* he believe the testimony which he offers from Theodoret?

#### WEIGHT OF HISTORICAL QUOTATIONS

Those who favor trine immersion seem to think that their argument is strong if they can quote many authors who agree that trine immersion prevailed among the early Christians. We admit that it did, and ten thousand witnesses to that affect do not at all increase the truthfulness, nor yet the importance, of the fact. But, while we know that many scandalous errors, held to

this day by some, but by most repudiated, prevailed at the same time, and were introduced fully as early, the bare fact that the practice existed at an early age proves nothing at all in its favor. The question is not, Did it exist? but, By what authority did it exist? Satan existed at a very early age, and assumed to take his place among the sons of God; but neither his age nor such association gives any sanctity to his character.

If it could be shown that the church was exceedingly pure in the age of its first recognition by "the Fathers," and that no other error had yet obtained a footing among the bishops and presbyters, that would be a presumption in its favor. Yet only a *presumption*, if it cannot plainly be found in the Scriptures. *History makes no authority.* It is for this reason we did not pursue the historical argument at the first, because it has no weight in our minds. We should not have deviated from the course first marked out, to notice the historical argument at all, had it not been for the request of brethren whom we highly respect, and whose judgment we honor. We said, and we repeat it, We care nothing for what people *have done*; our sole inquiry is respecting what they *ought to have done*. History may inform us what they did, but we look to the Bible alone for duty—for what we ought to do. But in addition to this statement, we must record our most solemn conviction that history—

early history—is not at all in favor of trine immersion. We trace it directly to Africa, for its first adherents, and find them acknowledging tradition as its basis.

There are three points which we must examine: the weight of the testimony of the Greek Church; the light in which baptism was held among the ancient Christians; and the reasons which were early urged in favor of trine immersion. And first

#### THE GREEK CHURCH.

Though it is a matter of minor importance, yet Eld. Moore is not strictly correct in dating the age of the Greek Church prior to its separation from the communion of Rome in the latter part of the ninth century. Prior to that, they were considered one body; after that, the Greek and Roman churches became distinct. So far, however, as their practice is concerned, it is not, probably, affected by this circumstance. The Greek Church is often referred to as an example on the subject of baptism. It is said they ought best to understand their own original tongue; therefore it is safe to follow them in their definition of baptism.

We have said, We safely follow them *in the definition of the word*, but we dare not follow them *in their construction of the ordinance*. For this we can show a reason. In giving to *baptizein* the definition, *to immerse*, they follow the usage of the

language in which the New Testament was written. But, having established the identity of *baptism* and *immersion*, if they follow tradition, and practice three immersions, which is in truth *three baptisms*, they then depart from the Greek text of the New Testament, which plainly says *one baptism*. And here truth compels us to leave them. Eld. Moore quotes Alexander de Stourdza as declaring that the Greek Church "administer baptism after the similitude of that of Christ," and as they practice trine immersion he infers that is after that similitude. We here repeat other words of this author as follows:—

"The church of the West has, then, departed from the example of Jesus Christ; she has obliterated the whole sublimity of the exterior sign; in short, she commits an abuse of words, and of ideas, in practicing *baptism* by *aspersion* this very term being, in itself, a derisive contradiction. The verb *baptizo*, *immergo*, has in fact but one sole acceptation. It signifies literally and always *to plunge*. Baptism and immersion, therefore, are identical; and to say, *baptism* by *aspersion*, is as if one should say, *immersion* by *aspersion*, or any other absurdity of this nature."

This is surely a strong presentation of the case; but if it be true, which we all admit, that *immersion* and *baptism* are identical, it will take a wiser than Alex. de Stourdza to show that *three immersions* and *three baptisms* are not iden-

tical! And, inasmuch as *baptism* and *immersion* are equal, if *three baptisms* and *three immersions* are not equal, it is because *three are not equal to three!* There remains no dispute about the equality of *baptism* and *immersion*; the whole matter turns on the question, Is the number three *equal to itself?* Here is the absurdity of the trine immersion theory reduced to a mathematical demonstration. For it is an axiom that if equals are added to equals the results are equal. Then, as *three* are equal to *three*, if they be added respectively to *immersion* and to *baptism*, which are also equals, the results are equal. Hence *three immersions* equal *three baptisms*. We would be pleased to see somebody try to establish the converse of this proposition. But three baptisms are contrary to the Scriptures; therefore three immersions are contrary to the Scriptures.

Mr. Moore quotes Dr. Carson to confirm the view that the *three* immersions (properly designated three baptisms by Dr. Carson) have respect to the action, while one baptism (properly one immersion) has respect to the rite. Dr. Carson said:—

“The three immersions are, *in the estimation of those who used them*, only one rite.”

Dr. Carson was a very conscientious man. He sacrificed everything that a man of the highest culture and best worldly prospects could sacri-

fice to introduce immersion into the practice of the church. But he never uttered one word in favor of three immersions, as we would expect him to do if he believed that to be the sense of the Scripture injunction.

There is, moreover, an error in distinguishing between the *action* and the *rite*. A rite is necessarily an action; the sense of one determines the sense of the other. The distinction assumed, "in the estimation of those who used them," as Dr. Carson said, we assert is unjust. Mr. Moore says of Alexander Campbell's advocacy of one baptism:—

"The one baptism, or one immersion, seen by Campbell, was not the action by which the rite was performed, but the rite itself. . . . The three immersions seen through his historical glasses were the same thing, only under a different appearance."

And it is only by the magic power of "historical glasses" that anybody can see three immersions. The real value of the sight we have tried to lay before our readers. We have noticed for some time that *historical spectacles* are a panacea with a certain class given to *theological squinting*. We consider it a device of empirics, injurious to the *moral vision*, sometimes resulting in *total Bible obscuration*.

Constantinople was the central city of the Greek Church, as Rome was and is of the Latin.

The present head of the Greek Church, so-called, is the Czar of Russia. They were of one communion till the ninth century; but it was decided by Pope Gregory the Great that a diversity of practice in regard to baptism did not invalidate the ordinance. We have seen that the Greek Church do not act consistently with the New Testament in practicing three baptisms. Have we any other reasons for distrusting their testimony and their example? We have.

1. They practice *infant baptism*, which is plainly a corruption of the ordinance. They profess to found this also directly on the teachings of Christ; affirming that baptism is the birth spoken of in John 3:5, which only can secure their entrance into the kingdom of God. Thus we see that we cannot safely trust to their example, nor to their claim that they derive it from the Scriptures.

2. They practice *infant communion*, which is also a corruption of the gospel. But they profess to draw this also from Christ's own words in John 6:53, 54. They affirm that in the communion is the flesh and blood of Christ, which infants also must eat and drink, or lose eternal life. This, another perversion of Scripture, proves that they are not safe guides in faith and practice.

3. In common with the Latins, the Greek Church are addicted to the grossest idolatry in image worship. This is confessed by Chrystal, who yet



points us to the Greek Church as worthy to be followed in its three immersions. Thus he says:—

“The Greek Church in the matter of image worship and creature worship, and the prevalence of superstition, is nearly as far from primitive truth as the Latin.” Page 140.

And again:—

“This church, with all these grand memories and advantages in its own worship, is, *in practice*, the most thoroughly creature-worshiping part of Christendom.” Page 168.

How inconsistent, then, to ask us to follow the Greek Church with the idea that in her practices we shall find the ordinances of the gospel preserved in their purity!

4. They acknowledge the authority of *tradition*, holding it equal to the Scriptures. It is well known that the authority of tradition was placed beyond question *in the whole Catholic Church*, long before the separation of the Greek and Latin parts. But we need not argue the point on this occasion, for Eld. Moore himself says: “Indeed, the scriptural and traditional authority are with the Greeks equally binding.” This decides the question as to the value of their practice as example for us. The Scriptures are our *only* rule. We can harmonize with others as far as they harmonize with this rule; when they leave it, or corrupt it, or exalt tradition to an equality with it, we cheerfully take another direction, and separate from their company.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## BAPTISM IN THE FIRST CENTURIES.

IF the example of the church in the first centuries is of any weight or importance as indicating our duty in regard to baptism, it can only be because they preserved it in purity. For if they did not preserve it pure—if they perverted and corrupted it—then their example should be *avoided* and *not followed*. We shall now give abundant reasons for not only distrusting the acknowledged teachers and leaders of the early centuries, but turning away from them with feelings of pity for their blindness and folly, if, indeed, we are not led to indulge stronger feelings than those of pity.

Bingham gives the various titles which were given to baptism, going back as early as Tertulian. It was called “absolution,” for an evident reason; “regeneration of the soul;” “illumination,” because it was supposed to impart a knowledge of divine things to the understanding; “salvation,” because it was supposed to be necessary to salvation and to insure it; “the sign of God,” “character Dominicus,” because the character of the Lord was supposed to be imparted to the subject! “It was a saying that baptism washes away all sins.” It was for this reason that Con-

stantine, for thirteen years after he professed Christianity, refused to be baptized, only requesting it on his death-bed, thus to make sure that his sins might all go together, as if to "compound his felonies" with Heaven! It was considered useful for physical as well as spiritual disorders, as a cure for diseases. Bingham relates that those who had no interest in Christianity themselves used to carry their infants to the bishops for baptism, in order to preserve them from diseases. It is said of Novatus, "From a hope of recovering his health he professed Christianity." "He was baptized in his bed when apparently about to die." Such were the views of baptism in the second, third, and fourth centuries.

Connected with it, and as necessary to the full performance of baptism as "trine immersion," was the "renunciation." And Bingham says, "The antiquity of this renunciation is evidenced from all the writers that have said anything of baptism." If antiquity gives authority or makes it *apostolical*, then this ceremony must be accepted! Bingham gives Dionysius as his authority, thus:—

"In another place he thus describes the whole ceremony: The priest makes the person to be baptized to stand with his hands stretched out toward the west, and striking them together (the original denotes collision, or striking them together by way of abhorrence); then he bids him

thrice exsufflate, or spit, in defiance of Satan; afterwards, thrice repeating the solemn words of renunciation, he bids him thrice renounce him in that form; then he turns him about toward the east, and with his hands and eyes lift up to Heaven, bids him enter into covenant with Christ. Vicecomes thinks this triple renunciation was made, either because there were three things which men renounced in their baptism, the devil, his pomps, and the world; or to signify the three persons of the Trinity, by whom they were adopted as sons upon their renouncing Satan."—*Book 11, chap. 7, § 3 and 5.* Section 4 says, "It was accompanied with some other ceremonies."

Then there were the unction, signing with the cross, and the consecration of the water.

"The bishop begins the unction by thrice signing him with the sign of the cross, and then commits him to the priests to be anointed all over the body; whilst he goes and consecrates the water in the font."—*Id.*

"—The unction of confirmation, which was then usually the conclusion of baptism, both in adult persons and infants; and many of the passages which speak of the sign of the cross in baptism do plainly relate to this as an appendage of baptism, and closely joined to it, as the last ceremony and consummation of it."—*Book 11, chap. 7, § 4.*

And § 3 says, "The water of baptism was signed with the sign of the cross."

There is no doubt that the ceremony of consecrating and crossing the water had much to do in building up the idea of the wondrous effects of the water of baptism, both physically and spiritually. Thus Chrysostom said:—

“They who approach the baptismal font are not only made clean from all wickedness, but holy and also just. Although a man should be foul with every human vice, the blackest that can be named, yet should he fall into the baptismal pool, he ascends from the baptismal waters purer than the beams of noon.” *See Coleman, Ancient Chris. Exemplified*, pp. 368, 369.

There was a regenerating and saving power ascribed to the consecrated waters. Neander says:—

“Chrysostom specifies ten different effects of grace wrought in baptism; and then he complains of those who make the grace of baptism consist simply in the forgiveness of sin.”—*Vol. 2*, p. 665.

This superstition of consecrating and crossing the water, dates as early as the age of Tertullian. Of its efficacy he thus speaks:—

“All waters, therefore, in virtue of the pristine privilege of their origin, do, after invocation of God, attain the sacramental power of sanctification; for the Spirit immediately supervenes from the heavens, and rests over the waters, sanctifying them from himself; and being thus sanctified,

they imbibe at the same time the power of sanctifying."—*Tertullian on Baptism*, chap. 6.

This mass of nonsensical mockery is traced to the second century, almost to the very time of the apostles!

Tertullian mentions, also, *sponsors* in baptism and *penance* for sins after baptism. He is the first writer who mentions them, and also some other errors; but his mention proves that such *customs* existed in Africa in his day.

We have said that Tertullian first mentions sprinkling for baptism, and quoted from him wherein he relates that the candidate was *both immersed and sprinkled*.

There seems to be no doubt that sprinkling was first introduced, with many other things herein related, as *an addition* to baptism, and not altogether as a *substitute* for it. This is confirmed by the ritual of the Armenians, which required that the candidate be both sprinkled and immersed. But such additions or appendages soon supplant the original, as man, in the pride of his heart, ever tries to introduce his own institutions as an improvement of the Lord's plan. The following words of Tertullian do clearly show that, in his day, sprinkling was considered sufficient to fulfill the act of baptism. They are concerning a controversy as to whether the apostles were baptized by other than John's baptism. He says:—

"Others make the suggestion—forced enough,

clearly—‘that the apostles then served the turn of baptism when, in their little ship, they were *sprinkled* and covered with the waves; that Peter himself also was immersed enough when he walked on the sea.’ It is, however, as I think, one thing to be sprinkled or intercepted by the violence of the sea; another thing to be baptized in obedience to the discipline of religion. . . . Now whether they were baptized *in any manner whatever*, or whether they continued unbathed to the end,” etc.—*Tertullian on Baptism*, chap. 2.

Reading these remarks, we must bear in mind that Tertullian does not speak against sprinkling itself, but against the occasion referred to, as not being in “the discipline of religion.” For he elsewhere shows that sprinkling was then practiced in baptism, and his words, “baptized in any manner whatever,” show that one particular manner was not then deemed essential.

Also in his book on Repentance, chap. 6, urging a genuine repentance, he says:—

“For who will grant to you, a man of so faithless repentance, one single sprinkling of any water whatever?”

The prevalence of *infant baptism* at this early day cannot be fairly questioned. The historical evidence on this point is very full and explicit. Tertullian himself did not favor the baptism of infants, not because he did not regard the ordinance in the same light in which it was regarded

by others, but he held the same view which afterward influenced Constantine. However, where death was to be apprehended, he thought they ought to be baptized. Bingham draws a just conclusion from Tertullian's opposition to it, thus:—

“Of his own private opinion he was for deferring the baptism of infants, especially where there was no danger of death, till they came to years of discretion; but he so argued for this, as to show us that the practice of the church was otherwise.”—*Book 11, chap. 4 § 10.*

We should not overlook this important fact, right here, that, though the words of Tertullian prove the *practice* of infant baptism, they equally prove that he did not consider it of authority higher than tradition. Had he believed that it was in accordance with a Scripture commandment, he certainly would not have argued against it.

We think there is no room to doubt that “the practice of the church” in the second century, especially in Africa, the home of Tertullian, was to baptize infants.

Cyprian argues in its behalf thus, in his letter to Titus:—

“Who comes for that reason more easily to receive forgiveness of sins, because they are not his own but other men's sins, that are forgiven him.”—*Id.*, § 12.



This unscriptural idea, well worthy of the darkness and superstition of the age in which it originated, is held to this very day by Protestant churches which practice infant baptism.

Origen also uses this custom as an argument for the sinfulness of infants! A stronger evidence that the custom prevailed could not be required. Bingham quotes Origen's views on this point, and remarks as follows:—

“It may be inquired, What is the reason why the baptism of the church, which is given for the remission of sins, is, by the custom of the church, given to infants also? Whereas if there were nothing in infants that wanted remission and indulgence, the grace of baptism might seem needless to them. . . . Infants are baptized for the forgiveness of sins.’ . . . He affirms, that the church received the order of baptizing infants from the apostles.”—*Book 11, chap. 4, § 11.*

Cyprian and his colleagues in council decided that infants might be baptized as soon as born, lest they should die without baptism. Cyprian's own words in defense of this are these:—

“As far as we can, we must strive that, if possible, no soul be lost.”—*Cyprian*, vol. 1, p. 198.

This shows that it was the belief in that early age that unbaptized infants were lost. And all this they professed to derive from the teachings of Christ and his apostles!

With infant baptism came *infant communion*.

The Greek Church, that pattern of Christian faith and practice in the eyes of trine immersionists, yet retains both these rites handed down from early fathers. St. Augustine, and others whose evidence is relied upon to prove the validity of three immersions, advocated infant communion. Dr. Schaff calls it "the incongruous system of infant communion, which seemed to follow from infant baptism." It *naturally* followed infant baptism, and accompanied it in the practice of *the whole church* for about six hundred or seven hundred years. By the whole church, we mean all embraced in the communion of Rome. But it is no more incongruous, no more unscriptural, than infant baptism. And this was *ancient* as well as *general*. Quoting from Cyprian, Bingham says:—

"Here we may observe that children were made partakers of the eucharist (which Cyprian calls the meat and drink of the Lord); and this is evident from other passages of the same author; which is a further evidence for the practice of infant baptism; for it is certain that none but baptized persons were allowed to partake of the eucharist at the Lord's table."—*Antiquities*, book 11, chap. 4, § 12.

Dr. Schaff seems to think it had the strongest hold among the North African churches. It is highly probable that it took its *earliest* hold there; but the evidence clearly shows that it

became as general as infant baptism or three immersions, or three *aspersions*; for it is true that *three sprinklings* or *three pourings* were admitted, as well as *three immersions*.

The reader will readily agree with us that this is enough on this subject. The early church, even in the second century, did *not* retain baptism in the purity of the gospel. They connected with it an almost inconceivable number of rites, some of them of the most ridiculous form and nature. Therefore it is beyond all question true that we do not safely appeal to them for the true practice—the gospel form, and apostolic practice—of baptism.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### REASONS FOR THREE IMMERSIONS— THE CONSEQUENCES.

A most important point remains to be noticed. It is that of *the reasons offered for three immersions*. It will generally be found that in regard to religious rites and institutions, scriptural *reasons* and scriptural *methods* stand or fall together. When any people give an unscriptural reason for their practice, the presumption is that their practice is itself unscriptural, or a perversion of Scripture. Very early in the Christian church, reasons were assigned for three immersions which

are either contrary to the Scriptures, or others than those given in the Scriptures. While on the other hand, wherever we find "one baptism" literally and strictly followed, there we find the scriptural reason assigned for the action.

1. Paul says we are baptized into the Saviour's death, and raised in the likeness of his resurrection. But this reason was not only ignored, but *condemned*, by those who advocated three immersions. This speaks more against the theory and practice than whole volumes of history can speak in its favor. It brands it as an innovation, setting aside both gospel faith and gospel practice. Speaking of trine immersion, Bingham says:—

"Two reasons are commonly assigned for this practice: 1. That it might represent Christ's three days' burial. . . . 2. Another reason was that it might represent their faith in the holy Trinity."

Pope Gregory the Great wrote to one who inquired of this:—

"Concerning the three immersions in baptism, you have judged very truly already, that different rites and customs do not prejudice the whole church, whilst the unity of faith remains. The reason why we use three immersions (at Rome) is to signify the mystery of Christ's three days' burial, that whilst an infant is thrice lifted up out of the water, the resurrection on the third day may be expressed thereby."

This *reason* is unscriptural and inconsistent. We are baptized into Christ's death; he died but once. We are raised in the *likeness* of his resurrection; he was raised but once. "Thrice lifted up out of the water" cannot be made to represent his resurrection, even though a *great pope* says it; while the Scriptures say nothing at all of the three days being represented by baptism.

The very first witness *claimed* by trine immersionists as speaking in favor of the practice, gives the same unscriptural reason. This is Clement of Alexandria. We believe that the testimony is apocryphal; but if it is not, it only serves to show how very early this erroneous view was grafted into the Christian faith. These are the words ascribed to Clement:—

"Ye were conducted to a bath, just as Christ was carried to the grave, and were thrice immersed to signify the three days of his burial."

Thus this testimony, whatever its origin, stands self-condemned, as being directly outside of the scriptural ideas of baptism. It is based on a false view of the ordinance.

And the famous fiftieth "Apostolical Canon," which does such good service in the cause of trine immersion, says:—

"If any bishop or presbyter do not perform three immersions of one initiation, but one immersion which is given into the death of Christ, let him be deposed."

The word of the Lord is yea and amen, not yea and nay. If we had no other evidence that the three-immersion theory is based on a false construction of our Lord's commission, this is sufficient, that it could only be maintained by setting aside the words of Paul in Rom. 6. There is no discrepancy in baptizing into the names of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and baptizing into the death of Christ, if we preserve, in the action, the likeness of his burial and resurrection. But it was clearly seen by the originators and early advocates of three immersions, that that practice could never be harmonized with the words of Rom. 6. Therefore an order of deposition was issued against any one who baptized into the death of Christ, notwithstanding that such was the baptism of the gospel according to the *writings* of the apostle Paul, not according to "apostolical *tradition*."

And not only the early advocates of three baptisms denied the words of the apostle on this subject, but their followers of the present day maintain the same unscriptural position. Thus Mr. Moore, speaking of the words imputed to Clement, says:—

"Christ was placed in the grave, they in the water; Christ three days, they three times."

It is only by a wondrous strain of the language that any analogy can be found between three immersions and lying three days in the grave. If

Christ had been *buried once each day*, or had *three times died and been buried*, then they would have their case. But as he *died once*, and was *buried once*, and was *raised up once*, we can be baptized into the likeness of his death and raised in the likeness of his resurrection only by a single burial or immersion, and a single rising out of the water. And all the flourish about "the fathers" so well understanding the Greek language, amounts to nothing on this question. The Greek can never be forced to favor "three baptisms," three burials, or three resurrections. Good common sense and reverence for the exact words of Scripture are quite as essential as a knowledge of the Greek.

We *know* that these same fathers were advocates of innovations and absurdities in both faith and practice. And we are assured that if they speak not according to the law and the testimony their words are not light, but darkness.

Again: Mr. Moore makes the Scriptures conflict with themselves in the following language:—

"The law of holy baptism demands that all persons should be baptised 'into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,' while the contrary law requires baptism 'into the death of Christ.'"

We know not in what words to express our surprise that a man should quote *the exact words of Scripture* which refer to baptism, and denounce them as a "contrary law" and a perversion of

the doctrine of baptism! The words of Rom. 6 : 3-5 are as follows:—

“ Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him 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. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.”

These words, according to Eld. Moore, contain the “ contrary law ” which he and his associates refuse to follow! We fully agree with him that it contains a rule clearly and explicitly *contrary* to “ trine immersion.” But we never shall admit that these words of Paul’s are contrary to the commission of the Saviour while we retain any reverence and respect for the Bible.

One thing is now most clearly proved, which is this: ROM. 6 : 3-5 IS CONTRARY TO THE CONSTRUCTION WHICH IS PUT UPON THE COMMISSION BY THE TRINE IMMERSIONISTS. This is proved by their arguments and their own admissions. The conflict is evident and the issue is a plain one. And one question alone remains: Which is correct, Rom. 6 : 3-5, or their construction of the commission? We are at no loss for the answer. We do not see how any one can have confidence in their view of the commission while it involves



such a plain contradiction of the Scriptures. The trine-immersion theory stands self-condemned.

2. Those who will have the patience to read the writers of the early centuries in their controversies over the doctrine of the Trinity, must agree in this, that very much which was then written on the subject was an interminable jargon, a bitter contention over words to no profit; made up more largely of invectives and personal criminations than of argument; showing more zeal for party success than piety. With one thing we have been particularly struck,—that the dominant or orthodox writers sometimes expressed their faith in the very same words which were bitterly assailed as the rankest heresy when used by an opposing party. The “Athanasian creed” was saved only by the greater influence of the bishop of Rome. Athanasius himself was not always considered orthodox; he was not only banished from his place in the church, but a reward was set upon him by the emperor Constantius “to whomsoever should bring him alive or dead.” The bishop of Rome endeavored to procure his pardon, to whom the emperor replied:—

“All, without exception, have been injured by him, but none so deeply as I have been. Not content with occasioning the death of my eldest brother, he endeavored to excite Constans, of blessed memory, against me; and had not his aims been frustrated by my moderation, he

would have caused a violent contest between us. None of the victories which I have gained, not even those obtained over Magnentius and Silvanus, appear so satisfactory to me as the ejection of this despicable man from the government of the church."—*Theodoret*, book 2, chap. 16.

The creed was formulated and the faith defined by Athanasius. Previous to that time there was no settled method of expression, if, indeed there was anywhere any uniformity of belief. Most of the early writers had been pagan philosophers, who to reach the minds of that class, often made strong efforts to prove that there was a blending of the two systems, Christianity and philosophy. There is abundance of material in their writings to sustain this view. Bingham speaks of the vague views held by some in the following significant terms:—

"There were some *very early* that turned the doctrine of the Trinity into Tritheism, and, instead of three divine persons under the economy of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, brought in three collateral, co-ordinate, and self-originated beings, making them three absolute and independent principles, without any relation of Father or Son, which is the most proper notion of three gods. And having made this change in the doctrine of the Trinity, *they made another change answerable to it in the form of baptism.*"—*Antiquities*, book 11, chap. 3, § 4

Who can distinguish between this form of expression and that put forth by the council of Constantinople in A. D. 381, wherein the true faith is declared to be that of "an uncreated and consubstantial and co-eternal Trinity"? The truth is that we find the same idea which is here described by Bingham running through much of the orthodox literature of the second and third centuries. There is no proper "relation of *Father* and *Son*" to be found in the words of the council, above quoted. And we willingly leave it with the good judgment of every unprejudiced reader that *three baptisms* are more consistent with the idea of "three collateral, co-ordinate, and self-originated beings," than with the idea of baptism into the names of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and in the likeness of the Saviour's death and resurrection.

Bingham says this error in regard to a Trinity of three co-ordinate and self-originated and independent beings arose in the church *very early*; and so we find it in the earliest authors after the days of the apostles. He said that a change was made in the form of baptism corresponding to this form of belief; and so we find that *three baptisms* were announced by the same writers. Three baptisms are contrary to the express words of the Scripture and contrary to the Scripture ideas of baptism into the death and resurrection of Christ. We must determine, and

that to a certainty, that *three baptisms* is that erroneous *form* which was made to correspond to the doctrine of *three co-eternal beings*, which did not regard the true relation of *Father* and *Son*, and which gave rise to a rejection of the baptism of the gospel, into the death of Christ.

Eld. Moore says:—

“We have shown conclusively that Justin was baptized ‘in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,’ and by trine immersion, which traces trine immersion in an unbroken line to within thirty-three years of the close of the apostolic age.”

We quote this to show with what surpassing confidence he claims to have proved conclusively that of which he has not given one particle of evidence. And this seems to be characteristic of that class. The most absurd and improbable things are put forth with as much assurance as if they were demonstrated. Again he says:—

“The origin of single immersion can be found among the innovations of the fourth century, while sprinkling and pouring, as well as infant baptism, can boast of no better birth.”

We say that single immersion has not been and *cannot be* traced to the innovations of the fourth century. It is according to the plain teachings of the New Testament; and the historian or tradition-monger who seeks to elevate

another form to its place only proves that he does not follow the light of divine truth. And, if Eld. Moore means to say that sprinkling and pouring and infant baptism are also among the innovations of the fourth century, then he states what every one knows to be untrue who does not take all his historical knowledge at second-hand. Or, if he means to say that sprinkling and pouring and infant baptism, and, we may add, infant communion, have not as good historical evidence in their favor as trine immersion has, he then speaks against his own knowledge, or shows that his knowledge of history is very limited. Let this be specially noticed: While history is the chief dependence of trine immersion, it is not one whit more strongly fortified by history than are sprinkling, infant baptism, and infant communion. On this point we are willing to rest the case on the evidence herein presented.

Chrystal, who is quoted so largely by the advocates of trine immersion, advocates infant baptism as strongly as he does trine immersion. And he defends tradition, because by it he proves these dogmas. But it is a suspicious circumstance that he is silent in regard to infant communion, which, he must know, is as strongly entrenched in tradition, as are infant baptism and trine immersion. Infant baptism and infant communion are logically inseparable; they stand

or fall together, so far as reason and traditional evidence are concerned.

#### THE CONSEQUENCES.

Some may be led to inquire, Does it not invalidate the Christian faith, or raise a doubt of the accuracy and sufficiency of the New Testament, to thus prove that the writers of the second and third centuries were so divided in sentiment, or so completely followers of traditions? We answer, not at all. It proves the correctness of the New Testament, which pointed out this very state of things as soon to exist after the days of the apostles. Even in their own times they had to labor against this spirit of contention and division, which already began to distract the churches. Paul at Ephesus said:—

“For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.”

This fitly represents the condition of the poor, distracted church, under the leadership of ambitious men, such as obtained the controlling influence in the early centuries. We have no doubt that many honest souls mourned over this declension, but the willful and the ambitious are the ones who are heard, and who leave their impress on the multitude, and stand out most

prominent in history. This contentious and ambitious spirit gave rise to the Roman hierarchy, a dominion in the church of Christ such as the Scriptures never sanctioned, and Christ himself forbade. The Papacy, as a power among the kingdoms of earth, was erected in the sixth century; but we shall greatly mistake if we think it arose so late as that. Paul, speaking of the "falling away" and the revealing of the "man of sin," said, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work." We must bear in mind that this mystery of iniquity was working *in the church*; it was by a *falling away* that the man of sin was developed.

Such being the case, is it any credit to any system or doctrine that it found advocates and followers in that age? If we pay proper regard to the warnings of the apostles, and respect to the Scriptures as the only and sufficient rule of faith and practice, we shall rather avoid quoting the opinions of "the fathers" in favor of any dogma, knowing that they lived in an age of darkness and great confusion. We pass no judgment upon their sincerity of purpose or honesty of intention. But we do affirm that it is not safe to follow every one who, we think, intends well; we must remember their liability to be deceived. We contend for "the Bible and the Bible alone." Centuries ago this was declared to be "the religion of Protestants." But alas for the

day! Protestants, or those calling themselves by this name, are turning again to the fog of tradition for support, and rejoice when they can find the testimony of *the fathers* on their side, as if they had found great treasures.

We do not consider it necessary to consume time and space to show why the writings of the fathers have not been preserved as free from corruptions and interpolations as the Holy Scriptures. Reasons, good and sufficient, may be given. We never feel more thankful that we have the Bible, given by inspiration of God, and wonderfully preserved by the providence of God, than when we are reading the writings of the successors of the apostles. They present a labyrinth of contradictions and superstitions, from which we turn to find glad relief in the writings of those who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

"Should all the forms that men devise  
Assault my faith with treacherous art,  
I'd call them vanity and lies,  
And bind the gospel to my heart."



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