

# Which is the Correct Christian Baptism

According to the New Testament?

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# Which is the Correct Christian Baptism?

**B**APTISM is an ordinance of definite institution in the New Testament, and it is the bounden duty of every true Christian to inquire therein as to his relation to the ordinance and to observe it in the Divinely prescribed way.

To the Bible alone we appeal as our final standard, using the testimony of scholars and famous men only to convince the gainsayers.

## SEVEN BAPTISMS

are mentioned in the Scriptures.

1. **The Baptism unto Moses.** The event is recorded in Exodus 14. 22: "And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left." The New Testament application is, "All our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor. 10. 1, 2).

2. **The Baptism of John.** The details are given in Matthew 3. 1: "In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, and saying, Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand...and were all baptised of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." John demanded a certain moral condition before he baptised those who came to him (Matt. 3. 7-12). That John's was a baptism unto repentance in view of the Kingdom is clear from Matthew 3. 8,

Mark 1. 4, and Acts 2. 38; that it was preparatory to Christ is clear from Matthew 2. 3; and that it was set aside by Christian baptism is also clear from Acts 1. 22; 18. 25; 19. 1-5.

3. **The Baptism of Jesus** at the beginning of His public ministry, detailed in Matthew 3. 13-17: "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan, unto John, to be baptised of him...and Jesus, when He was baptised, went up straight-way out of the water...and, lo, a Voice from Heaven, saying, This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This baptism at the beginning of our Lord's ministry was doubtless a figure of

4. **The Baptism of the Cross**, at the close of His ministry. Concerning this, He said, "I have a baptism to be baptised with; and how am I straitened (or pained) till it be accomplished" (Luke 12. 50). What this baptism meant is foretold in the prophetic words of the Saviour; "O My God, My soul is cast down within Me...Deep called unto deep...all Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over Me" (Psa. 42. 6, 7), and prefigured in the person of the real prophet, Jonah, who cried, "For Thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all Thy billows and Thy waves passed over me" (Jonah 2. 3).

ELIZABETH C. CLEPHANE, writer of the hymn, "The Ninety and Nine," expresses the feeling of the child of God who seeks to understand the meaning of this Baptism of Suffering, when she says:

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"But none of the ransomed ever knew,  
How *deep* were the waters crossed,  
Nor how *dark* was the Night that the Lord  
passed through,  
Ere He found the sheep that was lost."

These baptisms of our Lord possessed certain features in common; both were voluntary, in accordance with the will and purpose of God, an entire submersion under a distinctive element, an emergence therefrom to triumph and the manifestation of Divine favour.

Who would dare to assert that the baptism of suffering was a petty sprinkling of judgment, a mere pouring of wrath, or anything but a complete submersion under the awful wrath and curse of God. If not concerning the baptism at the end, why assume such concerning the baptism at the beginning of that blessed life of holiness and obedience?

**5. The Baptism of the Spirit.** Foretold by John. "I indeed baptise you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after Me...He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (Matt. 3. 11). Reaffirmed by the Lord in Acts 1. 5, "John truly baptised with water, but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence." Experienced by the united disciples in Acts 2. 3, 4: "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." That baptism of the Spirit was usually a prelude to the baptism in water is attested by the Apostle in Acts 10. 44-48; "While

Peter yet spake these words the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word... Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptised, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"

This is the portion of every "believer in the Lord Jesus Christ" affirmed in 1 Corinthians, addressed to "the Church of God at Corinth, with *all* that in *every* place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." Chapter 12. 12: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and *all* the members of that one body, being many, are one body...for in one Spirit were we *all* baptised into one body...and were all made to drink of one Spirit" (R.V.).

6. **The Baptism of Judgment**, yet to come. "He shall baptise you with fire. He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matt. 3. 11, 12). "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven...in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God" (2 Thess. 1. 7, 8). "And fire came down from God out of Heaven, and consumed them" (Rev. 20. 9). As God immersed the world in *water* in the days of Noah, so will He immerse it in *fire* in the "day of judgment" (2 Peter 3. 5-11). Then it shall emerge a "new heaven and a new earth" (Rev. 21. 1).

7. **The Baptism of Believers**, or Christian Baptism, which is our theme, and into which we now seek to inquire as to "What saith the Scripture?" (Rom. 4. 3).

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### I. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTISM.

In the olden days, when the celebration of the Deliverance out of the House of Bondage was being observed, the question anticipated related not to the time, or manner, but to the *meaning* of the Passover. "And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, *What mean ye by this service?*" (Exod. 12. 26). So with this Divine ordinance, we inquire, "What is the significance or meaning?" For answer let us refer to the New Testament, and note what it teaches:

"The saints and faithful brethren at COLOSSE" were said to be "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. 1. 2; 2. 12).

The saints at ROME were asked: "Are ye ignorant that all who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death?" and were assured, "We were buried therefore with Him through baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6. 3, 4, R.V.). The words "like" (v. 4), "likeness" (v. 5), "likewise" (v. 11), indicate our oneness with Christ.

Thus clearly signifying that baptism is the

#### **Symbol of the Identification of the Believer with Christ**

in His death, burial, and resurrection. Identity

or identification with Christ in His death, as He passed through those awful billows of judgment; identification with Christ in His burial, when He was laid in Joseph's rock-hewn tomb; identification with Christ in His glorious resurrection, and in all the blessed and eternal results of what He has done for the glory of God.

Going under the water, the believer says: "I have been crucified with Christ, I am buried with Him by baptism into death." Rising up out of the typical grave, he further says: "Like as Christ was raised from the dead, I have been raised with Him." "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2. 20). As I go under the water I should say: "Old things have passed away;" and, as I rise up out of the water, "Behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5. 17). Henceforth I seek to "walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6. 4-11; Col. 3. 1-5).

### **Pictured in the Twelve Stones.**

Is this act not beautifully pictured in the passing of the Children of Israel out of bondage into liberty. The place where "the feet of the priests stood firm in the midst of Jordan" was marked by twelve stones, erected in the *bed* of the river and left there. Twelve other stones were taken out of the bottom of the river and "*carried* unto the place where they lodged." When the children asked, "What mean ye by these stones?" they explained how they had gone to the bottom of Jordan, the river of death, and had come up out of it on the other side, a resurrection people,

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in a new land, and these were memorial stones (Joshua 4. 1-11).

In a certain hall it is told of the surprise of the hallkeeper at finding an old black tobacco pipe in the baptistry. Inquiry elicited the fact that a slave to drink and tobacco, saved by grace, and recently baptised, had taken this part of the "old man" and left it in the bed of the river, never meaning to give it a resurrection. Not only this, but many other things pertaining to the flesh—wrath, strife, hatred, variance, envyings and things vile, questionable, and not convenient—might well be given a similar burial.

### What Baptism is NOT.

Having set forth what baptism signifies, it may be well to be emphatic as to what it is not.

Baptism does not indicate THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE OLD MAN, but rather the opposite. It is a testimony to inbred corruption. "In my flesh dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7. 18). The "old man" in the believer has been judged, set aside, and passed away (as a condemning power) at the Cross. "I have *died*."

Baptism is NOT THE DOOR TO HEAVEN. The dying thief reached Paradise apart from baptism of any kind, and so will every one who truly accepts Christ as Lord and Master. Yet many believe it is necessary for Heaven. Even CRANMER, the martyr, made this remarkable statement, "Our second birth is by the water of baptism." And this thought runs through most Anglican theology. But this has not the slightest



warrant from the Word of God. On the contrary it makes plain that there is no salvation in *water*, whether it be sprinkling, pouring, or dipping, whether it be as is used in the British Royal Family, supposed Holy Water from the Holy Land, or water fresh or salt. "Apart from the shedding of *blood* there is no remission" (Heb. 9. 22). Once, and only once did *perfect* Blood stain this sin-polluted earth. Of that Blood alone can it be said "The Blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1. 7). As this is vital, and means the Paradise of God, or the Lake of Fire for Eternity, let every reader be mercilessly clear that their sole hope for Glory is in "the Blood of His Cross" (Col. 1. 20).

Baptism is NOT THE DOOR TO THE CHURCH, or the Assembly. Every child of God ought to be baptised because the Lord commands it (Matt. 28. 19, 20; Mark 16. 15), the Apostles practised it (*see references to Acts, to follow*), and those "who gladly received the Word" obeyed it (Acts 2. 41); but there is no warrant for withholding Christian fellowship from those who, on account of false teaching, heart trouble, or various other health reasons, may not feel free thus to obey their Lord. Teach them, pray for them, put them in touch with some Aquila or Priscilla who will "expound unto them the way of God more perfectly" (Acts 18. 26), but do not attempt to "*compel* them to see the truth" as has verily been suggested.

### **Baptism by Compulsion.**

Years ago, an educated lady sought fellowship

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in Marble Hall, Glasgow. She had been brought up a Presbyterian, and had not seen the truth of believers baptism. After sitting back a Sunday or two, and being pressed on the matter, she said, "Well, if it is your rule that I *must* be baptised before I can have fellowship, although I do not see it, I am willing to fall in with your wishes." Dear Mr. Caldwell used to tell how they held up their hands in horror at such a tragedy—baptised because of a man-made law. They welcomed her "because she belonged to Christ" (Mark 9. 41); and he used to add "Within three months we had the joy of baptising her as an intelligent believer identifying herself with her Lord and Master."

Need we add that baptism is NOT "A MEANINGLESS ORDINANCE" of "no account," as has more than once been foolishly said; and as is assumed by the Society of Friends and the Salvation Army in their deliberate setting aside of this "ordinance" of God. None can controvert this fact, that the best days of the Church have ever been days when "the ordinances were kept as delivered," and were well to the fore. And the individual, Church, or community which has dared to set baptism aside as of "no account" has withered and decayed as a spiritual force, as is manifest in the two companies named, and will be more so in years to come. "He that rejecteth, rejecteth not man, but God" (1 Thess. 4. 8, *m.*).

There can be nothing "meaningless" or of "no account" if found in the Word of God. Hence it behoves every true believer to search the God-given guide for himself. The Lord

Jesus said, "If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples *indeed*" (John 8. 31).

"A young man called upon his minister, and told him that his mind was much troubled about baptism. 'Indeed!' said the minister, 'and pray, what books have you been reading on the subject?' The young man replied, 'I have only been reading the New Testament.' 'Ah, John,' answered the minister, 'if I had read only the New Testament, I should have been immersed long ago.'"

### **Blessed but Not Baptised.**

Dr. HANDLEY MOULE, late Bishop of Durham, cites this remarkable case:

"Not many years ago a man, awakened to Divine faith and love, called to see his devout and holy pastor, and told his tale of peace and joy. 'These are the fruits of your baptism' (meaning sprinkling as an infant), was the response. But it appeared that the new convert, 'born again to a living hope,' *had not been baptised*, and came to seek the blessing of baptism."

The man was a member of the Church of Christ, and as a believer was "blessed with all spiritual blessings, in Christ" (Eph. 1. 3), and yet had neither been sprinkled as a babe, nor immersed as an adult. Such a scholar as Dr. Moule thus admits the possibility of the "new birth" and entrance into the Kingdom apart from baptism.

The blessing of obedience certainly lay in his path, as it may lie in the path of the reader, and at all times "to obey is better than to sacrifice" (1 Sam. 15. 22). "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5. 3).

Read the New Testament, and obey what *you* find therein, and you will be safe, happy, and "not be ashamed before Him at His Coming."

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### II. THE SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM.

"*Who* then can be saved?" was a question addressed to the Master. "*Who* then should be baptised?" may well be a question addressed to each disciple who sincerely desires to be guided alone by the Word of the Lord. The "*who*" will be answered by various schools as: (1) infants, (2) adults, (3) believers, (4) households, (5) companies or communities. For information we turn to our Guide Book.

And here let me recommend earnestly a careful reading of the best little book on the subject of Baptism which has ever been written. It bears a very simple title, "The Acts of the Apostles," but is really a detailed account of "the Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles in early days." An unbiassed reading of that God-breathed record is enough to settle the subjects, the mode, and the meaning of this divine ordinance as given at first, as practised in early days, and as binding on His own in these last days. Turn we then to

#### The Book of Acts.

Acts 2. 41: "Then they that gladly *received* his word were baptised, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." So to-day those who *gladly* receive God's Word are usually classed amongst those believers who have been baptised.

Acts 8. 12: "When they *believed* Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the Name of Jesus Christ, they were baptised, both *men* and *women*." No mention of children,

where it might have been expected, if children as such had then been baptised.

Acts 8. 36, 37: "And as they went on their way, they came to a certain water: and the Eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptised? And Philip said, If thou *believest* with all thine heart, thou mayest. And the Eunuch answered and said, I *believe* that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." The only qualification then, and the only test to-day—personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Questions of age, colour, family, creed, culture, custom, etc., are not in the count. Heart faith and the honest confession, "I believe," should ever suffice.

Acts 8. 38, 39: "And they went down both *into the water*, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptised him. And when they were come up *out of the water*, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the Eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing." If that is not a plain picture of two men going *into* and coming *out of* a pool or river, what is it? Like all others who have truly asked and answered the question: "What doth hinder *me* to be baptised?" a glad obedience has led on in a path of rejoicing.

Acts 9. 17, 18: "And Ananias said, *Brother* Saul,...and immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales, and he *received sight* forthwith, and arose and was baptised." Clearly the baptism of a young brother, newly come to the faith, and a "pattern" (1 Tim. 1. 16) for all who similarly are turned from darkness to light.

## 14 Who are Subjects for Baptism?

Acts 10. 47, 48: "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptised, which have *received the Holy Ghost*, as well as we. And he commanded them to be baptised in the Name of the Lord." As each believer receives and is sealed by the Holy Spirit, when he believes (Eph. 1. 13, R.V.), the pattern again warrants only the baptising of those who have believed on Christ and received the Holy Spirit. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His" (Rom. 8. 9).

Acts 16. 15: "And a certain woman named Lydia...*whose heart the Lord opened*...when she was baptised and her household." Clearly an adult woman, converted by the riverside, and baptised most likely in the same river.

Acts 16. 33: And the jailer "took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes: and was baptised, he and all his straightway... and *rejoiced, believing* in God with all his house." Faith precedes baptism, joy follows the act of obedience.

Acts 18. 8: "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians, *hearing, believed, and were baptised*." Here we have clearly God's order then and now: (1) *hearing* the Word of the Lord, (2) *believing* on the Son of God, (3) *baptised* as believers in the Lord Jesus.

Acts 19. 4, 5: "Then said Paul, John verily baptised with the baptism of Repentance, saying unto the people that they should *believe* on Him that should come after him, that is on Christ

Jesus. When they heard this they were baptised in the Name of the Lord Jesus." Here again is definite testimony, personal faith in Christ Jesus, linked with a subsequent baptism in His Name.

Thus it will be seen that according to the Pattern in early days, it was those who *received* the Word, *believed* on Christ, and consequently *confessed* their faith in Him by being baptised.

Nor need we with an open Bible be afraid to examine the subjects as enunciated by the

### VARIOUS SCHOOLS OF BAPTISM.

**1. Infant Baptism.** The Catechism of the Church of England states very clearly what is intended when they sprinkle an infant. In the answer to the second question asked the young applicant for Confirmation occur these words:

"In my baptism, wherein I was made a *member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.*"

According to the "Ministration of Baptism of Infants" after sprinkling a babe:

"then shall the priest say, Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that *this child is by baptism regenerate* and grafted into the body of Christ's Church, let us give thanks unto Almighty God for these benefits."

See any "*Book of Common Prayer.*" The italic footnote at the end of the Service says:

"It is certain by God's Word that children which are baptised, dying before they commit actual sin, are *undoubtedly saved.*"

In Article XXVII., which is admitted to be a "clear and careful theological statement of Church doctrine on this ordinance," are these words;

## 16      **Who are Subjects for Baptism?**

“Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also *a sign of Regeneration or New Birth*, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the Church; the promises of the *forgiveness of sin*, and of our *adoption to be sons of God* by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed ”

The Catechism of the Presbyterian Church shortens the statement, but arrives at the same conclusion. It says baptism

“signifies and seals our engrafting into Christ.”

Whatever reservations or explanations may have been held or made by such godly men as the late Dr. HANDLEY MOULE, of the Church of England; Dr. ANDREW BONAR, of the Free Church of Scotland; and many others, there is not the possibility of a question that the original meaning, the plain teaching of the Church standards, the theory accepted by thousands of ministers, and the delusion of multitudes of parents, is that by baptism the infant is thereby made a child of God.

### **“Baptismal Regeneration”**

is the unvarnished title for that which is usually taught and practised in both Established and Free Churches which endorse infant baptism.

C. H. SPURGEON in his long-famous address on “Baptismal Regeneration,” speaks thus plainly:

“The Church of England does not teach this doctrine merely through a section of its ministers, who might charitably be considered as evil branches of the vine, but it openly, boldly, and plainly declares this doctrine in her own appointed standard, the Book of Common



Prayer, and that in words so express, that while language is the channel of conveying intelligible sense, no process short of violent wresting from their plain meaning can ever make them say anything else "

We have yet to come across an intelligent student of the New Testament who will assert that "infant baptism" is clearly taught therein. It is alleged, deducted, special pleading is used, but as none of these are sufficient for either doctrine or practice, we need not follow the mazes of tradition involved therein. An ounce of "Thus saith the Lord" is worth a ton of deduction at any time.

Hear the testimony of some of the fathers and famous leaders, against *infant* baptism:

MARTIN LUTHER asserts: "It cannot be proved that *infant* baptism was instituted by Christ, or by the first Christians after Christ."

JOHN CALVIN says: "It is nowhere expressed by the evangelists that *infants* were baptised."

ERASMUS, who wrote in Luther's day, says: "It is nowhere expressed in the Apostles' writings that they baptised *children*."

JEREMY TAYLOR testifies: "It is against the perpetual analogy of Christ's doctrine to baptise *infants*."

PROFESSOR OLSHAUSEN: "Paedo-baptism is not Apostolic for certain."

PROFESSOR DE WETTE: "In the time of the Apostles *children* were not baptised."

So also Prof. Schleiermacher, Prof. Gesenius, Prof. Neander, Prof. Lange, Prof. Meyer, Prof. Moses Stewart, Bishop Burnet, Bishop Harold Browne, Bishop Barlow, Dean Stanley, Dean M'Neile, Dr. Plummer, Canon Jacob, Henry Ward Beecher, and many more.

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ARCHBISHOP HUGHES, Roman Catholic Prelate, suggested this unique test: "The first principle of Protestants is, that nothing is to be practised which is not authorised by Scriptural example; but it does not appear from Scripture that even *one infant* was ever baptised; therefore, Protestants should reject, on their own principle, *infant baptism* as an unscriptural usage."

**2. Adult Baptism.** Some take the position of *adult* baptism instead of *infant* baptism. The term is wrong, as maturity of years is no qualification for a spiritual rite. Still we examine it. The Church of England provides for "the Ministration of Baptism to such as are of riper years." But it only substitutes "this *person*" for "this *child*," and makes the same claim that they "have *now* by baptism put on Christ."

In his "Outlines of Christian Doctrine," Bishop MOULE makes this remark:

"The scholastics, in discussing the blessings of adult baptism, argued with much subtlety that the moment of the rite cannot be the moment of 'justification' (which with them means, practically, regeneration). For the sincere catechuman is already justus before God, as already repenting and believing; and the insincere can only become justus later, on repenting and believing, when, and not before, the covenanted blessing of justification becomes his "

**3. Household Baptism.** Of more recent years it has been argued that because the Scriptures speak of the baptism of households, therefore there must have been children. It is well to remember that there is nothing which "*may*" or "*must*" have been except what is clearly stated as fact in the Word of God.

WILLIAM KELLY, ANDREW MILLER, and other teachers rejected the theory at the beginning. C. H. MACKINTOSH, Editor of *Things New and Old*, writing from Bristol, 22nd Dec., 1871, says

"I believe the course of some of our friends, in urging on this question of (household) baptism, will, unless God in His mercy interpose, lead to most disastrous results. For my own part, seeing the question has been thus forced upon me, I can only say I have for thirty-two years been asking, in vain, for a single line of Scripture for baptising any save believers or those who professed to believe. I have had inferences, conclusions, and deductions, but of direct Scripture authority not a tittle."

### III. THE STYLE OF BAPTISM.

Should the mode of baptism be by sprinkling or by immersion? The answer is not difficult. From the 5 reasons given it is clear that the original method was immersion in water. In proof whereof we adduce:

1. **The Meaning of the Word.** The Greek word *baptizo*, the equivalent of baptise in the English version, is a lengthened form of the verb *bapto*. It occurs some eighty times in the New Testament, and according to that standard work, Liddell & Scott's Greek Lexicon, means "to dip," "to dye," done by immersion; "to draw water" by dipping a vessel therein.

Dr. ALFRED PLUMMER, Master of University College, Durham, writes: "Baptizo is intensive from Bapto. *Bapto*, 'I dip;' *Baptizo*, 'I immerse.' The recipients of Christian baptism were required to repent and believe. Not only is there no mention of the baptism of infants, but there is no text from which such baptism can be securely inferred."

2. **The Examples in the Scriptures.** Our

LORD Himself, "when He was baptised, went up straightway *out of the water*" (Matt. 3. 16). JOHN the Baptist "was baptising in Enon, near to Salem, *because there was much water there*" (John 3. 23). Clearly indicating an adequate quantity for immersion. PHILIP and the Eunuch both "went *down into the water*, and came up *out of the water*" (Acts 8. 38). The Revisers leave *into*, so that the assertion of some that it was *unto* need not be seriously considered. The Apostle PAUL says, "Therefore we are *buried* with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was *raised* up from the dead" (Rom. 6. 4). Neither sprinkling nor pouring can by any stretch of imagination be made to signify *burial* and *resurrection* as indicated by the Apostle.

**3. The History of Infant Baptism.** There is no hint or record anywhere in the New Testament, or in early Church history, that baptism was ever allowed to any but believers in Christ. It was first introduced by the African Church, which also granted "infant communion, giving wine to children incapable of taking bread."

WHENCE DID IT ORIGINATE? Here is the testimony of an authority:

WHITLEY STOKES, LL.D.: "I suggest that the source of Christian infant baptism is to be found in *folk-lore*, and that this kind of baptism was *originally a Pagan rite of purification*, which at first, perhaps, included the mother as well as the child" (*The Academy*, Vol. XLIX).

HOW DID IT SPREAD? The main reason is thus stated by:

Principal JOHN CUNNINGHAM: "Infant baptism is never heard of during the first hundred and fifty years of the

Church's history. Notwithstanding the remonstrances of Tertullian, infant baptism came slowly into use. For if there was a danger of a baptised person disgracing his baptismal profession, there was a still greater danger of an unbaptised infant *dying, and being damned for ever*. So great a calamity must by all means be prevented, and more especially where it could be prevented by the easy method of dipping the infant in lukewarm water. Thus, infant baptism came daily more and more into use, and was soon universal. It was a startling departure from the original institution, and the usage of three or four hundred years."—*Croall Lectures*.

SALMASIUS, the very learned historian and critic, says: "An opinion prevailed that *no one could be saved without being baptised*; and for that reason the custom arose of baptising infants."

IN THE FIRST CENTURY writings of Clement, Polycarp, Barnabas, Ignatius, Hermas, and Papias there is no mention of Infant Baptism.

IN THE SECOND CENTURY writings of Quadratus, Aristidez, Justin Martyr, Tatian, Theophilus, Clement of Alexandria, Irenaeus, there is no mention of Infant Baptism. Surely if it had been in use it would have been named by some of these accredited writers. But it can be found neither in *record* nor *practice*.

ONLY APPEARS IN THE THIRD CENTURY.

Bishop MOULE admits that: "In the New Testament we have not indeed any mention of infant baptism. . . . It is true that *few* certain notices of infant baptism are to be found before Century III" (*Outlines*, p. 256, 7).

COMES INTO USE IN THE FOURTH CENTURY. Dean STANLEY, admitted by Churchmen to be a leader, a scholar, and an authority, historical and ecclesiastical, says:

## 22 Testimony of Scholars on Baptism.

"There can be no question that the original form of baptism—the very meaning of the word—was complete immersion in the deep baptismal waters; and that, *for at least four centuries*, any other form was either unknown or regarded, unless in the case of dangerous illness, as an exceptional, almost monstrous, case."

In 1559 infant sprinkling was introduced from Geneva by JOHN KNOX. From Scotland it made its way to England in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

The Westminster Divines had the question of baptism under discussion in 1643; 24 voted for immersion, 24 for sprinkling, the *casting vote* given by Dr. LIGHTFOOT, the chairman, fixed sprinkling in the Westminster Standards of the Presbyterian Church.

**4. The Testimony of Scholars of Modern Times.** (Not themselves connected with Baptists, or among those who practise the immersion of believers).

CAROL H. P. LIDDON, Church of England, in his "Explanatory Analysis of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans," says: "The baptism of adults by immersion is present to the Apostle's mind. The descent into the water (*katadusis*) and the rising from it (*anadusis*) were the two striking features of the rite."

Dr. R. T. KNOWLING, Professor of New Testament Exegesis, King's College, London, writing on Acts 8. 38, in "The Expositor's Greek Testament," says: "The context *anebesan ek* indicates that the baptism was by immersion, and there can be no doubt that this was the custom in the early Church."

Dr. WM. SANDAY and Dr. A. C. HEADLAM, in the "International Critical Commentary": "Baptism expresses symbolically a series of acts. . . Immersion—Death; Submersion—burial (the ratification of death); Emergence—resurrection."

Dr. A. PLUMMER, Church of England, Master of University College, Durham, in "Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible": "The rite is nowhere described in detail; but the element was always water, and the mode of using it was commonly immersion. The symbolism of the ordinance required this: A death to sin was expressed by the plunge beneath the water, and a rising again to a life of righteousness by the return to light and air and hence the appropriateness of immersion. Immersion is implied in Romans 6. 4; Colossians 2. 12."

Bishop HANDLEY MOULE, Church of England, in his "Outline of Christian Doctrine": "Scripture indicates a usage of immersion in the Apostolic missions, very plainly. And it connects baptism with our Lord's death, burial, and resurrection, doctrinally. . . . The Church of England makes immersion her first alternative, meanwhile, in the baptismal rubrics."

DEAN PLUMPTRE, Church of England, wrote on Acts 8. 38: "The Greek preposition might mean simply 'unto the water,' but the universality of immersion in the practice of the early Church supports the English version."

Bishop LIGHTFOOT, Church of England, Durham (quoted by Dr. ALEX. MACLAREN, Manchester) give this paraphrase (Rom. 6.): "Ye were buried with Christ to your old selves beneath the baptismal waters;" and he well asks: "If baptism be immersion, and immersion expresses a substantial part of its meaning, can sprinkling or pouring be baptism?"—*British Weekly*, 1905.

Dr. G. CAMPBELL MORGAN, formerly of Westminster Congregational Church: Extract from *Seren Cymru*—"A Congregational Minister Baptising by Immersion. 'An interesting service . . . when seven were baptised by immersion . . . not one of Dr. Campbell Morgan's children has been christened. One of the above seven was Dr. Campbell Morgan's own son.' . . ."

Dr. R. F. HORTON, M.A., Congregational, London: "As in His complete humility He steps into the water, and is submerged beneath their waves."

## 24 Eminent Men on Baptism.

Principal T. C. EDWARDS, M.A. : "Baptism is a symbol of our spiritual burial with Christ, and of our resurrection into newness of life (Rom. 6. 4)."

Rev. EZRA P. GOULD, S.T.D., Professor of the New Testament Literature and Language, Divinity School of the Protestant Episcopal Church, Philadelphia : "*Eis ton Iordanyn*—into the Jordan. The preposition here coincides with the proper meaning of the verb, indicating that the form of the rite was immersion into the stream. The preposition *ek* in the next verse—going up *out* of the water—implies the same. Mark 1. 10."

Rev. MARK GUY PEARSE, the noted Methodist minister : "Baptism meant, and meant always, death, burial, resurrection."

The Hon. BAPTIST NOEL, Church of England, one of Queen Victoria's Chaplains (who relinquished his position), said : "I believe I have weighed well every considerable argument that has ever been adduced in the maintenance of infant baptism, as an addition to, and which evidently becomes a substitution for, the baptism of believers in Christian Churches; and I have come distinctly to these two conclusions, which appear to me, at least, to be certain. It appears to me to be distinctly proved, first, that baptism, as ordained by Christ, is an immersion in the water, a being buried in the water; and secondly, that immersion is meant to be a profession of faith in Christ."

Dr. GRIFFITH THOMAS, Church of England, of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford; Wycliffe College, Toronto, in *The Catholic Faith*, says : "The Greek word 'to dip' is *bapto*, with which the word 'Baptize' is undoubtedly associated."

Dr. COX, requested Mr. Ewing, the author of a Greek Lexicon, to refer him to a single authority for a different interpretation : "I now once again demand of Mr. Ewing to point me out the Lexicon which does not give dipping, plunging, or immersing, as the unquestionable, settled, and universally admitted primitive signification of the contested terms."



To these might be added Dr. MASSIE, Professor of New Testament Exegesis in Mansfield College (Congr.), Oxford; Dr. DALE, of Birmingham; Principal RITCHIE, Nottingham College; Dr. J. VERNON BARTLETT, Professor of Mansfield College, Oxford; Dr. J. S. CANDLISH, Free Church College, Glasgow; Dr. JOHN WATSON (Ian Maclaren), Presbyterian, Liverpool; Archbishop SECKER, etc., etc., etc.

**5. The Confessions of Eminent Men of All Denominations** (*not Baptists*), mostly in days gone by.

MARTIN LUTHER, Founder of the Lutherans: "I would have those who are to be baptised to be entirely immersed, as the word imports and the mystery signifies."

JOHN CALVIN, founder of the Calvinistic Methodists: "The word 'baptise' signifies to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient Church."

Professor GODET, French Protestant Church: "To be baptised in the Name of, signifies to be plunged in water, while engaging to belong to Him in whose Name the external rite is performed."

Dr. THOS. CHALMERS, of the Free Church of Scotland: "The original meaning of the word 'baptism' is immersion. The prevalent style in the Apostle's day was an actual submerging of the whole body under water."

JOHN WESLEY, the founder of the energetic body named after himself, "practised immersion before he went to Georgia, and while there he not only immersed, but he refused the Lord's Supper to all who had not been immersed."—"Tyreman's Oxford Methodists."

Dr. ALBERT BARNES, Congregational, the well-known Commentator: "It is *altogether* probable that the Apostle in this place had allusion to the custom of baptising by immersion" (Rom. 6. 4).

Professor J. AGAR BEET, Methodist: "From the

earliest sub-apostolic writings we learn that immersion was the usual form of baptism."

GEORGE WHITEFIELD: "It is certain that in the words of our text there is an allusion to the manner of baptism, which was by immersion" . . .

BISHOP LIGHTFOOT, Church of England: "Because ye were buried with Christ to your old selves, *beneath the baptismal waters*, and were raised with Him from those same waters to a new and regenerate life."

Dr. MARCUS DODS, Presbyterian New College, Edinburgh: "The reason for choosing this locality was *oti udata polla yn ekei*—'because many waters were there,' or *much* water; and therefore even in summer baptism by immersion could be continued."

CONYBEARE and HOWSON, in their famed book, "Life and Epistles of St. Paul": "This passage cannot be understood unless it be borne in mind that the primitive baptism was by immersion."

Dr. E. W. BULLINGER, Church of England, in his well-known work, "A Critical Lexicon to the English and Greek New Testament," says: "By baptism we must understand immersion."

To these may be added quite a remarkable admission of a well-known Church of England clergyman, an acknowledged scholar, and one of the best-known Keswick speakers.

J. RUSSELL HOWDEN, B.D., Vicar of Southborough, speaking in the Great Hall, at Tunbridge Wells, on April 5, 1925, with (Revs.) Barclay Buxton, T. H. Groves, K. E. Bevan, J. Mountain, and many well-known residents on the platform, said: "Every man's utterances should be tested by the Word of God . . . There was something which he was going to say which he hoped would not be considered unkind. This was that *there was no heresy which had done more harm than the heresy of baptismal regeneration*. One could be baptised with water without being baptised with the Holy Ghost. . . We had got to remember that Christ died for the ungodly—

not for this class or that class, but for the ungodly; and perhaps the regular church-goers needed Him as much as any of them."

And the list could be considerably lengthened if required.

**IV. SUGGESTIONS AS TO BAPTISM,**  
with some **Objections** and difficulties considered.

**1. Ritualism will be the result of attaching such importance to an external rite.** If it is Ritualism to follow the example of the Lord Jesus, who was immersed in Jordan when thirty years of age, then let me be a devoted Bible following Ritualist. So may it be claimed that it is Ritualism to believe and carry out His teaching (Matt. 28. 19; Mark 16. 16); Ritualism to fulfil the words of the Apostle Paul and be "*Buried* with Christ through baptism" (Rom. 6. 4).

Then how is it not Ritualism to keep the other ordinance, and Break Bread according to the Scriptures "upon the First Day of the week" (Acts 20. 7). Believers' Baptism is as much an ordinance of Christ as the Lord's Supper.

We are ever safe following the Scriptures wherever they lead, regardless of what men may say, tradition claim, or even hoary headed custom assume to be right and proper. May we not rather respond that the sprinkling of unconscious infants or immersion of unconverted adults is Romanistic in its origin and Ritualistic in its tendencies.

**2. Baptism takes the place of Circumcision.** This, one of the principal arguments of those who baptise infants, is controverted by the following facts:

*Male children* only were the subjects of circumcision under the Old Covenant. . . (Gen. 17. 12)

Circumcision was commanded to be done when *eight days old* (Gen. 17. 12).

Circumcision was *compulsory* (Gen. 17. 9).

Circumcision brought *every* male child into the Jewish fold (Acts 7. 6, 8).

Circumcision was given to freeborn and strangers—no distinction (Gen. 17. 12).

Circumcision was after natural birth.

*Believers*—men, women, or children, old enough to consciously act, are the subjects of baptism in the New Covenant (Acts 8. 12, etc.).

Baptism follows faith in Christ *at any believing age* (Acts 8. 12, 37).

Baptism is *voluntary* (Acts 2. 41).

Baptism indicates that the believer has been brought into the Heavenly Fold.

Baptism is only for the saved, and indicates separation unto Christ (Acts 2. 41; Col. 2. 12-22).

Baptism is *after* the "new birth," (John 3. 3, 7).

Timothy was circumcised after he "believed" (Acts 16. 1-3). Did this preclude Timothy from being baptised?

The question of circumcision was discussed at the first Church Council, about 53 A.D., where, if anywhere, it should have been made clear that baptism took the place of circumcision; but no such finding is in the Record (Acts 15. 7-29).

**3. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is Enough**, apart from water-baptism. That both are right and needful is taught in Scripture. Cornelius and those with him heard the Word, believed on His Name, received remission of sins, and were baptised with the Holy Spirit (Acts 10. 33, 43, 44). Then, and not till then,

Peter said, "Can any man forbid *water*, that these should not be baptised, which have received the Holy Spirit" (vv. 47, 48).

Baptism in the Holy Spirit, the portion of every believer (1 Cor. 2. 13), rightly precedes, but does not take the place of baptism in water

In the case of "certain disciples at Ephesus," they were baptised in water before they were baptised in the Holy Spirit (Acts 19. 5, 6).

Hear what JOHN WESLEY, a prophet of the infant baptism school, says concerning Acts 10:

"Peter does not say, 'They have the baptism of the *Spirit*, therefore they do not need baptism with *water*.' But just on the contrary, 'If they have received the *Spirit*, then baptise them with *water*.' How easily is the question decided, if we take the Word of God for our rule."

**4. If Baptised once as Infants, why be Baptised again?** This raises the question of which baptism is *valid*? Some hold that if the Name of the Trinity has been used in sprinkling or immersing, by Roman Catholic Father, Greek Church Prelate, a drunken or a godly clergyman, or, in fact, *anyone*, that is valid baptism. A sorry theory indeed when frankly stated.

The Scriptures certainly cite a case of re-baptism. Certain disciples had been baptised with John's baptism; after believing on Christ Jesus, "they were baptised in the Name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19. 3, 5). Here at least were twelve persons rebaptised.

**5. Baptism could not be by Immersion, as there was not enough water in Jerusalem to immerse three thousand in one day.** This,

an old objection, made fifty years ago, more than once exploded, yet reasserted in a recent book by an evangelical minister, has weight with the unlearned and prejudiced.

In Acts 2. 41 it is made plain that "three thousand were *added* the same day," the adding being of the "saved" (v. 47). But it does not say that the three thousand were *baptised* "the same day." Many, doubtless, were baptised at once, others, most likely, within a brief period afterwards.

We point this out not to avoid the "three thousand in one day," for if this be freely admitted, there is abundant evidence of a sufficiency of water to immerse three or four times this number, even "the same day." Evidence of the plentiful supply of water at Jerusalem has been supplied.

The difficulty of eleven or twelve apostles being able to immerse this number is another makeshift of clerisy. The hundred and twenty in the upper room contained a number of "men and brethren" (Acts 1. 15, 16). Besides, there was nothing to hinder those *that day* made "priests unto God" (Rev. 1. 6) performing spiritual duties unto their fellows ere the day closed.

**6. Baptism by Immersion is dangerous to Health.** Without in any way urging the reckless baptising of men or women with certain ailments and at certain times of life, after fifty years' experience we have yet to learn of one single case of illness or death resulting from keeping the ordinance.

C. H. SPURGEON'S offer to pay the funeral

expenses of anyone who died as a result of being immersed, held good in his lifetime, without costing him a penny. Had he lived till to-day the result would have been the same.

Dr. A. RENDLE SHORT, Bristol, writes:

"Delicate, timid folk, men and women, boys and girls, have been baptised before now, and are still being baptised in the open air, in the face of a hostile crowd, and sometimes in icy waters. But such brave resolutions and fearless witnessing is part of the Cross which every follower of Christ with any conviction in his soul must take up sooner or later if he is to be a disciple at all, and shames the apathy of those of us who think we prefer a pleasanter way to that described in the Scriptures."

#### 7. What Name should be used in Baptism?

Throughout the ages, and by the vast majority of Christians, the formula given by the Master in the Great Commission is still used: "In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28. 19). As the commission and the promise are united—"All the days, even unto the end of the age" (v. 20, R.V.)—we fail to see any need of a change in the wording given at the first and used ever since.

A number of believers, in different parts of the world, contend vigorously for the use of the Name of the Lord alone. A glance at the places where it is used as noted below, indicates a variableness inconsistent with common use or custom:

"In the Name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2. 38).

"In the Name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 8. 16; 19. 5).

"In the Name of the Lord" (Acts 10. 48).

Had this been a revision there would certainly

have been a fixed term and regular usage. The *authority* is the Lord Jesus; the *Name* is the ever blessed Trinity.

## V. THE SEQUEL TO BAPTISM.

However precious the Scriptural meaning and mode of baptism, the most important thing, from a practical standpoint, is the life which follows the ordinance. "*Buried with Him by baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him.*" "If ye then be risen with Christ, *seek those things which are above*" (Col. 2. 12; 3. 1). "So we also should *walk in newness of life*" (Rom. 6. 4).

To observe an ordinance in a correct way, to be clear as to the doctrine concerning same, is of little value unless the truth is outwrought in the life; otherwise little good to the individual and less glory to the Lord will result.

As a final word on this great theme, we say:

*To the believer who has been baptised*, seek more and more to "know HIM, and the power of His resurrection" (Phil. 3. 10). "So...walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6. 4).

*To the believer who has not yet been "buried with Him by baptism,"* the word is: "Why tarriest THOU?"

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