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AN APPEAL

TO

CHRISTIANS

ON THE SUBJECT OF

BELIEVER'S BAPTISM.

BY

H. GRATTAN GUINNESS.

“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”
—MATT. xxviii. 20.
“He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.”
—JOHN, xiv. 21.

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DEAR READER,

Are you a believer in the Lord Jesus—a disciple of Christ? I ask not are you a professing Christian; doubtless you are that—but I ask have you been born again? are you created anew in Christ Jesus? If so, these pages are addressed to you; and I pray you to read them attentively, prayerfully, and, if possible, with an unprejudiced mind—"Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." If not, I beseech you, dear reader, trouble not your mind about the subject here considered. Weightier matters demand your attention first. Baptism is a Christian ordinance, an act of obedience required from those who know and love the Lord that bought them. Seek to know the Saviour Himself, to know Him as your Saviour, ere you study such questions as these. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Better, far better, spend an hour in seeking "the Lord while he may be found," than in reading this tract. If you wish to be obedient, His commandment to you is, "that

you BELIEVE on the name of His Son Jesus Christ." Till you have obeyed this soul-saving commandment, no obedience of yours can be acceptable to God, for "without faith it is impossible to please Him." My heart yearns over you, dear reader, but my words here are to others; to you I only add one sentence, and, oh! may you hear it as the voice of God—the voice of God to you—"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." Reader, it is impossible for God to lie. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but His words shall not pass away.

And now, dear fellow-believers in Jesus, allow me to recall to *your* memory another sentence spoken by Him, whom having not seen we love—"He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." Surely I may take it for granted that you desire thus to prove your love by obedience, and need make no apology for solemnly calling your attention to one of Christ's express commandments—that respecting baptism. My motive in doing so, is not a sectarian one; not a desire to proselytize to any party, or to advance the interests of any section of the Church of Christ; not to enforce my own views merely; no! it is the earnest desire that you and I, dear reader, should, as far as possible, "fulfil all righteousness," and be in all our ways well pleasing to God. If you have been unconsciously disobeying a plain command of the Lord Jesus, thus far in your Christian course, you will, doubtless, feel thankful to have such disobedience pointed out to you, that you may henceforth "cease to do evil, learn to do well."

Like thousands of others you have never, perhaps, given this subject a serious examination, in the light of the Word of God. Influenced by traditional teachings, and guided by blind custom, you would be unable to give a Scriptural reason for your views and practice with regard to it. This should not be so! You hold the revealed will of God in your own hand; you are personally responsible to Him, to study, understand, and obey it, whatever others may do or say. It is sheer Popery to found your faith on human teachings,

however authoritative ; it is unjustifiable to receive existing opinions, however universal, simply because they are so ; it is careless contempt of your duty to God to conform your practice to time-honoured customs, merely as such, without bringing all to the test of Scripture, and holding all you do hold, as *taught of God*. The Bereans did not receive even apostolic teachings without trying them by this standard ; but once discovered to be according to it, they received them gladly. They were a noble people : too noble on the one hand, to be *credulous of mere human assertions* ; too noble on the other, to be *prejudiced against the truth of God, because it was new and strange to them*. Do as they did ! “Search the Scriptures,” lest you may be transgressing the commandment of God, and making it of none effect through tradition : lest, like Israel of old, you deserve the sentence, “in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the *commandments of men*.” My wish is simply to place before you what I hold (not owing to, but in spite of, educational prejudices) to be the truth of God on this subject ; and without giving undue importance to an outward ordinance, to lead you to see and do the will of God more perfectly.

Christianity is not like Judaism, a religion of outward ceremonies, nor is it altogether destitute of them. Christ ordained two outward acts, to commemorate to the end of the world two important truths. There is a danger of despising these ordinances, as well as a danger of unduly exalting and magnifying them. Quakerism errs on the one hand, and Popery on the other, and most of the Protestant sects which lie between these, exhibit the same tendencies in lesser degrees. The consequences are lamentable. Those who dispense with ordinances, *lose sight of the truths they symbolize*, while those who unduly exalt them, *substitute the sign for the reality*. We must avoid both extremes, and give them their due place. It is presumption to modify and change them ; it is audacity to set them aside and despise them ; and it is idolatry to worship them. Jesus, who “knew what was in man,” forestalled our wants when He instituted them.

Our wisdom is exhibited, and our blessing best secured, by "keeping the ordinances as they are delivered unto us."

You probably admit that baptism, in some form or other, is a Christian ordinance. You perceive that Christ's command to his apostles to baptize disciples, involves the duty of disciples to be baptized: that the baptism intended is water baptism, and not that of the Holy Ghost, because it is a baptism into the name of the Holy Ghost; and that it is still incumbent, because the commission has *never been cancelled*, and is connected with the promise—"Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." Most Christians agree so far; and believe that it is, and will be to the end of the age, the duty of Christ's disciples to be baptized. But as to the mode and meaning of this ordinance of baptism, and as to its proper subjects, there exists, as you know, a wide difference of opinion. This is not to be wondered at—an equal or greater diversity of judgment prevails, and has prevailed, from the earliest ages, on points far more fundamental. The father of lies leaves no truth unattacked; and the more important the truth, the more he delights to undermine it with error. Nor should this fact discourage us from investigating the subject. Truths that are simple as sunlight in the Word of God have been obscured and mystified for ages through human tradition, and have yet shone out clearly at last. Nor should the heart fail if our researches into Scripture lead us to believe the greater portion of the Church to be in error on this point. Time was when Christendom itself was in midnight darkness, as to the very centre-truths of Christianity. If Luther's heart had failed in bearing his despised and rejected testimony to these very truths, where would have been the blessed Reformation and revival of true religion? I believe in the power of the truth; prejudice is very strong, but truth is stronger: and where people think and study Scripture for themselves, will always prevail. I ask you, therefore, dear reader, to divest your mind, as far as possible, of preconceived opinions on this subject, to throw aside the traditions of men respecting it, and to consider it

MERELY IN THE LIGHT OF THE WORD OF GOD—"To the law and to the testimony." Let us seek the truth from its only infallible teacher.

Scripture is so simple on this subject of baptism, that a simple mind marvels at the mysteries in which controversy has involved it. The Lord's Supper—the other simple and beautiful ordinance of Christ for His Church—has, to be sure, been made even more of a mystery, and afforded battle-ground for still hotter controversy. History, indeed, shows us that no truth in Scripture, however plain, can escape being wrested by the spiritually unlearned and unstable. We need not, therefore, expect to find baptism an exception. Yet, this subject does not occupy a third of the Bible, as prophecy does; nor even whole chapters of it, as do many doctrinal themes. All the Scriptures that bear on it may be quoted in a small compass, and carefully read in a short time. They comprise two classes of passages: those which speak of John's baptism, and those which speak of Christian baptism, or baptism "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." I omit here the first class, those which speak of John's baptism, as they do not bear directly on the point in hand. The following extracts contain *the whole testimony of Scripture on the subject* of Christian baptism; I ask you to read them afresh, and with close attention.

Matt. xxviii. 18-20.—"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Mark xvi. 15, 16.—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that BELIEVETH, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that BELIEVETH not, shall be damned."

Acts ii. 37, 38.—"Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, REPENT, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Acts ii. 41, 42.—"Then THEY THAT GLADLY RECEIVED HIS WORD were baptized: and the same day there were added unto

them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

Acts viii. 12-16.—"But when they BELIEVED Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself BELIEVED also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, then sent unto them Peter and John: 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."

Acts viii. 35-39.—"Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou BELIEVEST with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I BELIEVE that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized 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."

Acts ix. 17, 18.—"And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and, putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be FILLED WITH THE HOLY GHOST. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized."

Acts x. 44-48.—"While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 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. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."

Acts xvi. 14, 15.—"And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: WHOSE HEART THE LORD OPENED, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was

baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us."

Acts xvi. 32-34.—"And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, BELIEVING IN GOD WITH ALL HIS HOUSE."

Acts xviii. 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 baptized."

Acts xix. 1-7.—"And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye BELIEVED? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve."

Acts xxii. 13-16.—"Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. And he said, THE GOD OF OUR FATHERS HATH CHOSEN THEE, that thou shouldst know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldst hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

Rom. vi. 2-4.—"How shall WE, THAT ARE DEAD TO SIN, live any longer therein? 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."

1 Cor. i. 12-17.—"Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanus; besides, I know not whether

I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect."

1 Cor. xv. 29.—"Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead."

Gal. iii. 26, 27.—"For YE ARE ALL THE CHILDREN OF GOD by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

Ephes. iv. 4-6.—"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

Col. ii. 12.—"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."

Heb. vi. 1-3.—"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God. Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit."

1 Pet. iii. 21.—"The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but THE ANSWER OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE TOWARD GOD), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

And now, dear reader, tell me in all sincerity, what impression do these passages convey to your mind, as to the proper subjects of baptism? Suppose, for a moment, that you had no ideas about the matter, save those derived from a careful consideration of the foregoing extracts, WHO, would you say, were the persons intended by Christ to be baptized? Believers or unbelievers? I think there can be but one answer, *the former*. It is useless to ask you to state, from this perusal, HOW the ordinance should be administered. The mode is described by an untranslated Greek word, which can, of course, only convey to your mind ideas conventionally associated with it. But substitute in all these passages the word immerse and immersion for baptize and baptism, and you would, I think, feel no more difficulty or doubt as to the *mode* than as to the *subjects*. Proofs that these are the proper English

synonymes of the original words, shall be given further on. Let us now examine these passages in detail—

What do they teach as regards the SUBJECTS of baptism, or the proper persons to be baptized? and what as regards the MODE of baptism, or the manner in which it should be performed?

They afford three independent, harmonious sources of light as to the *first point*.

I. The great commission given by Christ to His apostles, and virtually to all those who succeed them in the ministry.

II. The apostolic practice, and that of the early church they describe.

III. Their teaching as to the import of the ordinance.

Each of these, I hesitate not to assert, affords separate and independent proof, that **THE PROPER SUBJECTS FOR BAPTISM ARE BELIEVERS ONLY**; and all together present a mass of evidence which it is impossible for an unprejudiced mind to gainsay or resist.

I. *Question the commission.* Who are the proper subjects of baptism? In order to a correct understanding of its testimony, it will be necessary to translate it more literally than the authorized version does. "Teach all nations" should be, as in the margin, "disciple all nations," or "make disciples of all nations;" and "baptizing them in the name" should be "baptizing them *into* the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Thus literally translated, and combined with the parallel passage in the 16th of Mark, it stands as follows—"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go ye therefore into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, and make disciples of all nations;* baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; he that believeth and is baptized shall

* Or, "disciple *all the Gentiles*." See Gk., 2 Tim. iv. 17, &c.

be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned : teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

An attentive reading of this passage shows, that the proper subjects of the baptism it commands are, in its own language, those to whom "the Gospel" has been "preached," who have been made "disciples" of by the Gospel, who "believe" it, and who "shall be saved," and *no others*. The commands are these, preach, make disciples, baptize, and teach; in other words, make disciples by preaching the Gospel, baptize them, and teach them. The order commanded is—first, the discipling, then the baptizing, and then the teaching. That the command, "make disciples," means make true Christians, and nothing less, is evident from the means by which the work was to be done, the preaching of the Gospel; evident from the New Testament use of the word disciple;* and evident from the fact that those whom Matthew calls "disciples" Mark calls "believers," and describes as "saved."

If it is objected that, as nations include infants, the command, "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them," is a command to disciple and baptize infants, I reply, the passage cannot be pressed in that way; for, on the same principle, it might be argued that, as they were commanded to "preach to every creature," and infants are creatures, the apostles were commanded to *preach to infants*, and to teach infants the will of God! This is absurd. None would assert it. The apostles were simply commanded to disciple those who were able and willing to be disciplined in every nation under heaven. Infants could neither understand the preaching nor believe the Gospel, nor become scholars, or followers, or disciples of Jesus, nor receive and profit by the subsequent instruction; therefore, they were not contem-

* "Will ye also be his disciples? Then they reviled him, and said, *thou art his disciple*, but we are Moses' disciples."—John ix. 27, 28. "Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom *one of his disciples* whom Jesus loved."—John xiii. 23. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, *so shall ye be my disciples*."—John xv. 8.

plated in this commission, and, therefore, it affords no authority for baptizing them. It contemplates adults throughout in each of its clauses. "*Preach*"—to whom? Clearly not to unconscious infants. "*Disciple*"—whom? Not beings incapable of moral action. "*Baptize*"—whom? *The same set of people.* And go on to "*teach*"—whom? Those who could observe all Christ's commands. *Each clause excludes infants.*

The commission not only excludes infants, it excludes all unbelievers from the ordinance of baptism. Unbelievers are contemplated, *but not as being baptized.* "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." Christ did not say, "he that believeth not shall be damned, even though he be baptized." No; He did not contemplate such a case (too common though it be, alas!) He gave no authority for the baptism of such, and the order of the four injunctions forbids it. This should be observed, for the order is Divine, as well as the injunctions themselves. It is, preach, disciple, baptize, and teach. Now, it is just as fair to put the *teaching*, the instruction in practical godliness, *before the preaching* of the glad tidings, as to put the baptism *before the discipling.* None should be baptized until previously discipled; or, in other words, **NONE BUT BELIEVERS SHOULD BE BAPTIZED.**

Now here I humbly, yet confidently take my stand. The command is, *first* make disciples, or true Christians of men (by the grace of God and a preached Gospel), and *then* baptize them. And this *command to baptize believers* can never, by any possibility, be made to imply a command to baptize those who are *not believers.* This must be clear to every unprejudiced mind, and is of great importance; for all apostolic baptism rests on the authority of this one passage. If the apostles baptized any but those whom they regarded as believers, they did so on the authority of some other commission, and not of that under consideration. But no such commission has ever been heard of, nor can the apostles be justly charged with any such practice. Well would it be if as much could be said of their successors.

From the great commission, therefore, on which the whole thing rests, no evidence can be gathered, for the baptism of any others than disciples, true believers; and further, it affords a strong argument against such a practice: *NOTHING but a direct prohibition could be stronger*. Such a prohibition could not be expected, regarding a custom which, at that time, had no existence.

II. Turn now to the practice of the apostles, as recorded in Acts, and you will find it in perfect harmony with this interpretation of the commission. Nine instances of baptism occur—let us examine them.

1. Of the 3000 baptized at Pentecost, it is said, that “they were pricked in their hearts,” on hearing Peter’s sermon, that they enquired the way of salvation, and that they “gladly received his word,” before they were baptized (Acts ii. 37-41). So it is evident they were believers.

2. Of those baptized by Philip at Samaria it is said, “he preached Christ unto them, and when they believed they were baptized, both men and women” (Acts viii. 5-12). Clearly they were believers, and adults too.

3. As regards the eunuch it is said, that Philip, taking his text from Isaiah, “preached unto him Jesus,” and baptized him *only on his confession of faith* (Acts viii. 26-40). Clearly he was a believer.

4. As regards Saul of Tarsus it is stated, that he had seen Jesus; that he had prayed to him, calling him “Lord;” and that he had been filled with the Holy Ghost, before Ananias baptized him (Acts ix. 11-18). Clearly he was a believer.

5. Cornelius, and the company in his house at Cesaræa, had “heard the word,” received the Holy Ghost, and were speaking with tongues and magnifying God, before Peter commanded them to be baptized. Clearly they were believers.

Observe, dear reader, how invariable the order is—preaching; discipling; baptizing—it is never reversed. We no more find an instance of baptism

preceding faith, than of conversion prior to preaching, or of the bestowal of the Holy Ghost prior to conversion. "In whom, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." The preaching produces faith, and the faith authorizes baptism.

6. Lydia's heart was opened before Paul baptized her and her household. Clearly she was a believer. If it be asserted that her household *may* have contained infants (no one will dare to say positively it *did*), it is sufficient to answer, that it *may not*—and that even if it did, the terms of the commission excluded them from baptism (Acts xvi. 14, 15).*

7. Of the Jailor it is said, "he rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." Clearly they were all believers (Acts xvi. 31, 34).

8. Crispus is said to have "believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized" (Acts xviii. 8). Not much question about them!

9. At Ephesus Paul baptized twelve men, to whom he had first preached Jesus, who had believed, and who subsequently received the Holy Ghost (Acts xix. 2). Clearly they were no exception to the rule. There is no other instance of baptism recorded in Acts, and these nine are instances of believer's baptism. From the practice of the apostles, therefore, no argument can be adduced in favour of the baptism of unbelievers, or non-believers.

Nor from the allusions to the subject in the Epistles. To the Romans (chap. vi.) Paul addresses an argument which assumes that "*so many*" of them as had been baptized, had not only been conscious of the meaning of the ordinance (which infants cannot be), but were capable of "walking in newness of life," which, unless real Christians, they could not have been.

In 1 Cor. i. Paul says he baptized Crispus and Gaius, and the household of Stephanus. We have already seen that Crispus was a believer. His baptism is the eighth mentioned in the Acts. As to Gaius,

* See answer to Objection 7.

Rom. xvi. 23 shows him to have been a Christian. He was Paul's host at Corinth. As to the household of Stephanus, we learn (1 Cor. xvi.), that they were "the first fruits of Achaia," and had "addicted themselves to the work of the ministry." Therefore they were believers.

To the Galatians he says, "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (chap. iii. 26, 27). No comment is needed to show that these were Christians.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians (chap. iv.), he connects the "one baptism" with the "one body," inhabited by the "one Spirit," having "one faith," "one hope," "one Lord," and "one God and Father." Alas! that men should ever have dis severed it from these. Alas! that it has come to be possessed now by more out of the "one body" than are in it. Alas! that there is "one baptism" in the apostolic sense no longer.

The allusion in Col. ii. 12 equally implies that the baptized among them were true believers. "Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him, through the faith of the operation of God, who raised Him from the dead; and you hath He quickened," &c.

And lastly, Peter closely connects the ordinance of baptism with "the answer of a good conscience toward God," which manifestly exists in none but believers (1 Pet. iii. 21).

III. Not only do these latter passages show that all the baptized were believers, and that all the believers were baptized, but they bring out *the meaning* of the ordinance, which affords the third source of unanswerable proof, that the proper subjects of baptism are believers only.

For of what is baptism an emblem? OF DEATH AND RESURRECTION. "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*" (Rom. vi. 3). Does not this passage clearly teach, that the ordinance is intended to symbolize the great spiritual fact, which is true of every believer, and of a believer only, that *he is one with Christ, one both in death and resurrection.**

In the death of his substitute he virtually died, and he confesses this in baptism, by going through an emblematic burial; in the resurrection of his head he is risen, and he expresses this in baptism, by rising again out of the watery grave. A believer in his baptism, not merely *says* but *acts*—"I am dead with Christ, and with Christ I am risen to newness of life."

As the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is expressive of life sustained by a constant feeding by faith on Christ crucified, so the ordinance of baptism is expressive of our being spiritually dead, and buried, and risen with Christ. Thus, while the former is continually repeated, the latter is enacted once for all. This is the primary signification of baptism—it has a secondary one, that of washing, purification from sin—intimated in such passages as, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." The thoughts, though distinct, are closely connected—the one involves the other. A believer's cleansing (at conversion) is not a partial but a total one—not merely a purification but a renewal—it is "the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost;" it is a putting away of sin, by destroying the body of sin, that we should walk in newness of life. The element and the action of baptism beautifully combine the two ideas; water—burial in it—and emergence out of it.

Now if this be the teaching of the ordinance, (and every passage which alludes to its meaning confirms this view,) then evidently, since none but believers are dead and risen with Christ, and able to walk in newness of life, *none but believers ought to profess to be so*, by going through an ordinance which expresses this. If baptism is "an outward visible sign of an inward spiritual grace," can it be right for those who

* See Appendix (A).

have not received the grace to assume the sign of it? If baptism represent *burial*, who should be baptized? Those who have died with Christ spiritually, or those who have not? The former alone, surely! It would be absurd and wicked to bury the living!

But it is a duty to bury the dead. If you, dear reader, are a Christian, it was your duty at your conversion, when you "*died* with Christ," when you first became "dead to sin" and "to the law," to have been *buried* with Christ by baptism into death; and by being raised again out of that watery grave, to have expressed your being "risen with Christ," and "alive unto God." If you did not fulfil this duty *then*, it is your duty *still*. God has made the waters of baptism a grave, wherein He "buries his dead out of his sight," and you must, if you would "fulfil all righteousness," consent to this burial with Christ.

You perceive now, dear reader, that the Scriptures we are considering have taught us thus much :

1. That the Lord Jesus never commanded any but believers to be baptized.

2. That his apostles baptized believers *only*, and, as far as we have any evidence, they *always* baptized those who believed.

3. That the *meaning* of the ordinance is such, that it is *an acted lie* for a non-believer to be made a partaker of it.

II. Let us now turn to the second question, THE **MODE** in which this ordinance should be administered. There are three independent harmonious sources of light on this part of the subject also.

1. The meaning of the word "baptize."

2. The descriptive particulars added in some of the narratives of baptism recorded in the New Testament.

3. The meaning of the ordinance: for any *mode* that fails to convey this cannot be a right one, the primary use of the outward sign being to express the spiritual truth.

1. AS TO THE MEANING OF THE WORD.

You observe, dear reader, that it is, as I before re-

marked, an *untranslated word*. Baptize is Greek, not English. The question is, How should it be translated? Does it mean one thing, or does it mean another thing quite different? Is it the Greek for "to immerse," or, is it the Greek for "to sprinkle," or is there any synonym for it in English? One would think this must be an easy question to answer, and so it is; for nothing is required but an exhibition of the use of the word in its native language, to dispel for ever the obscurity which traditional errors have gathered around it. Such an exhibition has recently been made; two hundred years of controversy demanded it, and the result ought to set the question at rest for ever. The Greek words "*to baptize*," and "*baptism*," ought of course to be translated into the vernacular tongue of every country, in versions of the New Testament, and *we may now assert, without hesitation, that their proper English synonymes are, "to immerse," and "immersion."* The American Bible Union are preparing a revised version of the Scriptures, with critical and philological notes. The Gospel by Matthew is already published, and the word "baptize" is in it translated by "immerse" wherever it occurs. It was needful to show authority for this change. An elaborate appendix accompanies the work, in which the use of the Greek word is philologically and historically investigated; it contains a collection of *all the instances* in which it is used, in extant profane Greek literature—every extract being given in the original, and in a literal translation—so that those who are no scholars can, by the context, form a judgment as to the meaning of the word. From this carefully prepared, and most complete compilation, I extract the following facts with regard to the meaning of the word baptize. It occurs 175 times in Greek literature, in reference to other subjects than the Christian rite; it is used by authors of every class, by poets, philosophers, critics, historians, writers on natural history, on medicine, on husbandry, on theology, &c., &c.; it is used in various styles of composition, in epistles, orations, odes, fables, sermons, narratives; and by writers of different nations, and religions, by

Pagans, Jews, and Christians; through a long succession of ages; sometimes literally, sometimes metaphorically. These examples exhaust the use of the word in Greek literature (save where it is applied to the ordinance under consideration).

From them it appears, that the ground idea expressed by this word, is to put into or under water, (or other penetrable substance,) so as entirely to immerse or submerge; that this act is always expressed in the literal application of the word, and is the basis of its metaphorical uses. This central idea of the word may be expressed in English by to immerse, immerge, submerge, dip, plunge, imbathe, or whelm, which all contain this ground meaning. From the earliest age of Greek literature, down to its close, a period of 2000 years, not an example has been found in which the word has any other meaning. There is no instance in which it signifies to make a partial application of water, by sprinkling or pouring; or to cleanse, or purify, apart from the literal act of immersion, as the means of cleansing or purifying. In Christian Greek literature, the word retained its distinctive meaning, and was freely used, both in its literal and metaphorical senses.

Further, there are seven examples, in Greek versions of the Old Testament, where the *Hebrew* word, translated in the authorized *English* version by plunge, dip, whelm, sink, &c., is translated into *Greek* by the word baptize. Further, wherever, in speaking of the Christian ordinance, the early Greek fathers of the Church use some other word or sentence to express it instead of the word baptize, there is no question that the meaning conveyed is immersion. Numerous examples of this kind occur. Further, the words used by the *Latin* fathers of the Church, in speaking of the ordinance, are words implying, in the same way, submergence. The examples of this, also, are numerous. And, lastly, in all the versions of the Scriptures into Latin and into other tongues, wherever the *Greek* word is not transferred, it is translated by words meaning to dip, plunge, immerse. Add to all this that nearly a hundred eminent Pœdobaptists (and one of the best testimonies is the acknowledgement of an adver-

sary) have allowed, in their printed works, that "baptize" means "immerse;"* and that the universal testimony of the learned in lexicons, &c., is to the same effect; and you will, I think, agree with me, dear reader, that, far as a descriptive word can determine it, the proper *mode* of baptism is proved to be *immersion* and not sprinkling.

II. Space forbids the production of a mass of other evidence which might be adduced to the same effect; so I turn to the light thrown on the mode of baptism by one of the narratives in Acts, that of Philip and the eunuch.

It is said, "They came to a certain water, *and they WENT DOWN both INTO THE WATER, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him; and when they were COME UP OUT OF THE WATER* the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip." Now, dear reader, would you, I ask, use such language as this to describe a modern baptism by sprinkling or pouring? Would you say "they went down both of them into the water, both the minister and the baby, and he baptized it; and when they were come up out of the water he returned it to its mother?" Oh! no! But you could not select language better adapted to express a baptism by immersion. Whatever others may do, Philip evidently did something more than sprinkle the eunuch!

The same remark applies to Christ's baptism by John; but I do not dwell on this. No one questions that he was baptized *in Jordan itself*, not, like our royal children, with a little water taken out of *Jordan!*

III. Equally clear proof that immersion only is the proper mode of baptism, lies in the *meaning* of the ordinance; in fact, if *this* were only kept in view as it is presented in Scripture, there could be little ques-

* A collection of extracts from their writings may be seen in a small pamphlet, entitled "Testimonies of Eminent Pædobaptists concerning the Ordinance of Baptism," dedicated to the Rev. W. Thorn, of Winchester. London: Simpkin and Marshall. 1860. Sixpence. Carson, Grafton-street, Dublin.

tion as to either subject or mode. It settles the whole matter without needing any other arguments to help it.

As I showed above, baptism denotes and is intended to express *death, and BURIAL, and resurrection*. Now, no corpse was ever buried by being sprinkled with a little dust—a body is covered right over when interred—hidden from view—buried out of sight. Total immersion under the water is the only mode of baptism that could figure out this truth. “Buried by immersion” is an apt metaphor; but who would say buried by sprinkling, or buried by pouring? No! BURIAL requires first a corpse and then a grave. BAPTISM requires something more; it needs a dead man and an emblematic grave to put him into; but it needs, besides, a living man to rise up out of the grave. A believer’s immersion presents all these. “Ye are dead.” “Our old man is crucified.” A believer brings this “old,” this sinful nature, the flesh which he realizes to have been condemned and executed in the vicarious death of Christ, lays it in a watery grave, and, in a figure, leaves it there—he has done with it—he reckons himself *dead and buried*—he is baptized into Christ’s death—and then he rises a new creature, to walk in newness of life. “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him.” Both are figured by immersion, and by immersion only; both are true of believers, and of believers only.

What then, dear reader, do we gather from the teachings of the Bible as to this point? It uses a word which was understood by those to whom it was addressed, in exactly the same sense as you understand “immerse,” a word which had no mystical sacred meaning in their minds, but which was a common every-day expression, with one primary and invariable import. Scripture uses *this* word and *no other* to denote the ordinance—though the words for “to sprinkle,” and “to pour,” are abundantly used in other connections. Further, in giving particulars as to the administration of this ordinance, Scripture uses language which cannot bear two meanings—language which conveys the idea of immersion, doubly and

trebly—and which without this idea is nonsensical. And lastly, Scripture claims for the ordinance a meaning, which no mode, save immersion, expresses. This “threefold cord cannot be broken.”

Let us recapitulate.

I. AS TO THE SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM.

1. Christ’s command was to baptize believers.
2. The apostle’s practice was to baptize believers.
3. The meaning of the ordinance demands the baptism of believers.

Therefore believers should be baptized.

II. AS TO THE MODE OF BAPTISM.

1. The word “baptism” means “immersion.”
2. The apostles and early church practised immersion.
3. The meaning of the ordinance (a typical burial) demands immersion.

Therefore believers should be baptized by immersion.

Or to put it negatively.

I. AS TO THE SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM.

1. There is no command in the Scripture to baptize any but believers.
2. There is no instance in Scripture of the baptism of any but professed believers.
3. The meaning of the ordinance excludes all but believers.

Therefore none but believers should be baptized.

II. AS TO THE MODE OF BAPTISM.

1. Nothing but immersion is commanded.
2. The apostles and early church practised nothing but immersion.
3. The meaning of the ordinance is expressed by nothing but immersion.

Therefore nothing but immersion is baptism.

Now, dear reader, having presented this subject to you in its true light, by laying before you all that the Word of God teaches with regard to it, let me answer a few of the objections, which may arise in your own mind, or be suggested to you by others; and also give you a brief sketch of the history of the existing and erroneous practice of infant baptism.

ANSWERS TO SOME POPULAR OBJECTIONS.

OBJECTION 1.—The ordinance was only intended to be temporary, and may now be regarded as obsolete.

ANSWER.—I admit that it was intended to last but for a time ; and that time—as long as there remains a “creature” to receive “the Gospel,” a sinner to be “discipled,” or a believer to be “immersed ;” in fact, “to the end of the world.”

OBJECTION 2.—The baptism commanded by Christ is not baptism with water, but baptism with the Spirit.

ANSWER.—I admit the baptism of the Spirit. But the baptism commanded in the great commission cannot be this, for it is baptism *into the name* of the Spirit. It is, therefore, that of water.

OBJECTION 3.—I have received the baptism of the Spirit, and therefore have no need to be baptized with water.

ANSWER.—Your having received the Spirit, so far from being a reason why you should not be baptized with water, *is the very reason why you should.* Consider Peter’s words—“Can any man forbid *water* (to be used) 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.”—Acts x. 47, 48.

OBJECTION 4.—Jewish children were circumcised ; therefore Christian children should be baptized.

ANSWER.—God commanded the one : He never commanded the other : besides, boys only were circumcised, not girls.

OBJECTION 5.—Infant baptism may be inferred from the analogy between the two cases, though not commanded.

ANSWER.—This is truly a slender and trembling foundation on which to rear such a vast and mighty superstructure as the universal baptism of infants! So the doctrine, which turns the *world* into the *church*, and makes void the express command of Christ to baptize believers, rests on a fancied resemblance, on a doubtful analogy? It does, in common with many a Romish heresy; but God forbid, dear reader, that we should receive it on such authority!

Yet I would not be understood as denying all similarity between baptism and circumcision. They are both initiatory rites in their respective systems: but this fact, so far from proving infant baptism, is an argument against it. Jewish infants received circumcision as a sign of their outward covenant relation to God, as soon as they entered *by natural birth* into that relation. Babes in Christ do the same. As soon as, by being *born again*, they enter into the new covenant with God, in Christ, they should be baptized. A Jew by *birth* became a member of the Jewish nation, and had a right to circumcision; a believer *by conversion* becomes a member of the Church, and has a right to baptism. *You must circumcise a Jewish child before it is born to make an analogy for baptism before conversion!* But while granting that circumcision and baptism are both initiatory rites, I deny that the latter has *come in the place* of the former. That which has now taken the place of outward circumcision, as Paul tells us in Col. ii., is the “circumcision *made without hands*” (not baptism which is made with hands) even that of the heart: “the putting away of the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ”—that is, by the spiritual circumcision which Christ administers. Any argument, therefore, based upon the supposed substitution of the one for the other is really groundless.

OBJECTION 6.—But does not Paul say, in 1 Cor. vii., that the children of believers are “holy?” If so, should they not be baptized?

ANSWER.—So this is another theory on which infant baptism rests—HEREDITARY HOLINESS! And pray what is this hereditary holiness? Is it pretended that the children of Christians are necessarily children of God? Facts contradict this. Does the parents being regenerate, make the children regenerate? No! they are “by nature the children of wrath even as others.” What, then, is this holiness? The passage must be interpreted by its context. It is a question whether a believing husband or wife may continue to live with an unconverted partner in life. So and so is “clean to you,” or “unclean to you,” was a Jewish expression familiar to those whom Paul addressed.* He uses it here, putting “holy” in opposition to “unclean.” What he says may be thus interpreted. Though the Christian law of marriage be “*only in the Lord*,” and therefore, *prima facie*, a Christian wife must quit an unbelieving husband, as being “unclean” to her, yet so it need not, must not be. The relationship already exists, and it sanctions and sanctifies what would be otherwise inadmissible. One who would otherwise have been “unclean” to her, becomes “clean” or “holy” to a Christian wife *because he is her husband*. “The unbelieving husband is sanctified *by* (or more properly *to*, as the word is elsewhere rendered) the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified to the husband, else (and here he strengthens his position by an appeal which must carry instant conviction) were your children unclean, but now are they holy.” That is, if this principle (that relationship sanctions intercourse with unbelievers) were not true, your own children would be “unclean” to you, since they too are unbelievers:

* “The Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron saying, These are the beasts which ye shall eat, among all the beasts, * * The camel, he is unclean unto you; and the coney, he is unclean unto you; and the hare, he is unclean unto you; and the swine, he is unclean to you. Of their flesh ye shall not eat, and their carcase shall ye not touch; they are unclean to you. * * * They shall be an abomination to you. * * * These are unclean to you, among the creeping things * * * To make a difference between the unclean and clean, and between the beast that may be eaten, and the beast that may not be eaten.”—See Lev. xi.

this evidently is not so. They are "clean," "holy" to you; therefore, so is your husband. He does not speak of the children as having any real personal holiness—much less as being baptized—could he have done the latter, this would have been the very occasion. *Had the practice existed he could not have failed to adduce it in support of his position.* A relative sanctity is intended, that is all; and even if it were otherwise, the thought of baptism is about as foreign to the passage as the thought of the Lord's Supper. Any argument that deduced infant baptism from it, *must also deduce from it the propriety of baptizing unconverted husbands and wives!*

OBJECTION 7.—But the apostles occasionally baptized whole households; who can prove that they left out the children?

ANSWER.—Who can prove the households in question to have contained children? This argument rests entirely on the assumption that these households *must necessarily* have contained infants: it is quite sufficient to reply, *there is no such necessity, multitudes of households contain none.* In the absence of any intimation that these households did contain infant children, the statement that they were baptized, warrants the inference that they did not: since the terms of the commission, and the meaning of the ordinance, alike exclude such from baptism, as I before proved. But further, as to four out of the five cases of household baptism, we are not left to inferential evidence. The Spirit of God has expressly intimated that the households of Cornelius, of the jailor, of Crispus, and of Stephanus, were composed of *believers*; of persons able to believe, to rejoice, to speak with tongues, and to minister to the saints. This has been shown above.* Lydia's household is, therefore, the only case in point, and I admit there is nothing *positively* to prove it did not contain infants: but there is nothing to prove it DID, *and before any argument for their baptism can be founded on it, THIS MUST BE PROVED.* This passage is therefore, "*hors de combat*," for it is impossible to prove any-

* See pages, 12, 13.

thing of the sort. It is impossible ever to show that Lydia was a married woman, or that she had a family at all; and equally impossible to prove that she had an infant, and that if she had, it was with her in Europe, away from her Asiatic home. What, then, at best, does this argument amount to? "There *may* have been infants in Lydia's household, and if so, they were baptized, and, *therefore*, infant baptism is Scriptural." How convincing! There *may* have been, and therefore *there were!* Might I not as well argue, "there *may* have been *no* infants in Lydia's household, therefore *there were none.*" Thank God, believers' baptism rests on no such false foundation of unwarrantable assumption, and unjustifiable inference, but upon the clear precepts, and undeniable practice of Christ and his apostles. Reader, are you not ashamed of such reasoning? "*There may have been infants in Lydia's household, therefore there were—therefore they were baptized* (in disobedience to Christ, and contrary to the invariable custom of the apostles on other occasions), *and, therefore, I and all the world baptize them now.* How sensible! how just! how very conclusive!!

And does the world-wide practice of infant baptism rest on such a basis as this! as well might the pyramid of Cheops be poised on the point of a pin! Its advocates will say, it does not rest solely on this: but surely that it must be a woefully weak cause, which condescends *ever to advance such an argument!*

OBJECTION 8.—Christ blessed little children, and said, "of such is the kingdom of heaven," therefore we should baptize them.

ANSWER.—He blessed, but did *not* baptize them; nor should we. When He said, "of such is the kingdom of heaven," He did not teach that all children are regenerate, but merely that all the regenerate are childlike.

OBJECTION 9.—It is impossible that baptism can have been invariably by immersion. How could 3000 be immersed in one day? There was not sufficient water in Jerusalem to immerse them in, &c., &c. The jailor was baptized the same hour of the night—whence came the water, &c.

ANSWER.—Scripture does not assert that the 3000 were baptized in one day. These objections, and numerous similar ones, are founded simply on our *ignorance* of the precise circumstances of the case, and the *gratuitous assumption* that the thing was impossible. Taking them in detail it is very easy to *prove* that there is no absolute impossibility in any case. I, myself, have recently seen water enough in Jerusalem to immerse three thousand persons: but it is utterly unfair to demand such proof from us. Scripture says distinctly that the three thousand, the jailor, &c., were baptized (immersed); and it devolves upon those who deny that they were immersed **TO PROVE THEIR IMMERSION IMPOSSIBLE.** This they are of course unable to do!

OBJECTION 10.—But there is something indelicate and disagreeable in immersion: nature itself teaches that sprinkling or pouring is a preferable mode of baptism!

ANSWER.—It is enough to answer this impious assertion by the question, “**WHO COMMANDED IT?**” Is Christ the minister of sin? God forbid! But it is not the first time He has been charged as a sinner by the wisdom of the world. His ordinances may and do humble pride, and offend human dignity. God’s institutions are all pure, but they do not all consult our notions of delicacy. Would such objectors deny the divine origin and authority of circumcision? Would Abram have pleaded *this* argument against *it*? or would God have accepted such a plea if he had? It is an awful thing to enlist the *corruptions* of the Christian’s heart against an ordinance of Christ, as this objection does, to say the least of it. We know that Christ himself was immersed, and that he humbled himself in ten thousand ways, and exposed himself to shame and spitting. Shall He lose sight of His dignities, and make Himself of no reputation for our sakes, and shall we spurn, in fastidious folly and pride, his pure and blessed ordinances? Again I say, *God forbid!*

OBJECTION 11.—After all the mode is of little importance.

ANSWER.—It is of just as great importance as any-

thing else commanded by Christ. Many a command of God is important *solely because He has commanded it*. Here it is not so. Immersion is the *only* mode of administering the ordinance which preserves its meaning, or teaches the truth intended to be conveyed. If it were asserted that Christians should touch, smell, or look at the bread and wine at the Lord's Supper instead of eating them, would you say the mode is of little importance? No! you would perceive that such an alteration *destroyed the meaning* of the ordinance. So here.

OBJECTION 12.—But the church may *change the mode* of an ordinance, though she may not abolish or invent one.

ANSWER.—This is Popery. Christ's ordinances are to be "*kept as delivered.*" To say the contrary is to exalt the church above Christ.

OBJECTION 13.—It can hardly be that the immense majority of Christians are wrong, and the few only right. Would it not be presumption for me to differ from such men as the reformers, &c.

ANSWER.—Numbers are no argument for truth. Pagans are far more numerous than Christians, and Catholics than Protestants. *No array of great names can weigh much against CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES.*

OBJECTION 14.—I have already been baptized as an infant. It is needless now to repeat it.

ANSWER.—You have done many things Christ never commanded, but that is no reason why you should refrain from doing what you know He *has* commanded. You are bound to be immersed as a disciple, as a believer; it is no excuse for disobedience, to allege that something else was done to you as an unconscious infant.

OBJECTION 15.—Had I seen this truth when I was first converted, I would have been baptized. It seems inconsistent, now that I have been many years a Christian, to return to an initiatory ordinance.

ANSWER.—I grant that it would have been preferable, had you been baptized at conversion; but "*better late than never.*" You would not argue thus as regards the payment of a debt long over-due to a neighbour. Baptism is not *merely* an initiatory ordi-

nance ; though it ought properly to be connected with the commencement of the Christian life (where as a confession it has peculiar propriety), yet it is not unsuited to any stage of it. This will be seen when its meaning is considered ; baptism is an *acted confession* of union with Jesus in death and resurrection ; and though to be observed only once in a Christian's life, it is, like the Lord's Supper, expressive and appropriate at any period of it. The children of Israel *ought* to have been circumcised at eight days old ; but having omitted this, they were all by God's command circumcised when they came to Gilgal, and thus "rolled away the reproach of Egypt."

OBJECTION 16.—I do not wish to become a "Baptist"—sectarian divisions on minor truths are to be avoided ; Christians must make sacrifices to promote *union* in the Church of Christ—it is better to keep these controverted points in the background.

ANSWER.—Plausible reasoning—but unsound ! I do not urge you to become a Baptist, or to indulge *sectarian* feeling as to this truth or any other. I only urge you to obey Christ, and to lend your influence and example to induce others to do the same. Make any personal sacrifices you please, to promote union among Christians, but never secure it at the cost of faithfulness ! Remember "*to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.*" Union in the truth is good, but may God deliver us from uniformity in error ! Testimony to the truth can never be displeasing to Christ, and ought never to be so to true Christians—they may not see a thing to be truth, but if you *advocate it merely as such*, and without giving it undue importance—sectarian feeling if it come in at all, must arise from *prejudice* ; which we are bound not to foster, but to oppose. Paul says, "I have not shunned to declare unto you, the whole counsel of God ;" and I, for my part (instead of keeping any truth in the background), wish to be able to say the same. My duty is to "*preach the Word,*" not *part* of the Word, even though many "will not endure sound doctrine," and yours, dear reader, is "to fulfil *all* righteousness," not *some* merely, and to let your light

shine before men, not to put it under a bushel. Avoid sectarianism by all means; entertain no feeling towards those who differ from you, but one of love and pity; pray for them that wherein they are "otherwise minded, God would reveal even this unto them;" but seek to obey and to please GOD RATHER THAN MEN.

It seems needful to say a few words in conclusion as to the history of the present practice of infant sprinkling. There is no instance recorded of baptism by any other mode than by immersion for 250 years after Christ. The practice of the early church was unquestionably immersion. From that period sprinkling was permitted in cases of necessity, and in prospect of death; indicating the existence even then of the false idea, that baptism is needful to salvation. Pouring was *tolerated* by the Church of Rome, though immersion was her rule, in the eighth century; and not till the *sixteenth* century was it adopted generally. The rubric of the Church of England to this day, *enjoins* "dipping," as the rule—but *permits* pouring as an exception—though sprinkling only is, and has been for the last 300 years, the usual *practice*. All Christian nations that do now, or ever did, own the power of the Pope, sprinkle—all those that never did (in Asia, Africa, and in a third of Europe), immerse still; but for 1,300 years after the apostolic era, the whole church was unanimous in baptizing by immersion, except in cases of sickness. Were there no other argument, this alone would be strong *presumption*, that immersion was the original, and, if so, the only divinely authorized mode of baptism.

The now widely spread practice of administering the ordinance to *infants*, rests on the slenderest foundations. When, and on what authority, it was introduced, you shall hear!

There is no evidence of it earlier than the third century; then it was allowed by a few; but it did not become general till the fifth century. The first

mention of it is by Tertullian (A.D. 204). He *argues against it*, as unknown in apostolic times, destitute of divine or apostolic authority, dangerous to the sponsors, and useless and absurd as regards the children! The early advocates of infant baptism held that baptism was needful to salvation, that forgiveness accompanied it, and that all who died without it were lost. *In this false view of the nature of the ordinance, the application of it to infants ORIGINATED!* Sponsors arose from the felt need of some confession of faith prior to baptism: infants could not make it for themselves, so others must for them. The practice is first found in an age fruitful in heresies and corruptions, and was accompanied by the administration of the Lord's Supper to infants. As to authority, the advocates of infant baptism do not claim any very high authority for it;* while some base it on doubtful analogies, &c.,† most of them allow that it has no authority either from Christ or his apostles, and that it is not to be found in Scripture. The Church of Rome claims for it apostolic tradition, and others base it on decrees of episcopal counsels! Reader, is it not manifestly a mere human invention, originating in false views of the saving efficacy of ordinances, and subversive of God's institution? If so, *abandon it*, for it is as mischievous as it is unauthorized: *abandon it*, as that which obliterates the distinction between the Church and the world, is the root of wide-spread false profession of the name of Christ, tends, almost more than anything else, to obscure the truth, "Ye must be born again;" to delude the unconverted, and hinder the reception of the Gospel: *abandon it*, as that which engenders and fosters a false peace, and a false hope, that he who believeth not shall be saved; degrades a beautiful and expressive ordinance, into an absurd, unmeaning ceremony; and sets aside, altogether, the real institution of believer's baptism, preventing all the good it was designed to work, and making void the express command of Christ.

Reader, whosoever you are, the Scriptural doctrine

* See Appendix (B).

† Appendix (C).

of baptism is now fairly before your mind. Let me say, in conclusion, "if you know these things *happy are you if you do them.*" May your course, however blameable in the past, deserve for the future the commendation, "I praise you that ye remember me in all things, and *keep the ordinances AS I DELIVERED THEM UNTO YOU.*" If, heretofore, you have "erred, not knowing the Scriptures," may God give you grace now to take up your cross and follow Christ in this matter! Loving "the praise of God," more than "the praise of men," may you "obey from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you;" so that you may never hear the reproach, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and *do not* the things which I say." Your *obedience* is demanded, your love is put to the test; how will you act? "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." Christian reader, "Why tarriest thou? **ARISE AND BE BAPTIZED.**"

APPENDIX (A.)

Testimonies of eminent Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists, as to the *meaning* of the ordinance:—

DR. WALL (Vicar of Shoreham, in Kent, and author of that famous work, "The History of Infant Baptism," for which he received the thanks of the whole clergy in Convocation.) "As to the manner of baptism then generally used, the texts produced by every one that speaks of these matters, John iii. 23; Mark i. 5; Acts viii. 38; are undeniable proofs that the baptized person went ordinarily into the water, and sometimes the Baptist too. We should not know from these accounts, whether the whole body of the baptized was put under water, head and all, were it not for two later proofs, which seem to me to PUT IT OUT OF QUESTION.—One, that St. Paul does twice, in an allusive way of speaking, call baptism a BURIAL. The other, the custom of the Christians in the near succeeding times, which being more largely and particularly delivered in books, is known to have been generally or ordinarily, a total immersion." *Defence of the Hist. of Inf. Bap.*, p. 131.

ARCHBISHOP TILLOTSON. "Anciently, those who were baptized, were immersed and BURIED in the water, to represent their death to sin; and then did rise up out of the water, to signify their entrance upon a new life. And to these customs the apostle alludes, Rom. vi. 2-6." *Works*, Vol. I. Serm. vii., p. 179.

ARCHBISHOP SECKER. "BURYING, as it were, the person baptized in the water, and raising him out again, WITHOUT

QUESTION, was anciently the more usual method; on account of which, Saint Paul speaks of baptism as representing both the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and what is grounded on them—our being dead and buried to sin, and our rising again to walk in newness of life." *Lect. on Catechism*, L. xxxv.

DR. NICHOLSON (Bishop of Gloucester). "In the grave with Christ we went not; for our bodies were not, could not be buried with his; but *in baptism*, by a kind of analogy or resemblance, while our bodies are under the water, we may be said to be **BURIED** with him." *Expos. of the Church Catechism*, p. 174.

DR. WHITBY (Author of a Commentary on the New Testament, and more than forty other learned works). "It being so expressly declared here, Rom. vi. 4, and Col. ii. 12, that we are **BURIED** with Christ in baptism, by being buried under water; and the argument to oblige us to a conformity to his death, by dying to sin, being taken hence; and *this immersion being religiously observed by ALL CHRISTIANS FOR THIRTEEN CENTURIES*, and approved by our Church, and the change of it into sprinkling, even without any allowance from the author of this institution, or any license from any council of the church, *being that which the Romanist still urges to justify his refusal of the cup to the laity*; it were to be wished, that this custom might be again of general use, and aspersion only permitted, as of old, in case of the Clinici, or in present danger of death." *Note on Rom. vi. 4.*

DR. BLOOMFIELD. "There is here (Rom. vi. 4.) plainly a reference to the ancient mode of baptism by immersion; and I agree with Koppe and Rosenmüller, that there is reason to regret it should have been abandoned in most Christian churches, especially as it has so evidently a reference to the mystic sense of baptism."

DR. SCOTT. "Those phrases, 'buried with Christ,' and 'risen with Christ,' are only the sense and signification of that eastern custom in baptism, viz.—of plunging the baptized person under water, and raising him up again; and the significancy of them, the apostle (Rom. vi., 3, 4, 5) plainly tells us, wholly refers to the death, and burial, and resurrection of Christ; and, therefore, the plunging under water must necessarily refer to Christ's death and burial, and the raising up again to His resurrection."

REV. W. J. CONYBEARE, M.A. (late F.T.C., Cambridge), and REV. J. S. HOWSON, M.A. (Principal of the Collegiate Institution, Liverpool). "With Him, therefore, we were buried," &c., Rom. vi. 4. "This cannot be understood, unless it be borne in mind that the primitive baptism was by immersion." *Life and Epistles of Paul. Note on Rom. vi. 4.*

ASSEMBLY OF DIVINES. "'Buried with Him in baptism' (Col. ii. 12). In this phrase, the apostle seemeth to allude to the ancient manner of baptism, which was to dip the parties baptized, and, as it were to bury them under the water for a while; and then to draw them out of it, and lift them up, to represent the burial of our old man, and our resurrection to newness of life."

"In the Assembly of Divines, held at Westminster, in 1643, it was keenly debated whether immersion or sprinkling should be adopted; *twenty-five voted for sprinkling, and twenty-four for immersion*, and even this small majority was obtained at the request of Dr. Lightfoot, who had acquired great influence in the assembly. Sprinkling is, THEREFORE, the general practice of this country. Many Christians, however, especially the Baptists, reject it. The Greek Church universally adheres to immersion." *Edinburgh Encyclopedia.*

DR. CHALMERS. "We advert to this (the practice of immersion) for the purpose of throwing light on the analogy that is instituted in these verses.—Rom. vi. 3, 4: Jesus Christ by death, underwent this sort of baptism, even immersion under the surface of the ground, whence He soon emerged again by His resurrection. We by being baptized into His death, are conceived to have made a similar translation: in the act of descending under the water of baptism, to have resigned an old life, and in the act of ascending, to emerge into a second or new life." *Lect. on Rom., chap. vi.*

EDINBURGH PRESBYTERIAN REVIEWERS. "We cannot but regret, therefore, that Mr. Ewing should have been guilty of so many gross and glaring blunders, in his endeavour to make out a case in favour of sprinkling. We have rarely met, for example, with a more weak and fanciful piece of reasoning, than that by which Mr. Ewing would persuade us that there is no reference to the mode of immersion, in the expression 'buried with him in baptism'—this point ought to be FRANKLY ADMITTED, and, indeed, cannot be denied with any show of reason." *Review V. I.*, p. 531.

MR. RICHARD BAXTER (the most eminent nonconformist of his age). "Therefore, in our baptism, we are dipped under the water, as signifying our covenant profession, that as He was buried for sin, we are dead and buried to sin; that as the glorious power of God raised Him from the dead, so we should rise to live to Him in newness and holiness of life." *Paraph. on the N. T.* On Rom. vi. 4.

DR. DODDRIDGE. "*Buried with Him in baptism.* It seems the part of candour to confess, that here is an allusion to the manner of baptizing by immersion, as most usual in these early times." *Fam. Expos.* Note on the place.

MR. GEORGE WHITFIELD. "It is certain that in the words of our text, Rom. vi. 3, 4, there is an allusion to the manner of baptism, which was by immersion, which is what our own church allows," &c. *Eighteen Sermons*, p. 297.

MR. JOHN WESLEY. "*Buried with Him*—alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion." *Note on Rom.* vi. 4.

APPENDIX (B).

PROFESSOR JOWETT (of the University of Oxford).—"Infant baptism, and the Episcopal form of Church government, have sufficient grounds; the **WEAKNESS IS IN ATTEMPTING TO DERIVE THEM FROM SCRIPTURE.**"

DR. HOFFMAM (of Basil).—"Infant baptism was unknown to the apostles, but is **AN IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENT UPON THE APOSTOLIC PRACTICE.**"

REV. T. PALMER (Independent).—"There is nothing in the words of institution, nor in any of the accounts of the administration of this rite, respecting the baptism of infants; there is not a single precept for, nor example of this practice, through the whole New Testament."

DR. FIELD.—"The baptism of infants is therefore named a tradition, because it is not expressly delivered in Scripture, that the apostles did baptize infants; nor is any express precept there found that they should do so."

ARCHBISHOP WHATELY.—"The silence of the sacred writers on the subject is (at least so far as any express directions are concerned) admitted on all hands."

NEANDER (the well known Church Historian).—"It is in the highest degree probable, that the practice of infant baptism was unknown in the apostolic age . . . *we have all reason for not deriving infant baptism from apostolical institution.*"

APPENDIX (C).

Differences among Pædobaptists as to the GROUNDS of baptism. "Cyprian says it is the universality of Divine grace; Austin, the faith of the Church; Church of England, the faith of Sponsors; a new England Synod, church membership; Beza, federal holiness; Baxter, the faith of parents; Henry, the profession of faith by the parents; others the faith of pious ancestors; Witsius and others, a relative state of grace; Prideaux, infants having the faith of the *covenant*, though not the faith of the *covenantees*; Luther and others, the faith of the *infants themselves*; (!) Chamierus, infants being in a *certain respect* believers; Calvin and others, infants having faith and repentance in *semine*; some say they have an *imputed*, some a *passive* faith, and others a *relative* faith; Dr. Priestly, his own profession of Christianity; Fabricius and others (if the parents be heterodox), the requisition of the magistrate; Dr. Hammond, Jewish proselyte bathing; Knatchbull, Jewish circumcision; and finally, Dr. E. Williams lays capital stress on the *capacity* and *moral* qualifications of infants. As to whose infants have a right to baptism: with some, it is those infants *both* of whose *parents* are believers; with others, if *one parent* be a believer; with others, it is the infants of *nominal* Christians; with others, *all infants*. One writer says infants should be baptized because they are in the covenant; another, that baptism brings them into the covenant. One says it brings them into the church; another says they are baptized because they are already in the church. One says it makes them holy; another, that they are baptized because they are holy." (Testimony of eminent Poedobaptists as to the ordinance of baptism, p. 61, 62.)

H Y M N .

AROUND Thy grave, Lord Jesus—
Thine empty grave, we stand,
Our hearts all full of gladness
To keep Thy blest command ;
By faith, our souls rejoicing
To trace Thy path of love,
Through death's dark, angry billows,
Up to the throne above.

Lord Jesus ! we remember
The travail of Thy soul,
When, in Thy love's deep pity,
The waves did o'er Thee roll ;
Baptized in Death's cold waters,
For us Thy blood was shed,
For us the Lord of glory
Was numbered with the dead.

O Lord ! Thou now art risen,
Thy travail all is o'er,
For sin Thou once hast suffered,
Thou liv'st to die no more.
Sin, death and hell are vanquished
By Thee, the Church's Head ;
And lo ! we share thy triumph,
Thou first-born from the dead.

Into Thy death baptized,
We own with Thee we died ;
With thee to life are risen,
And in Thee glorified.
From sin, the world, and Satan,
We're ransomed by Thy blood ;
And now would walk as strangers
Alive, with Thee, to God.

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