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# BAPTISM:

A STUDY  
IN SCRIPTURE



by  
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# FOREWORD

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In pursuing this study the aim has been to present simply what is found in Scripture as to Baptism.

Where conclusions are stated which may differ from either of the two well-known views, it is hoped that the reader will accord those conclusions consideration as being the result of an effort to draw directly from the language of Scripture itself, and keep within the bounds it establishes. This has led the writer to adopt a change of view in reference to the administration of this ordinance as far as *little* children are concerned.

Quite apart from this, the result is submitted with sincere desire to further the deeper appreciation of the spiritual import of this Christian ordinance. May the Lord use it to this end.

JOHN BLOORE.

# BAPTISM:

## A STUDY IN SCRIPTURE

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### 1.—General Remarks

In the New Testament there are two forms of baptism:

- 1.—Ritual, or symbolic.
- 2.—Real, or spiritual.

The first is outward, physical; the second, inward, and hence spiritual in character.

There are two agencies used in these baptisms:

- 1.—Water.
- 2.—The Holy Spirit.

There is also what we may call for the sake of distinction the *receiving* element. This expresses the meaning of the baptism, whether symbolic or real. The meaning is not primarily found in the agency used to effect the baptism. In defining the meaning of baptism it is a mistake to substitute the agency for what the baptism itself is stated to be, and so lose the important distinction between the *agent* and the *receiving* element. Neither water nor the Holy Spirit are spoken of as being the latter. We do not read of being baptized (or, of baptism) into water, nor into the Holy Spirit. The receiving element is variously stated, e.g., "into death," "into one Body" (or, "unto," if it be preferred).

It is worthy of note that throughout the New Testament there is discrimination in the use of the two prepositions, *eis* and *en*, in relation to baptism. The former ("unto," or "into") is connected with the receiving element; the latter ("with," or "by") denotes the agency. Another point of interest is that these prepositions are used exclusively with two cases: *eis* with the Accusative; *en* with the Dative. This adds force to their distinctive use. The Dative as thus used is the case of the instrument, expressing also the mode of an action. The Accusative "primarily denotes that towards which motion is directed." Thus *eis* used in connection with baptism is to be rendered: (1) *unto, to*, where the context or nature of the case limits the idea of movement to the interior: e.g., "baptized unto Moses;" (2) *in order to, for*, when the context speaks of a certain result: e.g., baptism for repentance, or for remission of sins—the results in view; (3) *into*, when the idea is entrance into a state or sphere, whether symbolical or actual. A passage which may illustrate both (1) and (3) is Rom. 6: 3: "As many as have been baptized unto Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death."

In Acts 2: 38 we have "baptized in (*epi*) the name of Jesus Christ;"<sup>1</sup> this preposition with the Dative, as here, signifies *on*, "resting upon," giving the idea of the basis or groundwork for the action; so we might render it, "Baptized...resting upon the name of Jesus Christ for (*eis*) the remission of sins."

The expression, "baptism of repentance," occurs several times. It is an example of the Genitive of relation, and signifies *in respect of*, or *in order to*—repentance was the object in view.

So then baptism *en* indicates the agency *by which* it is effected, and *eis* marks out the receiving element *unto or into which* the subject passes in respect to relation or state, as defined in the context.

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<sup>1</sup> Scripture quotations are generally from *The New Translation* (J. N. D.).

In the New Testament those elements which stand identified with the preposition *eis* are:

For repentance.

For remission of sins.

Unto the name of the Lord Jesus.

Unto Jesus Christ.

Unto Christ.

Unto the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Unto Paul (brought forward as a contrast).

Unto Moses (as a type).

Into Christ's death.

Into one Body.

The last alone is connected with the agency of the Holy Spirit.

The act itself in which water is used is called baptism; but what baptism means is defined by the receiving element. This distinction is not unimportant, because baptism is not to be viewed as a mere physical act of a few moments' duration, but rather as signifying entrance into a change of relation and state with which thereafter the subject is viewed as continuously identified. This is what gives force to the apostle's argument in Rom. 6. Having been baptized into Christ's death and buried with Him by baptism, the subject is ever viewed as identified with what this means and is to apply its meaning to his course of life. Because of this, what we may call the *emersion* is not spoken of in relation to baptism; it is not part of its significance, for what we are said to be baptized for, unto, or into, is viewed as an abiding relation or state. Baptism is an entrance into something, not a going into and a coming out of. Therefore resurrection is not part of its symbolism. And since baptism is into, and not out of, the mere coming out of the water is not given any significance as far as Scripture speaks. Thus baptism signifies entrance into what is stated as the receiving element without the idea of limitation or non-continuance in it. A person may prove true or false, but being baptized that becomes the ground of appeal and a standard by which to judge his course.

Considering the administration of this rite, we find it linked with the kingdom. This is advanced on earth by the sowing of the Word, begun by the Lord Himself and continued by those who heard Him, and then by those who believed through their word. The term "kingdom" presupposes a king, his laws and government, his subjects—in this case Christ, the things He has commanded and which are preached by His servants, and those who profess allegiance to His name and claims. The commissions which He gave before His ascension are clear as to these elements. That in Matthew puts baptism in relation to the fulfilment of these obligations.

These commissions are world-wide in scope—all nations, Jews and Gentiles, are included. Disciples are to be made—that is not the same as saying people are to be saved, or made members of Christ, for a disciple is a learner, one who takes a place under a recognized master, to be instructed in his things, in this case those of Christ and His kingdom. This of course is effected by the preaching of the Word by His messengers.<sup>2</sup> Even before this the relation of discipleship and baptism is intimated in John 4: 1, 2. The Pharisees heard "that Jesus makes and baptizes more disciples than John." Those who profess to receive the word preached declare their readiness to be disciples and are made such by "baptizing" and "teaching" (Matt. 28: 19). Grammatically it appears certain that these two participles are used in a modal sense, setting forth the manner in which the given action is performed. As to whether their profession is real or only nominal is not a question raised.

Baptism with water is not presented in Scripture as effecting any spiritual change, nor is its administration connected with evidence of such a change obtained through the probation of the candidate. It is a symbolic rite signifying *identification with* whatever is mentioned as the receiving element in a *prospective, anticipatory*

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<sup>2</sup> Note Acts 14: 21: "Having announced the glad tidings to that city, and having made many disciples," *lit.*, "having evangelized that city and discipled many" (*Green*).

character, as our following study will show. It signifies the taking of a place with which certain privileges and responsibilities are connected—that of discipleship to Christ, and so in the kingdom of heaven.

Quite another kind of baptism, that of the Holy Spirit, introduces to the Body of Christ, and by His spiritual, internal work through the Word, effecting new birth, the kingdom of God is entered, so that what that kingdom is in its moral and spiritual realities becomes the sphere in which every true believer is found, though also to-day by the same Divine Person baptized into the one Body of which Christ is the Head. From a comparison of Acts 2: 38 with Acts 11: 16, 17, we see that “the gift of the Holy Spirit” and being “baptized with the Holy Spirit” are analogous. Peter says, “God has given them (Gentiles) the same gift as also to us (Jews) when we had believed on the Lord Jesus Christ.” “For also by one Spirit we have all been baptized into one Body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bondmen or free, and have all been given to drink of one Spirit,” and through Christ “we have both (Jew and Gentile) access by one Spirit to the Father” (1 Cor. 12: 13; Eph. 2: 18).

Having spoken in this general way, let us now take up those scriptures which refer to baptism, grouping them under three general heads:

- 1.—The characteristics of baptism with water.
- 2.—The meaning of baptism with water.
- 3.—The administration of baptism with water.

## **2.—The Characteristics of Baptism with Water**

These may be distinguished thus:

PROSPECTIVE, as having some coming thing or person in view.

ANTICIPATORY, as having in view a response from the subject agreeable to the meaning of the baptism.

IDENTIFICATION WITH the person or persons spoken of.

INTRODUCTORY, as outwardly marking the subject to be thereafter in that place or relation mentioned.

*Prospective and Anticipatory.* These characteristics are closely related, and yet have slightly different associations in the scriptures concerning baptism.

The first reference is in Matt. 3: 6. Those who came to John "were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins." The form of statement implies that confession was connected with the baptism, that the act of confession and that of being baptized coalesced. It indicates that there was acknowledgement of guilt. This fittingly accompanied John's baptism since it was in respect of, or for, repentance; *that* was the *prospective* element, and so the baptism was *anticipatory* of an amended life on the part of those receiving it. To this John exhorted them, as we read in Luke 3: 7-14.

Many of the Pharisees and Sadducees came to John's baptism, and in what he says to them the prospective element is associated with it. Coming wrath was in view. Submission to John's baptism had in view escape from that wrath which he preached. This involved repentance. Therefore his baptism is characteristically called "the baptism of repentance" (Mark 1: 4; Luke 3: 3; Acts 13: 24; 19: 4) — repentance was the object in view. John came preaching that baptism of repentance. Those who were baptized by him thereby acknowledged that repentance was needful. The importance of this is evident from what the Lord says to the chief priests and elders (Matt. 21: 25-33; compare also Luke 7: 24-30). John came "in the way of righteousness," and repentance was of that way, but this in their pride they had refused. Moreover, God's counsel was involved, but the Pharisees and lawyers had rendered it null as to themselves, not having accepted John's baptism. John was God's appointed messenger, and He had sent him to baptize with water (John 1: 23, 31-33). It was the beginning of the Divine testimony looking to the coming of Christ (Acts 1: 21-23; 10: 36-44; 13: 23, 24; 18: 25; 19: 3, 4), and

what would be realized thereby. We are given a scant record of what John may have actually said, but after what is recorded in Luke 3 we are assured that, "Exhorting then many other things also he announced his glad tidings to the people." The substance at least of those glad tidings is beautifully stated in these words: "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to make ready His ways; to give knowledge of deliverance to His people by the remission of their sins on account of the bowels of mercy of our God; wherein the dayspring from on high has visited us, to shine upon them who were sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1: 76-79). And so Peter can say, "The word which He [God] sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all things), ye know; the testimony which has spread through the whole of Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism which John preached" (Acts 10: 36, 37). He, too, spoke of Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. These are precious hints of what John announced as "his glad tidings to the people." What they were Apollos ministered, an eloquent man, mighty in the Scriptures: "He was instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught exactly the things concerning Jesus, knowing only the baptism of John" (Acts 18: 24, 25). But all of this shows baptism to have a prospective, and not retrospective, character.

This again is seen in another important feature—John came preaching the baptism of repentance *for the remission of sins* (Mark 1: 4; Luke 3: 3). This result was in view; into this those would enter who repented and believed on Him who came after John, that is, Jesus (Acts 19: 4). The same is true of Peter's word (Acts 2: 33): "Repent, and be baptized, each one of you, in (*epi*, on, or, resting upon) the name of Jesus Christ, for (*eis*, the result in view) the remission of sins, and ye will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." The latter is also *prospective*, as was the remission. To be baptized in

response to Peter's word would be an acknowledgement of the necessity for repentance, and in itself an act of that character.

We may notice in connection with John's preaching and baptism, that while he calls for repentance and exhorts to fruits worthy of it, he evidently does not wait for evidence of such a change in life before baptizing those who came to him. They were baptized *in view* of them producing such fruits, not because they had already done so. How could John know? We do not read that he put them on probation. What he proclaimed was the baptism of repentance. Those who submitted to it, in doing so admitted the necessity for it, confessed their sins, and so virtually pledged themselves to this requirement of God's counsel by John. The Pharisees and lawyers sinned in "not having been baptized by him." It was thus *anticipatory* of their response to His exhortations. The act itself became the demand upon them for amendment of life, the need of which they acknowledged in being baptized. This the pride of the Pharisees would not allow.

This prospective character (and not retrospective) is again seen in connection with quite another form of baptism of which the Lord speaks as to Himself. "But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it shall have been accomplished!" (Luke 12: 50). This is the baptism of judgment at the cross. There was a real way in which He was bound until it was accomplished, but afterward there would be liberty, enlargement, for relatively He would enter into a new place from which He would dispense of His fulness without restraint such as known in the days of His flesh. The baptism of which He speaks had this in prospect for Him.

This same characteristic pertains to the Lord's baptism by John. He was taking His place with those who were confessing their sins, not as so doing for Himself, for He was absolutely without sin, but as pledging Himself prospectively to the work by which that other prospective result would be realized—"the remission of sins." Thus

His act had the significance of fulfilling *all* righteousness. Did not this mark Him out as the Lamb of God?

Finally, we see it true of Christian baptism (Rom. 6). As being baptized unto Christ Jesus, we are baptized into His death, but this is anticipative of walk in newness of life; and in 1 Cor. 15: 29, as the context shows, baptism is in prospect of resurrection. Vers. 20-28 form a parenthesis, hence read ver. 29 in connection with ver. 19.

*Identification with.* This characteristic of baptism is brought out in what the Lord says as to John. He came in the way of righteousness, the Lord's messenger, declaring the counsel of God in preaching the baptism of repentance. The Pharisees and lawyers had set this aside as of no account in that they had not identified themselves with that testimony by that act which signified it—John's baptism. The people who were baptized, it is said, "justified God," for they bowed to His testimony as to their condition and need of repentance and His right to judge. This was signified in their baptism. This was the way of righteousness for them according to God; and the Lord in coming to be baptized by John declared His identification with all who took that place—not that He was in their condition and need, but He, the Lamb of God, would do what was essential to glorify God and answer their need by sacrifice, making the remission of sins possible, for that was in view, as we have seen.

Again, in speaking of baptism, though of a different order, the Lord emphasizes *identification* (Mark 10: 38, 39; Matt. 20: 22, 23). This baptism is that of suffering in circumstances of rejection. It is not the cross as in Luke 12: 50, where the Lord says, "I have a baptism to be baptized with," something in the future for Him at the time He spoke. In Mark the baptism is present for Himself: "The cup which I drink (*i.e.*, was then drinking), the baptism that I am baptized with (*i.e.*, which He was then in)." For the disciples He puts it in the future: "Ye will drink . . . ye will be baptized." What this meant for them we may gather from John 15: 19-21; 16: 33.

The same characteristic appears when we come to the day of Pentecost, and thereafter. Peter declares the

guilt of the nation in the rejection and crucifixion of Christ. God's answer to this was His resurrection and exaltation. His message is, "Repent," etc., "and with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, Be saved from this perverse generation." Upon it the judgment of God would fall in due course. To be baptized, as accepting Peter's word, was their act of repentance to which he called them, for it was not be baptized because they had brought forth the fruits of repentance—no time for this was allowed—but on that very day 3000 were baptized, "those who had accepted<sup>3</sup> his word." They repented in being baptized, and so on the one hand separated themselves from that perverse generation, and on the other, *identified* themselves with the nation-rejected Saviour whom God had raised up to Israel. Thus they became disciples of Christ according to Matt. 28: 19; and being taught, we read, "they persevered in the teaching and fellowship of the apostles."

Passing on to the other instances of baptism in the Acts, we read of it being "unto (*eis*) the name of the Lord Jesus" (8: 16; 19: 5), and (in 10: 48) "in (*en*) the name of the Lord." This last passage is slightly different in form from the other two. With *en* we have the Dative, indicating in this case that baptism is administered as signifying association with the Person mentioned—the Lord; and it is *en* as denoting the place or sphere into which they are brought, in which that Person is owned as Lord, and with whom now they are *identified*. The other two expressions, in which *eis* with the Accusative as usual is used, also indicate identification, but rather in an objective sense, suggesting what is in view, while the other with the Dative gives the thought of being actually *in* what is spoken of. It appears stronger in its implication. In view of this the change of form in 10: 48 seems to be the result of the manifest evidence that those composing the company to be baptized were

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<sup>3</sup> The force of this word is interesting: it is "to receive in full," or, "with satisfaction;" or, as to an opinion or teaching, "to accept and receive it as true" (J. N. D., in *New Trans.*). This was signified in being baptized.

already actually Christ's—they had received the Holy Spirit with the accompanying signs of that day. This was in prospect in the other cases.

The idea of identification is also evident from Paul's reference to baptism in 1 Cor. 1: 13, 14. Christian baptism signified identification with the name of Christ, otherwise his question as to those who were saying, "I am of Paul," would lose its point—had they been baptized unto his name? So again in 1 Cor. 10. "All were baptized unto (*eis*) Moses in (*en*) the cloud and in (*en*) the sea." Here we seem to have "the *en* instrumental" as it is called, so rather "by" or "with;" that is by means of the cloud and sea Israel was identified with Moses as their leader. By this means they passed out from one place, that of bondage under Pharaoh, into a new place, that of liberty under Moses.

So we conclude that to be baptized unto the name of Jesus Christ signifies that the person, by the ordinance itself, becomes identified with that name, and so moves toward (as the Accusative implies) a definite end or object, that of obedience to all taught in that name. He has been made a disciple. Thus one's baptism becomes of abiding significance, a ground of appeal for the proper response in manner of life. It puts us under obligation to learn and practise the will of the Lord unto whose name we have been baptized.

*Introductory.* That this characteristic pertains to this ordinance we may learn from references to John's baptism (Acts 10: 37; 13: 23-25; 18: 25). It introduced God's testimony to Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ. "God brought to Israel a Saviour, Jesus; John having proclaimed before the face of His entry among the people the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel."

This feature receives emphasis from the case of Cornelius and his company. Before baptism with water they had received the Holy Spirit, and so were confirmed believers. What meaning could baptism have in their case? This indicates that it has some meaning quite distinct from the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Does not Peter's question: "Can any forbid water?" show that its ad-

ministration is connected with authority to receive these Gentile believers into the place of association with themselves? — and so become identified with that sphere of things called the kingdom of heaven and of God. By baptism people are outwardly introduced to and put into identification with the company of acknowledged disciples, to learn and obey, to represent and serve, according to the commandments of the Lord unto whose name they are baptized.

This too must be the force of Paul's baptism in the light of the related circumstances. Ananias said to him: "Arise and get baptized, and have thy sins washed away, calling on His name." Baptism washes sins away in this case. Certainly "calling" could not. There is no possible connection between the idea of washing away and calling; there plainly is as to water, and so baptism. But why be baptized and have sins washed away? Was Saul not saved? Had not the Lord appeared to him, and even commissioned him as His servant? Surely. Were not his sins then already washed away, and that by the precious blood of Jesus who had spoken to him from heaven? Without doubt. Was water needed to finish the cleansing from sins? Does not the precious blood suffice? It does. How then explain this statement? It is simple when we see that baptism is introductory to, and signifies reception by those who are within the place of professed subjection to Christ. Saul, the persecutor of Jesus, is thus marked as His disciple, and the baptism which marks him as this, and which signified his reception to that place, is that which in this connection washes away as before men all his former sins as the avowed hater and persecutor of Jesus and His followers.

The same thought appears in the case of the Ethiopian eunuch. Philip announced to him the glad tidings of Jesus, and it seems must have brought in baptism, for upon reaching a certain water the eunuch said: "Behold water; what hinders my being baptized?" The question presupposes the acceptance of Philip's word. Will Philip now make him a disciple of Christ by baptism? He does.

So too in Acts 19. Those who were disciples of John by having been baptized to his baptism are made disciples of Jesus by baptism unto the name of the Lord Jesus.

### **3.—The Meaning of Baptism with Water**

Much we have considered has had to do with John's baptism, but this does not affect the application of what we have had before us to Christian baptism, for they are evidently characteristics applicable to baptism whatever its distinctive form. We must, however, show the difference between that of John and Christian baptism. The latter is unto Christ, into His death, and has the meaning of His resurrection connected with it, and the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. All of this could only come in after accomplished redemption. So while the same characteristics apply all through so that its bearing as an ordinance is always the same, its spiritual import as Christian baptism is greatly enhanced by the teaching in the epistles. Let us now turn to this.

Rom. 6. The thesis of the chapter really is in ver. 2: "We who have died to sin, how shall we still live in it?" Then baptism is brought forward to illustrate and enforce the meaning of this statement.

First, "We... have been baptized unto Christ Jesus." This is similar to "unto the name of Jesus Christ," as in the Acts. Yet there is difference, suggested by the omission of certain words and the reverse order of the names. In Acts the order of the names emphasizes identification with that Person who was despised and hated, and in particular rejected by the Jews, His own people, yet the name which stood for all that constituted God's testimony on the earth. It would be instructive in itself to consider how the name is referred to throughout the Acts, but this would be a long digression. It is "the excellent name which has been called upon us" (James 2: 7). This has its connection with what is outward in character, a

place taken in testimony before men, but with Paul in the epistles it is the moral bearing of things. With him it is simply, "unto Christ Jesus." The change in the order of the name puts the emphasis, not on that Person's rejection as Jesus, but on that Person as now exalted in glory. This brings in added truth, as indeed fitting when it is a matter of doctrinally unfolding the gospel, and not of the historical carrying out of the ordinance as in the Acts.

Now to be baptized unto Christ Jesus involves that what is true of Him is to be appropriated and acted upon. This is to become characteristic of those baptized. What is the immediate bearing of baptism in reference to "we who have died to sin?" It is that "we...have been baptized unto (or, into) *His* death." Thus what God reckons true of us, that "we have died with Christ" (ver. 8), is symbolically expressed in our baptism. "We have been buried therefore with Him by (*dia*, with Genitive, notes the instrument of an action, so 'by means of') baptism into death." Baptism is burial. Viewed as having died with Christ, our baptism being into His death, by *it* we are buried with Him. In this, symbolically, we have "become identified with Him in the likeness of His death"—that likeness is found in the act of baptism. It is thus an action from which we are to draw the lesson that:

"We have died to sin."

"We have died with Christ,"

so that now we are:

"To reckon ourselves dead to sin," for

"Our old man has been crucified with Him."

These things press upon us the feature of identification, but in a moral aspect, since it is with the death of Christ. This means more than outward place in testimony among men.

But here also there is brought in the prospective or anticipatory element. While the emersion can scarcely be considered a part of the act of baptism, which is im-

mersion,<sup>4</sup> and so is into death and burial, still as a necessary feature of the ceremony (which, however, is not specifically mentioned in Scripture) it seems appropriate to link it with what is here doctrinally stated to be in view for those who are "baptized unto Christ Jesus." What is in prospect is stated thus: we have been buried with Christ by baptism into death,

"In order that, even *as* Christ has been raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, *so we also should walk in newness of life.*"

Apprehending the meaning of baptism, it becomes introductory to a new manner of life practised in the light of the resurrection-glory of Christ. And so the apostle carries the thought on to future resurrection, when we shall be perfectly conformed to the likeness of Christ. This glorious prospect is to have its present power over us in practical life. In this connection let us note that the crucifixion of our old man is linked with the death of Christ. Our old man is the totality of our former mode of life in every way. This is seen passing under the judgment of God in the death of Christ on the cross. It is crucified, "that the body of sin might be annulled" (*i.e.*, made inert or idle, inoperative)—this body as belonging to and ruled by sin resulting in its members being instruments of unrighteousness (ver. 13) — "that we should no longer serve sin," not letting "sin therefore reign in your mortal body to obey its lusts."

Thus newness of life is defined for us. So, as it is with Christ who died unto sin once for all (as being the One who came into the scene under its dominion and who in it took the place of bearing judgment so as to remove sin in its totality from before God), and now that having been forever dealt with so that He has nothing more to

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<sup>4</sup> This seems clear from the Lord's use of baptism in reference to the cross. His resurrection cannot be included in this idea; the meaning of the term excludes it, though of course it is the necessary complement of the baptism spoken of.

do or say in reference to it, as far as judgment in death is concerned, He lives to God, we also, who shall live with Him in the glory consequent upon resurrection, are to reckon ourselves "dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus," for have we not been baptized unto Christ Jesus into His death and buried with Him by baptism into death?

Thus baptism which preaches to us the solemn lesson of death, Christ's death and ours with Him, in which God visited judgment upon sin and its dominion, calls upon us for that manner of life which alone becomes those baptized unto Christ Jesus. They are to identify themselves with the meaning of His death, and henceforth live no longer unto themselves but unto Him who died for them and rose again. This, too, indicates that baptism has the characteristic of being introductory to a new place and condition. The fourfold character we have given to this ordinance comes out in this teaching of Rom. 6.

This truth of a new place and condition is found also in Gal. 3: 27, though there baptism has its distinct shade of meaning in the light of the teaching of the epistle. "For ye, as many as have been baptized unto Christ, have put on Christ." In their baptism they put on Christ. If the baptism itself is a putting on of Christ, it appears certain that the coming out of the water is not made to bear significance as far as baptism is concerned, otherwise the coming out could only be construed as a putting off if the immersion is a putting on.

In this passage the significance of the ordinance, as an object lesson of truth, is determined by the teaching of the epistle—that of passing out of all the former place and condition of bondage to the elements of the world, especially in respect to law and its economy, and entering into the new place and condition of freedom found in and with Christ according to God's promise now realized through the presence of the Holy Spirit. Thus the great dispensational change, emphasized throughout the epistle, is here linked with baptism. In this sense, by it, they put on Christ. On the moral side this involves our de-

liverance from the present evil course of this world (ch. 1: 4). Compare Rom. 12: 1, 2.

This being the import of their baptism, how could the Galatians turn again to the weak and beggarly principles which were of the world and not after Christ? In baptism they had put Him on, in practice they would then be putting Him off.

Morally, if by baptism I am viewed as invested with Christ, what is to be my daily practical answer to it? What demand does my baptism make upon me? Surely it is that we "walk becomingly; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and lasciviousness, not in strife and emulation. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not take forethought for the flesh to fulfil its lusts" (Rom. 13:13, 14). In the light of Rom. 6 we may say that in baptism, symbolically, "they that are of the Christ have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts" (Gal. 5: 24). Hence since the presence, power and fruit of the Spirit characterize the new place both dispensationally and morally, those who live by the Spirit are to walk also by the Spirit (ch. 5: 25). "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall no way fulfil flesh's lust" (ch. 5: 16).

Turning now to Col. 2: 11-13 we may see the teaching of both Romans and Galatians linked together. Here it is said: "Buried with Him in (*en*) baptism." Rom. 6: 4 is by baptism, specifically referring to the act; here *in* as indicating the place or sphere entered with which we are viewed as becoming identified, and in which we abide in respect to the subject treated. Since it signifies death and burial with Christ in reference to sin, our old man, and the complete judgment of what this involves, we are at no time viewed as out of it in respect to *those things* as God reckons, and as we too ever should reckon, for it is practical power so to do. The new life and its course are connected with Christ risen and faith in Him (compare the contrast of things connected with "died" and "risen" in Col. 2: 20—3: 4). Therefore in this passage the reading of ver. 12 here preferred is: "Buried with Him in baptism; in whom also ye have been raised together (*i.e.*, with Christ) through faith," etc. So here

baptism is connected with circumcision (not the Jewish rite, but that of Christ) used in this passage to set forth similar teaching to that of Rom. 6. And though the ideas are different, for circumcision is a stripping off while baptism is a going into, yet they coalesce in the truth of the gospel. Baptism signifies death as judgment and consequent burial, but this in result is our circumcision—the stripping off from us as before God of all that comes under the judgment figured in baptism.

But the truth we have here is deserving of more detailed consideration. As already mentioned it links with that of Romans and Galatians. In the latter we have noticed the dispensational bearing of the truth, and this in respect of deliverance from the elements of the world appears also in Colossians, though of course treated there in relation to the special subject of that epistle. But this accounts for the way circumcision is introduced there.

The Judaizing teachers pressed circumcision as necessary for the Gentiles. It appears that they considered God's promises in the gospel to be solely linked with Abraham and his seed—Israel. Therefore if the Gentiles were to share in these blessings they must be brought into that nation so as to be of Abraham's family. This, according to these teachers, could only be by circumcision, for it was not simply required by Moses, it was of the fathers (John 7: 22), God having given Abraham the covenant of circumcision (Acts 7: 8), to whom also the promises were addressed, and to his seed (Gen. 17: 1-14; Gal. 3: 16; Gen. 35: 14-17). Therefore, to participate in the blessing of Abraham, they contended, all must receive this initiatory rite or they could not be saved. They preached this; Paul did not (Gal. 5: 11; Acts 15: 1, 5). This side of the question Paul answered in Rom. 4: 9-12. Coupled with this there was the contention that they should "keep the law of Moses," and this evidently for justification (Acts 15: 5; Gal. 2: 15-21). The apostle meets this in two ways: first, the law had nothing to do with Abraham and the promises (Rom. 4: 13-15; Gal. 3: 15-20); secondly, what the law brought in was the knowledge of sin, wrath, curse; it was a ministration of death,

not of righteousness or life, because of what man is and his utter failure to continue in all things written in the book of the law to do them. Under law all depended upon doing these things (Gal. 3: 10-12). But it is evident these teachers of circumcision and law-keeping did not emphasize the solemn duties required by the law. This Paul did for the purpose of showing the impossibility of being justified on such a basis. These Judaizers rather pressed sacred seasons and ordinances of fleshly character (Gal. 4: 10; Col. 2: 16, 21-23). They prescribed holy days and festivals which, because they pleased the flesh, exercised a more seductive influence than the exposition of the Word which would exercise the conscience. Satan was behind the pressing of such things upon the Gentiles for he saw they offered a kind of compensation for the heathenism abandoned upon the profession of Christianity. Where the truth had not set free this would avail to seduce those of fleshly tendency, awaken and gratify the old disposition, surrounding Christianity with what was congenial to those of worldly, carnal mind, thus destroying its proper character, and enabling those who followed this order of things to avoid persecution. Compare Gal. 3: 8, 9; 5: 11; 6: 12.

Now the answer to all this is twofold: first, the death of Christ which in relation to us is called circumcision, the meaning of which finds additional illustration in baptism; secondly, our new place as raised with Christ, quickened together with Him.

Christian circumcision is not that done by hand. It is spiritual, it is in Christ, and so brings in the truth of Christ's death applied to us as "the putting off of the body of the flesh." This means that viewed as in Christ we are circumcised in the sense of there being a complete removal of the flesh; from this side of the truth, therefore, we have no link with it whatever. This putting off, etc., is similar to, "Our old man has been crucified with Him."

Our former state was that of being "dead in offences and the *uncircumcision* of your flesh"—moral death, the flesh fully active, for circumcision means judgment exe-

cuted, and uncircumcision the opposite. This may well lead us to think of what is practical in relation to circumcision, for while it is spoken of as in Christ, and "we are the circumcision" (Phil. 3: 3), as such we are not to trust in the flesh but put to death our members. In this sense our flesh is then circumcised, judged; there is the practical answer to the truth of our being circumcised in Christ, which was done in relation to us "in the circumcision of Christ."

The following four features are to be emphasized:

- The point of view is that we are in Christ;
- the work done in relation to us in circumcision;
- the meaning of this is the putting off of the body of the flesh;
- the way is in the circumcision of Christ—His death.

If this is spoken of as circumcision, it must bear a relation in meaning to what is said of us as circumcised in Him. If it means the putting off, etc., in our case, it must mean in some sense the same in His case. Let us consider this.

He came "in likeness of flesh of sin, and for sin, has condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8: 3). He was "put to death in flesh" (1 Pet. 3: 18). He "suffered for us in flesh" (1 Pet. 4: 1). "For in that He has died, He has died to sin once for all" (Rom. 6: 10). Christ in the *death* endured in the body of His flesh stood identified with sin in the flesh, with all that the old man stands for, and also bore sins in His own body on the tree. In taking this place and bearing the judgment belonging to it for God's glory and our eternal blessing, there was stripped off, wholly put away from all connection with Him, flesh with its sin, with which as a sacrifice for sin He became identified, taking all the judgment attaching thereto. This was His circumcision. Now as viewed in Him the believer is said to be circumcised in His circumcision, so that what is meant in relation to Christ becomes applicable to the believer. The putting off has its application in both cases. What does it mean for the believer? It means that according to God's mind he

is no longer identified with the body of the flesh, all that it is (and with it he once stood in full identification) has been judged and put off from him. It follows that this is to have its practical answer in the life of the believer. Compare Rom. 6: 11-23.

This aspect of Christian truth is set forth in baptism. Christian baptism is unto Christ's death. We are "buried by baptism unto death" (Rom. 6: 4). That which is dead is buried. So to "buried with Him in baptism" we may join our "being dead in offences," etc. Burial is the consequence. For us it is by being identified with Christ in His death. All is viewed as judged, removed, buried—a complete end made of the body of the flesh, the flesh in its entirety.

What now? Christ who was put to death in flesh, as standing identified with all that flesh means in relation to man, was made alive in spirit<sup>5</sup> (1 Pet. 3: 19), that is, the one state having ended in death, and burial, He died unto sin once, He was made alive in spirit, He reentered that form of existence which was His from all eternity, except that *now* He is in it in a bodily form, in a body suited to that manner of life, as He was in a body suited to the condition into which He entered for the suffering of death. Hence, He significantly speaks of "flesh and bones" in resurrection—human nature apart from mutability—whereas He had taken up at the time of incarnation "flesh and blood"—human nature in the mutable condition which for Him ended in death.

This change as to Christ is so absolute that the apostle says, "If we have known Christ according to flesh, yet

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<sup>5</sup> "In spirit," as denoting the sphere in which resurrection placed Christ; to it "in flesh" is antithetical as the sphere in which death occurred. As in this sphere of spirit existence before incarnation—that form of life of which spirit is the character—He preached in the days of Noah. And now as acting in that sphere, having reentered it at resurrection, He is said to preach to Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2: 17), and work with His servants (Mk. 16: 20). All such activity stands in closest identification with the Holy Spirit. Compare Gen. 6: 3; John 16: 12, 13; Eph. 2: 17, 18; 1 Pet. 1: 11 with 2 Pet. 1: 21; Acts 1: 16.

now we know Him thus no longer." For what we see in Him as made alive in spirit is new creation. Hence, if any man be in Him there is as to that man new creation (2 Cor. 5: 16, 17). For such a man "neither circumcision has any force, nor uncircumcision;<sup>6</sup> but faith working through love... For in Christ Jesus neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision;<sup>6</sup> but new creation." This, henceforth, is the rule by which the Christian is to walk (Gal. 5: 6; 6: 15, 16).

Christ in this new place stands as "the last Adam" who is "a quickening (or, making alive) Spirit" (1 Cor. 15: 45). He is this to all identified with Him through faith. So we are "quickened together with Him," for He it is "with whom ye have been raised together (or, with Him) through faith." It is "in whom" as defining the only way in which it could be made true of us, and it is "with Him," if preferred, as denoting identification in the same order of life. This is apprehended as true of us through faith, for it is not resurrection out of the dead, a still future event, and which is not our being raised *with* Him, for He was raised long ago. It is a spiritual truth. We are now taught to reckon through faith that being in Christ we are raised with Him. From this flows the development of present heavenly manner of life, for we are no longer of this world even as He is not, for such as "the heavenly One, such also the heavenly ones"—His life, His portion, His place already ours to appropriate and enjoy through faith. This, then, is that "newness of life" in which we should walk, the character of which the apostle defines for us by setting it in relation to Christ in resurrection. "We have been buried therefore with Him by baptism unto death, in order that, *even* as Christ has been raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father, *so we* also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6: 4). It is further true, since the faith which enters into this is "the working of God who *raised Him from among the dead,*" that believers too shall be

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<sup>6</sup> In both cases, of course, the reference is to the Jewish rite, and so to being in the place of a Jew or a Gentile.

raised from among the dead. They will be fully after the order of Christ as Firstborn from among the dead, for in resurrection He stands as the Second Man fully revealed to be of that class alone which suits and belongs to heaven, even as the first man, being made of dust, was of the class which suited and belonged to the earth. So we who "have borne the image of the one made of dust, shall bear also the image of the heavenly One" (1 Cor. 15: 49). "For if we are become identified with Him in the likeness of His death, so also we shall be in the likeness of His resurrection" (Rom. 6: 5). Then "the body of our humiliation" shall be transformed "into conformity to His body of glory" (Phil. 3: 21).

In considering Col. 2: 11-13 reference was made to 1 Pet. 3: 19. This suggests a link with what follows in that chapter as to baptism. Peter speaks of Noah and his family as "saved through water: which figure also now saves you, even baptism." The passage is recognized as having its difficulties in reference to both the text and its rendering, but what we have given above appears the best. However a remark as to the word rendered "figure" may be in place. It is found elsewhere only in Heb. 9: 24: "the *figures* of the true." The word is *antitupon*, and it means what corresponds to something, an antitype, a copy or representation, "so of an *echo*, or of the *reflection* of light; then a *correspondence*, as of a stamp to a die, as here" (*Vincent*). So to give the sense more literally we might read, and as keeping the actual order of the words in Greek: "Which (*i.e.*, water) also you, as in an antitype, or in an antitypal manner, now saves—baptism." In effect Peter says: The water of baptism is for you a copy, a representation, an antitype, of the flood-water through which Noah was saved.

So baptism in its import, in an antitypal manner, answers to what the flood-water meant to Noah in the ark. It bore the ark up through the judgment which brought ruin and death to all without. This effected separation from that wicked generation and all its works. And this brought the ark into a new scene in which was found what was of God in the way of both blessing and

government, all as connected with the sacrifice and the Word of God.

So, too, with those to whom Peter wrote. Baptism saved them as effecting their present separation from that perverse generation which had rejected the Chief Corner Stone, for to it He had been a stone of stumbling and rock of offence through disobedience (1 Pet. 1: 6-8). Being baptized unto the name of the Lord Jesus they were separated from the sons of disobedience. At the beginning Peter exhorted the Jews: "Be saved from this perverse generation." And in his epistles he specifically addresses the believing remnant from among them. Thus then they came into that association, identified with that company of people on earth, among whom God had set up His blessings and government — His kingdom, the things of which were there preached and known — where as nowhere else on the earth there was enlightenment, the privilege of tasting the heavenly gift, participation in the things of the Holy Spirit, the good Word of God and the powers of the coming age, and where, as to position even outwardly, they were sanctified with the blood of the covenant, and where the government of God was exercised in respect to all in this association (Heb. 6 and 10). This constituted that house of God at which judgment must begin, for it is that as to which He must sanctify His name, if evil intrude. It has, as with Israel (1 Cor. 10), so with that sphere called the kingdom and with that company called the assembly of God, His house on earth. It is in this connection we must place the conditional teaching of the parables, the good and wicked servants, the good, poor, and wicked workmen of 1 Cor. 3, and the "if" passages of the New Testament.

But though there is this aspect of mixture, foretold by the Lord and His apostles, now known to us as a matter of historical development through men holding the doctrine of Balaam and that of the Nicolaitanes and such as those of whom Jude speaks, what Peter has before him is the reality of things. In other words, those who being baptized and saved in the manner just outlined are of faith, and so are really in God's marvelous light,

His chosen generation, kingly priesthood and holy nation. To them baptism is no mere putting away of the filth of flesh even ceremonially, but "the asking after a conscience good toward God." This, it appears to me, is the simple way to understand this statement and the difficult word, *eperotema*, found in it. It means an inquiry, the interrogation, the question asked; "answer" it cannot be. Men come to baptism as professedly accepting the word which pronounces judgment and calls them to repent. In baptism they acknowledge the need of this, and *it* is their asking after, or inquiry unto God for, a good conscience. Baptism is thus an interrogation, or question-asking, directed toward (*eis*) God with respect to a good conscience. Now this as to relationship with God could only be possessed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So knowing that He who suffered, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God, into whose death I am baptized, yea, buried with Him by baptism, has been raised from among the dead, "quickenened in Spirit," I may be certain that all is perfectly settled. I am justified and have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Baptism itself does not give a good conscience, but is the inquiry after one, to which the answer is found in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. "God has raised Him from among the dead and given Him glory, that your faith and hope should be in God" (1 Pet. 1: 21; 3: 22).

The part of ver. 21 which we have been considering is parenthetical in character, affording us an explanation of the nature of Baptism. It is not the putting away of filth of flesh, nor an affirmation of what is true of the inward state, but as the form of an interrogation, an inquiry after something with a view to the settlement of what relates to us and God. Again we have the prospective characteristic of the ordinance. Now this parenthetical part we may omit, so as to get the underlying connection, and read thus: "Which (*i.e.*, water) also you, as in an antitype or in an antitypical manner, now saves — baptism . . . by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." There could be no salvation in any sense apart from this great fact of the gospel which Peter presses

from the beginning, and Paul so strongly emphasizes. It was that which along with much else declared the certainty of judgment upon the sons of disobedience who stumbled over the precious Chief Corner Stone. This gave important meaning to baptism unto His name.

But what we have here also suggests the deeper moral bearing of the ordinance as found in Romans, Galatians, and Colossians. Thus appropriated by faith the inner reality of salvation is known. As in the flood all was swept away by the engulfing water, so in baptism as symbolizing death and burial we in it pass through judgment by which all is removed from before God and stripped off from us, but of course as dying and being buried with Christ. Thus in Rom. 6 all that is flesh and sin is swept away in the judgment of the cross, this being applied to us as identified with Christ; and then the new place and the new life taken up on resurrection ground as presented in Galatians and Colossians. Notice how at once from the conclusion of ch. 3 Peter goes on in ch. 4 to the newness of life which we are to live, which, as we have seen, is to characterize those baptized unto Christ.

#### **4.—The Administration of Baptism with Water**

As far as salvation is concerned there is no command to the believer to be baptized. To make obedience to an ordinance essential to its realization is to deny to that extent the true character of Christianity, and in principle adopt the Galatian error. The command to baptize is given to the eleven. We see it carried out in the Acts. Paul himself baptized, and he more than any other teaches its spiritual significance.

But though baptism is not made a condition of salvation, which alone is on the principle of faith, it is linked with salvation by the Lord in Mark 16: 16. "And He said to them, Go into all the world, and preach the glad tidings to all the creation. He that believes and is bap-

tized shall be saved, and he that disbelieves shall be condemned.”

This supposes that any one who truly believes God's testimony would be baptized unto the name of Him made known in that testimony. By it they would openly identify themselves with that Name, and with those already His disciples. Who that truly believed would refuse or resist the administration of this ordinance? If a person who professed to believe refused to thus unite with the disciples of the Lord it would amount to evidence of insincerity—a profession without reality. Practically, such a person could not be treated as a saved person. This appears to bring baptism on to the ground of James as to justification before men. It becomes a way of showing one's faith by one's works—not of course that it is something that I do, but like the eunuch, I say: “Behold water: what doth hinder my being baptized?” The question itself indicates that it is a privilege to be conferred, something that one already in must administer, but nevertheless in the light of the Lord's words that which one who truly believes God's glad tidings will seek, so that identification may be established with and introduction be given to the company of the Lord's disciples. Those being addressed in this passage are of course exempt. They with others, for example, the 120, are to be in due course by the Spirit's coming set up as the administering body, so to speak, responsible to commence and carry on the work given them in the commissions to preach and baptize. They were not to commence until after the coming of the Spirit. After that, believing and getting baptized is the order. So it was with Cornelius and his company, and Saul, to whom it was said: “Arise, and get baptized.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> For some there may still be difficulty as to Mark 16:16 since baptism is connected with salvation. May I then offer the following alternative view?

Seemingly salvation in its reality is referred to, as the parallel but contrastive statement suggests, in which condemnation is spoken of. The reference appears to be to what is eternal on either side. If then water-baptism is

So with the coming of the Spirit God set up that into which people could be received—a company of people on earth called out to God, within which, as the spheres of His blessings and government, there were privileges to enjoy and responsibilities to share. This company came to be known as the assembly of God, His house and temple on earth, the present dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit. With this the name of the Lord Jesus was identified, and people were baptized unto that name. Thus they became His disciples and entered that company in which the things He commanded—the things of the kingdom—were taught, and where obedience to them was required. This as set up at the beginning was the sphere of salvation in the sense that all that was of God was found there in contrast to both Judaism and Gentile idolatry (1 Cor. 10).

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referred to, does this imply that not simply faith but the administration of an ordinance also is essential to salvation? This we know at once would be in conflict with the plain teaching of Scripture.

There is no evidence that the 12 or the 120 were baptized with Christian baptism. Were they not saved? Moreover in Mark, apart from the historical references to John's baptism and the ceremonial baptism of cups and pots, there is no mention of others doing it as in Matt. 28:19, or of other forms except that of participation in the Lord's rejection (10:38, 39), and that which *He Himself would do—baptize with the Holy Spirit.*

Since it says, "believe and is baptized," and connects this with salvation, it appears to follow upon faith in God's testimony (ver. 15). May not the reference here be to the baptism of the Holy Spirit in which all participate who truly believe since Pentecost? Indeed, it is only those thus baptized who are *saved*. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is not of Him." After Pentecost the normal order was, *Believe and receive the Holy Spirit.* The Galatians began in the Spirit, having received Him on the principle of faith. So Eph. 1:13. Many are not thus baptized, although they profess to believe and have been baptized with water. They do not receive the Spirit and are not put into the Body of Christ. They may say, "Lord, Lord;" but they are not known of Him. This baptism is the inseparable accompaniment of believing the gospel of our salvation.

Into this corruption has entered, as the Lord and His apostles foretold, and a deplorable condition now exists. As another has said: "The boundaries of the assembly of God and the world have been so broken down and both intermingled, that the fact of the Holy Ghost being in the assembly...and Satan in the world, is eclipsed by the state of things, but it was not so at the beginning, and the Word of God abides." So since that beginning, by baptism, "We are received into the assembly *on earth*—the house builded on earth for a habitation of God—not into the Body...[but] admission into the assembly gathered on the earth to the name of Christ." Baptism signified identification with, and was introductory to this company.

This fairly bring us to the question of who are to be received? As to the assembly which is Christ's Body we know that it is entered only by the operation of God the Holy Spirit. Therefore baptism with water has nothing to do with making members of Christ, or bringing into the Body of Christ. It is the way of making *disciples*, those who take the place of learners in subjection to the Master unto whose name they are baptized. About thirty times in the Acts the term is applied to such. "And having announced the glad tidings to that city, and having *made many disciples*, they returned to Lystra, and Iconium, and Antioch, establishing the souls of the *disciples*, exhorting them to abide in the faith and that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14: 21, 22). Let us now see what we may gather as to who are made disciples.

From the record of Scripture we gather the following summary:

When John's baptism is spoken of we read: "Were baptized confessing their sins." In Luke the crowds who came to be baptized by him were reprov'd and exhorted to produce fruits worthy of repentance. And then we are told of "all the people having been baptized." When the Lord speaks of John's baptism, He refers to how the tax-gatherers and harlots submitted to the counsel of God,

but the Pharisees and lawyers rejected it in not being baptized by him.

The Lord's commission in Matt. 28 is: "Making disciples . . . baptizing . . . teaching." The word of the kingdom is sown in the field, the world, and those accepting it are made disciples by baptizing and teaching. Thus people are "discipled into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 13: 52), and according to the measure of their progress as disciples bring out things new and old.

On the day of Pentecost Peter sowed the Word, and "those then who accepted (see the force of this word previously noted) his word were baptized."

In Acts 8, "When they believed Philip announcing the glad tidings . . . they were baptized, both men and women. And Simon also himself believed; and having been baptized, continued constantly with Philip." Later we read of the eunuch; of Saul; of Cornelius and his company; of John's disciples; and of many of the Corinthians who heard, "believed, and were baptized," among them being Crispus who "believed in the Lord with all his house," and whose personal baptism Paul speaks of (1 Cor. 1:14), also that of Gaius.

Three other specific instances are recorded: Lydia "and her house;" the jailer "and all his;" and "the house of Stephanas." Leaving these for the moment, what we learn from the other details of the record is that the administration of baptism is connected (1) with those able to hear and accept the Word preached; and (2) that in reference to them there is no evidence of a period of probation before it is administered.

As illustrating the second point, the relation of things in Acts 19: 1-5 is at least suggestive. Paul found "certain disciples" at Ephesus. From the form of his question it is evident that as disciples he considered that they had "believed." Finding that they knew nothing as to the presence of the Holy Spirit, he inquired as to what they had been "baptized." This indicated that they became disciples by professed reception of John's message, upon which they were baptized. The same order is seen in what follows. Paul speaks to them of the

prospective nature of John's baptism, namely, that they should believe on Jesus who came after John. "And when they *heard* that, they were *baptized* to the name of the Lord Jesus."

On Pentecost the word is, "Repent, and be baptized," and *that* day 3,000 were baptized. There was no time allowed to test or prove the reality of their repentance by the bringing forth of fruit worthy of it. In fact, submission to the act itself has that character.

It is not different in any of the other cases, so that what appears evident from the record is that baptism was administered when profession was made and without any period of probation. That it should be so seems easy to understand in the light of those characteristics of the ordinance already considered. It was the outward sign of entrance into a new place, and had in prospect the change suited to that place with which those who were baptized stood identified. It marks such as disciples of Him whose excellent name had been called upon them in baptism, and then that which baptism is made to symbolize is to be realized through faith and spiritual experience under the operations of the Holy Spirit.

Now in view of these things we would not expect to find one in the assembly of God on earth who had not been baptized unto Him in whose name the assembly gathers, the name that is called upon it, and the name of Him under whose authority and according to whose will all is to be ordered, as we may learn from 1 Corinthians. As a matter of fact this implies its precedence to the observance of the Lord's Supper, for that is eaten by those within. It is one thing to be admitted to the place by those within and so be marked as a disciple of Christ, and another to be accorded participation in the activities of the house; that must be according to the instructions given as to behavior *in* the house.

Now when we consider the meaning attached to baptism, and the practical teaching drawn from it, and see it made the basis of appeal for the proper response in practical Christian living, so that it carries responsibility with it for those baptized, the inference seems fair that

its administration should be limited to those who can be individually held responsible. In short, to those who profess acceptance of the Word preached.

The contrary is not established even when households are mentioned, as far as the record of Scripture is concerned. Noah's household consisted of adults—in all, eight souls. The house of Stephanas "devoted themselves to the saints for service." This implies that its members were old enough for this, and so to profess individual acceptance of the Word, thereupon being baptized and so received into the sphere where "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" is owned. Nothing in the record of Acts 16 warrants the supposition that it was otherwise in Lydia's house or that of the jailer.

If we are to consider them as warranting the practice of baptizing believers' households, it seems remarkable that such are not referred to when baptism was administered to the many who believed, as in Acts 2, 8, and 18. Doubtless it was not the general thing then any more than now for entire households to believe, rather indeed the exception. So may not those mentioned—Lydia, the jailer, Crispus, and Stephanas—be brought forward as an evidence of special power in the work, inasmuch as on these occasions not simply individuals were reached, one or two in families, but entire households brought to profess acceptance of the Word?

In any case, it does not seem that from the facts of the history itself, we can definitely establish any other conclusion than that those able to hear and accept the Word preached were subjects of Christian baptism. This at once raises the often-discussed question of the *little children* of believing parents, and what relation they have, if any, to the administration of baptism.

In this connection it will hardly do to press that households were "baptized unto Moses"—households which in that case would include servants as well as children, "and a mixed multitude went up also with them" (Exod. 12: 38; Num. 11: 4; Jude 5; Heb. 4: 17-19; 1 Cor. 10: 5). God saved a people out of Egypt, that people included the mixed multitude. With many among them

God was not well pleased. They fell in the wilderness because of unbelief. And so after saving this people out of Egypt God destroyed them that believed not. We are told "these things happened as types of us, that we should not be lusters after evil things" (1 Cor. 10: 6).

What we find Scripture telling us is, that the kingdom of heaven and that which is called the assembly of God on the earth have a similar history. That mixture prevails, and that judgment is as sure in this case as that it took place in the other. It is in this connection, as already mentioned, that the conditional aspect of things is found as depicted in the parables of the kingdom in reference to forgiveness, service, reward, etc. Christendom has become like the Old Testament type. Yet this, too, is a sphere of salvation, being distinct from both Judaism and Gentile idolatry, in which God has set up His testimony as with Israel of old.

Now the whole assembly of which we are speaking went out with Moses into the wilderness—households were included, neither children nor herds were to be left behind. They shared in being saved out of Egypt. "All our fathers . . . were baptized" unto him. The application of this history to us is in reference to *our behavior*. As they were baptized, but proved unfaithful to their leader, fell to lusting and suffered God's judgment, so there is present danger that some baptized unto the name of Jesus Christ may behave in like manner and suffer like consequences. Of this the apostle warns the fleshly-minded Corinthians. He warns also as to present apostasy in Heb. 6 and 10 by referring to the same history; and so with Jude.

This is all clear, and bears its relation to the kingdom and assembly on earth. But does this warrant us in teaching the baptism of believers' households? Certainly *it* must be limited to the little children of a family, for when a parent becomes a believer who has grown-up children (an event often true since Pentecost) they could not be compelled to receive baptism. It would be admitted at once that force is not to be thought of. But in the type households must have included all, even servants, and the possessions of the family—their flocks

and herds. The fact appears evident that the present circumstances are against the idea of applying the type of Israel's baptism unto Moses in this particular detail of households, and that its bearing as used in 1 Cor. 10 is not along that line but rather in respect to the solemn responsibility involved. This is made applicable to us in reference to our manner of life as those baptized unto Christ. This lesson Paul has already taught us in Rom. 6. To go beyond this seems to be an effort to literalize a certain detail of the type, and then apply it only within certain limits which we are now forced to recognize. This sets aside, as to application, the full force of what is involved in Israel's baptism in that very detail itself. Quite apart from this the important lesson of 1 Cor. 10 as applied to Christian profession is simple and clear.<sup>8</sup>

Further, the moral lesson is of utmost importance: those baptized unto Christ are responsible to carry with them into that sphere where the things of God are set up and known, which in this respect is a sphere of salvation, all that they possess—children, and in the language of Israel's history, their "flocks and herds," their business, their whole course of life. But must all be baptized with water to this end? Has not Scripture

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<sup>8</sup> It is to be noted that throughout 1 Cor. 10 the reference is to "all our *fathers*," whether as to baptism, or the other things mentioned in the chapter. They were "strewed in the desert," not the children, for they were preserved to enter the land with Joshua and Caleb, the only two of the "fathers" saved from God's judgment on that generation. In Heb. 3: 9, 16-19 also, the "fathers" are spoken of. Num. 14: 29-32 says, "The whole number from twenty years old and upwards, who have murmured against Me, shall in no wise come into the land...save Caleb...and Joshua...But your little ones, of whom ye said they should be a prey, them will I bring in...and as to you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness." So, too, Deut 2: 14-18, "When all the men of war were consumed, having died off from among the people." This feature of 1 Cor. 10 adds force to the importance of the chapter for us, it being admonition to those who are personally responsible for their behavior, whether in the light of their baptism or other privileges in which they participate, as later mentioned in this chapter.

sufficiently guarded its administration, showing the limits within which *it* is to be used? This in no way weakens the meaning of that history of Israel so forcefully applied in the New Testament. In Christianity the emphasis is quite evidently on the individual, and his responsibility is made to embrace all his relationships in life, family and otherwise, in the light of his own baptism unto Christ.

But let us return to the question of the little children of believing parents, and what relation they have, if any, to the administration of baptism. If they are not included, the question has been asked: "Are they to be left in the devil's dominion, or brought where the Holy Ghost dwells to be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?" Primarily the home is the place in which they are to be so brought up, and in due course brought into the assembly which in its present aspect of God's house on earth is the dwelling-place of the Spirit. If the little children are not there by baptism, are they then in the devil's dominion? Does not God recognize them, and that individually, as in another sphere of dominion, though not yet as in that of the outward Christian public circle? Are children born to even *one* Christian parent viewed as in the devil's dominion if not baptized? Or are they in what may be called an intermediary place positionally, while their public acknowledgment as in the place of Christian profession with its accompanying responsibility awaits their own individual profession? 1 Cor. 7: 12-14 would seem to be the answer.<sup>9</sup> The children are "holy." In Paul's day when people were coming out of idolatry, and one parent only was reached by the gospel, *then* even the unbelieving parent was sanctified in the believer, doubtless on the ground of them being "one flesh" in God's estimate of their union. Their children, those born before the parent in question had been saved, were after the parent's conversion accounted "holy," and of course any who were born after that event. They are so accounted because of birth-relation with one who is of faith. This is Paul's

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<sup>9</sup> See Appendix, Note 1.

answer as to whether the believer was to put away or separate from the unbeliever and their children as was required under the law (compare Ezra 9 and 10). In this the apostle shows the difference brought in through grace, and the mercy operating through it. The question is not one of ecclesiastical relation or position, but the continuance of home relations<sup>1</sup> with an unbelieving parent and the children of such a union.<sup>2</sup> This under the law was not to be suffered. The children being holy is of course relative, not intrinsic, but this shows that they are in a different category to those who have no birth-relationship with a Christian parent.<sup>3</sup>

This being God's view under grace, it warranted the continuance of the home and also made it clear that the children should not be shut out from association with Christians in their assemblies. Neither of these blessings could be enjoyed if conditions were to be regulated according to the law.<sup>4</sup>

Does not this indicate a place other than that of "the devil's dominion"? In such a home they would be under instruction in the things of the Lord as given by the

<sup>1</sup> In vers. 12, 13 it is "dwell with" her or him—*oikeo*—occupy a house, *i.e.*, reside, from *oikos*, a dwelling; by implication a family.

<sup>2</sup> In ver. 14 the apostle first states what would be the consequence (as implied by the introductory *epei*) if it were otherwise than what he has just stated is true under grace in respect to husband and wife; then he adds, "but now (*nun*—in this present time, actually, in the present) they are holy." This is the conclusion drawn from the sanctifying of the unbeliever in the believer, for *nun* has an inferential force, and here introduces what is the present fact.

<sup>3</sup> Thus we have the continuation of that principle which marks God's ways in all dispensations—"Thou and thy house." Only under grace it operates in respect to the family viewed in relation to the believing parent, even though it be the *woman*, and not the man who is normally the head of the family according to the order of God. See Appendix, Note 3.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix, Note 2.

believing parent, all with a view to their public acknowledgement as disciples of Christ by baptism in due course, this opening to them other privileges and responsibilities in God's house.

Eph. 6: 1 says: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is just," that is, as being in the sphere of His Lordship. This they are as being even of one Christian parent. *That* put the house, relatively, as to outward position "in the Lord" (not "in Christ," for that is alone by faith). Notice that the apostle brings forward an Old Testament command with promise as being applicable in that sphere of Lordship. Fathers are enjoined to bring up their children "in the discipline and admonition of the Lord," that is, instruct them as to what it means to be in the sphere of such Lordship, which they are through the faith of the parents, even one. Here then the whole Word of the Lord is the instrument by which to so bring them up.

With this part of our subject we must also link those passages in the Gospels in which children are specially spoken of by the Lord: Matt. 18: 1-14; the three parallel passages, Matt. 19: 13-15; Mark 10: 13-16, and Luke 18: 14-17; then also Mark 9: 33-37 and Luke 9: 46-50.

Little children, by Luke called infants, are brought to the Lord. He says: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," or "of God." He follows this with the declared necessity to be morally like such for entrance into the kingdom. In the last two passages He says: "Whosoever shall receive one of such little children in My name receives Me; and whosoever shall receive Me, does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me." The only difference being that Luke makes the statement specific: "Receive this little child."

Let us first inquire as to the force of "receive." It is a word meaning simply to receive *kindly*, to extend a *cordial welcome*. That is just what the disciples were not doing. Then what does "in (*epi*) My name" involve? *Epi*, of which the primary, local, import is *upon, above*, denotes, in general, when used with the dative as here, the basis, ground-work or foundation on which an action or state rests. So to do something *upon* the name of

someone means to do it as relying upon, or having reference to, that name. Hence "in My name" is the ground or basis upon which a little child is to be received in the manner of which the Lord speaks. In other words, it is action performed by the receiver on the ground of himself resting upon and professing Christ's name—one of His disciples acting in His spirit.

Then the Lord in some sort identifies Himself with the child, since He says that in its reception He is received. This He carries on to include God the Father who sent Him. In what sense are we to understand this? Is it not that they are identified with Him, inasmuch as they are of the kingdom? There can be no question that the Lord definitely marks out little children such as He had before Him at the time as belonging to the kingdom. They are accounted of it. Nothing ceremonial or ritualistic is suggested or involved in what the Lord says. Hence to receive them in His name simply means to act toward them, treat them, in a manner becoming to His name as representing Him upon whose name the disciple rests. They belong to Him, are of the kingdom, for the Son of Man came "to save that which was lost." And this was surely because "it is not the will of your Father who is in the heavens that one of these little ones should perish." Thus we may say the Father is identified with them too. So it becomes clear how to receive them involves receiving both Jesus and the Father. The Lord warns against an opposite spirit: "See that ye do not despise one of these little ones."

So every *such* little one—plainly those who have not come to the age of responsibility, for in all these passages the word used is *paidion*, diminutive of *pais*, and so *little* children, that is, properly and generally a child, or children recently born<sup>5</sup>—is safe, is of God's kingdom, and in

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<sup>5</sup> In distinction from *teknon*, which means children in the sense of being born of the family, as for example in 1 Cor. 7: 14 (and often used by John to signify this relationship of Christians as born of God), the word *paidion* refers to children, as mentioned above, without particular reference to the family they are of. So we may say *any*

event of death ere the line of individual responsibility is crossed (a point known perfectly to the Father), finds its home in the Father's presence. Garnered out of the race of men since the beginning of its sad history, how large a proportion they will constitute of that redeemed company which shall be the Lord's joy when He sees the fruit of the travail of His soul, for He gave His life that such might be saved.

The precious comfort of this does not mean that the Christian parent can afford to be indifferent as to the instruction of his little one until more advanced in years. Surely in the light of what the Lord has said, it is our privilege and responsibility to begin at the earliest possible moment to teach them the things of Him who claims them as of His kingdom; while it lays upon the Lord's disciple the obligation to "receive" such whenever and wherever access to them is afforded, and in the measure possible minister to them what is of Himself in tender love and care for their spiritual and physical welfare. And this as done in His name may often be the means of reaching parents who are careless or ignorant of the Lord's things.

In conclusion, since baptism is primarily the act of the baptizer and not the baptized, though there may be inquiry about it as in the eunuch's case, and since it is the introduction into the outer circle of public position as a Christian, as to which the history of the Acts is conclusive, it being the baptizer's acknowledgement of those as disciples of the Lord who professed acceptance of the Word preached, it does seem that we are without definite scriptural instruction to baptize any other class. This, of course, is not saying that when children are brought up in a Christian environment characterized by teaching what the Lord commanded, part of which should be the relation of baptism to His kingdom, that professed acceptance may not come early in life, and upon this

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little children are in the Lord's mind here, not simply those who are the children of His people or those professing to be. Compare notes in *New Translation* on Luke 7: 27, 28.

baptism, with the prospect of entering in due course upon the enjoyment of privileges in God's house and the sharing of responsibilities belong to it, if it is evident by their manner of life that they are abiding in the faith, founded and firm, and are not moved away from the hope of the glad tidings which they have heard.

What then Scripture appears to show is that Christian baptism has its place in relation to those individuals who profess to acknowledge Christ and His Word. If we have rightly apprehended its meaning, it would seem that only to such could baptism have fitting application as being an abiding object lesson of truth, implying responsibility to answer thereto in daily practice.

On the other hand, it is evident that by baptism the baptizer marks as acknowledged disciples those who profess acceptance of the Lord's word. It is thus that they are publicly given a place in the sphere of Christian profession on earth.

May not the meaning of Christian baptism properly have, what it seems seldom to have, a place in our presentation of the gospel? May not Philip have given it such a place in view of the eunuch's question, and Paul when he spoke in the jailer's house? It seems, in view of the history, that it must have been presented as a feature of the testimony given by those who preached the gospel. Also may it not suitably be made a part of the instruction imparted to the household of the Christian? Then its administration fittingly follows when any in such a household profess acceptance of the Lord in whose nurture and admonition they are being brought up. Baptism being administered, there necessarily follows (because of its prospective, anticipatory character) the need for care and watchfulness that there is a practical development of life agreeable to its meaning, and then in due course participation in other privileges and responsibilities belonging to all who show themselves to be in fellowship with Christ.

# APPENDIX

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## NOTE ONE

### *Some forms of expression used in 1 Cor. 7.*

It may be of interest to distinguish the forms of expression used by the apostle in respect to his teaching in this chapter.

In ver. 6 he says: "But this I say, as consenting to, not as commanding it." What he states in this connection he could not give as a command, but something said by way of permission. As a command it would have set aside the marriage ordinance of the Creator.

In ver. 10 he says: "But to the married I enjoin, not *I*, but the Lord." Here it was a matter of positive command, and as having particular emphasis, since he can say in effect, "Not *I* merely (the pronoun is emphatic in the second place), but the Lord," for *He* had in fact already given command as to this in His teaching about divorce.

Then in ver. 12 he says: "But as to the rest (*i.e.*, other matters asked about, see ver. 1), *I* say, not the Lord." This change indicates that what he is going to say is said according to his apostolic authority, and not as something upon which the Lord Himself had previously pronounced, as in the other matter. It seems evident that he is instructing them about what had become a question in view of Old Testament practice. This, perhaps, Judaizing teachers had raised concerning mixed marriages among them.

In ver. 25 the apostle speaks of not having received commandment of the Lord, but says he gave his judgment. Concluding this final section, he says in relation to his judgment: "But I think that I have God's Spirit."

He gave Spirit-formed judgment, though not inspired to give it as commandment. In 2 Cor. 8: 10 he also speaks of giving his judgment.

## NOTE TWO

### *Baptism in relation to* 1 Cor. 7: 12-14.

It is thought that what these verses teach must be connected with an outward rite of similar import to circumcision, and that baptism is that rite.

But we do not have baptism made analogous to circumcision "done by hand." It is made analogous, as we have seen, to what is called "the circumcision of Christ," not the rite performed when eight days old, but His death. This is a symbolical and spiritual use of the term itself. Though this throws light on the typical meaning of the ancient rite, it does not teach that *now* under the Gospel baptism takes its place, and hence is to have the same scope of physical application. In other words, that as children were circumcised on the eighth day after birth, so the inference follows naturally that children are to be baptized.

The bearing of the question to which the apostle here gives answer becomes clear when viewed in the light of Ezra's day. Then in the case of mixed marriages, the wives and the children born of them were separated from, according to the law which had been broken by such union. The question appears to be: Must this be the order in Christianity? Now plainly circumcision had no relation to this particular matter, and why should baptism with 1 Cor. 7, where it is not even mentioned? If it had the supposed connection with the children in regard to their relative holiness, is it amiss to think that the apostle would have said: "But now they are holy, were they not baptized?" or some such remark? Thus he seems to have spoken when he could appeal to baptism in relation to his subject.

To infer that under Christianity the place of relative holiness given to the children of such mixed marriages must have, so as to be known and recognized, a form of ritual acknowledgement, in this case baptism, appears to be gratuitous. Why need anything more than the apostle's teaching, as to which along with other things mentioned here, he says: "Thus I ordain in all the assemblies" (ver. 17). Further, this supposition as to baptism seems to raise a difficulty not really found in the passage itself. Let us suppose there were children in such a household come to years of responsibility, the possibility of which is allowed for in the word for children used here—*teknon*, a child, a descendant, not *paidion*, infants or little children as recently born;<sup>6</sup> and suppose such do not submit to the rite, force being out of the question, could they, would they, be accounted unclean or unholy? The statement of the apostle allows of no exception: "holy" applies to all children of such mixed marriages. But if baptism is the rite by which this place of relative holiness is really their's, what about any without it, as in the case supposed, one perhaps quite frequent in those early days, and not without possible occurrence in our own? The matter appears simple enough if left in its own setting, that of resulting from birth-relation to a believing parent. To this the apostle's word seems clearly to apply: "Since otherwise indeed," etc., *i.e.*, if it were otherwise than as stated in respect to the parents "your children are unclean, but now (because of this being so) they are holy."

### NOTE THREE

#### *The principle of "Thou and thy house."*

In the ways of God this principle affects the house or family according to what is true of the head, whether it be for good or evil. We find it from the beginning, as in the case of Adam and the result for his race con-

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<sup>6</sup> Compare footnote 5 on page 40.

sequent upon his fall. This underlies the teaching of Rom. 5: 12, etc. We see it operating in Noah's case, and that of Abraham. Other examples of it occur in the history of the kingdom. The place taken by the recognized head, be it as to the household, the priesthood, or the nation, involves that to which as before God the person is head. This brings in good or evil results according to what is true of the head.

The same rules in relation to Christ and those who are His, variously spoken of as the house over which He is Son, or the company of children given to Him, or the race to which He is Last Adam, for "as the heavenly One, such also the heavenly ones." This principle is involved in our being blessed "in Christ," and as having life "in the Son." And again, in the truth of Christ as the Firstborn among many brethren. Thus the blessing of the house, the family, the brethren, the race, is established through the recognized Head, and because of acknowledged association with Him.

Under grace as to the house and family, this principle is in operation as stated in 1 Cor. 7: 12-14. It certainly seems that it is in this connection we must understand the expression to the Philippian jailer—"Thou and thy house." "Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved" is distinctly individual, personal; but the added phrase, "Thou and thy house" being saved also, as the connection involves, can only imply some form of resultant blessing to the house through the faith of its head. This blessing has the character of the house being "saved." To take this expression to mean that if all in his house believed as he had done they then would be saved, simply makes it tautological, in fact an unnecessary statement, in view of the gospel being to "whosoever," irrespective of headship relation; nor can we assert it to mean that the house will be saved in an eternal sense *because* of the faith of the head. Therefore, it seems evident that it must mean that the house derives blessing through the head, and that this too in some form is a being saved. This can hardly be understood as anything else but the change brought about for the house as now being under

the enlightening influence of Christian headship. But to carry this on to the inference that baptism is to be administered to such a house irrespective of whether its members express individual acceptance of the Word through which the change has come to the head of the house, when there are so many indications of its administration being expressly to those who do signify acceptance, appears to be going beyond what Scripture clearly indicates.

The possibility of houses which included infants or little children being baptized on the faith of the head must be really limited to the supposition of this being so in the case of Lydia and the jailer. Such a supposition is reasonably excluded in the case of Crispus, who "believed in the Lord with all his house," and the house of Stephanas, the firstfruits of Achaia, of which it is said, "They have devoted themselves to the saints for service" (Acts 18: 8; 1 Cor. 1: 16; 16: 15). But when all other examples show administration to be related to those who profess acceptance of a testimony rendered, why suppose it was otherwise as to the persons making up those two particular houses? Would it not be better to forego the inference rather than bring it in to support a practice which involves what is admittedly without scriptural example. It is faulty reasoning to argue that if households were baptized then there was certainly Household Baptism. The latter is a uniform practice to be carried out whenever the head of a house becomes a professed Christian; the other (the record in Scripture of some households being baptized) may simply be the record of what was exceptional rather than general, and so particularly mentioned because in those cases whole houses professed acceptance of the Word preached, and not simply one or two in the houses, which was doubtless the case very generally then as now. Sometimes only the wife was reached by the gospel. Thus viewed the term "house," though mentioned in relation to the administration of baptism, is neither superfluous nor mystifying.

To argue that because we have houses mentioned as baptized, we necessarily have Household Baptism in the sense of an established order of practice, is like arguing that because "both men and women" are specially mentioned in Acts 8:12 then *adult* baptism must be the established order of practice, thus excluding children who may profess acceptance of the Word. What Scripture as a whole indicates to be the governing rule is professed acceptance of the testimony rendered without setting an age limit or requiring a period of probation.