



# Baptism

*What is Baptism?*

*Why Practice Water Baptism?*

*What is the Proper Method?*

*Should Infants be Baptized?*

*What is the Baptism of the Spirit?*

*What is the Baptism of Fire?*

THAT Jesus and His Apostles practiced and enjoined upon all their followers—"even to the end of the world" or present dispensation—an outward rite called *baptism*, in which water was used in some manner, cannot reasonably be questioned, for it is made very prominent in the New Testament. Baptism was practiced not only during our Lord's ministry in the beginning of the Harvest of the Jewish Age, but also in the Gospel dispensation after Pentecost, as is abundantly proved by the Scriptural record (Acts 2: 41; 8: 12, 16, 36, 38; 9: 18; 10: 47, 48; 16: 15, 33; 18: 8; 19: 3-5; 22: 16).

Nor is it correct to assume, as some do, that baptism belonged among the ceremonies of the Jewish Law, and that it, with all other ordinances of that Law, ended at the cross; for baptism was not a part of the Jewish Law. The washings enjoined in the Law, performed at the laver in the court of the tabernacle, were neither *immersions* nor *sprinklings*, but simply *cleansings*.

Nor will it do to say with others, who claim that water baptism belonged to the Jewish Age, that the Apostles, on coming out of Judaism, erred for a while—that they failed at first to discern that the *real* baptism was the baptism of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost—and that they therefore improperly kept up the *water* baptism. In this, as in the matter of not eating with the uncircumcised, it is claimed that St. Peter erred, and that others of the Apostles erred with him to some extent. It is claimed also that St. Paul confesses an error when he says (1 Cor. 1: 14-16), "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius ... and the household of Stephanas"; also when he says (Col. 2: 20, 21), "Why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances—touch not, taste not, handle not."

Thus an *apparently* strong argument is built up, the fallacy of which many do not discern. This is the result of a too superficial examination of the subject, and a jumping at conclusions from certain texts whose connections have not been thoroughly studied nor understood.

As already shown, baptism was not a feature of the Law Covenant; hence it was not at all a part of that which our Lord ended and cancelled at the cross for Jews who believe in Christ (Rom. 10: 4). It is a great mistake to class *baptism*, which is a symbol of the Grace Covenant, with the "*ordinances*" of the Jewish Law Covenant mentioned by the Apostle (Col. 2: 20). In Col. 2: 14 he shows that he refers to ordinances that were *against* the Jews, *i.e.*, which restricted their liberties. Can anyone say this of baptism? In what sense is it against anyone?

What the Apostle does refer to as the Law "ordinances," contrary to or against the Jew, were ceremonies and fastings, celebrations of the new moons and sabbaths (v. 16), and particularities about the eating of clean and unclean animals, the wearing of clothing made of linen and wool mixed, *etc.* These ordinances included not only those originally introduced by Moses, but also others subsequently added by the scribes and Pharisees who sat "in Moses' seat" (Matt. 23: 2). These forms and ceremonies had become so complex and bewildering a mass that those who *attempted* a strict observance of them found them extremely burdensome—a yoke of bondage. Our Lord referred to the same bondage and weariness (Matt. 23: 4); and, again (Matt. 11: 28-30), to the same class he held out *grace* instead of the Law, as the only way of life, saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden [with the Law's *unprofitable* and multitudinous ordinances—which, because of your weak, fallen condition cannot profit, but only annoy and weary you, and are therefore "*against*" you], and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

It is furthermore evident that baptism is not one of the ordinances referred to in Col. 2: 14, for we read to the contrary in v. 12, that those who are buried with Christ in baptism are *therefore* (even if Jews formerly under the Law Covenant) not liable or subject to the ordinances of v. 14. Thus baptism is placed in contrast with the ceremonies of the Law.

The idea that baptism does not belong to the Gospel Age, but ended at the cross, is again proved erroneous by the fact that it was after His resurrection, during the forty days before His ascension, that our Lord, while giving special instruction concerning the new dispensation, or Gospel Age, *specially mentioned* baptism as the outward symbol by which believers were to confess Him—"even to the consummation of the Age" then just begun (Matt. 28: 18-20).

And those who claim that proper baptism is that of the Holy Spirit *only*, and that water baptism is therefore *wrong*, should be effectually silenced and converted from their error by this, the Master's commission to His Church, to preach and baptize to the end of the Age, for how could the disciples baptize anyone with the Holy Spirit? Surely that is God's part.

Furthermore, the Lord's words could not have meant that His followers should teach all nations and that those who believe would be baptized with the Holy Spirit by God, for then why would He give particular directions to the disciples as to *how* it should be done—"in the name [by the authority] of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"? It is evident that our Lord's directions refer to the *symbol*, to water baptism only; because we can do no more for others than to teach and symbolically to baptize them: we cannot believe for them, nor make them believe; neither can we consecrate for them, nor make them consecrate. But we can *teach* them, and, when they believe for themselves and consecrate for themselves, we can baptize them in water. And by this act they confess their faith in Christ's death and resurrection, and their own consecration to be dead to self and the world and alive to God, that in due time they may share in the resurrection.

## 1 COR. 1: 11-17 EXAMINED

When the Apostle Paul thanked God that of the Corinthian Church he had baptized only a few (1 Cor. 1: 11-17), he was not assuming that he had since become wiser than to do so again—wiser than the Master, who commanded His disciples to teach and to baptize unto the close of the Age—but he was thanking God for totally different reasons: reasons which can be better understood by those who read the entire epistle to the Corinthians *connectedly*. He had heard that the church at Corinth was split into factions, divisions (literally, *sects*), some calling themselves Paulites, others Apollosites, others Peterites and others Christians. He was sure he had in no way aided such sectarianism, and was glad he could say, I never authorized you to call yourselves by *my name*. Were you baptized in the name of Paul, or in the name of Christ? Since the majority were evidently calling themselves Paulites, and since St. Paul had founded the church at Corinth, it might appear to some that he had been seeking to make converts to himself—Paulites instead of Christians; and, since it had resulted that a number were calling themselves Paulites, he was glad that he could say that very few of these had been baptized by him; as he said—"Lest any should say, I baptized in mine own name" (v. 15).

In addition to St. Paul's poor eyesight, the facts that he was a more able preacher than others, and that many others could baptize as well or better than he, would have been sufficient reasons for his never baptizing his converts when he could avoid it; for similarly we read of the Master (John 4: 1, 2), "Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John; though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples." Judging from his comparative unfitness for performing baptism, and his great talent for teaching, Paul concluded that *preaching*, and not *baptizing*, was his *special* mission (1 Cor. 1: 17), though his own record shows that, when occasion required and no one else was convenient to render the service, he did not allow even his own comparative unfitness to hinder or prevent his obedience to this part of the Master's injunction.

### "JOHN'S BAPTISM"

Turning to the Scripture testimony on baptism, we find that at the close of the Jewish Age a form of baptism was performed by John the Baptist and others, which is known as "John's baptism" (Acts 19: 3). It was for the Jews only. By their covenant, the Law, they occupied a relationship toward God very different from that of the Gentiles (who were without God or hope—Eph. 2: 12); for, by God's arrangement, the Jews were recognized and treated, under the provisions of the *typical sacrifices*, as typically *justified* from the Adamic guilt and penalty, and were, *as a nation*, consecrated to God (Ex. 19: 5, 6), and treated as though they were to be made the Bride of Christ.

The provision, too, was that when the true Lamb of God would come, those truly consecrated among them, "Israelites indeed," might, by accepting the true Lamb and the true sin-sacrifice and atonement, enter upon *real justification*, and carry with them their former consecration. In other words, an Israelite, consecrated indeed, living at the close of the Jewish Age, after the *real* sacrifice for sins was made by our Lord and He had appeared in the presence of God on behalf of

the Church, would upon acceptance of Him as the true Lamb of God be treated as though he *had always had the reality*, whereas really he had up to that time had only a typical justification.

Therefore, in the opening of the Gospel Age, Jews were not preached to in the same manner as Gentiles. The Gentiles were told: You who were once aliens and strangers have now through Christ Jesus been brought nigh, and through the merit of His blood may now have access to God and may *enter into* covenant relations with Him. Therefore, come to God by Christ, who has broken down the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles, not by taking favors from the Jews, but by ushering believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, into the blessings and favors of the heavenly calling (Eph. 2: 13-19).

The Jews, on the other hand, were told: "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers. ... Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit; for the promise is unto you [*belongs to you*], and to your children" (Acts 3: 25, 26; 2: 38-41).

The point to be noticed is that the Israelites were *already* consecrated, and heirs according to the Law Covenant; and the only reason that they, as a nation, had not been merged at once out of the Jewish typical state into the Gospel realities, as the Apostles and other individuals had been, was that in many individuals they had not been living up to their covenant relationship, and hence as a nation were not ready to receive their Messiah, Jesus (John 1: 11). Hence they were told to *repent* or turn back into the true covenant relationship with God, and to enjoy their privileges as children of the covenant. They had sinned in not living up to what they could of their covenant, and they were to show forth to others that they renounced their previous state of sin by baptism—washing away their transgressions in symbol, after praying in the name of Christ (Acts 22: 16).

Thus John's baptism, whether performed by John, or by Christ's disciples, was confined to Israelites; it signified repentance for covenant violations, and a *return* to covenant relationship, and was intended as a preparatory work; for those who fully received the testimony given and reformed, and thus became Israelites *indeed*, did receive Christ, and did pass into the higher favors of the Gospel Age (John 5: 45-47; Matt. 21: 31, 32). To these, already children of the covenant and already heirs of the promised blessings, water baptism signified a renouncing of sins of unfaithfulness, and more: from Christ's death onward it signified their renunciation of the national sin of crucifying Him, for the rulers, representing that nation, had said, "His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matt. 27: 25).

Hence St. Peter exhorted, saying, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." And when, in view of this *national sin*, which each thus shared, they inquired, "Brethren, what shall we do?" St. Peter answered, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins [and especially for your share in this national sin of crucifying Messiah], and ye

shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2: 36-39). To those who accepted this invitation, baptism in water with John's baptism symbolized not only a renunciation of their sins, including their national sin of crucifying Christ, but also a stepping *out* from the dispensation and control of Moses *into* that of Christ, because in acknowledging Jesus to be the true Messiah, they were acknowledging Him to be the long-promised Savior, Lawgiver and Teacher greater than Moses and typified by him.

The persons whom the Apostle Peter addressed on the day of Pentecost were Jews, and hence he very properly said to them, "*Be baptized for the remission of your sins.*" Not that John's baptism was the appointed channel for the remission of sins before God; for, as the Apostle Paul declares, "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9: 22). However, the Jewish nation, under God's arrangement through Moses, was accepted of Him as a whole, as a nation, and sin-offerings had been made year by year for them all as a nation, and had been accepted, and a covenant had been made, called the Law Covenant. Those whom the Apostle addressed, being under the Law Covenant, were under all these favorable conditions, under the blood of the typical sacrifices, typically justified and reconciled; and to them, consequently, God's promises pertained, as they did not pertain to the Gentiles, who had not come under such typical reconciliation through typical sacrifices.

The sin which the Apostle enjoined his hearers emblematically to wash away in baptism was not, therefore, original sin, but was their sin against their Law Covenant, including their national sin in the rejection of the Messiah. With these purged away, with the symbolical washing, they would be back to the standpoint of true Israelites, "Israelites indeed"; and as such they would have every right and privilege belonging to the Israelites, but belonging to members of no other nation.

### GENTILES GRAFTED IN

The Apostle Paul explains this relationship (Rom. 11: 1-36), saying that the Israelites were the natural branches in the olive root of the Abrahamic promise. As branches already in that root they would not need to be grafted in, as do we who by nature are Gentiles. They were already in relationship to God, and all that they needed to do was to repent of their sins and figuratively wash them away, after which they would be fully acceptable branches in the olive tree, branches that would not be broken off, as long as they did not reject their Messiah, Jesus, but, on the contrary, would receive now a special share in the Pentecostal blessing.

Subsequently, when exhorting Gentile converts to baptism, the Apostle Paul explained most clearly its difference from this baptism of Jews for the remission of sins (Acts 19: 1-6). He shows that the baptism of Gentiles signifies or emblemizes their introduction into the Body of Christ as wild olive branches grafted into the approved stock, to be partakers of the richness of the promises through the root (Rom. 6: 3-5; 11: 17). We should, however, remark that the Jew no longer holds this same peculiar relationship; so that if the Apostle were addressing Jews today

we believe he would address them exactly as he would address Gentiles on this point of seeking union with Christ.

Our reasons for so thinking are: That as the *national* favor to Israel ended with the death of Christ, in the midst of their "week" of favor (Dan. 9: 27), so the *individual* favor to the Jew above the Gentile ceased with the breaking off of the natural olive branches during the remaining thirty-three years of their "harvest," which ended with the destruction of their polity, A.D. 69. A natural branch once broken off could be reunited only by engrafting—in no way differently from a wild olive branch. Consequently any Jew, seeking to come into Christ since the day of wrath upon his nation, could come in only under the same terms and conditions as a Gentile.

Throughout the Gospel Age, no one, whether Jew or Gentile, was "called" or invited into the "body of Christ," except those already *believers*, who owned Christ as their Redeemer or Justifier, and who were therefore justified freely from all things by faith in His blood. Such, and not sinners, were invited to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God (Rom. 12: 1).

Under the Law, the blemished of the flock were not acceptable on the Lord's altar, typifying God's rejection of all imperfect offerings. Our Lord was the *actually* spotless, unblemished, perfect Lamb of God, sacrificed for our sins; and in inviting some during the Gospel Age to join Him in sacrifice, and afterward in glory and honor, the Father has accepted only such as were first made "whiter than snow," and who, because of faith in and acceptance of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, were *reckoned* perfect, and hence were acceptable to God.

## BAPTISM INTO DEATH

The *real* baptism is baptism into death; and the water baptism, though a beautiful figure which graphically illustrates the real baptism, is only its figure or symbol. St. Paul explains the Church's *real* baptism in Rom. 6: 3-5: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also [sharers] in the likeness of his resurrection."

It is evident, then, that baptism in water is the symbol of a complete laying down of life unto death, a baptism which began and is counted from the moment the *justified believer* consecrated himself and surrendered his will to God, though to secure the promised share in the Kingdom it must continue until death.

It was from this standpoint that our Lord spoke, when He said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened [in straits, difficulties] till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12: 50). He had already performed the symbol at Jordan, but He was now referring to the consummation of His baptism into death. His will, surrendered to the Father's will and plan, was already buried; but as the dark hour of Gethsemane and Calvary drew near He longed to finish His sacrifice.

It was from this same standpoint that He spoke of baptism to the two disciples who asked to sit, the one at His right hand and the other at His left, in the Kingdom (Mark 10: 35-37). He answered them, "Ye know not what ye ask—Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am [being] baptized with?" (Matt. 20: 22). He referred here to the baptism into death, and showed that none need expect to share the Kingdom except those who share this baptism of death. Thus the Apostle's explanation of the symbol concurs exactly with that of our Lord.

These are not two baptisms—one into water and the other into death—but one. The baptism in water is the symbol or shadow of the baptism into death. If there is a shadow, there must be a substance; and a clear, strong light falling upon a substance produces a shadow of it. It is for the instructed child of God to distinguish between the substance and the shadow, and by recognizing their relationship to see in the two parts "one baptism." Since the two parts were recognized as one baptism by the Apostle, it is doubtful if anyone fully appreciates the *one, true baptism* without seeing both the substance and the shadow.

Recognizing the true import of baptism, we see that, next to faith in Christ, this true baptism is the one important and essential step by which a share in the Kingdom will be attained; for only such as during the Gospel Age are faithful unto death will become Abraham's seed, through whom the blessings of the Millennial Kingdom will flow to the non-elect. It is not surprising that some have mistaken the shadow or symbol for the real, and made it a test of membership in the church upon earth: this is but a natural mistake. All who see the *real* baptism, as well as the *symbol*, and yet ignore the latter, should carefully examine themselves to see that their wills in this matter are *really* dead and buried in the will of Christ.

### THE NECESSITY OF WATER BAPTISM

But some may inquire, Is it *necessary* for me to be baptized in water, if I am confident that I am fully consecrated unto death? Would the Lord reject me for so small a matter as a failure to go through a form?

Do not forget that God does not command and compel the obedience of those who follow in Jesus' footsteps. This is a time in which, as a great favor, believers are *privileged* to offer their wills and their all in consecration to God. It is still the time in which God is pleased to accept (through Christ) those who surrender their little human *all* to Him, and thus become followers in the footsteps of Jesus. To them He promises certain exceeding great rewards.

Those who see this matter aright know that the consecrated have not been given a law of commandments, nor dealt with as were the Jews; for "Ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6: 14). Theirs was the *house of servants*, and it is proper to command servants; but, if we belong to the *house of sons* (Heb. 3: 5, 6), God deals with us as a true Father with true sons. True sons possess the spirit of obedience, the spirit of sons, and need not to be commanded and

threatened; for such, both by word and deed, and in matters both small and great, declare, "I delight to do thy will, O my God" (Psa. 40: 8). For such, no self-denial is too great, and no act of respect and obedience is too small.

Anyone who is consecrated to God, who has truly laid down self-will and accepted God's will, who is thus truly baptized, and who has *seen* water baptism to be the will of God, will not refuse to obey. Let us remember that obedience in a small matter may be a closer test than in a large one. Had Satan attempted to get Eve into the sin of blaspheming the Creator, he would have failed; had he attempted to induce her to murder Adam he would have failed; hence the test of obedience in a very small matter was a much more crucial test. So now God tests our professions of love and devotion and obedience most thoroughly by some of the smallest matters, of which the symbolic immersion is one. God's decision is, He that is *faithful* in that which is least will be faithful also in that which is greater (Luke 16: 10).

### THE FORM OF BAPTISM

The Greek language is remarkable for its clear and definite expression of thought, and it was therefore well fitted to give expression to Divine truth. Its flexibility is well illustrated in the following words, each expressing a different shade of thought, yet all having a similar significance. Thus *rhantizo* (from *rhaino*) signifies to sprinkle; *cheo*, to pour; *louo*, to wash or bathe; *nipto*, to wash a part of the person; *bapto*, to dip, whelm or dye; *baptizo*, to dip, immerse, overwhelm or cover.

This last word, *baptizo* (rendered *baptize* in the King James Version Bible), was used by our Lord and His Apostles when referring to an ordinance which they practiced, as well as enjoined upon all followers of the Lamb. From this word, selected from among so many others of various similar shades of meaning, it seems clear that a sprinkling, or pouring, or even a washing of a part of the person, was not the thought, but an immersion or covering of the whole person.

The word "baptize," as given in some versions, is not a translation at all, but a mere transfer of the Greek word into the English. Greek dictionaries give the meaning of *baptizo* as follows: "to dip in or under water"—Liddell and Scott; "to dip repeatedly, to immerge, to submerge"—Thayer; "to dip, immerse, sink"—Abbott-Smith; "to dip, immerse"—Bagster; "to dip in, to sink, to immerse"—Robinson; "to immerse, to sink"—Greenfield; "to immerse, to submerge"—Cremer; "to dip repeatedly, dip under"—Classic Greek Dictionary. *Immerse* is the English word which seems most nearly to correspond in meaning to the Greek word *baptizo*.

It has been suggested by some that in the case of the jailer who believed and was straightway baptized (Acts 16: 33), the baptism could not have been by immersion, because he and the others could not have left the jail for the purpose; but, on the contrary, it is now known that at that time the jails were provided with bathing reservoirs, most suitable for immersions. And, furthermore, it is to be remembered that of John the Baptist it is written, "John was baptizing at Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there" (John 3: 23). If John merely sprinkled his converts,

the largeness of the water supply would not have been a consideration. It was probably at a pool in the Jordan.

It is generally admitted by scholars that immersion was the common practice of the early Church; but with the beginning of the third century great confusion arose on this and on other subjects. Some placed all the value upon *the form*, some even insisting on three immersions, because our Lord had said, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," not seeing that *in the name of* signifies *by the authority of*; others claimed that, as our Lord's head bowed forward in dying on the cross, so they should be immersed, not as in a burial, but with face downward; others insisted that the ones baptized must be nearly naked, as our Lord was when he died; and still others went to an opposite extreme, and, while holding that *a form* was all important, claimed that *the exact form* was unimportant, and for *convenience* substituted sprinkling. This finally became the standard mode in the Church of Rome, from which it reached Protestants. All these errors as to *form* resulted from losing sight of the real significance of baptism.

Even if the testimony as to the procedure of the early Church were so confused that we had nothing whatever therein to guide us in determining whether the apostolic mode of baptism was by sprinkling, pouring or immersing, it would still be possible for us to see clearly what would and what would not constitute appropriate pictures of real baptism, and thus to determine the matter for ourselves. Scrutinizing every form practiced, only one seems at all to *picture* death and burial with Christ. We fail to see any symbol of death to self and the world and rising to newness of life in many or few drops of water upon the forehead, or in a pailful of water poured over the person. But when we consider immersion we see at a glance a wonderful, striking, remarkable and fitting illustration of all that is implied in the real baptism to death.

The one immersion backward into water in the name of Christ is a most striking picture of a burial, fitting in every particular. The one doing the symbolic baptizing represents our Lord. As the one being baptized goes to the baptizer, so in our hearts we go to the Lord for baptism. Confessing that we cannot of ourselves become dead to self and the world, we put ourselves into the hands of the Lord, asking Him to accept the will for the deed, and that, our wills being given up, He will bury us into death—that He will cause such experiences, disciplines, assistances and chastisements to come into our lives as will best enable us to carry out our consecration vows. After the one being baptized thus pictures that he has given up his will, the baptizer gently lets him down into the water; and, while he is thus on his back, helpless in the water, he furnishes a complete illustration of our powerlessness to assist ourselves while in death; and, as the baptizer raises him to his feet again, we see in the picture just what our Lord has promised us, to raise us up from the dead in due time by His own power.

We make no attempt to constrain the consciences of others who differ from us; but it seems to us evident from the fitness of immersion as a symbol that its author is the Lord. Who else could have arranged so complete a picture or symbol of the entire matter?

## WHO ARE TO BE BAPTIZED?

Our Lord authorized first the teaching of the gospel, and then the baptism of such as *believed* in Him as their Redeemer (Matt. 28: 19; comp. Mark 16: 16), and accepted the gospel call to become His footstep followers. The Apostles followed this rule, and we have no testimony anywhere that they baptized others than *believers*—neither unbelievers, nor infants, nor the mentally disabled. True, it is recorded that several "households" were baptized, and from this it is argued that probably there were infants in some of those families, and that therefore it is probable that infants were baptized, though none are mentioned. But, we answer, some families contain mentally disabled ones, and some families number one or more unbelievers; shall we therefore conclude without other evidence that the Apostles disregarded our Lord's command, and baptized unbelievers? Nay, verily! It is far more reasonable to conclude that in the few cases where households are mentioned as being baptized, they consisted of persons who could and did *believe*, or that, since the custom or general usage would prevent misunderstanding, it was proper enough to say "household," even if there were in it children too young to be *believers*, and who therefore would be understood as not being included among those baptized.

Many who practice sprinkling, and that upon unintelligent (and hence *unbelieving*) babes, hold that *water* baptism is the door into the Church of Christ; and they do not receive into membership any others than those who have gone through some ceremony *called* "baptism." They thus receive infants into their churches, on the ground that only church members will be saved from everlasting torment. True, this, like other doctrines of the Dark Ages, is little taught in our day, and is fast losing its influence over the people; nevertheless, many parents today still believe that their children would be consigned to everlasting torment if they would die without being sprinkled with water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

An example of this, and one which shows the power that these errors put into the hands of the priestly or clergy class, came to our attention recently. The parents of an infant had a disagreement with the pastor of their church about non-payment of church dues and non-attendance at meetings. The child grew seriously ill, and the father and mother by turn went many times to implore the cold-hearted, error-teaching, hireling shepherd to come and sprinkle their babe and save it from the eternal damnation he had taught them would otherwise be its portion. But he refused to come, telling them that they deserved the punishment. After further efforts they secured the services of another preacher "just in time" to allay their groundless fears. (For an examination of the teachings of the Scriptures on "Where are the Dead?" including unbaptized infants, write for our free booklet on the subject.)

## WHO MAY BAPTIZE?

No limitations are mentioned in the Scriptures as to who may perform this ceremony of baptizing believers in water, though only consecrated believers were ever commissioned, either to teach or to baptize. Although knowledge on the part of the one performing the ceremony is not required, it is, of course, desirable; but both faith and knowledge are necessary on the part

of the one to be immersed. Sometimes the one performing the ceremony may be far inferior in every way to the one for whom it is performed (Matt. 3: 14).

Certainly all who are authorized to *teach*, are equally authorized to *baptize*; and in its wide sense that includes every true follower of Christ—"even to the end of the Age," according to the general call to the ministry, commission and ordination of Matt. 28: 19, 20 and John 17: 14-23. The most proper course, however, would be for such services to be in the charge of either the general or local elders of the Church.

### THE MANNER OF THE SYMBOL

The immersion, since it symbolizes a burial, should be backwards, in water sufficient for the purpose, and as convenient as circumstances will permit. It should not be done with secrecy, as it is intended as a *public confession of faith*. Yet its publicity should be to fellow-believers rather than to the world. Hence, while it should in no way be kept secret from the world, it is unnecessary to give public notice except to fellow-believers. In fact, so solemn is the occasion to believers, who realize its deep significance, that the presence of the worldly, unless they be seekers after God and therefore more than mere curiosity seekers, should not be encouraged.

Some think that because John the Baptist and the Lord's disciples baptized publicly in the river Jordan, therefore all should be immersed in public view in a river. But let it be remembered that the whole Jewish nation was the *Church* according to their Law Covenant; therefore *public* view meant especially in the presence of members of the professed Church of that time. As for the river Jordan, John and the disciples evidently used it because it was the most convenient place at their service. If the *river* was an important factor, why should we also not use the *same* river—Jordan?

It should be noted that when the eunuch believed and was baptized, only Phillip was present (Acts 8: 29-38); when the jailer believed and was baptized (Acts 16: 33), it was not in a river, but in a bath or some other convenient arrangement in the prison. And we know that the ruins of the church buildings of the first two centuries show that they had special, annexed buildings prepared for the convenience of immersions.

The form of words used by the Apostles and the early Church is not given, which shows that the *form of words* used is much less important than the act, and the *meaning* which it expresses. We may gather, however, from Acts 2: 38; 8: 16; 10: 48; 19: 5; Rom. 6: 3 and 1 Cor. 1: 13, that baptism was performed in the name of the Lord Jesus and that it was expressed in words. We may also assume that our Lord's words, "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," were not disregarded, but somehow were expressed on such occasions. The thought is, that believers, by baptism into God's will unto death, are accepted as His people, and that their right or privilege to be thus accepted is in the name or by the authority of the Father, through the merit of the Son and by the impartation to such of the Holy Spirit of truth.

We append here some interesting questions on baptism:

### "BAPTIZED FOR THE DEAD"

*Question:* What is meant by 1 Cor. 15: 29 (ASV): "Else what shall they do that are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them?"

*Answer:* This has been considered by many as a very obscure passage. Those who deny water baptism cannot interpret this passage without implying that the great, inspired Apostle Paul was foolish; those who regard sprinkling or pouring as proper forms of baptism find it difficult to see any logical meaning in this text; and even many of those who recognize immersion as the proper symbol of baptism do not comprehend this verse. Its beauty and force can be discerned only if we recognize the real baptism, death to self-will and the world's will, and aliveness to God's will, immersion in water being its proper, appropriate and provided symbol, and only if we understand God's great plan of salvation for the Church and the world.

A misapprehension of the meaning of this text led, during the Dark Ages, to substitutionary baptism: Christian people, whose friends had died without baptism, were baptized for them representatively. The correct view of what constitutes the real baptism quickly shows us the inconsistency of such a procedure. One person could no more consecrate himself for another person than he could transfer either his natural or spiritual life to another person.

The Apostle's topic in vs. 12-28 is the resurrection of the dead, and in v. 29 he is sustaining and elaborating that doctrine. Evidently assaults had been made upon the faith of the Church at Corinth as to the resurrection of the dead. As a part of his argument in refutation, in v. 29 he calls the attention of the Church to the fact that they had all been baptized, and that their baptism signified or symbolized death, as we have already explained. He then, by way of showing up the inconsistency of the erroneous new position, inquires wherein would be the wisdom or value of such a consecration to death, as their baptism suggested, if the new theory that the dead rise not at all were true. They had consecrated themselves to be dead with Christ, to be baptized into His death as members of His Body (1 Cor. 12: 12, 13), to join Him in His sacrificial cup (Mark 10: 39), *on behalf of the dead world*, Adam and the non-elect of his race, and therefore they hoped to share in the promised glorious resurrection.

The Apostle's argument is that the whole Christian position stands or falls together. If there is no resurrection of the dead, then those who are fallen asleep in Christ are perished, as well as the remainder of the world; if such be the case, and there is no future hope either for the Church, or for the world through the Church, then why should the Church consecrate their lives unto death? They were baptized into death with Christ—baptized for, on behalf of, the dead and dying world of mankind—so that in due time, in the First Resurrection, they could also live and reign with Him (Rom. 8: 17; 2 Tim. 2: 11, 12; Rev. 5: 10; 20: 4, 6), and as His Bride and Joint-heir, the

Second Eve (2 Cor. 11: 2, 3; Eph. 5: 31, 32), share with Him as the Second Adam, the Life-giver of the world (1 Cor. 15: 45; Isa. 9: 6), in regenerating the race in righteousness and life (Matt. 19: 28; Isa. 60: 4; Gal. 3: 8, 16, 29; Rev. 22 : 17).

### *BAPTISM WITH HOLY SPIRIT AND FIRE*

*Question:* What did John the Baptist mean (Matt. 3: 11, 12) when he said of Jesus: "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire"?

*Answer:* To understand John's words we must bear in mind that he was addressing mixed classes of the Jews. There came out to him people of Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, including Pharisees and Sadducees (vs. 5, 7). John came as the introducer of Jesus and the Gospel, and, looking forward, he prophetically foretold the results. "Now also the axe [of Divine judgment] is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit [the fruitage of righteousness] is hewn down, and cast into the fire" (v. 10). Then, speaking of Jesus, he says: "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." Some of his hearers included in the "you" would receive Jesus, and these (as Israelites indeed) would be baptized with the Holy Spirit (at Pentecost), but others whom he was then addressing would not receive Jesus; hence after their house (nominal Fleshly Israel) would be left desolate (Matt. 23: 37-39), they would be baptized with fire—the judgments which came upon them as a people after their rejection of Jesus—not literal fire—but the fire of God's wrath (comp. Ezek. 38: 19; Zeph. 3: 8), the fire of trouble that culminated in the destruction of the Jewish polity in 69-73 A.D.

That the above is the correct understanding is proven further by v. 12, which is but a repetition of the same thoughts in other words: "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor [this shows the main work of Jesus during His 3½ years' ministry; as a winnowing He separated the wheat of the Jewish people from the chaff], and gather his wheat [the true Israelites indeed] into the garner [the Christian Church]; but he will burn up the chaff [the rest of the nation, the refuse] with unquenchable fire [sure destruction that nothing could prevent—the great fire of religious and political contention which destroyed the Jewish nation]." Thus John told his mixed audience that, whereas he baptized with water, Jesus would baptize them with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Some received the one and others the other kind of baptism.

We believe it is a serious mistake for any of God's people to pray for a baptism of fire, for, unwittingly, they are actually praying for a curse instead of a blessing. It is to their advantage if God does not answer such a petition.

### *"BORN OF WATER AND OF THE SPIRIT"*

*Question:* In view of Jesus' statement, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3: 5), is water baptism essential to salvation?

*Answer:* This passage does not refer at all to water baptism, nor to the real baptism. It refers to the begetting and birth of the Spirit. In this verse the word *water* is used figuratively to symbolize the Truth, as is often the case in the Bible (Eph. 5: 26; Heb. 10: 22; 2 Pet. 2: 17; 1 John 5: 6, 8; Jude 12; Rev. 12: 15; 21: 6; 22: 1, 17; John 7: 38; Ezek. 36: 25; 47: 1-12; Isa. 12: 3). It is by the Truth that we are begotten of the Spirit (1 Cor. 4: 15; Jas. 1: 18; 1 Pet. 1: 3, 23, 25). In the Greek the one word, *gennaō*, means both (1) *to beget* and (2) *to bear* (see *The Divine Plan of the Ages*, pp. 278, 364-368), and hence this word is not here repeated before the word *Spirit*, though both things are meant in this verse. To bring out the sense in English we might paraphrase this verse as follows: Except a man be begotten of the Truth and born of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

## A LETTER ON BAPTISM

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THE EDITOR, Sir:—So many letters have appeared in connection with Bishop Gibson's sermon, I will content myself with dealing with just one point. Speaking of Christian Baptism, he referred to "immersion" as "the first error of a good deal of teaching in Jamaica." What is the correct mode of Christian Baptism—immersion or sprinkling? Let us see who is really in error. A few quotations from undoubted scholars will settle the question:

In the "Emphatic Diaglott," a Greek-English translation of the New Testament, I find the following note on baptism:

BAPTIZE, *bapto*, *baptizo*. *Bapto* occurs 3 times, Luke 16: 24; John 13: 26; Rev. 19: 13, and is always translated *dip* in the common version. *Baptizo* occurs 79 times; of these, 77 times it is not translated at all, but transferred; and twice, *viz.*, Mark 7: 4; Luke 11: 38, it is translated *wash*, without regard to the manner in which it was done. All lexicographers translate it by the word *immerse*, *dip*, or *plunge*, not one by *sprinkle* or *pour*. No translator has ever ventured to render these words by *sprinkle* or *pour*. In the Septuagint version we have *pour*, *dip*, and *sprinkle*, occurring in Lev. 14: 15, 16, "He shall *pour* the oil, he shall *dip* his finger in it, and he shall *sprinkle* the oil." Here we have *cheo*, to pour; *raino*, to sprinkle; and *bapto*, to dip."

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

Dr. Handley Moule, late Bishop of Durham, admits: "In the New Testament we have not indeed any mention of infant baptism ... It is true that FEW certain notices of infant baptism are to be found before Century III."

Dean Stanley, admitted by churchmen to be a leader, a scholar, and an authority, historical and ecclesiastical, says: "There can be no question that the original form of baptism—the very meaning of the word—was complete immersion in the deep baptismal waters; and that, for at least four centuries, any other form was either unknown or regarded, unless in the case of dangerous illness, as an exceptional, almost monstrous, case."

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

Dr. R. T. Knowling, Professor of New Testament Exegesis, King's College, London, in "The Expositor's Greek Testament," says: "The context '*anebesan ek*' [Acts 8: 39] indicates that the baptism was by immersion, and there can be no doubt that this was the custom in the early Church."

Dr. William Sanday and Dr. A. C. Headlam, in the "International Critical Commentary," say: "Baptism expresses symbolically a series of acts ... Immersion—Death; Submersion—Burial (the ratification of death); Emergence—Resurrection."

Bishop Lightfoot, Church of England, Durham: "Ye were buried with Christ to your old selves beneath the baptismal waters"; and he well asks, "If baptism be immersion, and immersion expresses a substantial part of its meaning, can sprinkling or pouring be baptism?"—*British Weekly*, 1905.

Martin Luther: "I would have those who are to be baptised to be entirely immersed, as the word imports and the mystery signifies."

John Calvin: "The word *baptize* signifies to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient Church."

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

Professor John Agar Beet, Methodist: "From the earliest subapostolic writings we learn that immersion was the usual form of baptism."

The Hon. Baptist Noel, Church of England, one of Queen Victoria's Chaplains, said: "I believe I have weighed well every considerable argument that has ever been adduced in the maintenance of infant baptism, as an addition to, and which evidently becomes a substitution for, the baptism of believers in Christian Churches; and I have come distinctly to these conclusions, which appear to me, at least, to be certain: It appears to be distinctly proved, first, that baptism as ordained by

Christ, is an immersion in the water, a being buried in the water; and secondly, that immersion is meant to be a profession of faith in Christ."

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

J. Russell Bowden, B.D., Vicar of Southborough, speaking in the Great Hall, at Tunbridge Wells on April 5, 1925, with many well-known clergymen on the platform, said: "Every man's utterances should be tested by the Word of God ... There was something which he was going to say which he hoped would not be considered unkind. This was that there was no heresy which had done more harm than the heresy of baptismal regeneration. One could be baptised with water without being baptised with the Holy Spirit ... We had got to remember that Christ died for the ungodly—not for this class or that class, but for the ungodly; and perhaps the regular church-goers needed Him as much as any of them."

The quotations could be multiplied many times, but already I have made the letter longer than I had intended, and must therefore crave your indulgence.

I am, *etc.*, \_\_\_\_\_, Jamaica, B.W.I.