

# **“BAPTISM”**

**A Study**

**by**

**Dr. Archie L. Miller**

**Nov. 28, 1997**

**The Orcutt Christian Church  
204 Patterson Rd.  
Santa Maria, CA 93455**

## Forward

“With regard to meaning [of baptism], there existed a remarkable consistent agreement within Christendom for fifteen hundred years, up to and including Martin Luther himself. This agreement consisted in two main points: (1) baptism is a work of God, i.e., the main action in baptism is something being done by God and not by man; and (2) the divine work accomplished during baptism is the initial bestowal of saving grace upon the waiting sinner, i.e., it is the point of transition from wrath to grace for the individual.”

Jack Cottrell

Baptism and the Remission of Sins

p. 18

This study will consider the following:

## **Introduction**

### **I. Arguments Against Baptism**

- A. The Baptism Of Jesus Is Our Example
- B. Jesus' Blood Remits Sins, Not Baptism
- C. Baptism Is A Work, We're Not Saved By Works
- D. Paul Was Sent To Preach, Not Baptize
- E. What About The Thief On The Cross?
- F. Summary

### **II. Sprinkling, Pouring, Or Immersion?**

### **III. What About Infant Baptism?**

### **IV. What About "Re-Baptism?"**

### **V. What About the Baptismal Formula**

### **VI. What The Early Christians Believed About Baptism**

### **VII. A Lexigraphical study of eis [eis] "for" in Acts 2:38**

### **VIII. Alexander Campbell on "Who's A Christian"**

### **IX. For Your Further Study**

# **I. Arguments Against Baptism**

## **A. Objection # 1**

**“JESUS WASN’T BAPTIZED FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS AND WE ARE TO FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE!”**

We can agree with much within this argument. For example, we are to follow the example of Christ (1 Jn 2:6; 1 Cor 11:1). We can also agree that Jesus was not baptized for the remission of His sins, for indeed He had no sin (Heb 4:15). However, the fact He had no sin itself might show something different between His baptism and ours.

Why was Jesus baptized anyway? Do those who make this argument against baptism follow it consistently, and submit to baptism for the same reason Jesus did? In Jn 1:29-34, John the Baptist told why he baptized Jesus:

John 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

John 1:30 This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’

John 1:31 I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.”

John 1:32 Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him.

John 1:33 I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’

John 1:34 I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.”

Indeed, the reason John baptized Jesus was not for the remission of His sins, but to enable God to show John the Baptist that Jesus was the Messiah He promised in the Old Testament! God had told John the Baptist that one day while he baptized people, the Spirit would

descend on one of them in the form of a dove. When this happened, John would know he had baptized the Messiah.

Now, who do you know who ought to be baptized for the same reason Jesus was? Who has been baptized for the same reason Jesus was? Today, none of us follows the example of Jesus in being baptized so God can show we are the Messiah!

## **B. Objection # 2**

### **“THE BLOOD OF CHRIST REMITS OUR SINS, NOT BAPTISM!”**

Without exception, everyone who reads these words, and who believes the Bible, accepts that the blood of Christ was shed for the remission of our sins. Before we discuss the relation of baptism to the remission of sins, let's ask ourselves why we universally agree Jesus' blood was shed for the remission of our sins? Wasn't it because the Lord Himself said in Mt 26:28, Matthew 26:28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Certainly, we can all accept this plain statement from the lips of our Lord Himself.

Why then can we not accept the words of His apostle Peter, when in Acts 2:38, Peter used the same language in the Greek about baptism:

Acts 2:38 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

If we can't believe Peter in Acts 2:38 when he said baptism was for the remission of sins, why would we believe Jesus when He used the same words to say His blood was shed for the remission of sins? If on the other hand, we believe Jesus when He said His blood was shed for the remission of sins, why shouldn't we as well

believe Peter when he used the same words to say baptism was for the remission of sins?

If someone should argue that “for” or “unto” means “because of” in Acts 2:38, i.e., we are to be baptized because our sins have already been remitted, why would not identical language mean that Jesus shed His blood because our sins had already been remitted, and therefore the blood of Christ has nothing to do with the remission of sins? Surely, we can see that whatever purpose Jesus accomplished when He shed His blood, the same purpose is accomplished by the baptism of a penitent believer in the name of Jesus Christ.

Interestingly, it is by no means unusual to meet denominational preachers who have had a smattering of exposure to the Greek language who insist the word translated “for” or “unto” means “because of” in Acts 2:38. However, when pressed for a New Testament translation that so translates the word, they universally meet with failure.

Denominational SCHOLARS generally will not sacrifice their scholarship in favor of their denominational doctrine...

G.R. Beasley-Murray, Principal of Spurgeon’s College in London, later Senior Professor at Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, KY, wrote a modern classic, *Baptism In The New Testament*. He gives chapters which thoroughly discuss baptism in the Gospels, in Acts, in Paul’s writings, and in other apostolic writings. In his introduction, Beasley-Murray said:

This book is intended to offer a Baptist contribution to the discussions on baptism that are taking place throughout the Christian world. But the indefinite article should be observed; the impression must not be given that my interpretations are characteristic of Baptist thought generally. At most it can be claimed that they represent a trend gaining momentum among Baptists in Europe. I have striven to interpret the evidence of the New Testament as a Christian scholar, rather than as a member of a particular Christian Confession.

(G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism In The New Testament*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962, pp. v-vi.)

From his chapter on baptism in Acts, Beasley-Murray said:  
“Consequently, baptism is regarded in Acts as the occasion and means of receiving the blessings conferred by the Lord of the Kingdom. Admittedly, this way of reading the evidence is not characteristic of our thinking, but the intention of the author is tolerably clear.” (Ibid., p. 102)

Whatever the relationship between baptism and the gift of the Spirit elsewhere in Acts, there appears to be no doubt as to intention of Acts 2:38; the penitent believer baptized in the name of Jesus Christ may expect to receive at once the Holy Spirit, even as he is assured of the immediate forgiveness of his sins. (Ibid., p. 108)

From his chapter on baptism in the apostolic writings, concerning Romans 6:3-4, Beasley-Murray said:

“We that are Baptists have largely ignored this aspect of Pauline teaching; even when we have heard it we have hesitated to accept, partly no doubt because of the one-sided emphasis it has often received but partly also because we have not known how to deal with it. But misapplication of truth must never be permitted to make us insensitive to it.” (Ibid., pp. 142-143)

Some concluding statements were:

In light of the foregoing exposition of the New Testament representations of baptism, the idea that baptism is a purely symbolic rite must be pronounced not alone unsatisfactory but out of harmony with the New Testament itself. Admittedly, such a judgment runs counter to the popular tradition of the Denomination to which the writer belongs...

The extent and nature of the grace which the New Testament writers declare to be present in baptism is astonishing for any who come to the study freshly with an open mind.

...the “grace” available to man in baptism is said by the New Testament writers to include the following elements:

- > Forgiveness of sin, Acts 2:38 and cleansing from sins, Acts 22:16, 2 Cor 6:11;
- > Union with Christ, Gal 3.27, and particularly union with Him in his death and resurrection, Rom. 6.3ff, Col 2.11f,
- > All that implies of release from sin's power, as well as guilt, and the sharing of the risen life of the Redeemer, Rom 6.1-11;
- > Participation in Christ's sonship, Gal 3.26f;
- > Consecration to God, 1 Cor 6.11, hence membership in the Church, the Body of Christ, 1 Cor 12.13, Gal 3.27-29;
- > Possession of the Spirit, Acts 2.38, 1 Cor 6.11, 12.13, and therefore the new life in the Spirit, i.e., regeneration, Ti 3.5, Jn 3.5;
- > Grace to live according to the will of God, Rom 6.1ff, Col 3.1ff;
- > Deliverance from the evil powers that rule this world, Col 1.13;
- > the inheritance of the Kingdom of God, Jn 3.5, and the pledge of the resurrection of the body, Eph 1.3f, 4.30. (Ibid., pp. 263-264)

Beasley-Murray stated his conclusion in a chapter entitled "Baptismal Reform and Church Relationships":

First, there ought to be a greater endeavor to make baptism integral to THE GOSPEL. It is taken as axiomatic amongst us [Baptists - sgd] that the proclamation of the Gospel consists of making the redemptive acts of God in Christ known and calling for faith in Christ as the due response; baptism is then a proper subject for exposition in the enquirers' class, along with instruction as to the nature of the Church, of worship, of Christian obligation in the Church and to the world, etc.

Peter's response, however, to the cry of his conscience stricken hearers on the Day of Pentecost was not "Repent and believe", but "Repent and BE BAPTIZED"! (Acts 2.38). Naturally faith was presumed in repentance, but Peter's answer told the Jews how to become Christians: faith and repentance are to be expressed in baptism, and SO they are to come to the Lord. Baptism is here a part of the proclamation of Christ. In an Apostolic sermon it comes as its logical conclusion. An effort ought to be made to restore this note in our [Baptist - SGD] preaching. (Ibid., p. 393)



Thus, we believe the blood of Jesus was shed for the remission of sins, because the Bible says it. Likewise, we believe baptism is for the remission of sins, because the same Bible says it in identically the same words.

See also Section VII. A Lexigraphical study of eis [eis] “for”

### **C. Objection # 3**

#### **“BAPTISM IS A WORK, AND WE’RE NOT SAVED BY WORKS”**

Baptism is a work, or a thing done, and we’re not saved by works of a distinct kind, that is, works of merit. We are impressed with what many people in the religious world have been exposed to in the way of false teaching about baptism, and why they’re leery of believing that baptism has anything to do with man’s salvation.

Our Roman Catholic friends believe baptism is a work of merit, i.e., the act itself merits salvation whether any faith exists behind the act or not. For example, the following quotations from several official Catholic publications show that baptism often is not an act of faith at all:

Valid reception does not require faith...Therefore, an unbeliever who so desires may be validly baptized even though he have no faith. (Jone-Adelman, MORAL THEOLOGY, p. 320, cited by O. C. Lambert, CATHOLICISM AGAINST ITSELF, VOL. II, Winfield, AL, O. C. Lambert, Publisher, 1966, pp. 218-222.)

Likewise, Catholic sources teach one need not even be conscious when he is baptized:

Baptize any person found unconscious and in a dying condition. (Ayrinhac, LEGISLATION ON THE SACRAMENTS, p. 32, cited by O. C. Lambert, Ibid.)

On baptizing infants, Catholics teach:

Many priests find this the least spiritualizing of all their works in the Church. The fact that the recipient of the sacrament is

unconscious of what is being done, and often in consequences behaves in a manner not befitting the occasion, undoubtedly detracts from the solemnity of the rite. (Ward, THE PRIESTLY VOCATION, p. 89, cited by O. C. Lambert, Ibid.)

Two of the most amazing statements showing Catholics don't view baptism as an act of faith, but a mere meritorious work, are the following:

A miscarried fetus or embryo, no matter how small, must always be baptized - absolutely if certainly alive, conditionally if doubtfully alive. (Gerald H. Fitz Gibbons, SPIRITUAL FIRST AID PROCEDURES, p. 3, cited by O. C. Lambert, Ibid.)

The general rule is, of course, that a child should not be baptized until fully born. But if there is a danger that the child will die of suffocation, or from some other cause before complete delivery, it should be baptized on the first available members. (Rumble, QUIZZES ON HOSPITAL ETHICS, p. 56, cited by O. C. Lambert, Ibid.)

These statements regarding baptism as a meritorious work not contingent on the faith of the subject are as repulsive to us as to the one who argues that since baptism is a work, it has nothing to do with our salvation. However, just because Roman Catholicism goes to one extreme about baptism, we shouldn't go to another extreme where we don't teach the truth about baptism either. The argument that works have nothing to do with salvation is just as false as the idea that meritorious works do.

For example, the statement that works have nothing to do with salvation is not just an argument against baptism, but also an argument against repentance, for it is a "thing done." Likewise, confession is a work - not a meritorious one, but certainly "unto salvation" (Rom 10:9-10). Similarly, faith itself is a work, for Jn 6:28-29 says:

John 6:28 Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?"

John 6:29 Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

Thus, if works have nothing to do with our salvation, then faith itself would have nothing to do with the salvation of a person! The truth of the matter is, GOD works in baptism. Paul said in Col 2:12,

Colossians 2:12 Having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

In the next verse Paul told about the work [operation] God does when we are baptized with this faith:

Colossians 2:13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,

When we have “faith in the working [operation] of God,” rather than thinking baptism has nothing to do with our salvation or perhaps even being unconscious to the act, and are baptized, God forgives us our sins, and raises us up with Christ to walk in newness of life.

#### A COUPLE OF FINAL POINTS:

1) Baptism is the most PASSIVE act (or work) of faith required to receive Christ and the blessings He provides. In other words, “believing” is something we must DO, “repenting” is something we must DO, and “confessing Christ” is something we must DO. Baptism, on the other hand, is something DONE TO US.

“Faith,” “repentance,” and “confession” are all ACTIVE acts of faith on our part. “Baptism” is but a PASSIVE act of faith in which we submit to the working of God in our lives (cf. Col 2:12).

To object to baptism because it requires man to “do” something would require one to object to “faith,” “repentance,” and “confession,” for they also require man to “do” something!

2) It helps me to think of baptism as a “spiritual operation” in which the “Great Physician” does His Work. When I need surgery my faith in the skills of a physician allows me to submit to the operating table.

So my faith in God and in the death of His Son for my sins prompted me to submit to the “spiritual operation” of baptism, in which God did His wonderful work of cleansing by the blood of Jesus and regeneration by the Holy Spirit (Ti 3:5)!

#### **D. Objection # 4**

**“PAUL SAID CHRIST DIDN’T SEND HIM TO BAPTIZE, THEREFORE BAPTISM MUST NOT BE ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION!”**

People who take this position use 1 Cor 1:11-17 to substantiate their view:

I Corinthians 1:11 My brothers, some from Chloe’s household have informed me that there are quarrels among you.

I Corinthians 1:12 What I mean is this: One of you says, “I follow Paul”; another, “I follow Apollos”; another, “I follow Cephas”; still another, “I follow Christ.”

I Corinthians 1:13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul?

I Corinthians 1:14 I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius,

I Corinthians 1:15 So no one can say that you were baptized into my name.

I Corinthians 1:16 (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don’t remember if I baptized anyone else.)

I Corinthians 1:17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel--not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

Rather than showing Paul didn’t think baptism was very important, this passage demonstrates the essentiality of baptism. First, notice the context of these words. Corinth, a church wracked with nearly every conceivable problem, also had a problem with its attitude toward preachers.

In this very passage, Paul mentioned that he learned they were divided over the preacher who baptized them. In this context, Paul said he was glad he hadn't baptized any more of them than he had. This was not because he didn't think baptism was important, but lest any man should say that he was baptized into Paul's name. Indeed, Paul baptized a few of them while there. Many were baptized by other men, as Luke's account of Paul's work in Corinth in Acts 18:8 shows:

8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

So many were baptized, yet because of the specific problem in Corinth, Paul was glad that he hadn't personally baptized more of them, lest an even greater number would be calling themselves after him.

About the structure of Paul's language in 1 Cor 1:17, "For Christ sent me NOT to baptize BUT to preach the gospel," this is an excellent example of an ellipsis, a figure of speech where certain words not directly expressed are understood. Other scriptural examples illustrate how we are to interpret these words. For example, in 1 Pet 3:3-4, Peter said,

1 Peter 3:3 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes.

1 Peter 3:4 Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.

In this passage, which is similar in construction to 1 Cor 1:17, Peter didn't forbid putting on apparel - surely women were to adorn themselves with clothing, but he placed the emphasis upon women's inward adorning, the adorning of their spirit!

Similarly, in Jn 6:27, Jesus used this construction when He said, 27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

Plainly, Jesus didn't prohibit working for physical food (Paul in 2 Th 3:10 said: "If any will not work, neither let him eat.") but He showed where we should place the emphasis, i.e., spiritual food should take precedence over physical food.

Likewise, when Paul said Christ sent him not to baptize, but to preach, he didn't depreciate baptism. Christ merely showed where Paul should place the emphasis, i.e., upon preaching the word of God. When the apostles delivered the gospel, it was more important that they preach. At that time, not just anybody could teach the word of God, but anybody could baptize! Thus, the apostles rightly emphasized their preaching over baptizing believers themselves.

In addition, Luke in Acts 18:8 said Crispus believed, whereas Paul said Crispus was baptized in his account in 1 Cor 1:14. This merely shows that "belief" in the Bible included baptism. Crispus was a believer because he placed his confidence in Christ enough to obey Him - he believed in Christ enough to be baptized for the remission of his sins! Those who argue about Jesus' teaching on baptism ought to have the same faith Crispus had!

In this passage Paul also taught two things must happen before one may call himself after another person. He said for one to call himself after Paul, (1) Paul would have to be crucified for the person, and (2) the person would have to be baptized in the name of Paul. That neither of these was true should prohibit the Corinthians from calling themselves after Paul.

Consider carefully what Paul's argument means positively: for one to be called after Christ, two things must happen:

- (1) Christ would have to die for the person, and
- (2) the person would have to be baptized in the name of Christ!

Thus, the very passage so many people use to show that baptism is not essential proves true belief includes baptism (as it did in the case of Crispus) and for one to be called a "Christian," he must be baptized in the name of Christ!

## **E. Objection # 5**

**“WHAT ABOUT THE THIEF ON THE CROSS? HE WASN’T BAPTIZED, AND YET JESUS SAID HE WOULD BE WITH HIM IN PARADISE!”**

The case of the thief on the cross has to be the most often offered objection to the necessity of penitent believers being baptized in our time. People argue, “The thief on the cross wasn’t baptized, and yet Jesus said he would be with Him in paradise.” This argument deserves an honest and forthright reply.

First, how do you know the thief on the cross wasn’t baptized? What makes you think he wasn’t? Remember how John the Baptist preached and baptized in this region, and the gospels tell how he met with stupendous success (Mt 3:1-6; Lk 3:7,12):

**MATTHEW 3**

Matthew 3:1 In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea

Matthew 3:2 And saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.”

Matthew 3:3 This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: “A voice of one calling in the desert, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’”

Matthew 3:4 John’s clothes were made of camel’s hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey.

Matthew 3:5 People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan.

Matthew 3:6 Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

**LUKE 3**

Luke 3:7 John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?”

Luke 3:12 Tax collectors also came to be baptized. “Teacher,” they asked, “what should we do?”

Suppose someone could make statements like this about the community where you live, i.e., all the city had gone out to be

baptized, that all the region around your city had, that multitudes had, and even the federal employees had! Would you be dogmatic that a certain individual in your community had not been baptized? Of course, no one knows for sure whether the thief on the cross was baptized by John's baptism. However, the success of John's preaching shows that those who assume the thief was not baptized have no basis to make this assumption.

ANOTHER POINT COULD BE MADE: The thief evidently had a remarkable understanding of the nature of Jesus and His Kingdom, for notice that despite the imminent death of Jesus Himself, we read in Lk 23:42...

Luke 23:42 Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

Somehow the thief knew that death itself could not prevent Jesus from coming into His kingdom! Many of Jesus' closest disciples did not understand that, thinking that the death of Jesus ended all their hopes (cf. Lk 24:13-27).

Is it not conceivable that the thief may have been a backsliding disciple himself, having been baptized of John, then going back into his old ways, only to be caught and sentenced to be crucified, but then repenting as he sees Jesus being crucified with him?

Whether the thief on the cross was baptized in John's baptism, he was not baptized in the name of Jesus Christ! Christ hadn't commanded anyone in the world to be baptized in His name at the time Jesus was crucified. The thief on the cross was never commanded to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ!

Not until fifty days later, when the gospel was first preached in fact on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ, were believers told: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins." (Acts 2:38)

So the thief on the cross couldn't have been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ - he wasn't commanded to! Have you been commanded to?

Suppose that someone refuses to pay his income tax, and when confronted by a federal judge, argues he doesn't have to pay income tax because Abraham Lincoln didn't pay income tax. That



judge will inform him the laws have changed somewhat since the times of Lincoln and now demand it.

Similarly, one might argue that he doesn't have to put money in parking meters because his great grandfather didn't. He, too, will be informed the laws have changed since great-granddad's day. We are to obey the laws we live under, not the laws someone else lived under.

Likewise, the thief on the cross lived under the law of Moses. He was not under the covenant you and I are subject to, for Christ's covenant didn't go into effect until He died (Heb 9:16-17). The thief never heard the words Christ directs to believers today: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

## **F. Summary**

When all men's arguments fall, the Bible's teaching on this subject is still the same.

Acts 2:38 still teaches that baptism is for the remission of sins:

Acts 2:38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 22:16 still teaches baptism washes away sins:

Acts 22:16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

Mk 16:16 still teaches:

Mark 16:16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

1 Cor 12:13 still teaches that baptism puts us into the body of Christ:

I Corinthians 12:13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

Gal 3:27 still teaches baptism puts us into Christ:

Galatians 3:27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

Rom 6:3-4 still teaches baptism puts us into the death of Christ:  
Romans 6:3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

Romans 6:4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Col 2:12-13 still teaches that through baptism we obtain the newness of life:

Colossians 2:12 Having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

Colossians 2:13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,

1 Pet 3:21 still teaches that baptism saves us:

1 Peter 3:21 And this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also--not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

The first time the gospel was preached, "They then that received his word were baptized," (Acts 2:41). People today who receive the gospel do the same thing. Friend, if you will believe in Jesus Christ, and have repented, i.e., determined that you will live according to His teaching, won't you confess His name before men and be baptized for the reasons HE said while you have opportunity?

**Note re the above section:**

When someone suggests that baptism into Christ is essential to our salvation, several objections or arguments are frequently raised by those who sincerely differ. This section provide answers to some commonly presented arguments. For more in depth discussion see: "DENOMINATIONAL DOCTRINES," Chapter Six, "Arguments Against Baptism Answered," (Samuel G. Dawson, Gospel Themes Press).

## II. Sprinkling, Pouring, Or Immersion?

Scriptural Immersion Requirements	Sprinkling Requires	Pouring Requires	Requires
Water Acts 10:47	X	X	X
Much Water Jn 3:23		?	X
Going to Water Mt. 3:13			X
In Water Mk. 1:9			X
Down into water Acts 8:38			X
Coming out of water Mt. 3:16			X
A burial Rom. 6:4			X
A resurrection Col. 2:12			X
Bodies washed Heb. 10:22			X

## III. What About infant baptism?

### INTRODUCTION

1. In the previous studies we have seen that baptism...

a. Is essential to:

- 1) SALVATION - Mk 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16
- 2) BECOMING DISCIPLES OF CHRIST - Mt 28:19-20; Gal 3:27

b. Is immersion, for:

- 1) Pouring and sprinkling do not fit with figures used to describe baptism in the N.T.
- 2) The Greek words can only mean immersion
- 3) Scholars are unanimous in pointing out that immersion was the practice in the Bible and early church

2. Two more questions remain which are often in the minds of people:

- a. Should infants be baptized?
- b. Is there ever a need to be “re-baptized?”

[This study shall consider the question, “What About Infant Baptism?”]

## I. IS “INFANT BAPTISM” EVEN REALLY BAPTISM?

### A. TO BE BAPTISM, IT MUST BE IMMERSION

1. We have seen that pouring or sprinkling is not baptism
2. Therefore “infant baptism” as commonly practiced is really a misnomer
  - a. “Infant pouring” or “infant sprinkling” would be more accurate
  - b. Only if the infant is immersed could it be called “infant baptism”

### B. TO BE BAPTISM, IT MUST INVOLVE THOSE WHO MEET CERTAIN PREREQUISITES

1. Bible baptism requires FAITH - Acts 8:35-38
    - a. “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?”
    - b. “If you believe with all your heart, you may.”
    - c. If one believes, they may be baptized - Mk 16:16
    - d. But infants are incapable of belief!
  2. Bible baptism requires REPENTANCE - Acts 2:38
    - a. If one is a penitent believer, they may be baptized
    - b. But infants are also incapable of repentance!
- [The first thing to realize about “infant baptism” is that it is not baptism in the strict sense of the word; nor is it the baptism spoken of in the N.T., which was only for those who possessed faith and a penitent heart.
- Another question to consider concerning so-called “infant baptism”...]

## II. IS “INFANT BAPTISM” EVEN NECESSARY?

### A. THE RISE OF INFANT BAPTISM IN CHURCH HISTORY

1. Even those who later approved of infant baptism admit that one could not prove it from the Scriptures...
  - a. “It cannot be proved by the sacred Scriptures that infant baptism was instituted by Christ, or begun by the first Christians after the apostles.” (MARTIN LUTHER, On Rebaptism)
  - b. “Infant baptism was established neither by Christ nor the apostles. In all places where we find the necessity of baptism notified, either in a dogmatic or historical point of view, it is

evident that it was only meant for those who were capable of comprehending the word preached, and of being converted to Christ by an act of their own will.” (JACOBI, Article on Baptism in Kitto’s Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature, Vol. I, p. 287)

2. If this is true, when did the practice of “infant baptism” begin?

- a. The earliest mention of infant baptism is around 200 A.D.
- b. The practice began only after the doctrine of “original sin” had been developed
- 1) “The early theological development of the doctrine of original sin contributed to the importance of infant baptism.” (Christianity Through The Centuries, p. 160)
- 2) The whole basis of “infant baptism” lies in the assumption that infants are born in sin

## **B. ARE BABIES BORN IN SIN?**

1. The doctrine of “original sin” means different things to different people

- a. Some understand it to refer only to inheriting the “fallen nature” of Adam, and not any personal guilt of his
- b. But the common conception includes the idea of inheriting the guilt of Adam’s sin as well, meaning that babies are born in sin
- c. It is this latter understanding that led to the practice of infant baptism

2. Do babies inherit the personal guilt of their forbearers?

- a. God has clearly said that He does not hold the child guilty for the sins of the father - Ezek 18:20
- b. Paul described a time in his life when we was alive before he became a sinner - Rom 7:7-11
- 1) According to the common idea of original sin, this would have been impossible!
- 2) But not if children are born free from the guilt of sin and remain such until they reach an age of accountability

3. Consider the nature of the NEW COVENANT - Heb 8:6-13

- a. One of the notable features about the new covenant is:
  - 1) “None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying ‘Know the Lord’...”

- 2) “For all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.”
- b. In other words, no one enters into this new covenant without already knowing the Lord
- c. Unlike the old covenant...
  - 1) Where people entered the covenant by virtue of birth into the right family (Israel)
  - 2) Where males entered the covenant by virtue of circumcision when eight days old
  - 3) Where as they grew older THEY HAD TO BE TAUGHT TO KNOW THE LORD
- d. When “infant baptism” is practiced, this distinctive feature of the new covenant is no longer present!
  - 1) Children, who have supposedly entered a covenant relationship with the Lord, still need to be taught as they get older
  - 2) They have to be taught to know the Lord!
- e. This distinctive feature of the new covenant is true only when:
  - 1) Baptism (the means by which we enter a covenant relationship with the Lord today) is administered to penitent believers
  - 2) Those who enter the covenant have already been taught about the Lord (via the gospel of Christ)\

## **CONCLUSION**

1. Should infants be baptized? The answer is “yes” if we can show:
  - a. One example in the N.T. where infants were baptized
  - b. That they meet the prerequisites of faith and repentance required of all those baptized in the N.T.
  - c. That they can know the Lord somehow before they enter into the relationship baptism places them, and so do not need to be taught to know the Lord
2. But the facts are:
  - a. There is not one case of “infant baptism” in the N.T.!
  - b. Only those who believe and have repented may be baptized!
  - c. To baptize infants would make the point of Heb 8:11 without meaning!
3. The logical conclusion is that babies:
  - a. Are born into this world without the guilt of their forbearers

- b. Are not lost and in need of salvation
- c. Are “safe” (not “saved,” for they were never “lost”)
- d. Remain safe until they reach an accountable age where they become guilty of their sins and in need of salvation
- 4. What if you were “baptized” as an infant?
  - a. Most likely you were not (simply “sprinkled”)
  - b. Even if immersed, it was not “Bible baptism” which requires faith and repentance
  - c. You are still in need of obeying the Word of the Lord!

## **IV. What about Rebaptism?**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. So far we have seen that baptism is...
  - a. Essential to:
    - 1) Salvation - Mk 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16
    - 2) Becoming disciples of Christ - Mt 28:19-20; Gal 3:27
  - b. Immersion, for:
    - 1) Pouring and sprinkling do not fit the FIGURES used to describe baptism in the N.T.
    - 2) The Greek words can only mean immersion
    - 3) Scholars are unanimous in pointing out that immersion was the practice in the N.T.
  - c. For those who are sinners, and have expressed faith in the Lord Jesus and are penitent for their sins (i.e., not infants)
2. One question remains which is often in the minds of people: “Is there ever a need to be re-baptized?”

[This study examines that question, first by noticing...]

### **I. A CASE OF “RE-BAPTISM” IN THE N.T.**

#### **A. FOUND IN ACTS 19:1-5**

Acts 19:1 While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples

Acts 19:2 And asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” They answered, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.”

Acts 19:3 So Paul asked, “Then what baptism did you receive?” “John’s baptism,” they replied.

Acts 19:4 Paul said, “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.”

Acts 19:5 On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 19:6 When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

Acts 19:7 There were about twelve men in all.

1. Background information is found in Acts 18:24-28
  - a. Apollos had been teaching the baptism of John
  - b. But he himself was taught more accurately by Aquila and Priscilla
2. Paul finds some “disciples” at Ephesus - Acts 19:1-3
3. Upon further examination he has them “re-baptized” - Acts 19:4-5

## **B. SOME OBSERVATIONS...**

1. They had been previously “baptized”
2. But their baptism was lacking in some way
  - a. Even though it was immersion
  - b. Even though it was “for the remission of sins” - Mk 1:4
  - c. Their baptism was not in the name of Jesus - Acts 2:38; 10:48; 19:5
- 1) That is, by His authority
- 2) Which would have been a baptism into the name of the Father, the Holy Spirit, and the Son - Mt 28:19
3. Because their first “baptism” LACKED AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT, “re-baptism” was necessary!

## **II. WHEN “RE-BAPTISM” IS APPROPRIATE**



## **A. THERE ARE FOUR “ELEMENTS” OF BIBLE BAPTISM**

1. The proper **MODE** - a burial (immersion) - Rom 6:3; Col 2:12
2. The proper **AUTHORITY** - in the name of Christ - Acts 19:5
3. The proper **PURPOSE** - remission of sins - Acts 2:38; 22:16
4. The proper **SUBJECT** - penitent believer - Acts 2:38; 8:37; Mk 16:16

## **B. WE HAVE SEEN FROM ACTS 19:1-7 THAT WHEN ONE OF THESE WAS LACKING, “RE-BAPTISM” WAS COMMANDED**

1. In Acts 19:1-5, the proper **AUTHORITY** was lacking
2. Even though their previous baptism had the right **MODE**, **PURPOSE**, and **SUBJECT**, “re-baptism” was commanded

## **C. APPLYING WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED BOTH NOW AND FROM PREVIOUS LESSONS:**

1. If we were baptized by **SPRINKLING OR POURING...**
  - a. As practiced by Catholics, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Methodists and others
  - b. Our baptism lacked the proper **MODE** (immersion)
  - c. And “re-baptism” would be necessary
2. If we were baptized by **THE AUTHORITY OF ANYONE OTHER THAN JESUS CHRIST...**
  - a. Our baptism was not by the right **AUTHORITY** (Jesus Christ)
  - b. And “re-baptism” would be necessary
3. Finally, if we were baptized **BUT WERE NOT PENITENT BELIEVERS**
  - a. As is the case when people are baptized:
    - 1) When all their friends are doing it
    - 2) Because their spouse, fiancée, or parents are pressuring them to do it (and they do it to please them, not God)
    - 3) As in the case of infant baptism
  - b. Our baptism was lacking the right **SUBJECTS** (penitent believers)
  - c. And our need for “re-baptism” is just as great as any other!

## **Summary**

1. See Section VIII.: Alexander Campbell's views on Who Is A Christian.
2. Any person who is immersed without faith in Jesus as the Messiah ought to be reimmersed.
3. Faith does not imply perfect understanding of all the New Testament teaching. Faith matures as one studies the Scripture. Faith does not require perfect understanding in order for it to be efficacious.
4. One who is immersed upon faith, a faith that understands that Jesus is the Messiah, but may not understand every design of baptism, or who may not understand all the New Testament doctrines, still receives all the blessings which God has attached to baptism.
5. Since there is no command to reimmerse believers in Jesus Christ, and no example of the reimmersion of believers in Jesus as the Messiah, reimmersion is thus an opinion, and not a Scriptural precedent.

## **V. What About The Baptismal Formula**

Matthew 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

28:18 kai proselth<sup>n</sup> o i<sup>h</sup>sous elal<sup>sen</sup> autois leg<sup>n</sup> edoth<sup>ē</sup> moi pasa exousia en ouran<sup>ō</sup> kai epi a<sup>g</sup>g<sup>h</sup>l<sup>ō</sup>n

Matthew 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

28:19 poreuthentes ats<sup>ōn</sup> math<sup>ē</sup> teusate panta ta ethn<sup>ē</sup> baptizontes autous eis to onoma tou patros kai tou uiou kai tou agiou pneumat<sup>os</sup>

Matthew 28:20 And teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

28:20 didaskontes autous t<sup>ō</sup> rein panta osa eneteilam<sup>ēn</sup> umin kai idou eg<sup>ō</sup> meth<sup>um</sup> eimi pasas tas <sup>h</sup>meras e<sup>s</sup> t<sup>ē</sup>s sunteleias tou ai<sup>ō</sup>nos tsb<sup>am</sup>ēn

For a sacrament to be valid, three things have to be present: the correct form, the correct matter, and the correct intention. With baptism, the correct intention is to do what the Church does, the correct matter is water, and the correct form is the baptizing “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt 28:19).

Unfortunately, not all groups use the form. The Jehovah’s Witnesses use no formula at all in their baptisms, and an even larger group, the “Jesus Only” Pentecostals, baptize “in the name of Jesus.” As a result, the baptisms of these groups are invalid, meaning that they are not Christian, but pseudo-Christian religious organizations.

Both groups also reject the Trinity, the Jehovah’s Witnesses claiming Jesus is not God, a heresy known as Arianism (after its fourth-century founder), and the “Jesus Only” Pentecostals claiming that there is only a single Person (Jesus) in the Godhead, a heresy known as Sabellianism (after its inventor in the third century).

“Jesus Only” Pentecostals note that Jesus told the apostles to baptize in “the name” (singular) of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, but they make the mistake of assuming that name is Jesus. In reality, the single name shared by the three is almost certainly Yahweh (the personal name of God in the Bible).

This name is applied to both the Father and the Son in the New Testament. In Acts 2:34-36, Peter quotes Psalm 110:1, applying the term “Lord” to the Father, but in the Old Testament original, the term “Lord” is actually Yahweh.

In Philippians 2:10-11, Paul quotes Isaiah 45:19-24, applying a prophecy about the Lord to the Son. And in the Old Testament original, the term “Lord” in this passage is actually Yahweh. Jesus also applied the name Yahweh (“I AM”) to himself in John 8:58, and his audience understood exactly what he meant and tried to stone him.

Since the bible applies the name Yahweh to the Father and the Son, it is almost possessed by the Spirit, and thus is a name of all three Persons of the Trinity.

“Jesus Only” Pentecostals also argue that the New Testament talks about people being baptized “in the name of Jesus,” but there are only four such passages (Acts 2:38, 8:16, 10:48, and 19:5); they don’t use the same designation in each place (some say “Lord Jesus,” other say “Jesus Christ”), meaning they were not technical formulas used in the baptism but simply descriptions by Luke; and the four simply cannot stand up against the divine command of the Lord Jesus Christ to: “make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19).

The phrase, “baptized in the name of Jesus” is A technical version of the baptismal formula, not simply Luke’s designation for Christian baptism to distinguish it from other baptisms of the period, such as John’s baptism (which Luke mentions in Acts 1:5, 22, 10:37, 11:16, 13:24, 18:25, 19:4), Jewish proselyte baptism, and the baptisms of pagan cults (such as Mithraism). It also indicates the Person into whose Mystical Body baptism incorporates us (Rom. 6:3, Gal. 3:3). *eis to onoma*, *eis to onoma*, is a means that one is literally baptized into the name (Greek, *eis to onoma*) of the Trinity.

According to Cottrell, “In the Biblical world a person’s name was not just an arbitrary means of identification but was considered to be intrinsically related to the person himself, representing his qualities and his character and his very nature. Thus, the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit’ (only one name) represents the very persons of the trinity. Being baptized into the name of the Trinity is no less than being baptized into the Trinity as such.” Cottrell declares that *eis to onoma*’ is a “technical term used in the world of Greek business and commerce. It was used to indicate the entry of a sum of money or an item of property into the account bearing the name of the owner. It’s use in Matthew 28:19 indicates that the purpose of baptism is to unite us with the Triune God in an ownership relation; we become his property in a special, intimate way.” (Jack Cottrell, *Baptism: A Biblical Study*, p.16, 17). The early Church Fathers, of course, agreed. As they following quotes show, Christians have from the beginning recognized that the correct form of baptism requires one to baptize “in the name of

the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” These quotations come from the 2nd century forward, and demonstrate a gradual departing from the Scriptural foundations.

**(circa 170 A.D.) - Tatian the Syrian**

“Then said Jesus unto them, I have been given all authority in heaven and earth; and as my Father has sent me, so I also send you. Go now into all the world, and preach my gospel in all the creation; and teach all the peoples, and baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; and teach them to keep all whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you all the days, unto the end of the world” (The Diatesseron 55 [A.D. 170]).

**140-230 AD - Tertullian**

“When we are about to enter the water--no, just a little before--in the church and under the hand of the bishop, we solemnly profess that we renounce the devil and his pomps and his angels. Thereupon we are immersed three times” (The Crown 3:2 [A.D. 211]).

**140-230 AD - Tertullian**

“After His resurrection He promises in a pledge to His disciples that He will send them the promise of His Father; and lastly, He commands them to baptize into the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, not into a unipersonal God. And indeed it is not once only, but three times, that we are immersed into the Three Persons, at each several mention of Their names” (Against Praxeas 26 [A.D. 216]).

**(mid 2nd Century) - The Didache**

“After the foregoing instructions, baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in living [running] water. If you have no living water, then baptize in other water, and if you are not able in cold, then in warm. If you have neither, pour water three times on the head, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Before baptism, let the one baptizing and the one to be baptized fast, as also any others who are able. Command the one who is to be baptized to fast beforehand for one or two days” (Didache 7:1).

### **215 AD - Hippolytus**

“When the one being baptized goes down into the water, the one baptizing him shall put his hand on him and speak thus: ‘Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty?’ And he that is being baptized shall say: ‘I believe.’ Then, having his hand imposed upon the head of the one to be baptized, he shall baptize him once. Then he shall say: ‘Do you believe in Christ Jesus . . . ?’ And when he says: ‘I believe,’ he is baptized again. Again shall he say: ‘Do you believe in the Holy Spirit and the holy Church and the resurrection of the flesh?’ The one being baptized then says: ‘I believe.’ And so he is baptized a third time” (The Apostolic Tradition 21 [A.D. 215]).

### **248 AD - Origen**

“Why, when the Lord himself told his disciples that they should baptize all peoples in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, does this apostle employ the name of Christ alone in baptism, saying, ‘We who have been baptized into Christ’; for indeed, legitimate baptism is had only in the name of the Trinity” (Commentary on Romans 5:8 [A.D. 248]).

### **250 AD - The Acts of Xantippe and Polyxena**

“Then Probus . . . leapt into the water, saying, Jesus Christ, son of God, and everlasting God, let all my sins be taken away by this water. And Paul said, We baptize thee in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Ghost. After this he made him to receive the Eucharist of Christ” (Acts of Xantippe and Polyxena 21 [A.D. 250]).

### **253 AD - Cyprian of Carthage ///**

“He [Jesus] commanded them to baptize the Gentiles in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. How then do some say that though a Gentile be baptized . . . never mind how or of whom, so long as it be done in the name of Jesus Christ, the remission of sins can follow--when Christ himself commands the nations to be baptized in the full and united Trinity?” (Letters 73:18 [A.D. 253]).

323 AD - Eusebius of Caesarea

“We believe . . . each of these to be and to exist: the Father, truly Father, and the Son, truly Son, and the Holy Ghost, truly Holy Ghost, as also our Lord, sending forth His disciples for the preaching, said, “Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost .” Concerning Whom we confidently affirm that so we hold, and so we think, and so we have held aforetime, and we maintain this faith unto the death, anathematizing every godless heresy” (Letter to the People of His Diocese 3 [A.D. 323]).

350 AD - Cyril of Jerusalem

“You were led by the hand to the holy pool of divine baptism, as Christ was carried from the cross to this Sepulcher here before us [the Tomb of Jesus at Jerusalem]. And each of you was asked if he believed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. And you confessed that saving confession, and descended three times into the water, and again ascended, and in this there was suggested by a symbol the three days of Christ’s burial” (Catechetical Lectures 20:4 [A.D. 350]).

361 AD - Athanasius

“And the whole faith is summed up, and secured in this, that a Trinity should ever be preserved, as we read in the Gospel, ‘Go ye and baptize all the nations in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost’ (Matt. 28:19). And entire and perfect is the number of the Trinity (On the Councils of Arminum and Seleucia 2:28 [A.D. 361]).

367 AD - Basil the Great

“The Holy Spirit, too, is numbered with the Father and the Son, because He is above creation, and is ranked as we are taught by the words of the Lord in the Gospel, “Go and baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.” He who, on the contrary, places the Spirit before the Son, or alleges Him to be older than the Father, resists the ordinance of God, and is a stranger to the sound faith, since he fails to preserve the form of

doxology which he has received, but adopts some new fangled device in order to be pleasing to men” (Letters 52:4 [A.D. 367]).

375 AD - Basil the Great

“Faith and baptism are two kindred and inseparable ways of salvation: faith is perfected through baptism, baptism is established through faith, and both are completed by the same names. For as we believe in the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, so are we also baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; first comes the confession, introducing us to salvation, and baptism follows, setting the seal upon our assent” (The Holy Spirit 12[28] [A.D. 375]).

379 AD - Ambrose of Milan

“Moreover, Christ Himself says: “I and the Father are One.” “One,” said He, that there be no separation of power and nature; but again, “We are,” that you may recognize Father and Son, forasmuch as the perfect Father is believed to have begotten the perfect Son, and the Father and the Son are One, not by confusion of Person, but by unity of nature. We say, then, that there is one God, not two or three Gods” (The Faith 1:1[9-10] [A.D. 379]).

380 AD - Gregory Nazianz

“But not yet perhaps is there formed upon your soul any writing good or bad; and you want to be written upon today . . . I will baptize you and make you a disciple in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; and These Three have One common name, the Godhead. And you shall know, both by appearances and by words that you reject all ungodliness, and are united to all the Godhead” (Orations 40:45 [A.D. 380]).

382 AD - Jerome

“[S]eeing that a man, baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, becomes a temple of the Lord, and that while the old abode is destroyed a new shrine is built for the Trinity, how can you say that sins can be remitted among the Arians without the coming of the Holy Ghost? How is a soul



purged from its former stains which has not the Holy Ghost?”  
(Dialogue Against the Luciferians 6 [A.D. 382]).

383 AD - Gregory of Nyssa

“And we, in receiving Baptism, . . . conceal ourselves in [the water] as the Savior did in the earth: and by doing this thrice we represent for ourselves that grace of the Resurrection which was wrought in three days. And this we do, not receiving the sacrament in silence, but while there are spoken over us the Names of the Three Sacred Persons on Whom we believed, in Whom we also hope, from Whom comes to us both the fact of our present and the fact of our future existence” (Sermon For the Day of Lights [A.D. 383]).

400 AD - Augustine

“Baptism in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost has Christ for its authority, not any man, whoever he may be; and Christ is the truth, not any man” (On Baptism, Against the Donatists 4:24[57] [A.D. 400]).

408 AD - Augustine

“O Lord our God, we believe in you, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. For the Truth would not say, Go, baptize all nations in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, unless Thou were a Trinity” (The Trinity 15:28[51] [A.D. 408]).

412 AD - Augustine

“In this manner then the three things by which they are signified came out from the Body: of the Lord: like as from the Body of the Lord sounded forth the command to “baptize the nations in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.” “In the name:” not, In the names: for “these Three are One,” and One God is these Three. And if in any other way this depth of mystery which we read in John’s letter can be expounded and understood agreeably with the Catholic faith, which neither confounds nor divides the Trinity, neither believes the substances diverse nor

denies that the persons are three, it is on no account to be rejected” (Against Maximin 2:22:3 [A.D. 412]).

444 AD - Theodoret of Cyr

“And what need is there of many words, when it is possible to refute falsehood in few? We provide that those who year by year come up for holy baptism should carefully learn the faith set forth at Nicaea by the holy and blessed Fathers; and initiating them as we have been bidden, we baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, pronouncing each name singly” (Letters 145 [A.D. 444]).

## **VI. What The Early Christians Believed About Baptism**

The Early Christians Believed Water Baptism Essential to Salvation

110-165 AD Justin Martyr

“As many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting, for the remission of their sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them. Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water. For Christ also said, ‘Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.’ Now, that it is impossible for those who have once been born to enter into their mothers’ wombs, is manifest to all... And for this we have learned from the apostles this reason. Since at our birth we were born without our own knowledge or choice, by our parents coming together, and were brought up in bad habits and wicked training; in order that we may not remain the children of necessity and of ignorance, but may become the children of choice and knowledge, and may obtain in the water the remission of sins formerly committed, there is pronounced over him who chooses to be born again, and has repented of his sins, the name of God the Father and Lord of the

universe.” (Justin Martyr, “First Apology,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 1, pg. 183)

110-165 AD Justin Martyr

“As many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting, for the remission of their sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them. Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water.” (Justin Martyr, “First Apology,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 1, pg. 183)

110-165 AD Justin Martyr

The “Constitutions of the Holy Apostles” also refer to John 3:5. There, the one who refuses to be baptized is to be condemned as an unbeliever, partially on the basis of what Jesus told Nicodemus.... “He that, out of contempt, will not be baptized, shall be condemned as an unbeliever, and shall be reproached as ungrateful and foolish. For the Lord says: ‘Except a man be baptized of water and of the Spirit, he shall by no means enter into the kingdom of heaven.’ And again: ‘He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved but he that believeth not shall be damned.’” (Justin Martyr “Constitutions of the Holy Apostles,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 7, pg. 456-457.)

110-165AD Justin Martyr

“there is no other way [to obtain God’s promises] than this-to become acquainted with Christ, to be washed in the fountain spoken of by Isaiah for the remission of sins, and for the remainder, to live sinless lives.” (Justin Martyr, Trypho chap. 44)

110-165AD Justin Martyr

“Those who are convinced that what we teach is true and who desire to live accordingly are instructed to fast and to pray to God for the remission of all their past sins. We also pray and fast with

them. Then we bring them to a place where there is water, and they are regenerated in the same manner in which we ourselves were regenerated. They then receive the washing with water in the name of God (the Father and Lord of the universe) and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit. For Christ said, ‘Unless you are born again, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven’” [John 3:5]. (Justin First Apology chant 61)

#### 115-188 THEOPHILUS

“On the fifth day the living creatures which proceed from the waters were produced, through which also is revealed the manifold wisdom of God in these things; for who could count their multitude and various kinds? Moreover, the things proceeding from the waters were blessed by God, that this also might be a sign of men’s being destined to receive repentance and remission of sins, through the water and laver of regeneration, as many as come to the truth, and are born again, and receive blessing from God.” (Theophilus, “To Autolytus,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 2, pg. 101)

#### 120-205 AD IRENAEUS

“As we are lepers in sin, we are made clean from our old transgressions by means of the sacred water and the invocation of the Lord. We are thus spiritually regenerated as newborn infants, even as the Lord has declared: ‘Except a man be born again through water and the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.’” Irenaeus, “Fragments From Lost Writings”, no. 34, Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 1, pg. 574)

#### 120-205 AD IRENAEUS

“This class of men have been instigated by Satan to a denial of that baptism which is regeneration to God, and thus to a renunciation of the whole faith.” (Against Heresies, bk. 1, chap. 21, sec. 1, Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 1, pg. 345.)

#### 140-230 AD TERTULLIAN

“After the world had been hereupon set in order through its elements, when inhabitants were given it, ‘the waters’ were the first to receive the precept ‘to bring forth living creatures.’ Water

was the first to produce that which had life, that it might be no wonder in baptism if waters know how to give life.” (Tertullian, “On Baptism,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 3, page 670)

140-230 AD TERTULLIAN

“But they roll back an objection from that apostle himself, in that he said, ‘For Christ sent me not to baptize;’ as if by this argument baptism were done away! For if so, why did he baptize Gaius, and Crispus, and the house of Stephanas? However, even if Christ had not sent him to baptize, yet He had given other apostles the precept to baptize. But these words were written to the Corinthians in regard of the circumstances of that particular time; seeing that schisms and dissensions were agitated among them, while one attributes everything to Paul, another to Apollos. For which reason the ‘peacemaking’ apostle, for fear he should seem to claim all gifts for himself, says that he had been sent ‘not to baptize, but to preach.’ For preaching is the prior thing, baptizing the posterior. Therefore the preaching came first: but I think baptizing withal was lawful to him to whom preaching was.” (Tertullian, “On Baptism,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 3, pg. 676)

140-230 AD TERTULLIAN

“Happy is our sacrament of water, in that, by washing away the sins of our early blindness, we are set free and admitted into eternal life! A treatise on this matter will not be superfluous; instructing not only such as are just becoming formed in the faith... The consequence is, that a viper of the Cainite heresy, lately conversant in this quarter, has carried away a great number with her most venomous doctrine, making it her first aim to destroy baptism. Which is quite in accordance with nature; for vipers and asps and serpents themselves generally do affect arid and waterless places. But we, little fishes after the example of our ikhthus, Jesus Christ, are born in water, nor have we safety in any other way than by permanently abiding in water; so that most monstrous creature, who had no right to teach even sound doctrine, knew full well how to kill the little fishes, by taking them away from the water!” (On Baptism, Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 3, pg. 669.)

140-230 AD TERTULLIAN

“How mighty is the grace of water, in the sight of God and His Christ, for the confirmation of baptism! Never is Christ without water: if, that is, He is Himself baptized in water; inaugurates in water the first rudimentary displays of his power, when invited to the wedding; invites the thirsty, when He makes a discourse, to Himself being living water; approves, when teaching concerning love, among works of charity, the cup of water offered to a poor child; recruits His strength at a well; walks over the water; willingly crosses the sea; ministers water to his disciples. Onward even to the passion does the witness of baptism last: while He is being surrendered to the cross, water intervenes; witness Pilate’s hands: when He is wounded, forth from His side bursts water; witness the soldier’s lance!... True and stable faith is baptized with water, unto salvation; pretended and weak faith is baptized with fire, unto judgment.” (Tertullian, “On Baptism,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 3, pg. 673, 674)

140-230 AD TERTULLIAN

“The prescript is laid down that ‘without baptism, salvation is attainable by none’ chiefly on the ground of that declaration of the Lord, who says, ‘Unless one be born of water, he hath not life.’” (On Baptism, Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 3, pg. 674-675)

140-230 AD TERTULLIAN

“What more disgraceful than immodesties? If, moreover, even from a ‘brother’ who ‘walketh idly’ he warns the Thessalonians to withdraw themselves, how much more withal from a fornicator! For these are the deliberate judgments of Christ, ‘loving the Church,’ who ‘hath delivered Himself up for her, that He may sanctify her (purifying her utterly by the laver of water) in the word, that He may present the Church to Himself glorious, not having stain or wrinkle’ - of course after the laver - ‘but that she may be holy and without reproach; thereafter, to wit, being ‘without wrinkle’ as a virgin, ‘without stain’ (of fornication) as a spouse, ‘without disgrace’ (of vileness), as having been ‘utterly purified.’” (Tertullian, “On Modesty,” 217 AD, Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 4, pg. 94)

140-230 AD TERTULLIAN

This is in agreement to the context of the words of John the Baptist when he prophesied of the baptism of fire. Referring to Jesus, John said, “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire” (comment on Matthew 3:11-12).

150-200 AD CLEMENT

“Being baptized, we are illuminated; illuminated, we become sons; being made sons, we are made perfect; being made perfect, we are made immortal... This work is variously called grace, and illumination, and perfection, and washing. Washing, by which we cleanse away our sins; grace, by which the penalties accruing to transgressions are remitted; and illumination, by which that holy light of salvation is beheld, that is, by which we see God clearly.” (Clement of Alexandria, “The Instructor,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 2, pg. 215)

150-200 AD CLEMENT

“But when the time began to draw near that what was wanting in the Mosaic institutions should be supplied, as we have said, and that the Prophet should appear, of whom he had foretold that He should warn them by the mercy of God to cease from sacrificing; lest haply they might suppose that on the cessation of sacrifice there was no remission of sins for them He instituted baptism by water amongst them, in which they might be absolved from all their sins on the invocation of His name.” (Clement, “Recognitions of Clement,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 8, pg. 88)

150-200 AD CLEMENT

“Now God has ordered every one who worships Him to be sealed by baptism; but if you refuse, and obey your own will rather than God’s, you are doubtless contrary and hostile to His will. But you will perhaps say, ‘What does the baptism of water contribute towards the worship of God?’ In the first place, because that which hath pleased God is fulfilled. In the second place, because, when you are regenerated and born again of water and of God, the frailty

of your former birth, which you have through men, is cut off, and so at length you shall be able to attain salvation; but otherwise it is impossible. For thus hath the true prophet testified to us with an oath: 'Verily I say to you, That unless a man is born again of water, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Therefore make haste; for there is in these waters a certain power of mercy which was borne upon them at the beginning, and acknowledges those who are baptized under the name of the threefold sacrament, and rescues them from future punishments, presenting as a gift to God the souls that are consecrated by baptism. Betake yourselves therefore to these waters, for they alone can quench the violence of the future fire; and he who delays to approach to them, it is evident that the idol of unbelief remains in him, and by it he is prevented from hastening to the waters which confer salvation." (Clement, "Recognitions of Clement," Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 8, pg. 155)

150-200 AD CLEMENT

"We are washed from all our sins, and are no longer entangled in evil. This is the one grace of illumination, that our characters are not the same as before our washing... In the same way, therefore, we also, repenting of our sins, renouncing our iniquities, purified by baptism, speed back to the eternal light, children to the Father." (Clement of Alexandria, "The Instructor," Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 2, pg. 216-217.)

150-200 AD CLEMENT

"When he had given them these and such like precepts, he made proclamation to the people, saying: 'Since I have resolved to stay three months with you, if any one desires it, let him be baptized; that, stripped of his former evils, he may for the future, in consequence of his own conduct, become heir of heavenly blessings, as a reward for his good actions.'" (Clement, "Recognitions of Clement," Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 8, pg. 132)

150-200 AD Clement

"This work is variously called grace, and illumination, and perfection, and washing. Washing, by which we cleanse away our sins. Grace, by which the penalties of our sins are canceled. And illumination, by which that holy light of salvation is beheld, that is, by which we see God clearly." (Clement Instructor bk. 1, chap. 6)



## 200 AD HERMAS

“And I said, ‘I heard, sir, some teachers maintain that there is no other repentance than that which takes place, when we descended into the water and received remission of our former sin.’ He said to me, ‘That was sound doctrine which you heard; for that is really the case.’” (Hermas, “The Shepherd,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 2, pg. 22)

## 200-258 AD CARTHAGE

“Aurelius of Utica said: Since the apostle says that we are not to communicate with other people’s sins, what else does he do but communicate with other people’s sins, who holds communion with heretics without the Church’s baptism? And therefore I judge that heretics must be baptized, that they may receive forgiveness of their sins; and thus communion may be had with them.” (“The Seventh Council of Carthage Under Cyprian,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 5, pg. 569.)

## 200-258 AD CARTHAGE

“Caecilius of Bilita said: I know only one baptism in the Church, and none out of the Church. This one will be here, where there is the true hope and the certain faith. For thus it is written: ‘One faith, one hope, one baptism;’ not among heretics, where there is no hope, and the faith is false, where all things are carried on by lying.” (The Seventh Council of Carthage Under Cyprian, September, 258 AD, Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 5, pg. 565)

## 200-258 AD CARTHAGE

“Marcellus of Zama said: Since sins are not remitted saved in the baptism of the Church, he who does not baptize a heretic holds communion with a sinner.” (“The Seventh Council of Carthage Under Cyprian,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 5, pg. 570)

## 200-258 AD CARTHAGE

“Nicomedes of Segermae said: My opinion is this, that heretics coming to the Church should be baptized, for the reason that among sinners without they can obtain no remission of sins. (“The Seventh Council of Carthage Under Cyprian,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 5, pg. 567)

## 200-258 AD CARTHAGE

“Novatus of Thamugada said: Although we know that all the Scriptures give witness concerning the saving baptism, still we ought to declare our faith, that heretics and schismatics who come to the Church, and appear to have been falsely baptized, ought to be baptized in the everlasting fountain; and therefore, according to the testimony of the Scriptures, and according to the decree of our colleagues, men of most holy memory, that all schismatics and heretics who are converted to the Church must be baptized; and moreover, that those who appeared to have been ordained must be received among lay people. (The Seventh Council of Carthage Under Cyprian, September, 258 AD, Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 5, pg. 565)

200-258 AD CARTHAGE

“Victor of Gor said: Since sins are not remitted save in the baptism of the Church, he who admits a heretic to communion without baptism does two things against reason: he does not cleanse the heretics, and he befouls the Christians.” (“The Seventh Council of Carthage Under Cyprian,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 5, pg. 568)

200-258 AD CARTHAGE

“Victoricus of Thabraca said: If heretics are allowed to baptize and to give remission of sins, wherefore do we brand them with infamy and call them heretics?” (“The Seventh Council of Carthage Under Cyprian,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 5, pg. 568)

200-258 AD CARTHAGE

Dativus of Badis said: We, as far as in us lies, do not hold communion with heretics, unless they have been baptized in the Church, and have received remission of their sins.” (“The Seventh Council of Carthage Under Cyprian,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 5, pg. 567)

200-258 AD CARTHAGE

Felix of Bagai said: As, when the blind leads the blind, they fall together into the ditch; so, when the heretic baptizes a heretic, they fall together into death. And therefore a heretic must be baptized and made alive, lest we who are alive should hold communion with the dead. (“The Seventh Council of Carthage Under Cyprian,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 5, pg. 567)

200-258 AD CARTHAGE

Nemesianus of Thubunae said: That the baptism which heretics and schismatics bestow is not the true one, is everywhere declared in the Holy Scriptures, since their very leading men are false Christs and false prophets, as the Lord says by Solomon: ‘He who trusteth in that which is false. he feedeth the winds...’ And in the Gospel our Lord Jesus Christ spoke with His divine voice, saying, ‘Except a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’ This is the Spirit which from the beginning was borne over the waters; for neither can the Spirit operate without the water, nor the water without the Spirit.” (“The Seventh Council of Carthage Under Cyprian,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 5, pg. 566.)

200-258 AD CYPRIAN

“But as often as water is named alone in the Holy Scriptures, baptism is referred to, as we see intimated in Isaiah: ‘Remember not,’ says he, ‘the former things, and consider not the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, which shall now spring forth; and ye shall know it. I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the dry place, to give drink to my elected people, my people whom I have purchased, that they might show forth my praise.’ There God foretold by the prophet, that among the nations, in places which previously had been dry, rivers should afterwards flow plenteously, and should provide water for the elected people of God, that is, for those who were made sons of God by the generation of baptism.... Christ... cries and says, ‘If any man thirst, let him come and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture saith, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.’ And that it might be more evident that the Lord is speaking there, not of the cup, but of baptism, the Scripture adds, saying, ‘But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive.’ For by baptism the Holy Spirit is received... As also, in another place, the Lord speaks to the Samaritan woman, saying, ‘Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall not thirst for ever.’ By which is also signified the very baptism of saving water, which indeed is once received, and is not again repeated..” (Cyprian, “The Epistles of Cyprian,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 5, pg. 360)

## 200-258 AD CYPRIAN

“But if the baptism of heretics can have the regeneration of the second birth, those who are baptized among them must be counted not heretics, but children of God. For the second birth, which occurs in baptism, begets sons of God.” (Cyprian, “The Epistles of Cyprian,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 5, pg. 393)

## 200-258 AD CYPRIAN

“But what a thing it is, to assert and contend that they who are not born in the Church can be the sons of God! For the blessed apostle sets forth and proves that baptism is that wherein the old man dies and the new man is born, saying, ‘He saved us by the washing of regeneration.’ But if regeneration is in the washing, that is, in baptism, how can heresy, which is not the spouse of Christ, generate sons to God by Christ? For it is the Church alone which, conjoined and united with Christ, spiritually bears sons; as the same apostle again says, ‘Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it with the washing of water.’ If, then, she is the beloved and spouse who alone is sanctified by Christ, and alone is cleansed by His washing, it is manifest that heresy, which is not the spouse of Christ, nor can be cleansed nor sanctified by His washing, cannot bear sons to God.” (Cyprian, “The Epistles of Cyprian,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 5, pg. 388)

## 200-258 AD CYPRIAN

“Moreover, Peter himself... has commanded and warned us that we cannot be saved, except by the one only baptism of one Church. ‘In the ark,’ says he, ‘of Noah, few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water, as also baptism shall in like manner save you.’ In how short and spiritual a summary has he set forth the sacrament of unity! For as, in that baptism of the world in which its ancient iniquity was purged away, he who was not in the ark of Noah could not be saved by water, so neither can he appear to be saved by baptism who has not been baptized in the Church which is established in the unity of the Lord according to the sacrament of the one ark. (Cyprian, “The Epistles of Cyprian,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 5, pg. 389)

## 200-258 AD CYPRIAN

“Peter... said, ‘In the ark of Noah, few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water; the like figure whereunto even baptism shall save you;’ proving and attesting that the one ark of Noah was a type of the one Church. If, then, in that baptism of the world thus expiated and purified, he who was not in the ark of Noah could be saved by water, he who is not in the Church to which alone baptism is granted, can also now be quickened [made alive] by baptism. Moreover, too, the Apostle Paul, more openly and clearly still manifesting this same thing, writes to the Ephesians, and says, ‘Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water.’” (Cyprian, “The Epistles of Cyprian,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 5, pg. 398)

200-258 AD CYPRIAN

“What then, say they, will become of those who, coming from the heretics, have been received without the baptism of the Church?... But they... should be baptized with the baptism of the Church, that they may obtain remission of sins, lest by the presumption of others they remain in their old error, and die without the completion of grace.” (Cyprian, “The Epistles of Cyprian,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 5, pg. 395)

200-258 AD CYPRIAN

“Wherefore baptism cannot be common to us and to heretics, to whom neither God the Father, nor Christ the Son, nor the Holy Ghost, nor the faith, nor the Church itself, is common. And therefore it behooves those to be baptized who come from heresy to the Church, that so they who are prepared, in the lawful, and true, and only baptism of the holy Church, by divine regeneration, for the kingdom of God, may be born of both sacraments, because it is written, ‘Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.’” (Cyprian, “The Epistles of Cyprian,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 5, pg. 384)

200-258 AD CYPRIAN

“Widely different is the faith with Marcion, and, moreover, with the other heretics; nay, with them there is nothing but perfidy, and blasphemy, and contention, which is hostile to holiness and truth. How then can one who is baptized among them seem to have obtained remission of sins, and the grace of the divine mercy, by

his faith, when he has not the truth of the faith itself? For if, as some suppose, one could receive anything abroad out of the Church according to his faith, certainly he has received what he believed; but if he believes what is false, he could not receive what is true; but rather he has received things adulterous and profane, according to what he believed. This matter of profane and adulterous baptism Jeremiah the prophet plainly rebukes, saying, ‘Why do they who afflict me prevail? My wound is hard; whence shall I be healed? While it has indeed become unto me as deceitful water which has no faithfulness.’ The Holy Spirit makes mention by the prophet of deceitful water which has no faithfulness. What is this deceitful and faithless water? Certainly that which falsely assumes the resemblance of baptism, and frustrates the grace of faith by a shadowy pretense. But if, according to a perverted faith, one could be baptized without, and obtain remission of sins, according to the same faith he could also attain the Holy Spirit; and there is no need that hands should be laid on him when he comes, that he might obtain the Holy Ghost, and be sealed. Either he could obtain both privileges without by his faith, or he who has been without has received neither. But it is manifest where and by whom remission of sins can be given; to wit, that which is given in baptism.” (Cyprian, “The Epistles of Cyprian,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 5, pg. 381)

200-258 AD CYPRIAN

“Since, therefore, from the preaching and testimony of Christ Himself, the Father who sent must be first known, then afterwards Christ, who was sent, and there cannot be a hope of salvation except by knowing the two together; how, when God the Father is not known, nay, is even blasphemed, can they who among the heretics are said to be baptized in the name of Christ, be judged to have obtained the remission of sins?” (Cyprian, “The Epistles of Cyprian,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 5, pg. 383.)

200-258 AD CYPRIAN

“For he who has been sanctified, his sins being put away in baptism, and has been spiritually re-formed into a new man, has become fitted for receiving the Holy Spirit; since the apostle says, ‘As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on

Christ.’ (Cyprian, “The Epistles of Cyprian,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 5, pg. 387-388)

200-258 AD Cyprian,

...said of his own baptism, “Considering my character at the time, I used to regard it as a difficult matter that a man should be able to be born again.... Or that a man who had been revived to a new life in the bath of saving water could be able to put off what he had formerly been-that he could be changed in heart and soul, while retaining his physical body.... For as I myself was held in bonds by the innumerable errors of my previous life, from which I did not believe that I could by possibility be delivered, so I was disposed to acquiesce in my clinging vices, and because I despaired of better things, I used to indulge my sins as if they were actually a part of me, inherent in me. But later, by the help of the water of new birth, the stain of former years was washed away, and a light from above-serene and pure was infused into my reconciled heart. Then through the Spirit breathed from heaven, a second birth restored me to a new man.” (Cyprian To Donatus sec. 3, “The Epistles of Cyprian,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 5, pg. 276)

200-258 AD CYPRIAN

“But what a thing it is, to assert and contend that they who are not born in the Church can be the sons of God! For the blessed apostle sets forth and proves that baptism is that wherein the old man dies and the new man is born, saying, ‘He saved us by the washing of regeneration.’ But if regeneration is in the washing, that is, in baptism, how can heresy, which is not the spouse of Christ, generate sons to God by Christ?” (Cyprian, “The Epistles of Cyprian,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 5, pg. 388)

260-315 AD METHODIUS

“For thus will it be most certainly agreed that the Church is formed out of His bones and flesh; and it was for this cause that the Word, leaving His Father in heaven, came down to be ‘joined to His wife;’ and slept in the trance of His passion, and willingly suffered death for her, that He might present the Church to Himself glorious and blameless, having cleansed her by the laver.” (Methodius, “The Banquet of the Ten Virgins,” 260 to 312 AD, Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 6, pg. 319)

### 345 AD CYRIL OF JERUSALEM

“For all things whatsoever thou hast done shall be forgiven thee, whether it be fornication, or adultery, or any other such form of licentiousness. What can be greater sin than to crucify Christ? Yet even of this Baptism can purify. For so spake Peter to the three thousand who came to him, to those who had crucified the Lord, when they asked him, saying, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’ For the wound is great. Thou hast made us think of our fall, O Peter, by saying, ‘Ye killed the Prince of Life.’ What salve is there for so great a wound? What cleansing for such foulness? What is the salvation for such perdition? ‘Repent,’ saith he, ‘and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.’ O unspeakable lovingkindness of God! They have no hope of being saved, and yet they are thought worthy of the Holy Ghost. Thou seest the power of Baptism!” (Cyril of Jerusalem, 348 AD, “On Baptism,” Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, vol. 7, pg. 16)

### 345 AD CYRIL OF JERUSALEM

“The Lord... has granted repentance at Baptism, in order that we may cast off the chief - nay rather the whole burden of our sins, and having received the seal by the Holy Ghost, may be made heirs of eternal life.” (Cyril of Jerusalem, “On Baptism,” Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, vol. 7, pg. 16)

### 345 AD CYRIL OF JERUSALEM

“When going down, therefore, into the water, think not of the bare element, but look for salvation by the power of the Holy Ghost: for without both thou canst not possibly be made perfect. It is not I that say this, but the Lord Jesus Christ, who has the power in this matter: for He saith, ‘Except a man be born anew’ (and he adds the words) ‘of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.’ Neither doth he that is baptized with water, but not found worthy of the Spirit, receive the grace in perfection. Nor if a man be virtuous in his deeds, but receive not the seal by water, shall he enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (Cyril of Jerusalem, “Catechetical Lectures,” Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, vol. 7, pg. 15.)

### 390 AD JOHN CHRYSOSTOM



“In the Law, he that hath sin is punished; here, he that hath sins cometh and is baptized and is made righteous, and being made righteous, he liveth, being delivered from the death of sin... For in Baptism the sins are buried, the former things are blotted out, the man is made alive, the entire grace written upon his heart as it were a table.” (John Crysostom, “Homilies on Second Corinthians,” 390 AD, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, vol. 12, pg. 307)

#### CONSTITUTIONS

“Let him, therefore, who is to be taught the truth in regard to piety be instructed before his baptism in the knowledge of the unbegotten God, in the understanding of His only begotten son, in the assured acknowledgment of the Holy Ghost.... Adore God, the Lord of the whole world, and thank Him for His creation, for His sending Christ His only begotten Son, that He might save man by blotting out his transgressions, and that He might remit ungodliness and sins, and might ‘purify him from all filthiness of flesh and spirit,’ and sanctify man according to the good pleasure of His kindness, that He might inspire him with the knowledge of His will, and enlighten the eyes of his heart to consider of His wonderful works, and make known to him the judgments of righteousness, that so he might hate every way of iniquity, and walk in the way of truth, that he might be thought worthy of the laver of regeneration, to the adoption of sons, which is in Christ, that ‘being planted together in the likeness of the death of Christ,’ in hopes of a glorious communication, he may be mortified to sin, and may live to God, as to his mind, and word, and deed, and may be numbered together in the book of the living. “ (Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 7, pg. 475-476)

#### FIRMILIAN

“But indeed you are worse than all heretics. For when many, as soon as their error is known, come over to you from them that they may receive the true light of the Church, you assist the errors of those who come, and, obscuring the light of ecclesiastical truth, you heap up the darkness of the heretical night; and although they confess that they are in sins, and have no grace, and therefore come to the Church, you take away from them remission of sins, which is given in baptism, by saying that they are already baptized and

have obtained the grace of the Church outside the Church, and you do not perceive that their souls will be required at your hands when the day of judgment shall come.” (Firmilian, “The Epistles of Cyprian,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 5, pg. 396)

#### PHILIP

“Nicanora having thus spoken, the Apostle Philip, along with Bartholomew and Mariamme and those with them, prayed for her to God, saying: Thou who bringest the dead to life, Christ Jesus the Lord, who hast freed us through baptism from the slavery of death, completely deliver also this woman from the error, the enemy; make her alive in Thy life, and perfect her in Thy perfection.”

(“The Acts of Philip,” Author unknown, Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 8, pg. 498)

#### THEODOTUS

“Now, regeneration is by water and spirit, as was all creation: ‘For the Spirit of God moved on the deep.’ And for this reason the Savior was baptized, though not Himself needing to be so, in order that He might consecrate the whole water for those who were being regenerated. Thus it is not the body only, but the soul, that we cleanse.” (“Excerpts of Theodotus,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 8, pg. 44)



### **VII. A Lexicographical Study of eis [eis] = “for”**

Most commentaries are written by scholars who are lean towards a faith-only persuasion. There is, then, a lexical war going on over the translation of the word “for” [eis] in Acts 2:38. Involved is the question of whether or not a person must be baptized in order to have his/her sins forgiven.

Dr. Gareth Reese has set forth a scholarly, yet clear explanation of this battle:

“A large part of ‘Christendom’ holds to a doctrine that has been roughly categorized as ‘faith-only.’ The faith-only doctrine is that baptism is not necessary for salvation. All that men are required to do to be saved is to believe. Then, of course, once a man is saved, he will want to go ahead and be baptized. Among Bible students of this persuasion, baptism is often called ‘an outward sign of an

inward grace.’ It is merely a token to others of what has already happened in the heart, it is stated.

“If baptism is merely a token, how do the faith-only teachers explain this little preposition ‘for?’

(1) Some follow the Baptist scholar A.T. Robertson who, believing that salvation comes before baptism, translates eis ‘because of.’ That is, he appeals to what is called a ‘causal use of eis.’ His argument goes like this: You put a man in jail for murder. The ‘for’ in that sentence means (not in order that he might commit murder, but) ‘because he already has.’ So those translations, like the KJV and NASB, which read ‘for the remission of sins’ are interpreted to mean ‘be baptized because your sins have already been forgiven.’ Robertson insisted that the verse did not mean a man is baptized in order to get his sins forgiven, but rather because they already had been forgiven. In REPLY to this first faith-only explanation of eis, let it be known that many lexicons do not even give a ‘causal use of eis’ (because out of 1,773 occurrences of eis in the New Testament, only 4 might mean ‘because’), and those that do, admit that such a translation is at best controversial.

(2) Since the ‘causal use of eis’ argument has not been convincing, the faith-only teachers have tried another approach to explain what eis means here in Acts 2:38. They appeal to what is called the ‘static use of eis.’ What this means is simply this: In the New Testament times, there was a preposition en meaning ‘in’ and also a preposition eis meaning ‘into;’ the second was used more and more, even invading the use of en, till in modern Greek eis is used for both ‘in’ and ‘into’ and en had disappeared from use. What this all amounts to is this: Acts 2:38 is rendered ‘be baptized...in respect to the forgiveness of sins.’ This is just another way of saying because your sins are forgiven already, you need to be baptized. In REPLY, there are only a few reputable Greek scholars who would stake their reputations on such a rendering of Acts 2:38. Indeed there was a static eis in koine Greek, but not even the Arndt-Gingrich lexicon which lists a number of places where eis is static gives that as a meaning for the passage in question. That recognized as excellent lexicon says that eis

aphesin ton hamartion in Acts 2 ‘indicates the purpose of baptism.’ So the arguments marshalled to prove that baptism is not necessary for the forgiveness of sins have failed to carry the day.

We have been carried, then, by the process of elimination, to the place where we agree with those scholars who say that this passage means that forgiveness is contingent on repentance and baptism. It would be rightly translated, ‘baptized ... in order to have your sins forgiven.’

Edgar J. Goodspeed (another Baptist), in his version of the Scriptures, translated ‘You must repent and be baptized every one of you in order to have your sins forgiven.’ When he was asked about this very un-Baptist translation (it certainly does not uphold the doctrine of faith-only as the way of salvation), he replied, ‘I am first a Greek scholar, and then a theologian.’ In other words, the faith-only theology will just have to suffer, for Acts 2:38 makes baptism essential to salvation.

Peter has commanded two things: repentance and immersion. And he promises his hearers, first, that upon compliance with these conditions they shall have as a result the forgiveness of sins. The sins that are forgiven when a penitent is scripturally immersed are the sins he has committed up to the time of that baptism. This is the law of pardon for the non-Christian. The Christian does something different to find forgiveness for his sins, as we shall learn at Acts 8:22.”

Adapted from: Gareth Reese, New Testament History - Acts. pp. 76-78.



The Greek Scholar, Spiros Zodhiates, gives us the following study on eis:

NOTE: The numbers in the following study are keyed to Strong’s numbers. Example: 1519; or (1537).

1519. eis” eis; prep. governing the acc. with the primary idea of motion into any place or thing; also of motion or direction to, toward or upon any place, thing. The antithesis is expressed by ek (1537), out of.

(I) Of place, which is the primary and most frequent use, meaning into, to.

(A) After verbs implying motion of any kind, into or to, toward, upon any place or object, e.g., verbs of going, coming, leading, following, sending, growing, placing, delivering over to and the like (Matt. 2:12; 4:8; 5:1; 6:6; 8:18; 12:44; 15:11, 17; 20:17; 21:18; Mark 1:38; 5:21; 6:45; 9:31; 13:14; Luke 8:23, 26; John 1:9; 7:14; 16:21, “is born into the world”; Acts 16:16; 26:14; Rom. 5:12; 10:18; Rev. 2:22). With the acc. of thing, implying place (Mark 4:22; 13:16; John 1:11; 7:8, 10; 16:32; 18:6; Acts 15:38; 21:6).

With an acc. of person, but referring always to the place where the person dwells or is, and implying to, among (Luke 10:36; 21:24; Acts 18:6; 20:29; 22:21; Rom. 5:12; 16:19; 2 Cor. 9:5; 10:14; 1 Thess. 1:5; Rev. 16:2). Spoken also of persons meaning into whom demons have entered (Mark 9:25; Luke 8:30 [cf. Matt. 8:31; Luke 15:17, “having come to himself” {a.t.}, i.e., to his right mind]).

(B) After verbs implying duration, upon, or toward any place or object, e.g., verbs of hearing, calling, announcing, showing (Matt. 10:27; 22:3, 4; Mark 5:14; 13:10; Luke 7:1; 24:47; John 8:26; Acts 11:22, “hearing in the ears” [a.t.]; 1 Cor. 14:9; 2 Cor. 8:24; 11:6). Especially after verbs of looking (Matt. 5:35, “toward Jerusalem” [a.t.], i.e., turning or looking toward it; Matt. 22:16; John 13:22; Acts 1:10, 11; 3:4; Heb. 11:26). After nouns (Acts 9:2, “letters [directed] to Damascus”; Rom. 15:31, “my service which I have for Jerusalem”).

(C) Metaphorically of a state or condition into which one comes, after verbs of motion, duration (Matt. 25:46; Mark 5:26; 9:43; Luke 22:33; 24:20; John 4:38; 5:24; 16:13; Acts 26:18; 2 Cor. 10:5; Gal. 1:6; Phil. 1:12; 3:11; 2 Tim. 2:4; 3:6; Heb. 2:10). To baptize into somebody or into the name of somebody means to baptize into the obligations incumbent on a disciple of someone or to be identified with the character and purposes of such a person (Matt. 28:19; Acts 8:16; Rom. 6:3, 4). See baptízo (907), to baptize.

(II) Of time:

(A) Time meaning when, implying a term, limit, i.e., to, up to, until (Matt. 10:22, eis télos [5056], the end, meaning accomplishment of the task undertaken; Acts 4:3, “till the morrow” [a.t.]; Acts 13:42; Phil. 1:10, “unto the day of Christ” [a.t.], or in expectation of the

day of Christ; Phil. 2:16; 1 Thess. 4:15; 2 Thess. 2:6; 2 Pet. 2:4; 3:7). With the acc. of person as marking the time when one lives, appears (Gal. 3:17, 24, “unto Christ,” meaning until Christ came). (B) Time, meaning “how long” or marking duration (Matt. 21:19, “unto the age” [a.t.], forever; Mark 3:29; Luke 1:50, “unto generations of generations” [a.t.]; 12:19, “unto many years” [a.t.]; John 8:35; 2 Tim. 6:19; Heb. 7:3; 2 Pet. 3:18; Rev. 9:15).

(III) Figuratively as marking the object or point to or toward which anything ends.

(A) Spoken of a result, effect, consequence, marking that which any person or thing inclines toward or becomes (Matt. 13:30, “bind them in bundles”; 27:51, “split in parts” [a.t.]; John 17:23; Acts 2:20; 10:4, “your prayers went up unto remembrance” [a.t.]; Rom. 10:10, “with the heart man believeth unto righteousness”; 1 Cor. 11:17; 15:54; Eph. 2:21, 22; Heb. 6:6, 8; 1 Pet. 1:22; Rev. 11:6). With an inf. as subst. (Rom. 7:4, 5; 12:3; 1 Cor. 9:18; Gal. 3:17; Heb. 11:3). Thus *logízomai* (3049), to reckon someone or something unto, when used with *eis*, means to be considered as anything (Acts 19:27; Rom. 2:26; 9:8; Sept.: 1 Sam. 1:13; Is. 29:17). The expression *logízomai* followed by the dat., in connection with *eis* and the acc., means to reckon or to impute to someone, for, as (Rom. 4:3, 5, 9, 22 “unto righteousness” [a.t.]; Gal. 3:6 quoted from Gen. 15:6; Ps. 106:31). Also after verbs of constituting, making, becoming, and the like (Acts 13:22, “he raised up unto them David to be their king” or unto king [see Acts 13:47 {cf. Sept.: Ezek. 37:22}]). With *eínai* (1511), to be (Matt. 19:5, “they shall be into one flesh” [a.t.], indicating becoming one flesh; see Mark 10:8 [cf. Gen. 2:24; Luke 3:5 {cf. Is. 40:4; 1 Cor. 14:22; 2 Cor. 6:18; Heb. 1:5}]). With *gínomai* (1096), to become (Luke 13:19, became into a big tree, instead of became a great tree; John 16:20; Acts 5:36; Rom. 11:10 quoted from Ps. 69:23; 1 Cor. 15:45; Rev. 8:11).

(B) Spoken of measure, degree, extent, where *eis* can be translated “even,” i.e., guilty even unto Gehenna (Matt. 5:22). See *énochos* (1777), guilty of. Chiefly by way of periphrasis for an adv. as in Luke 13:11, *eis tó pantelés* (3838), i.e., entirely. In Heb. 7:25, with the idea of perpetuity. In 2 Cor. 4:17, *eis huperbolemn* (5236),

hyperbole, exceeding or exceedingly. In 2 Cor. 10:13, *eis tá ámetra* (280), those things that cannot be measured means immeasurable, indefinitely extensive. In 2 Cor. 13:2, *eis tó pálin* (3825), means simply again. Also *eis kenón* (2756), empty, vain, means in vain (2 Cor. 6:1; Gal. 2:2; Phil. 2:16).

(C) Spoken of a direction of mind, i.e., as marking an object of desire, good will, also aversion (1) In a good sense, toward, for, in behalf of (Matt. 26:10, “she did a good work for my benefit” [a.t.]; Rom. 1:27, “one toward another” of homosexual lust; 10:1, “unto salvation” [a.t.] or for or toward salvation; 12:16; 14:19; 2 Cor. 10:1; Phil. 1:23, “desire to depart” or to die; 1 Thess. 4:10; 5:15; 2 Pet. 3:9; Jude 1:21, “unto eternal life”). Also after nouns, e.g., love on behalf of someone (Rom. 5:8; 2 Cor. 2:4, 8; Eph. 1:15); the gift bestowed upon someone or for the good of someone (2 Cor. 1:11). After an adj. (Eph. 4:32 “kind one to another” [a.t.]; 1 Pet. 4:9 “hospitable one to another” [a.t.]). With the verbs *elpízo* (1679), to hope, and *pisteúo* (4100), to believe, with *eis*, usually with a dat., in which case these verbs imply an affection or direction of mind toward a person or thing, i.e., to place hope or confidence in or upon (Matt. 18:6, those “which believe [or place confidence] in me”; John 2:11; 5:45; 2 Cor. 1:10 [cf. Acts 24:15]). The subst. *elpís* (1680), hope, or *pístis* (4102), faith, *eis* followed by the acc., hope or faith in someone (Acts 20:21; 24:24; 1 Pet. 1:21). With *pepoíthesis* (4006), confidence (2 Cor. 8:22). (2) In an unfriendly sense, “against” (Matt. 18:15; Mark 3:29; Luke 12:10, “whosoever speaks a word against the Son of man” [a.t.], against the Holy Spirit, indicated by *eis*; Acts 9:1; 1 Cor. 6:18, to sin against; Col. 3:9). Also after nouns as in Acts 23:30 with *epiboulem* (1917), a plan against; Rom. 8:7 with *échthra* (2189), enmity against God; Heb. 12:3 with *antilogía* (485), contradiction against him.

(D) Spoken of an intention, purpose, aim, end; *eis* final. (1) In the sense of unto, in order to or for, i.e., for the purpose of, for the sake of, on account of (Matt. 8:4, 34; 27:7, 10; Mark 1:4; Luke 5:4; 22:19; 24:20; John 1:7; 9:39; Acts 4:30; 11:29; 14:26; Rom. 1:16, 17; 5:21; 6:19; 9:21; 10:4; 15:18; 1 Cor. 2:7; 2 Cor. 2:12; Eph. 4:12; 2 Tim. 1:16). In Matt. 3:11, to “baptize . . . unto repentance” or on account of repentance, could mean that no one has a right to

be baptized unless he repents. In 1 Cor. 12:13, “we were baptized into one body . . . we were made to drink into one spirit” (a.t.), refers to the spiritual baptism whereby we are made members of the body of Christ through the operation of that one Holy Spirit of which we were made to drink which satisfies our thirst. Therefore, believers, being members of the same body of Christ and participating of the same Holy Spirit, are one in body and spirit. In Matt. 18:20, “gathered together in my name,” means on My account, because of Me, for My sake, in order to promote My cause. Also before an inf. with the art., in order to, in order that (Matt. 20:19; Mark 14:55; Luke 20:20; Rom. 1:11; 11:11; James 1:18). With the acc. meaning to what end? wherefore? why? (Matt. 14:31; Mark 15:34). With *toúto* (5124), this, *eis toúto*, meaning to this end, for this purpose, therefore (Mark 1:38; Acts 9:21; Rom. 9:17). Followed by the relative pron. *hó*, *eis hó*, meaning to which end, whereunto, (2 Thess. 1:11; 1 Pet. 2:8). (2) In the sense of to or for, implying use, advantage and equivalent to the dat. of purpose (Matt. 5:13; 10:10; 20:1, “to hire workers unto his vineyard” [a.t.] or to serve his vineyard; Mark 8:19, 20; Luke 7:30, “unto themselves” [a.t.], i.e., to their own detriment; 9:13; 14:35, “neither for serving the land nor for the dunghill” [a.t.]; John 6:9; Acts 2:22; Rom. 11:36; 15:26; 16:6; 1 Cor. 8:6, unto him, for him, i.e., for his honor and glory; 2 Cor. 8:6; Gal. 4:11; Eph. 1:5; 3:2; 1 Pet. 1:4).

(E) Generally as marking the obj. of any reference, relation, allusion unto or toward, i.e., with reference to. (1) In accordance with, conformable to (Matt. 10:41, 42, “He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet” [a.t.], means in accordance with the character of a prophet, or as a prophet, or with the honor deserving of a prophet). In Matt. 12:41; Luke 11:32, “they repented at [eis] the preaching of Jonah,” where *eis*, into, means conformable to or at the preaching of Jonah. In Acts 7:53, “received the law by the disposition of angels,” *eis* means conformable to or in consequence of the arrangements of angels. See *diatage* (1296), arrangement. (2) In the sense meaning as, as to, in respect to, concerning (Luke 12:21, “not rich toward [eis] God” means in respect to God; Acts 2:25, “For David speaketh concerning [eis] him”; 25:20, “because



I doubted of such manner of questions,” eis ten . . . zetessin [2214], searching, question, where eis [TR] means concerning; Rom. 4:20; 13:14; 16:5, 19; 2 Cor. 2:9; 9:8; Gal. 6:4; Eph. 3:16; 5:32; 1 Thess. 5:18; 2 Tim. 2:14; Heb. 7:14; 1 Pet. 3:21).

(IV) Sometimes eis with the acc. is found where the natural construction would seem to require en with the dat. as after verbs which imply neither motion nor direction, but simply rest in a place or state. In such cases the idea of a previous coming into that place or state is either actually expressed or is implied in the context (Matt. 2:23; Mark 1:38, 39; 2:1, “that he was come into the house” [a.t.]; 13:9, 16; Luke 11:7, as we would say in Eng., my children are in bed, i.e., they had gone there before and they are now in bed; 21:37; John 9:7; Acts 7:4; 8:40; 18:21; 21:12, 13; 23:11). Here belongs also in the NT the apparent construction of eis with a gen. through the omission of its noun as eis hádou, as found in Acts 2:27, 31; the noun omitted is oíkon (3624), house. The expression would be eis oíkon hádou, which could have been also stated eis háden. The phrase in Acts is egkataleípseis, the fut. indic. act. of egkataleípo (1459), to leave behind or in it, eis Hádou (quoted from Ps. 16:10), to leave behind in Hádes (86), the realm of the dead. In other instances, eis and en are used alternately according to the different trend of thought, e.g., in John 20:19, 26, “came Jesus and stood in [eis] the midst,” but Luke 24:36 uses en (1722), in. Here the attention of John is fixed more on Jesus’ coming and standing, while that of Luke is on His actual presence. See also John 21:4 (cf. 8:3, 9; Acts 4:7). In Matt. 13:2; Mark 13:3 we have eis, and in Matt. 26:29 we have en. See Matt. 3:6, en, where the attention is fixed upon the act of baptism, while in Mark 1:9, it is also on the coming of Jesus to the Jordan. The expression “Go in peace” can have either eis or en, go away into peace or in peace (eiremne [1515], peace). It means into or in the enjoyment of peace, good, the idea being in the final analysis the same, but expressed under different aspects (Mark 5:34; Luke 7:50 [cf. Acts 16:36; James 2:16]).

(V) In composition, eis implies motion into, as eisdéchomai (1523), to take into one’s favor, receive; éiseimi (1524), to enter into; eisérchomai (1525), to enter in; eisphérom (1533), to bring in.

Motion or direction, direction to, toward, as eisakoúo (1522), to listen to, hear.

(VI) In its relationship with other prep., prós (4314), toward, eis denotes entry into, while prós denotes approach, up to. Eis is used with impersonal objects and prós with personal (2 Cor. 1:15, prós twice and eis once). In Gal. 2:9, “That we should go unto [eis] the heathen [the nations, the Gentiles], and they unto [eis] the circumcision [the Jews].” Here reference is made to the territories where Jews or Gentiles abounded. Both prepositions may express purpose. In Rom. 3:25, “to declare his righteousness [eis],” while in Rom. 3:26, “to declare [prós].” Both prepositions may be used also to express result. In Rom. 1:20, “so that they are without excuse [eis]”; in 1 John 5:16, “which is not unto death [prós],” resulting in death. The prep. prós is used in John 1:1, 2, and eis in John 1:18, and both figure importantly in the eternal and equal relationship between God the Father and God the Son. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was toward [prós] the God. The same was in the beginning toward [prós] the God” (a.t.). Prós here is used to indicate the communion of the Son with the Father. In verse eighteen, to show the role that the Son was going to play in the incarnation, eis is used indicating that the Father was in the Lord and the Lord Jesus was in the Father (cf. John 10:38), and that the Son and the Father have always been one (John 10:30). And yet, insofar as the incarnation was concerned, Jesus Christ, the eternal Son, was in (eis) the bosom of the Father as if He were someone who could be separated from the Father in His new temporary existence as the God–Man (John 1:1, 14), but never separated in the eternal Father–Son relationship. In John 10:38, to show forcefully the deity of the incarnate Son, the prep. en (1722), in, is used, “In me the Father and I in him” (a.t.). When we think of the Father, we see all of deity; and when we see Jesus Christ the Son incarnate, we see God not as spirit (John 4:24), but as a human being with bodily reality (Col. 1:19; 2:9).

[The Complete Word Study Bible And Reference CD]

Notice that Dr. Zodhiates lexical study is in strong agreement with Dr. Reese. We can conclude that eis [eis] is never used in the sense of “because.”

~~~~~

## VIII. Alexander Campbell on “Who’s a Christian”

[NOTE: *Since I wrote this booklet on Baptism, Dr. David Lertis Matson has published a masterful research paper on **The Lunenburg Letter** in the Stone-Campbell Journal: "Who Wrote the Lunenburg Letter? The Untold Story of the "Conscientious Sister" of Lunenburg." [http://www.stone-campbelljournal.com/the\\_journal/research/volume\\_11\\_issue\\_1/10101/](http://www.stone-campbelljournal.com/the_journal/research/volume_11_issue_1/10101/). Dr. Matson, research clearly explains the explosive attempt to undermine the New Testament teaching on baptism.]*

It has long been a slogan of the Restoration Movement that we are not the only Christians, but are Christians only. While this has been true of our stated position, there are some who wonder if those who have not been baptized by immersion for the remission of sins are Christians. This question was weightly addressed by Alexander Campbell in a series of discussions in the Millennial Harbinger, a reprint of which follows:

**Any Christians Among Protestant Parties,**

**or,**

**The Lunenburg Letter**

**by Alexander Campbell**

Published in the Millennial Harbinger, 1837

Note: [This letter and Alexander Campbell’s comments or remarks have affected the thinking of many, both within and without the Restoration Movement, since first appearing in the Millennial Harbinger for 1837.

Discussion of the issues raised in Campbell’s reply to the “conscientious sister” from Lunenburg continued in later issues of this periodical. Articles by Campbell and others--particularly Christianos and Thomas M. Henley--appeared in the Harbinger from 1837-1840.

The following are references to the ongoing discussion in the Millennial Harbinger:

1837--pp. 411-414, 506-508, 561-567, 577-578

1838--pp. 348-349, 426-427, 520-521

1839--pp. 43-45, 124-128, 168-179, 213-216, 292-294, 395-401, 475-476, 529-531, 547

1840--pp. 21-22, 106-109, 125-128, 162-165, 275-277

The statement by Campbell that induced the lady from Lunenburg to write the editor of the Harbinger is in an article entitled "Letters to England-No. 1," which was published in the June, 1837, issue. So that it may be kept in context, the entire paragraph preceding the statement and the paragraph in which the statement is found is printed. The statement to which objection was raised is printed in bold capital letters so as to be easily identifiable.

End Note]

"Touching your inquiries on some matters, I hasten to observe,-- that our brethren generally regard the church as the only moral or religious association which they can lawfully patronize. Hence they form not Missionary, Education, Tract, Bible, Temperance, Anti-Slavery confederations. If these are good works, they belong to the church in her own proper character; and every member of the church is, as a Christian, obliged to promote these objects as far as he has the means and the opportunity. The Christian institution, in our judgment, demands of all its subjects their best efforts to put down all profanity, unrighteousness, injustice, oppression, and cruelty in the world; and to promote every benevolent, humane, and charitable object which can ameliorate the conditions of human existence. That the gospel ought to be preached; that evangelists or missionaries ought to be sent out and sustained by the church; that the whole community should be intellectually and morally educated--every child born upon our soil so trained as to be a useful, safe and honorable member of society; that the Bible always, and sometimes religious tracts, newspapers, magazines and pamphlets should be widely circulated in the world; that Christians should be temperate in all things, and especially so in the use of all intoxicating liquors, and perhaps sometimes wholly abstinent; that they should not, after communing at the Lord's table, unite in any secret, political, or moral combination with the Lord's enemies, Turks, Jews, or Atheists; that they should oppose all schemes of robbery and oppression, whether the victims be white, black, or

yellow--bond servant or hired servant; that Christians should render to their servants every thing that is just and equal; that they should not, even when the laws permit them, violate or cause others to violate God's most ancient, venerable, and holy institution of marriage, by selling a wife from her husband, or infants from the embraces of maternal and paternal affection; that they should treat every human being, without regard to political or other factitious and circumstantial distinctions and differences, as their fellow-creatures, as subjects of God's philanthropy, to be taught his religion, and trained for immortality, are propositions or tenets held by us sacred as the precepts of Christ.

We would, indeed, have no objections to co-operate in these matters with all Christians, and raise contributions for all such purposes as, in our judgment, are promotive of the Divine glory or of human happiness, whether or not they belong to our churches: FOR WE FIND IN ALL PROTESTANT PARTIES CHRISTIANS as exemplary as ourselves according to their and our relative knowledge and opportunities; but we cannot form a confederacy with the troops of Satan, or tax his subjects to sustain the Christian cause; and, therefore, so long as all these associations openly and avowedly form a community on any one of these bonds of union, irrespective of citizenship in the kingdom of heaven; I say, so long as they hold communion with profane and ungodly persons, or with Gentiles of no creed and every creed, because of a single point of coincidence, whatever that point may be, we cannot unite with them, or sail under such a flag. Besides, if such schemes are really necessary, then has the church failed--then the Divine institution must yield the palm to institutions merely human. (pp. 271-273)

#### **ANY CHRISTIANS AMONG PROTESTANT PARTIES**

Lunenburg, July 8th, 1837.

“Dear brother Campbell-- I WAS much surprised to-day, while reading the Harbinger, to see that you recognize the Protestant parties as Christian. You say, you ‘find in all Protestant parties Christians.’

“Dear brother, my surprize and ardent desire to do what is right, prompt me to write to you at this time. I feel well assured, from the

estimate you place on the female character, that you will attend to my feeble questions in search of knowledge.

“Will you be so good as to let me know how any one becomes a Christian? What act of yours gave you the name of Christian? At what time had Paul the name of Christ called on him? At what time did Cornelius have Christ named on him? Is it not through this name we obtain eternal life? Does the name of Christ or Christian belong to any but those who believe the gospel, repent, and are buried by baptism into the death of Christ?”

---

In reply to this conscientious sister, I observe, that if there be no Christians in the Protestant sects, there are certainly none among the Romanists, none among the Jews, Turks, Pagans; and therefore no Christians in the world except ourselves, or such of us as keep, or strive to keep, all the commandments of Jesus. Therefore, for many centuries there has been no church of Christ, no Christians in the world; and the promises concerning the everlasting kingdom of Messiah have failed, and the gates of hell have prevailed against his church! This cannot be; and therefore there are Christians among the sects.

But who is a Christian? I answer, Every one that believes in his heart that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the son of God; repents of his sins, and obeys him in all things according to his measure of knowledge of his will. A perfect man in Christ, or a perfect Christian, is one thing; and “a babe in Christ,” a stripling in the faith, or an imperfect Christian, is another. The New Testament recognizes both the perfect man and the imperfect man in Christ. The former, indeed, implies the latter. Paul commands the imperfect Christians to “be perfect,” (2 Cor. iii. 11.) and says he wishes the perfection of Christians. “And this also we wish” for you saints in Corinth, “even your perfection:” and again he says, “We speak wisdom among the perfect,” (1 Cor. ii. 6.) and he commands them to be “perfect in understanding,” (1 Cor. xiv. 20.) and in many other places implies or speaks the same things. Now there is perfection of will, of temper, and of behaviors. There is a perfect state and a perfect character. And hence it is possible for Christians to be imperfect in some respects without an absolute

forfeiture of the Christian state and character. Paul speaks of “carnal” Christians, of “weak” and “strong” Christians; and the Lord Jesus admits that some of the good and honest-hearted bring forth only thirty fold, while others bring forth sixty, and some a hundred fold increase of the fruits of righteousness.

But every one is wont to condemn others in that in which he is more intelligent than they; while, on the other hand, he is condemned for his Pharisaism or his immodesty and rash judgment of others, by those that excel in the things in which he is deficient. I cannot, therefore, make any one duty the standard of Christian state or character, not even immersion into the name of the father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and in my heart regard all that have been sprinkled in infancy without their own knowledge and consent, as aliens from Christ and the well-grounded hope of heaven. “Salvation was of the Jews,” acknowledged the Messiah; and yet he said of a foreigner, an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, a Syro-Phenician, “I have not found so great faith--no, not in Israel.”

Should I find a Pedobaptist more intelligent in the Christian Scriptures, more spiritually-minded and more devoted to the Lord than a Baptist, or one immersed on a profession of the ancient faith, I could not hesitate a moment in giving the preference of my heart to him that loveth most. Did I act otherwise, I would be a pure sectarian, a Pharisee among Christians. Still I will be asked, How do I know that any one loves my Master but by his obedience to his commandments? I answer, In no other way. But mark, I do not substitute obedience to one commandment, for universal or even for general obedience. And should I see a sectarian Baptist or a Pedobaptist more spiritually-minded, more generally conformed to the requisitions of the Messiah, than one who precisely acquiesces with me in the theory or practice of immersion as I teach, doubtless the former rather than the latter, would have my cordial approbation and love as a Christian. So I judge, and so I feel. It is the image of Christ the Christian looks for and loves; and this does not consist in being exact in a few items, but in general devotion to the whole truth as far as known.

With me mistakes of the understanding and errors of the affections are not to be confounded. They are as distant as the poles. An angel may mistake the meaning of a commandment, but he will obey it in the sense in which he understands it. John Bunyan and John Newton were very different persons, and had very different views of baptism, and of some other things; yet they were both disposed to obey, and to the extent of their knowledge did obey the Lord in every thing.

There are mistakes with, and without depravity. There are wilful errors which all the world must condemn, and unavoidable mistakes which every one will pity. The Apostles mistook the Saviour when he said concerning John, "What if I will that John tarry till I come;" but the Jews perverted his words when they alleged that Abraham had died, in proof that he spake falsely when he said, "If a man keep my word he shall never see death."

Many a good man has been mistaken. Mistakes are to be regarded as culpable and as declarative of a corrupt heart only when they proceed from a wilful neglect of the means of knowing what is commanded. Ignorance is always a crime when it is voluntary; and innocent when it is involuntary. Now, unless I could prove that all who neglect the positive institutions of Christ and have substituted for them something else of human authority, do it knowingly, or, if not knowingly, are voluntarily ignorant of what is written, I could not, I dare not say that their mistakes are such as unchristianize all their professions.

True, indeed, that it is always a misfortune to be ignorant of any thing in the Bible, and very generally it is criminal. But how many are there who cannot read; and of those who can read, how many are so deficient in education; and of those educated, how many are ruled by the authority of those whom they regard as superiors in knowledge and piety, that they never can escape out of the dust and smoke of their own chimney, where they happened to be born and educated! These all suffer many privations and many perplexities, from which the more intelligent are exempt.

The preachers of "essentials," as well as the preachers of "nonessentials," frequently err. The Essentialist may disparage the heart, while the Non-essentialist despises the institution. The latter



makes void the institutions of Heaven, while the former appreciates not the mental bias on which God looketh most. My correspondent may belong to a class who think that we detract from the authority and value of an institution the moment we admit the bare possibility of any one being saved without it. But we choose rather to associate with those who think that they do not undervalue either seeing or hearing, by affirming that neither of them, nor both of them together, are essential to life. I would not sell one of my eyes for all the gold on earth; yet I could live without it.

There is no occasion, then, for making immersion, on a profession of faith, absolutely essential to a Christian--though it may be greatly essential to his sanctification and comfort. My right hand and my right eye are greatly essential to my usefulness and happiness, but not to my life; and as I could not be a perfect man without them, so I cannot be a perfect Christian without a right understanding and a cordial reception of immersion in its true and scriptural meaning and design. But he that thence infers that none are Christians but the immersed, as greatly errs as he who affirms that none are alive but those of clear and full vision.

I do not formally answer all the queries proposed knowing the one point to which they all aim. To that point only I direct these remarks. And while I would unhesitatingly say that I think that every man who despises any ordinance of Christ or who is willingly ignorant of it, cannot be a Christian; still I should sin against my own convictions, should I teach any one to think that if he mistook the meaning of any institution while in his soul he desired to know the whole will of God he must perish forever. But to conclude for the present--he that claims for himself a license to neglect the least of all the commandments of Jesus because it is possible for some to be saved who through insuperable ignorance or involuntary mistake, do neglect or transgress it; or he that wilfully neglects to ascertain the will of the Lord to the whole extent of his means and opportunities because some who are defective in that knowledge may be Christians, is not possessed of the spirit of Christ and cannot be registered among the Lord's

people. So I reason; and I think in so reasoning I am sustained by all the Prophets and Apostles of both Testaments.

A.C.

---

## CHRISTIANS AMONG THE SECTS

In an article on a query from Lunenburg which appeared in the September number, certain sentences have been objected to by some two or three intelligent and much esteemed correspondents. We gave it as our opinion that there were Christians among the Protestant sects; an opinion, indeed, which we have always expressed when called upon. If I mistake not, it is distinctly avowed in our first Extra on Remission; yet it is now supposed by these brethren that I have conceded a point of which I have hitherto been tenacious and that I have misapplied certain portions of scripture in supporting said opinion. In the article alluded to, we have said that we “cannot make any one duty the standard of Christian state or character, not even Christian immersion,” &c. Again, we have said that “there is no occasion for making immersion on a profession of faith absolutely essential to a Christian, though it may be greatly essential to his sanctification and comfort.” These two sentences contain the pith and marrow of the objectionable portion of said article to which we again refer the reader.

Much depends upon the known temper and views of a querist in shaping an answer to his questions. This was the case in this instance. We apprehended that the propounder of the queries that called for these remarks was rather an ultraist on the subject of Christian baptism; so far at least as not to allow that the name Christian is at all applicable to one unimmersed, or even to one immersed, without the true intent and meaning of baptism in his understanding previous to his burial in water. This we gathered from her epistle; and of course gave as bold an answer as we ever gave--perhaps more bold than on any former occasion, yet nothing differing from our former expressed views on that subject.

My high regard for these correspondents, however, calls for a few remarks on those sentences, as farther explanatory of our views. We cheerfully agree with them, as well as with our sister of

Lunenburg, that the term Christian was given first to immersed believers and to none else; but we do not think that it was given to them because they were immersed, but because they had put on Christ; and therefore we presume to opine, that, like every other word in universal language, even this term may be used as Paul sometimes uses the words saint and sinner, Jew and Gentile--in a part of their signification.

We have, in Paul's style, the inward and the outward Jews; and may we not have the inward and the outward Christians? for true it is, that he is not always a Christian who is one outwardly: and one of my correspondents will say, 'Neither is he a Christian who is one inwardly.' But all agree that he is, in the full sense of the word, a Christian who is one inwardly and outwardly.

As the same Apostle reasons on circumcision, so we would reason on baptism:--"Circumcision," says the learned Apostle, "is not that which is outward in the flesh;" that is, as we apprehend the Apostle, it is not that which is outward in the flesh; but "circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter [only,] whose praise is of God, and not of man." So is baptism. It is not outward in the flesh only but in the spirit also. We argue for the outward and the inward--the outward for men, including ourselves--the inward for God; but both the outward and the inward for the praise both of God and of men.

Now the nice point of opinion on which some brethren differ is this: Can a person who simply, not perversely, mistakes the outward baptism, have the inward? We all agree that he who willfully or negligently perverts the outward cannot have the inward. But can he who, through a simple mistake, involving no perversity of mind, has misapprehended the outward baptism, yet submitting to it according to his view of it, have the inward baptism which changes his state and has praise of God, though not of all men? is the precise question. To which I answer, that, in my opinion, it is possible. Farther than this I do not affirm.

My reasons for this opinion are various; two of which we have only time and space to offer at this time. Of seven difficulties it is the least; two of these seven, which, on a contrary hypothesis would occur, are insuperable:--The promises concerning an

everlasting Christian church have failed; and then it would follow that not a few of the brightest names on earth of the last three hundred years should have to be regarded as subjects of the kingdom of Satan!!

None of our brethren regard baptism as only outward. They all believe that in the outward submersion of the body in the water, there is at the same time the inward submersion of the mind and heart into Christ. They do moreover suppose that the former may be without the latter. They have only to add that it is possible for the latter to be not without the former in some sense, but without it in the sense which Christ ordained.

Still my opinion is no rule of action to my brethren, nor would I offer it unsolicited to any man. But while we inculcate faith, repentance, and baptism upon all, as essential to their constitutional citizenship in the Messiah's kingdom, and to their sanctification and comfort as Christians, no person has a right to demand our opinions on all the differences of this generation, except for his private gratification. He is certainly safer who obeys from the heart "that mould of doctrine" delivered to us by the Apostles; and he only has praise of God and man, and of himself as a Christian, who believes, repents, is baptized, and keeps all the ordinances, positive and moral, as delivered to us by the holy Apostles.

The scriptures quoted in the essay complained of, are all applied to the Christian character, and not to the Christian state, as contemplated by one of our correspondents. 'They are therefore not misapplied. It is hoped these general remarks will be satisfactory on this point.

A.C.

Ohio River, Sept. 28th, 1837.

---

### **ANY CHRISTIANS AMONG THE SECTS?**

JUDGING from numerous letters received at this office, my reply to the sister from Lunenburg has given some pain to our brethren, and some pleasure to our sectarian friends. The builders up of the parties tauntingly say to our brethren, "Then we are as safe as you," and "You are coming over to us, having now conceded the

greatest of all points--viz. that immersion is not essential to a Christian." Some of our brethren seem to think that we have neutralized much that has been said on the importance of baptism for remission, and disarmed them of much of their artillery against the ignorance, error, and indifference of the times upon the whole subject of Christian duty and Christian privilege.

My views of Opinionism forbid me to dogmatize or to labor to establish my own opinion, and therefore I hope to be excused for not publishing a hundred letters for and against said opinion. Only one point of importance would be gained by publishing such a correspondence; and I almost regret that we have not a volume to spare for it. It would indeed fully open the eyes of the community to the fact that there are but few "Campbellites" in the country. Too many of my correspondents, however, seem to me to have written rather to show that they are not "Campbellites," than to show that my opinion is false and unfounded.

While, then, I have no wish to dogmatize, and feel no obligation to contend for the opinion itself, I judge myself in duty bound to attempt--

1st. To defend myself from the charge of inconsistency.

2nd. To defend the opinion from the sectarian application of it.

3rd. To offer some reasons for delivering such an opinion at this time.

I. With all despatch, then, I hasten to show that I have neither conceded nor surrendered any thing for which I ever contended; but that on the contrary, the opinion now expressed, whether true or false, is one that I have always avowed. (Footnote in original reads: It is with us as old as baptism for the remission of sins, and this is at least as old as the "Christian Baptist." Read the first two numbers of that work.)

1. Let me ask, in the first place, what could mean all that we have written upon the union of Christians on apostolic grounds, had we taught that all Christians in the world were already united in our own community?

2. And in the second place, why should we so often have quoted and applied to apostate Christendom what the Spirit saith to saints in Babylon--"Come out of her, my people, that you partake not of

her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues”-had we imagined that the Lord had no people beyond the pale of our communion!

3. But let him that yet doubts, read the following passages from the Christian Baptist, April, 1825:--”I have no idea of seeing, nor wish to see, the sects unite in one grand army. This would be dangerous to our liberties and laws. For this the Saviour did not pray. It is only the disciples dispersed among them that reason and benevolence would call out of them, “&c. &c. This looks very like our present opinion of Christians among the sects!!! 2d ed. Bethany, p. 85.

4. Again, speaking of purity of speech in order to the union of Christians, we say, “None of you [Christians] have ever yet attempted to show how Christians can be united on your principles. You have often showed how they may be divided, and how each party may hold its own, but while you pray for the visible unity of the disciples, and advocate their visible disunity, we cannot understand you.” March, 1827, vol. 4.

5. Various essays and letters on “Christian union” from our correspondents, are given to our readers with our approbation; from one of which we quote these words:--”I suppose all agree that among Christians of every name there are disciples of Jesus Christ, accepted of God in him, real members of his body, branches in the true vine, and therefore all one in Christ.” October, 1826, vol. 4, p. 53.

6. In a letter to Spencer Clack, August, 1826, I have said, “As to what you say concerning the evils of division among Christians, I have nothing to object. I sincerely deplore every division, and every sectarian feeling which now exists; and if I thought there was any man on this continent who would go farther than I to heal all divisions and to unite all Christians on constitutional grounds, I would travel on foot a hundred miles to see him and confess my faults to him.” vol. 5, p. 15.

7. On the evening before my departure to debate with Mr. Owen, vol. 6, p. 239, April 6, 1829, in alluding to that crisis, I say--”I rejoice to know and feel that I have the good wishes, the prayers, and the hopes of myriads of Christians in all denominations.” So speak the pages of the Christian Baptist on many occasions.

(Original footnote states: “Let the curious reader consult the essays on Christian Union in the Christian Baptist, so far as I have approbated them, especially my replies to an Independent Baptist.”)

8. The views of the Millennial Harbinger on this subject are condensed in a work called “Christianity Restored,” or, as we have designated it, “A Connected View of the Principles,” &c. “of the Foundation on which all Christians may form one communion.”

(See its title-page!!)

9. In that volume there is a long article on the foundation of Christian union, showing how the Christians among the sects may be united. We refer to the whole of this article from page 101 to 128, as the most unequivocal proof of our views of Christians among the sects. Indeed we say (page 102) of our own community, that it is a nucleus around which may one day congregate all the children of God. In that article we wax bolder and bolder, and ask, (page 121,) “Will sects ever cease? Will a time ever come when all disciples will unite under one Lord, in one faith, in one immersion? Will divisions ever be healed? Will strife ever cease among the saints on earth?”

10. But in the last place in the first Extra on Baptism for Remission of Sins, we exclude from the pale of Christianity of the Pedobaptists, none but such of them as “wilfully neglect this salvation, and who, having the opportunity to be immersed for the remission of sins, wilfully neglect or refuse”-”of such,” indeed, but of none others, we say, “We have as little hope for them as they have for all who refuse salvation on their own terms of the gospel.” 1st Extra, 1st ed. p. 53.

With these ten evidences or arguments, I now put it to the candor of those who accuse us of inconsistency or change of views, whether they have not most evidently misrepresented us. Were it necessary we could easily swell these ten into a hundred.

**II. We shall now attempt to defend this opinion from the sectarian application of it:--**

1. It affords them too much joy for the consolation which it brings; because it imparts no certainty of pardon or salvation to any particular unbaptized person whatsoever.

In reference to this opinion, all the unimmersed are to be ranged in two classes;--those who neither know nor care for this opinion, and those who know it and rejoice in it. It will require but a moment's reflection to perceive that those who care nothing for this opinion will not rejoice it nor abuse it; and that those who would, for their own sake, rejoice in it are not included in it. He that rejoices in such an opinion, for his own sake, has had the subject under consideration; and it is a thousand chances to one that he is obstinately or willingly in error on the subject; and, therefore, in the very terms of the opinion, he is precluded from any interest in it. His joy, indeed, is strong presumptive evidence against him; because it is proof that he is one sided in his feelings, which no upright mind can be--at least such a mind as is contemplated in the opinion; for it respects only those who have not had any debate with themselves upon the subject, and have, without any examination or leaning, supposed themselves to have been baptized.

In no case, indeed, can there be the same certainty (all things else being equal) that he who was sprinkled, poured, or immersed on some other person's faith; or that he who was sprinkled, or poured on his own faith, shall be saved, as there is that he that first believes and is then, on his own confession, immersed, shall be saved. In the former case, at best, we have only the fallible inference or opinion of man; while in the latter we have the sure and unerring promise of our Saviour and Judge. It cannot be too emphatically stated that he that rejoices for his own sake, that he may be accepted by the Lord on his infant or adult pouring or sprinkling, because of his dislike to, or prejudice against believer's immersion, gives unequivocal evidence of the want of state of mind which is contemplated in the opinion expressed; and has proved himself to be a seeker of his own will and pleasure, rather than rejoicing in the will and pleasure of God; and for such persons we can have no favorable opinion.



2. But that the aforesaid opinion does not disarm us of our arguments against ignorance, error and indifference, is evident; because it assumes that the person in question is acting up to the full measure of his knowledge upon the subject, and that he has not been negligent, according to his opportunities, to ascertain the will of his Master; for in the very terms of the opinion he is not justified, but self-condemned, who only doubts, or is not fully persuaded that his baptism is apostolic and divine.

3. To admit that there may be Christians among the sects, does not derogate from the value or importance of baptism for the remission of sins, any more than it derogates from the superior value and excellency of the Christian Institution to admit that salvation was possible to the Jews and Patriarchs without the knowledge and experience of all the developments of the New Testament. For besides the Christian disposition, state and character, there are the Christian privileges. Now, in our judgment, there is not on a earth a person who can have as full an assurance of justification or of remission of sins, as the person who has believed, confessed his faith, and been intelligently buried and raised with the Lord; and therefore the present salvation never can be so fully enjoyed, all things else being equal, by the unimmersed as by the immersed.

4. Again, as every sect agrees, that a person immersed on a confession of his faith is truly baptized, and only a part of Christendom admits the possibility of any other action as baptism: for the sake of union among Christians, it may be easily shown to be the duty of all believers to be immersed, if for no other reason than that of honoring the divine institution and opening a way for the union and co-operation of all Christians. Besides, immersion gives a constitutional right of citizenship in the universal kingdom of Jesus; whereas with our opponents, themselves being judges, their "baptism" gives the rights of citizenship only in some provinces of that kingdom. For as far as baptism is concerned, the Greek, the Roman, the English, the Lutheran, the Calvinian, the Arminian, the Baptist communities will receive the immersed; while only a part of Christendom will acknowledge the sprinkled or the poured. Therefore, our opinion militates not against the value of baptism in any sense.

5. In the last place, to be satisfied with any thing that will just do in religion, is neither the Christian disposition nor character; and not to desire to know and do the whole will of God, places the individual out of the latitude and longitude of the opinion which we have advanced. These things being so, then we ask, wherein does the avowal of such an opinion disarm us of arguments for professor or profane, on the value of the baptism in the Christian Institution; or the importance and necessity of separating one's self from all that will not keep the commandments of Jesus; and of submitting without delay to the requisitions of the illustrious Prophet whom the Almighty Father has commanded all men to obey?

**III. In the third and last place, we offer some reasons for delivering such an opinion at this time:--**

1. We were solicited by a sister to explain a saying quoted from the current volume of this work, concerning finding "Christians in all Protestant parties." She proposed a list of questions, involving, as she supposed, either insuperable difficulties or strong objections to that saying; and because she well knew what answers I would have given to all her queries, I answered them not: but attended to the difficulty which I imagined she felt in the aforesaid saying.

2. But we had still more urgent reasons than the difficulties of this sister to express such an opinion:-- Some of our brethren were too much addicted to denouncing the sects and representing them en masse as wholly aliens from the possibility of salvation--as wholly antichristian and corrupt. Now as the Lord says of Babylon, "Come out of her, my people," I felt constrained to rebuke them over the shoulders of this inquisitive lady. These very zealous brethren gave countenance to the popular clamor that we make baptism a saviour, or a passport to heaven, disparaging all the private and social virtues of the professing public. Now as they were propounding their opinions to others, I intended to bring them to the proper medium by propounding an opinion to them in terms as strong and as pungent as their own.

The case is this: When I see a person who would die for Christ whose brotherly kindness, sympathy, and active benevolence know no bounds but his circumstances; whose seat in the Christian

assembly is never empty; whose inward piety and devotion are attested by punctual obedience to every known duty; whose family is educated in the fear of the Lord; whose constant companion is the Bible: I say, when I see such a one ranked among the heathen men and publicans, because he never happened to inquire, but always took it for granted that he had been scripturally baptized; and that, too, by one greatly destitute of all these public and private virtues, whose chief or exclusive recommendation is that he has been immersed, and that he holds a scriptural theory of the gospel: I feel no disposition to flatter such a one; but rather to disabuse him of his error. And while I would not lead the most excellent professor in any sect to disparage the least of all the commandments of Jesus, I would say to my immersed brother as Paul said to his Jewish brother who gloried in a system which he did not adorn: “Sir, will not his uncircumcision, or unbaptism, be counted to him for baptism? and will he not condemn you, who, though having the literal and true baptism, yet dost transgress or neglect the statutes of your King?”

3. We have a third reason: We have been always accused of aspiring to build up and head a party, while in truth we have always been forced to occupy the ground on which we now stand. I have for one or two years past labored to annul this impression, which I know is more secretly and generally bandied about than one in a hundred of our brethren may suspect. On this account I consented the more readily to defend Protestantism; and I have, in ways more than I shall now state, endeavored to show the Protestant public that it is with the greatest reluctance we are compelled to stand aloof from them--that they are the cause of this great “schism,” as they call it, and not we.

Now, with this exposition in mind, let us examine the meaning of the alleged concession. And first let me ask, What could induce us to make it at this crisis? or, I should more correctly say, to repeat it so strongly?

No one will say our opponents have compelled us by force of argument to make it. Themselves being judges, we have lost nothing in argument. All agree that the “concession” was uncalled for--a perfect free-will offering.

Neither can they say that we envy their standing, or would wish to occupy their ground; because, to say nothing of our having the pure original gospel institutions among us, regarding us merely as a new sect like themselves, we have no reason to wish to be with them, inasmuch as we have the best proselyting system in Christendom. Faith, repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins, with all the promises of the Christian adoption and the heavenly calling to those who thus put on Christ, is incomparably in advance of the sectarian altar and the straw-- the mourning bench, the anxious seat, and all the other paraphernalia of modern proselytism. That it is so practically, as well as theoretically, appears from the fact of its unprecedented advances upon the most discerning and devout portions of the Protestant parties. No existing party in this or the father-lands has so steadily and rapidly advanced as that now advocating the religion of the New Testament. It has been successfully plead within a few years in almost every state and territory in this great confederacy, and even in foreign countries.

All agree, for a thousand experiments prove it, that all that is wanting is a competent number of intelligent and consistent proclaimers, to its general, if not universal triumph, over all opposing systems. We have lost much, indeed, by the folly, hypocrisy, and wickedness of many pretenders, and by the imprudence and precipitancy of some good brethren: yet from year to year it bears up and advances with increasing prosperity, as the present season very satisfactorily attests.

Do we, then, seek to make and lead a large exclusive sect or party? Have we not the means! Why then concede any thing--even the bare possibility of salvation in any other party, if actuated by such fleshly and selfish considerations? With all these facts and reasonings fresh in our view, I ask, Is not such a concession--such a free-will offering, at such a time, the most satisfactory and unanswerable refutation that could be given to the calumny that we seek the glory of building a new sect in religion? If, then, as some of our opponents say, we have made a new and an unexpected concession in their favor, we have done it at such a time, in such circumstances, and with such prospects before us, as ought (we

think) henceforth to silence their imputations and reproaches on the ground of selfish or partizan views and feelings.

Some of our fellow-laborers seem to forget that approaches are more in the spirit and style of the Saviour, than reproaches. We have proved to our entire satisfaction, that having obtained a favorable hearing, a conciliatory, meek, and benevolent attitude is not only the most comely and Christian-like, but the most successful. Many of the Protestant teachers and their communities are much better disposed to us than formerly, and I calculate the day is not far distant when many of them will unite with us. They must certainly come over to us whenever they come to the Bible alone. Baptists and Pedobaptists are daily feeling more and more the need of reform, and our views are certainly imbuing the public mind more and more every year.

But to conclude, our brethren of Eastern Virginia have been the occasion at least of eliciting at this time so strong an expression of our opinion; and we have now many letters from that region for one from any other quarter on the aforesaid opinion. Had not some of them greatly and unreasonably abused the sects, or countenanced, aided, and abetted them that did so, and had not a few in some other regions made Christianity to turn more upon immersion than upon universal holiness, in all probability I would have answered the sister from Lunenburg in the following manner and style:--

The name Christian is now current in four significations:--

1. The ancient primitive and apostolic import simply indicates follower of Christ. With a strict regard to its original and scriptural meaning, my favorite and oft repeated definition is, A Christian is one that habitually believes all that Christ says, and habitually does all that he bids him.
2. But its national and very popular sense implies no more than a professor of Christianity. Thus we have the Christian nations, as well as the Pagan and Mahometan nations; the Christian sects as well as the sects political and philosophical.
3. But as soon as controversies arose about the ways and means of putting on Christ or of making a profession of his religion, in a new and special or appropriated sense, "a Christian" means one

who first believes that Jesus is the Christ, repents of his sins, is then immersed on confession into Christ's death, and thenceforth continues in the Christian faith and practice.

4. But there yet remains the sense in which I used the term in the obnoxious phrase first quoted by our sister of Lunenburg. As in the judgment of many, some make the profession right and live wrong; while others make the profession wrong, but live right; so they have adopted this style--"I don't know what he believes, nor how he was baptized, but I know he is a Christian." Thus Adam Clarke quotes some poet:

"You different sects who all declare, "Lo! Christ is here, and Christ is there! "Your stronger proofs divinely give, "And show me where the Christians live!"

Now in this acceptation of the word, I think there are many, in most Protestant parties, whose errors and mistakes I hope the Lord will forgive; and although they should not enter into all the blessings of the kingdom on earth, I do fondly expect they may participate in the resurrection of the just.

The words Jew, Israel, circumcision, disciple, are used in the same manner, even in the sacred writings: "They are not all Israel that are of Israel"--"An Israelite indeed"--"The true circumcision"--"A Jew inwardly and outwardly"--"Then are you my disciples indeed," &c.

I am glad to see our brethren so jealous of a correct style--so discriminating, and so independent. They are fast approaching to the habit of calling Bible things by Bible names. They only misunderstood me as using the term in its strictest biblical import, while in the case before us I used it in its best modern acceptation. I could as easily at first as at last have given this reply to our sister's queries- but I thought the times required something else-- and I was not mistaken. I have no doubt but it will yet appear to all that I have pursued in this the more useful and salutary course. Our Eastern brethren were indeed, I opine, hasty and precipitate enough in expressing themselves--almost indeed before they had time to hear and consider the whole matter. I wish they had been as prompt on another occasion, and I should not have been addressed on this subject by the worthy sister so often named. But we are all

learning and progressing towards perfection. If any of them, and not all, wish their communications to appear in this work, accompanied with a few pertinent remarks, I am in duty bound, according to my plan, to publish some of them.

I do not indeed blame them altogether for being prompt; for I had rather be an hour too soon as half an hour too late; yet I think some resolutions which I have received, were, upon the whole, rather premature. May the Lord bless all the holy brethren, and give them understanding in all things.

A.C.

~~~~~

## **IX. For Your Further Study**

For a much more indepth study on the subject of “baptism,” the following books are recommend:

1) BAPTISM: A BIBLICAL STUDY (Jack Cottrell, College Press, Joplin, MO., 1989)

2) BAPTISM AND THE REMISSION OF SINS (Edited by David W. Fletcher, College Press Publishing Co., Joplin, MO, 1990, 432 pages)

This is a highly recommended book to study. It is a collection of articles surveying throughout church history the view that baptism is for the remission of sins. It’s contributors are among some of the best scholars in the contemporary Restoration Movement. It also discusses controversies surrounding “re-baptism.”

3) HANDBOOK ON BAPTISM (Edited by J. W. Shepherd, Gospel Advocate Company, Nashville, TN, 1972, 512 pages)

This work, first published in 1894, is a compilation of quotes on the subject of baptism and related Scriptures by a broad assortment of historians, scholars, commentators, and theologians from virtually every major denomination.

4) BAPTISM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT (G. R. Beasley-Murray, Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1962, 442 pages)

This is an excellent treatment of the subject from a scholarly point of view, by one of the foremost scholars among the Baptist denomination. He readily admits that his conclusions run counter to the views held by those in his own denomination.

