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## OPEN LETTERS ON BAPTISM.

LETTER NO. XV.

MONCTON, N. B., Oct. 28, 1878.

To the Editor of the Wesleyan.

XIII.—LEXICONS THEIR OWN INTERPRETERS.

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of Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so"—Acts xvii: 11. Let us search the dictionaries, as we do the scriptures, whether those things are so; and receive their testimony with all readiness of mind, so far as it is worth receiving.

### MEANING OF ABLUO.

1.—The Latin word *abluo*, according to the dictionary of Rev. John T. White, D.D., of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and Rector of St. Martin, Ludgate, London, fourth edition, published by Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1870, means, page 3, among other things: "to wash away, to cleanse, to purify."

2.—*Ablutio* from *abluo*, according to White, means, "washing, cleansing, ablution."

3.—Webster, in his unabridged dictionary, published by Merriam, Springfield, 1861, page 1069, gives to the word *abluo* the same meaning that Dr. White, gives to the word *abluo*, namely, "to wash, to cleanse, to purify."

4.—By comparing White and Webster, it is apparent that *abluo* and *sprinkle* are equivalent words.

5.—Webster's same edition, page 1250, gives as a second meaning of *wash*: "to wet, to fall on and moisten; as the rain washes the flowers or plants." Webster also gives, as another meaning of the same word: "to cleanse by a current of water; as showers wash the streets."

6.—Webster, in no place, at least in this edition of his dictionary, gives *immerse* as an equivalent of *wash*, or as a meaning of *wash*. The nearest he comes to it is in the following definition, page 1250: "to squeeze and cleanse in water: as to wash wool. So sheep are said to be washed, when they are immersed in water, and wool squeezed, by which means it is cleansed."

7.—Webster, in no place, gives *immerse* as a meaning of *cleanse* or *purify*. [See pages 211 and 891.]

8.—Worcester, unabridged edition, Boston, 1867, gives as one meaning of *baptize*: "to sprinkle with water." He shows also that the word *abluo*, means washing or bathing the body, or some part of it. *Abluo*, then does not mean immersion.

Friedman's Lexicon, Leipzig, 1842, gives "spargere" and "lavare" as the meanings of *abluo*.

White's Lexicon gives: "to scatter or throw about, to sprinkle, wet, bedew, moisten, etc., as English meanings of *spargere*."

White's Lexicon gives: "to wet, moisten, bathe, bedew; to sprinkle; to wash away, wash out, etc., as English meanings of *lavare*."

Ainsworth's Dictionary, edition 1852, gives "to besprinkle," as one of the meanings of *lavare*, which is, according to Friedman, one of the meanings of *abluo*.

All the best Latin Dictionaries agree substantially, with those named, and clearly prove that "to sprinkle" is a meaning of the Latin word "*abluo*."

9.—The scriptures teach, in many places, that the religious mode of washing, cleansing, purifying, is in accord with those quotations from the dictionaries. For example: "Thou shalt thou do unto them to cleanse them: Sprinkle water of purifying upon them, Numbers vii: 8; and "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean," Ezekiel xxxvi: 25.

10.—There is not one word in the scriptures that proves that religious purifying, or cleansing, or washing, is by the mode of immersion.

11.—Hence it is apparent by comparing dictionary with dictionary that the Latin word *abluo*, and the English words *wash*, and *cleanse*, and *sprinkle*, are equivalent terms.

### MEANING OF LAVO.

According to Dr. White's dictionary, page 342, the Latin word *lavo* means: "to wet, moisten, bathe, bedew," and "to sprinkle." All the best Latin dictionaries give substantially the same meanings.

Rev. Joseph Cook, Knox College, Address, Toronto, October 1878, says: "The axiom, 'things which are equal to the same thing are equal to one another,' is true, not only on this earth, but true in the North Star, in the sun, anywhere." Therefore as *abluo*, according to White, is "equal" to *wash*; and as *sprinkle*, according to Webster, is equal to *wash*; it follows that *abluo* is "equal" to, or an equivalent of, *sprinkle*.

Friedman's Lexicon, 1842, gives "spargere," "aspergere," and "rigare" as Latin meanings of the Latin word "*lavo*."

White's Dictionary, as has been shown, gives "to sprinkle" as a meaning of "spargere."

White's Dictionary also gives, "to scatter or throw about, to sprinkle, wet, moisten," etc., as meaning of the Latin word "*aspergere*."

White's Dictionary also gives: "to wet, moisten, water, bedew anything with a liquid," as meanings of the Latin word "*rigare*."

Ainsworth, in his Dictionary of 1852, gives, "to besprinkle" as a meaning of "*lavo*."

Andrews, in his Dictionary of 1860, says, "*lavo* means in general to wash, also 'to bedew.'"

Hence it is clear that "to sprinkle" is the meaning of the Latin word "*lavo*."

Schrevelius gives both *abluo* and *lavo*, as meanings of the Greek word *baptizo*, and therefore, the lexicons themselves being judged, *baptizo* means "to sprinkle."

It is admitted that *mergo* is a meaning of the Greek word *baptizo*, and that *mergo* means to immerse. But it does not always mean to immerse, nor does it always imply contact with water in one way or another. For example:

"It provides for merging our Presbyteries into the Synods of our general Assembly."  
"The States are united, not merged."  
"The amendment merging the Minnesota with the Kansas bill was withdrawn."  
"Her evening sun set, merged, at length, with joy in the endless life of heaven."  
"The meeting will continue until 12 o'clock, and will then be merged into the prayer meeting."

### THE CATECHISM ON TRIAL.

In the light which those dictionaries give let us examine the meanings given on page 12.

1. SCHREVELIUS. What is the meaning of *baptizo*, according to Schrevelius? The Latin meanings of Schrevelius are: *mergo*, *abluo*, and *lavo*. Upon this point we all agree. The English meanings, as given by Rev. John Brown, in his pamphlet, page 28, are: "to baptize, immerse, wash off, bathe." These meanings are precisely those given by Dr. Graves, in the Debate, page 282.

The English meanings of *baptizo*, as given in the *Catechism of Baptism*, page 12, are: "to immerse, to wash, to sprinkle, to moisten, to wet."

The foregoing quotations from the lexicons, and especially from Dr. White's, prove, beyond all contradiction: (1) That my meanings are accurate in every particular; (2) That I have not "falsified" Schrevelius; (3) That I have not "manufactured" meanings; (4) That Rev. John Brown has omitted the following important words which are given in the dictionaries, namely: "to wet, moisten, bedew," and "to sprinkle; and (5) Mr. Brown's rendering of the meanings of *baptizo*, are incomplete, and untrue.

Moreover, two of the Latin meanings of Schrevelius, favour sprinkling, *lavo* in the most direct way, and *abluo* in a slightly less direct way, against one meaning, *mergo*, which favours immersion.

The Toronto Bible Index has affirmed, and Rev. John Brown has shouted: *absolutely not one lexicon gives "sprinkle."* By the lexicons let him who is of the truth stand; and by the lexicons let the false ones fall.

2. SCAPULA. Scapula published one edition of his lexicon in 1579. Dr. Graves, (Baptist), in Debate, page 282, says that Scapula gives as the meanings of *baptizo*: "immersion, washing, washing clean." Dr. Ditzler (Methodist), in Debate, page 31, says that Scapula gives as the meaning of *baptizo*: "no other New Testament meaning than *abluo*, and *lavo*."

Professor Enoch Pond, in "Treatise on Christian Baptism," Boston, edition of 1833, gives, pages 19 and 23; *mergo*, *abluo* and *lavo*, as Latin meanings of *baptizo*.

The *Catechism of Baptism*, page 12, says, Scapula gives the same definitions of *baptizo* as Schrevelius. The authorities cited are in exact accord with what the *Catechism* says.

3. HEDERICUS.—Dr. Ditzler, in debate page 31, says that "Hedericus, as well as Budaens, Stephanus, Passow, Scapula and Schrevelius, all give only *abluo* and *lavo* as the New Testament meanings of *baptizo* and that 'they never dip or immerse.'"

Prof. Pond says, Treatise, page 23, "Hedericus follows Stephanus and Scapula," and gives *mergo*, *abluo*, and *lavo*, as meanings of *baptizo*. The *Catechism* says, "Hedericus gives the same definitions," as Schrevelius. The Bible Index and Mr. Brown, mentioned on page 12, has been "falsified." The authorities quoted show that the statement in the *Catechism* is completely accurate.

4. SCHLENSNER.—Dr. Ditzler, Debate, page 29, says: "Schlensner has been claimed as a great witness for immersion. I hold him as well as Stokius, in my hand. He is a great standard." Dr. Ditzler quotes from Schlensner as giving "I immerse," &c., and also quotes from him, as giving, *abluo*, *lavo*, *agua purgo*. Dr. Ditzler says that Schlensner "shows where in this connection the Greek *baptizo* interchanged in many codices (M.S.S.) with *abluo* and *sprinkle*."

Prof. Pond, Treatise, page 24, gives the same definitions that Dr. Ditzler does, "*abluo*, *lavo*, *agua purgo*."

These authorities perfectly sustain the rendering of Schlensner, on page 12 of the *Catechism*.

As Schlensner's lexicons, like the other

popular dictionaries, have been subjected to many alterations, it may be well here to quote from Ditzler on this point. He says, Debate, page 33:

"Can he name two lexicons that are not translations or abridgements, the one of the other, or both from one, that render this word alike? He cannot. Take Schlensner's two lexicons—one for the New Testament, the other for Septuagint Greek—his definitions of *baptizo* are wholly different—radically different. Take Wahl, a noted lexicographer, as well as Schlensner of the present century. In two editions of the same year, 1829, his definitions are radically different as to order, and everything revised. In a third edition, 1831, he changes it again, erasing *immerse*, and inserting *sprinkle*, just as he had erased *lavo* from its place, and in the second edition inserted *immerse*."

It is well we have something better than lexicons to teach us the mode of baptism. We have indeed a more sure word of prophecy in the Bible—the word that liveth, and abideth for ever.

Dr. Angus (Baptist) Bible Hand Book, London, edited 1857, says, page 20: "The grand lesson, taught by these facts, is that while we need a knowledge of Greek generally, in order to read the New Testament, we need in order to understand it, a knowledge of the New Testament Greek, and of the Old Testament version. So essential is this knowledge, that a merely English reader, with only his English Bible, may understand the New Testament better than the Scholar who brings to the investigation of a particular passage, only classical acquisitions."

5. COLE (OR COULON). Prof. Pond, Treatise, page 19, says, this writer renders *baptizo* *mergo*, *tingo*, *abluo*. Again he says, page 23, Coulon calls baptism: "a sacred mystery of the entrance into Christianity administered in the church (immersion, ablution, et aspersione) by immersion, washing and sprinkling." Thus does this authority thoroughly sustain the *Catechism*.

6. PASSOW. Dr. Ditzler says, Debate, page 30: "Passow. We reserve this to the last because it is admitted by all scholars—German, English, American—by immersionists and affectionists to be the most learned, most scientific, and critical of all Greek lexicons ever issued—1841—being in three large volumes, the one I hold having eighteen hundred and eighty-four pages in it, double column, fine print..... It is in German. "*Baptizo*, from *bapto*, (1) oft and repeatedly to immerse..... Thence to *moisten*, to *wet*, *sprinkle* (*benetzen*, *anfeuchten*, *begiessen*..... *urb.* *ubergiessen*, *uberhauen*, *uberhaufen*, etc.....) generally, TO BE SPRINKLED, TO POUR UPON, TO OVERHELM, to burden with taxes, debts, etc." Such is Passow's and Roat's testimony."

Most completely does Passow sustain my *Catechism*; and yet Mr. Brown and his trio of newspapers cry aloud, and iterate and reiterate the cry: "Mr. Currie falsified the lexicons—Mr. Currie is a manufacturer of definitions of Greek words—absolutely not one lexicon gives *sprinkle* as a meaning of *baptizo*—absolutely not one, absolutely not one."

7. SUIDAS. Dr. Graves (Baptist), in Debate, page 282, says, Suidas gives *mergo*, *abluo*, *lavo*, as meanings of *baptizo*. The meaning is the same as that given by Schrevelius.

Prof. Pond, Treatise, page 23, gives substantially the same meanings.

Page 12, of my *Catechism*, says, Suidas defines *baptizo*: "To immerse, to moisten, to sprinkle, to wash, to cleanse."

By comparing Pond's definition, published thirty years before my *Catechism* was written, with what Graves said only three or four years ago, and also comparing these with White's dictionary, published six years later than my *Catechism*, it is apparent that these authorities sustain every word which I have given as a meaning of *baptizo*. The same authorities also show that Mr. Brown's definitions are a gross misrepresentation of the facts, inasmuch as he has omitted the principal word in dispute, namely the word "sprinkle," as well as other important words.

8. DWIGHT. Dwight is the only other authority mentioned on the much fought-over page 12, of my *Catechism*. I have no means of verifying what has been said about Dwight; as I can find no book within reach that speaks of him. I have culled, from public and private libraries in Quebec, Ontario, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere, information which is embodied in the *Catechism*. Where I met with Dwight I do not now remember. The definitions as given by him are unimportant namely: "To tinge, stain dye, or color," and they do not touch the point now in dispute.

Many other authorities, German and English, might be cited, whose testimony would show that my position is thoroughly correct, and irrefragable when I say, on page 12, of my *Catechism* of Baptism, that the Greek word *baptizo* means: "To immerse, to wash, to sprinkle, to moisten, to wet."

Dr. Ditzler, in Debate, page 449, says: "Now we have seen that all the great standards give *sprinkle* or *pour*, to both under the abridgements of Stephanus, born under immersionism rule. Yet he never gives dip as a meaning rule. He never gives *immerse* as a Bible meaning. He gives *abluo*, *lavo*, as its only New Testament meanings. But Passow, Suicer, Stokius,

Schlensner, Schneider, Roat and Palm—twenty five authorities define it *sprinkle* or *both*. Schneider, a great German, 1819, gives its general meanings as equivalent to *breche*—sprinkle, shed forth. Passow, gives its general meaning as "sprinkle upon, pour upon."

Let the reader "mark, learn, and inwardly digest," the testimony of the authorities herein quoted, and judge whether page 12, of my *Catechism* of Baptism, is worthy, or not, of the accusations made against it.

D. D. CURRIE.

## Scintillations of Thought.

### INDUSTRY.

Time worketh, let me work too,  
Time undoeth, let me do.  
Busy as time my work I ply  
Till I rest in the rest of eternity.  
Sin worketh, let me work too:  
She undoeth, let me do.  
Busy as sin my work I ply  
Till I rest in the rest of eternity.

When a man goes thirsty to the well, his thirst is not allayed by merely going there. On the contrary, it is increased by every step he goes. It is by what he draws out of the well that his thirst is satisfied. And just so it is not by the mere bodily exercises of waiting upon ordinances that you will ever come to peace, but tasting of Jesus in ordinances, whose flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed.

Remember that the secret studies of an author are the sunken piers upon which to rest the bridge of his fame, spanning the dark waters of oblivion. They are out of sight; but without them no superstructure can stand secure. —Longfellow.

There is a dark and also a bright side to every providence, as there was to the ferry, cloudy pillar that guided God's people of old in the desert. Nature looks upon the dark side, and calls it sorrow and sadness; but faith sees the sun dispersing the darkness, and calls it by the name of joy.—Bonar.

A doxology in the heart, is a glory in the life. Not so much a graceful rest from the finished service of duty as it is the glorious outbursting of a fountain of salvation, or the outgiving of a peaceful river of living water. What then is the fountain from whence arises this well of living water? It is Christ in the heart.

The Lord watches us with the eye of his love, supports us by the arm of his power, and guides us by the hand of his providence.

We shall all be held responsible, not only for the evil which we do ourselves, but for the evil which we might prevent others from doing.

The infinity of God is not mysterious, it is only unfathomable, not concealed, but incomprehensible. It is a clear infinity—the darkness of the pure unsearchable sea.—Ruskin.

The word of God moves along like a passing shower, whenever it comes it must be received at once, or it will be gone. How soon a man's "not now" becomes "a never!"

No one can "attain unto righteousness" if he seek it "as it were by the works of the law." It matters not whether it be ritual or daily duties. Mere unloving, untrusting regularity fails in producing goodness. Goodness comes not from death, but life.

We are haunted by an ideal life, and it is because we have within us the beginning and the possibility of it.—Phillips Brooks.

Duty is a power which rises with us in the morning, and goes to rest with us at night. It is co-extensive with the action of our intelligence. It is the shadow which cleaves to us, go where we will, and which only leaves us when we leave the light of life.—Gladstone.

Ministers are not like Plato and Aristotle, the originators of their own doctrines, or the teachers of the doctrines of other men, but simply the dispensers of the truths which God has revealed.—Hodge.

—I venerate old age; and I love not the man who can look without emotion upon the sunset of life, when the dusk of evening begins to gather over the watery eye, and the shadows of twilight grow broader and deeper upon the understanding.—Longfellow.