

Three points in this article claim special attention. 1st. *Christen* or *Christening*. 2nd. *Naming the child*. 3rd. *The private administration of the Ordinance*.

1st. By the term "*Christen*," those who use it, mean baptize. *Baptize* is the scriptural name, but has been corrupted by the Church of Rome to *christen*. That corrupt Church looks on all outside her own pale as infidel, and indeed as scarcely human, and unless christened, or made Christians by a Romish priest, perdition will be their inevitable portion. It were well if the use of that Popish name were confined to that Church, but it is to be lamented that it is commonly used in almost all the Protestant Churches. Much might be said on this point, but space forbids.

2nd. *Naming the Child*. An ignorant and absurd notion is entertained by a large and otherwise intelligent part of the Christian Church, that *naming* the child by the minister is a part of the ordinance. Now, pronouncing the name is intended for no other purpose but for the information of the assembled people. Most ministers are in the habit of saying: "A. or B. I baptize thee," etc., mentioning the name solely for the information of those present. But too many actually think that the minister, in baptism, *gives* the child the name, that he baptizes it A. or B. and that the right to use that name flows from the application of the water. Hence the question is often asked: "When will you name the child?" The infant is often called *little nameless*, until it is baptized, making the name a part of the ordinance. It would be well if ministers would more diligently instruct their people in this important matter.

3. The last and most important point is that of the *private* administration of the ordinance. How often is it administered in the family and in a private room, instead of in the face of the congregation, showing that there is a deplorable degree of ignorance both on the part of the pastor and the people. They can have no clear views of the design and significance of that holy ordinance. Baptism is only for *christians* and *their offspring*. And inasmuch as the profession is always public on the part of the parent, so it should be on behalf of the child whom that parent represents. The private administration of the ordinance of baptism is wholly unscriptural and is followed by injurious consequences to all concerned. "The nature and design of the institution," says a distinguished living author, "require that it should not be dispensed in private, but in the house of God, and in the public assemblies of the Church. It is the badge of a public profession of the religion of Christ; it is an open joining of the subject of baptism to the Lord's people, and a recognition, on the part of the Church, of one who has been added to its fellowship and admitted to its privileges." * * * "While it is admitted that, in some special cases, such as in times of persecution, and when the health of parent or child would be seriously endangered by attending upon the ordinance in the place of public worship, baptism may be elsewhere administered, it should, in every instance, be dispensed in connexion with teaching from the Word, and in presence of members of the Church, who are notified and encouraged to attend upon the occasion of the administration."

The private administration of the ordinance of baptism is a deviation from "the footsteps of the flock" in the purest times, and has been condemned by the most distinguished witnesses for truth. Calvin declares, that "this sacrament which introduces us into the Church, and is a sign of our adoption, cannot validly be dispensed except in the public assembly of believers. Private baptism neither agrees with the ordinance of God, nor the practice of the apostles." In the *Directory for Worship*, the Westminster divines say: "Baptism is not to be administered in private places, or privately, but in the place of public worship, and in the face of the congregation, where the people may, most conveniently, see and hear." The Church of Scotland, in its best days, ever discouraged private baptism. Bishop Burnet says, that the Church of England at the Reformation, judged it expedient to "have all baptisms done in the Church, and permitted the other only in cases of necessity." The Reformed Church of France declares that "no baptism shall be administered but in Church assemblies." The Church of Geneva enacted: "No baptism shall be celebrated but in the ecclesiastical assemblies, immediately after sermon."

It would be well if christian pastors and people would study this subject more attentively.