

# THE CHRISTIAN.

"FAITH COMETH BY HEARING, AND HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD."—Paul.

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## The Christian.

### SERMON ON BAPTISM.

Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations: baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Matt. 28: 19.

#### 1. What is Baptism?

(a) Baptism is a rite or ceremony belonging to the Gospel dispensation. The first mention made of this rite in God's Word is in the account given of the harbinger of Christ, when he came to prepare the way of the Lord, to make his paths straight he preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; and he said, he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me: Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

(b) It did not come in the place of Jewish washings or sprinklings; neither does it fill the place of circumcision;

(c) It was not prophesied of by Isaiah when he said, so shall he sprinkle many nations; neither by Ezekiel, in the words, Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean. The word used by these prophets was not the same word used by our Saviour; neither did these prophesies refer to this dispensation.

(d) It is the ceremony instituted by John the Baptist to which our Saviour submitted to fulfill all righteousness and leave an example for His followers, and Jesus has made it the rite of induction into His kingdom. We are said by Paul to be baptized into Christ, and in so doing to put on Christ.

#### 2. How is baptism performed?

Here we meet an apparent difficulty, for the translators of King James did not, for some reason, translate the word that tells the how of its being performed, but left us with a Greek word with an English ending. Were we to examine the Greek lexicons and Greek literature we might satisfy ourselves as to the action. But this difficulty is only apparent, for circumstantial evidence is sometimes stronger than direct testimony. Let us then investigate the word of God on this subject, and

(a) We find that when this rite was to be performed they sought a place where there was much water. (John iii: 23.) And John also was baptizing in Aenon, near to Salim, because there was much water there. They baptized in the river. (Mark i: 5.) And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

(b) Before they were baptized, they, (both the administrator and the person to be baptized), went down into the water. (Acts viii: 38.) And he commanded the chariot to stand still, and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

(c) After they were baptized they came up out of the water. (Mat. iii: 16.) And Jesus when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water, and, lo, the heavens were opened,

unto him, and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him, and, lo, a voice from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Acts viii: 39.—And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more, and he went on his way rejoicing. Were we to common sense work we might let the subject rest there, for who ever knew a preacher to take a candidate for baptism to a river where there was much water, to go down with the candidate into the water for any other purpose but to dip or immerse him. I have never seen such a thing done, and I do not suppose that the apostles were more simple than men of the present day. But we are not left to imagine what was done, for Paul says in Rom. vi: 4, 5, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." And again in Col. ii: 12. "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Paul also states the result to the body in these words, "Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." And once more we read in Tit. iii: 5. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." In the figures which Paul has here used we can see but one action. No person can be said to be buried until they are covered, neither is anything said to be planted until it is covered. Our Saviour once had a conversation with a man who came to ask about the kingdom which He was soon to set up, and Jesus informed him that in order for a man to enter that kingdom, he must be born again, born of water and the Spirit. These figures all point in one direction. A person then, in being baptized, goes to a river, or where there is much water, and then he with the administrator, goes down into the water, where he is buried and raised up to walk in the newness of life. Then he comes up out of the water.

#### 3. Who are to be baptized?

(a) Those who were capable of making a decision for themselves and of going to the place where the baptizing was to be done. We never read of any person being brought to John, to Jesus, or to the apostles for baptism.

(b) Those who believed the Gospel. Mark xvi: 16.—He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. We find by an examination of the preaching of the apostles, after they had been commissioned by the Lord that their first preaching was to present Christ as having died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, having been buried and risen again, according to the Scriptures. (1 Cor. xv: 4.) When these facts were believed with all the heart, or in other words, when they believed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, they were baptized.

(Acts viii: 12; viii: 37; xviii: 8.) Many other passages might be cited to establish this fact, but we deem these sufficient.

#### (c) Those who repent.

Our Lord has said, except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish as did those upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and those Galileans whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices, and Paul said when speaking to those on Mars Hill. The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent. In the first sermon preached after the Lord had commissioned His apostles, we are told that when they heard that the person whose blood they had called to rest on them, and on their children, was raised up, exalted, and made by God, Lord and Christ, they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Now, Peter was fitted to tell them, for he had received the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, and he spoke as the Spirit gave him utterance, and the answer which he gave them was this: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ." (Acts ii: 38.) Peter has given us the order here and who would dare to change it. We see then that persons coming to baptism were required to believe the Gospel and repent.

#### (d) Those who confessed Christ.

When the eunuch said to Philip see, here is water what doth hinder me to be baptized, he said: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (Acts viii: 37.) In writing to the Romans Paul says: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. x: 10.) And the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise. . . . The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart, that is the word of faith which we preach. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. x: 8, 9.) The persons then who were baptized by the apostles had their hearts changed, or purified, for faith makes this change as we learn from Peter. (Acts xv: 9.) God put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Their actions were changed, for this is the office of repentance. It is a turning from one thing to another, in this case from sin to righteousness. The confession of Christ as the Son of God indicates to the world that these changes have taken place. Baptism without these changes is a myth, is not in reality a baptism at all. I would not knowingly lead down into the water for baptism any person in which these changes had not taken place for any consideration.

#### 4. What is the design of this institution?

(a) Remission of sins, a present salvation. We find that the baptism of John had this design, for Mark says: (i chap., 4 verse) "John did baptize in the wilderness and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sin." Remission of sins then was an object to be attained in being baptized by John; but, is that object to be attained in obeying the command of