

day draws near; lose no time in securing the benefits of atoning grace, and then rest confidently in the divine assurance, that, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

INFANT SPRINKLING:

IS THERE ANY HARM IN IT?

"Any harm in it?" I am surprised and grieved that any one who takes the Bible for his guide, should ask such a question respecting a ceremony so unscriptural as that of infant sprinkling. For there is no more authority in the Bible for baptizing babes than there is for any other of the innumerable absurdities of the Church of Rome.

Any *harm* in it? If there be not, then there is no harm in any "transgression of the law." But, "be not deceived: God is not mocked." The Saviour has both by his own example and command, given us the law of baptism. And there is the harm in transgressing that law. Show me a single text in all the New Testament, from Matthew to Revelation, for baptizing infants, and I will baptize all the infants in this town, if the parents will allow me, immediately: yea, more, I will stand forth before the public, and openly renounce my Baptist principles.

This I now deliberately promise to do, if you, or any one, will produce a single passage in the Bible in which there is an express precept for infant sprinkling, or any example of it sanctioned by Christ or his apostles; for remember, "THE BIBLE, AND THE BIBLE ONLY, IS THE RELIGION OF PROTESTANTS;" and none, I believe, but the Baptists can abide by this glorious principle of the Reformation.

I know you may read about baptizing infants and bells, and of all sorts of Popish superstitions in *men's* books; but in God's book you will find no such unmeaning devices, for

"Men's books with heaps of chaff are stored,
God's word doth golden grains afford;
Then leave the chaff and spend your pains
In gathering up the golden grains."

Now take your Bible, and examine with me, "what saith the scripture" on the subject; and first, you may see from Mat. iii. 6, concerning John's baptism, that many "were baptized of him in Jordan confessing their sins." Is it not plain from this passage, first, that none of them were *infants*, for they were baptized, "confessing their sins," which infants are not capable of doing; and, secondly, that they were not *sprinkled* out of a basin or font, but baptized in a river, for we know that to baptize is to *dip* or *bury* in water, because the

apostle Paul, writing to the Romans, vi. 4, and referring to this sacred ordinance, says, "We are buried with him by baptism." Another thing is also plain, that there were no Godfathers nor Godmothers at the baptism. The Prayer-book of the Church of England says: "There shall be for every male child, two Godfathers and one Godmother; and for every female, one Godfather, and two Godmothers." And these are to promise and vow three things for the poor little infant: *first*, that it shall renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh; *secondly*, that it shall believe all the articles of the Christian faith; and *thirdly*, that it shall keep God's holy will and commandments all the days of its life. Now, I ask you, as in the sight of God, whether any person can fulfil such vows and promises as these even for himself? How much less ensure their fulfilment by others! Why it is an engagement which even an angel from heaven could not pledge himself to execute, and which he would not undertake! and yet all sorts of ungodly people are doing so every day.

But to proceed: in the same chapter of Matthew you have an account of our Lord's baptism, from the 13th to the 16th verse. But Jesus Christ was not an infant, for he was now about thirty years of age, Luke iii. 23; neither was he sprinkled with a few drops of water, nor was the sign of the cross made on his forehead, but he went down to the river Jordan, and, as it is written, "When he was baptized, he went up straightway out of the water."

But perhaps some will tell you that it is certain Jesus Christ took little children in his arms. Yes, I know he did, for his heart was full of love; but he *did not baptize them*; we are told he did not. He "blessed them," but it is recorded in John iv. 2, that "Jesus himself baptized not." That point, therefore, is settled for ever, "For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

But turn now to Matthew xxviii. 19, where you have our Lord's commission to his disciples, "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." And here you will observe, they were first to *teach*, and then to *baptize*; so that you must see at once they could not baptize infants, because they must first be taught, or made disciples; and you may be sure the apostles acted according to their Lord's command,—first making disciples, instrumentally by their ministry, and then baptizing them. For what would you think, if when a farmer told his servant to go and plough and sow a certain field, the servant should, "Well I shall alter the directions of my master and follow my own. I shall *sow* it first, and then *plough* it afterwards." Would this be obeying his master? Cer-

tainly not. He must not only do the things commanded, but to do them in the prescribed order. So must we obey the Saviour's command with regard to baptism.

Let us see, however, in what way the inspired apostles understood that law; this surely will decide the question. Turn then to Acts ii. 41, where it is written, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized." None of these, therefore, could be infants, for they "*gladly received the word*," which infants could not do.

See also Acts viii. 12, "When they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both *men and women*." But not a word about *infants*. I once asked a minister who practised infant sprinkling, whether he dare take a pen and alter that verse? which he might easily do by writing the word *children* or *infants* at the end of it; and he said "*no, I dare not do that!*" But if the baptism of infants be not in the word of God, it is as great a sin to practise it in his name, as it would be to insert it in his word. He who dares not alter the bible with his *pen*, should not dare to alter it by his *practice*; for "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book," Rev. xxii. 18. Is there *no harm* in this?

Again, in Acts viii. 36-39, you have an account of the conversion and baptism of the eunuch. Read it attentively and prayerfully, and you will see that *first* he believed, and then went down into the water, and being baptized, "came up out of the water;"—exactly in accordance with the practice of the Baptists of the present day.

See also, Acts x., in which you have an account of the conversion and baptism of Cornelius, which, like all the other instances of baptism in the word of God, fully confirms our practice of *believers' baptism*.

Besides these instances however, you read of the baptism of Lydia, of the Jailor, of Crispus and Stephanas, and of their "*households*," or families, and therefore it has been said, "*Oh, there must have been infants in those families!*" But why so? Prove it, and I will give up the point. Why, you know, that there are many families in which there are no infants. Only look round to the pews in your own congregation, or to the houses in your own town; and are there not many households in which there are no infants? You know there are! And is this bare conjecture—this uncertain guess, the only argument that can be brought for Infant Sprinkling? That cause should certainly be abandoned which leans upon such broken reeds for support. But if there *had* been any infants in those families, the apostles could not have baptized them; because as I have already shown you, their Master's order was first