

Christian or Romish Baptism?

JUSTIN D. FULTON, D. D.

Text—Matt. 3: 16. "For it is so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

These words fell from the lips of the God man in that memorable hour when Jesus Christ, our adorable Saviour, part of from the life of the house to become the hope of the world. It was a symbolic event in history, a way mark in the wilderness of sin, and outlined the pathway from a dead past to the living present and an opening future.

From far and near the people had gathered to witness the immersion of the sons of men; utterly ignorant of the fact that they were to behold the burial in the Jordan of the immaculate Son of God.

For months the voice of John saying, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," had been stirring the air that pavilioned the Jordan hills with a new emotion. The Lamb of God, born in a manger, reared in Nazareth, was on the way from Galilee to the Jordan to place before the eyes of mankind in all its significance the rite of Christian baptism. Immersion, death to sin, a burial to the world, and a resurrection to a new life had long been the practice of those who reputed to be Christians, and who looked to the coming of Christ.

"In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judea. And there went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and were immersed in Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance; and thus he said to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now, also, the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. I, indeed, immerse you with water unto repentance, but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to carry; He shall immerse you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Here the leader of the people paused. There was a movement in the crowd. Some thing remarkable was taking place. A man in the prime of his strength, with a face beaming with power, and a look that commanded worship, had reached the edge of the expectant multitude. They made an opening for him. He passed on to John to be immersed of him. John, the ruler of the multitude, in amazement by the appearance of that being who comes to take away the sins of the world and exclaims, "I have need to be immersed of thee and comest thou to me?" And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now, for it is becoming us to fulfil all righteousness. Then John obeyed Jesus. Together they descended into the Jordan, a stream linked in association to the story of Israel's march, but henceforth to be "come more famed as the liquid tomb in which Jesus Christ was buried and again as He became the way, the truth and the life for the people of God. The stormy banks of the Jordan are lined with a curious multitude. They behold the King of Glory in His highly adorned and marked visage. He is alone. Mary that bore him, busy with her home duties, is at home with the four boys and the girls that have found in her a mother in the person of Joseph a father. Jesus, to them, is an inexplicable mystery. He is away. Accompanied to be much apart in prayer and communion with the Infinite Father, no notice is taken of it, until the story of what has occurred at the Jordan breaks upon the hillside of Nazareth. Prophecy touches prophecy, and as when two electric currents collide, the result is a blaze and an illumination; so now the path of toiling millions is guided with a light that breaks through the open windows of heaven, because prophecy is becoming history and the forerunner leads the way as Jesus descends into the flowing stream. John speaks. The people cannot hear. They can only see. Christ's immersion is an object lesson for them and the whole world. They see the form buried beneath the liquid tomb. The Lord Jesus commits Himself to the keeping of a man, a type of the Christ in humanity, the result of which union is Christianity. "Christ rises into sight. The face of the God man is turned heavenward. Luke 3: 21, 22 says, "And Jesus being immersed and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him. And so we are immersed into the name of the Father" whose voice was heard saying, "This is My beloved son in whom I am well pleased," into the name of "the Son" who had glorified the act of immersion, and into the name of "the Holy Ghost," who had descended upon Jordan's flowing stream, the trine God had revealed Himself.

Christian immersion became a fact. The man, Christ Jesus, at thirty years of age, placed in that not three truths of immense value: 1. Death. 2. Burial. 3. Resurrection. Paul in Romans sixth sets before us that (1) the waters of baptism krow a grave, (2) baptism is a burial, (3) the baptized one is buried in the likeness of Christ's death. Because of this Baptism's immortality. The word baptizo translated means, "I immerse, or dip, or plunge, bury, or overhelm." Immersion is not salvation. It ought to be an evidence of it. Jesus said just prior to His ascension after His crucifixion, after His burial and resurrection, at the close of His three years of miraculous living: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore into all the world, preach the Gospel to every creature: He that believeth and is immersed shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be damned."

Baptism is a transferred word. It is not a translation. Such has been Rome's power even in the Christian church, that for the sake of peace men have refused to declare sprinkling or pouring, the creation and invention of Romanism, to be a poor substitute for the significant ordinance by immersion and so they have not interfered with the Romish ritual and have withheld the true rendering of the word baptizo.

The Greek church teaches and practices immersion. The Baptist church has held fast to the apostolic mode. The leaven of Gospel truth is at work. Will

it leaven the whole or shall it be hindered? In favor of its universal triumph is the example and command of Christ and the desire of millions to please Jesus because of their love for Him. Against it is Romanism and a claim that it is a mystery of importance whether we fall all righteousness or not.

1. Romish baptism, by either sprinkling or pouring, ignores the death, the grave and the resurrection typified by the immersion of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2. Romish baptism is a distortion of the act for the sake of convenience and a perversion of the truth inculcated by it, to mislead and destroy.

What is baptism? Rome answers: "Baptism is a sacrament which cleanses from original sin, makes us Christians, children of God and heirs of heaven."

Q. Are actual sins ever remitted by baptism? A. Actual sins, and all the punishment due to them are remitted by baptism, if the person baptised be guilty of any.

Q. Is baptism necessary to salvation? A. Baptism is necessary to salvation because without it we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Q. Who can administer baptism? A. The priest is the ordinary minister of baptism, but in case of necessity any one who has the use of reason may baptise.

Q. How is baptism given? A. Whoever baptises should pour water on the head of the person to be baptised, and say while pouring the water, "I baptise thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Q. How many kinds of baptism are there? A. There are three kinds of baptism: baptism of water, of desire, and of blood.

Thus, without apology, is the plain and positive truth of the New Testament set aside and baptismal regeneration is unblushingly taught. It has infected millions of people. But its power is waning. Infant baptism is becoming with evangelical churches a thing of the past. Why not drop sprinkling and pouring and let us be one in Christ all the world around? Romish baptism is a part of a conspiracy against the truth as it is in heaven. For more than 300 years immersion of the believer was the rule. At last a poor soldier was dying and prayed for immersion. It was inconvenient if not impossible to comply with his request. As a matter of expediency water was carried to him and a little of it was placed on his brow in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. The mistake then made was, they claimed that immersion was essential to salvation. Baptismal regeneration is a man made dogma and Romanism is largely built on this delusion. Immersion is a privilege quite as much as a duty. Having been released the desire is born within the soul to imitate Christ by following in the path He trod, to be like the grave-digger who has buried that the resurrection triumph may be enjoyed. The Romish way may be the easier, it is not the better way. It is a delusion and a snare. Its touch is a taint and millions are restless under the bonds it brings.

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In Pisa is one of the most famed baptiseries of the world. There in the summer of 1889, I saw a priest take an unconscious babe, put oil on his brow, salt in his mouth and pour water on his head, and then he turned to the child on the roll as a member of the Roman Catholic communion. Rome baptises and elsewhere in Italy are large baptiseries where a hundred could be immersed at a time.

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For a long time error was practised when convenient, but in case of sickness aspersion or pouring was permitted to take its place. Then came infant baptism and its terrible effects. The doctrine of the new birth, of believers' baptism and the purpose of baptism were lost from sight.

As a result an unconverted church membership gained a footing in the churches of Christ and denominations of various names, holding to Romish baptism and ignoring the plain and positive teachings and requirements of Jesus Christ, have obtained place and power.

Sprinkling and pouring as creations of Romanism are used to promote the interests of their originator. Thousands and tens of thousands of Protestant children are inducted by servant girls or by priests, through their aid, into the Roman Catholic communion, and it is the command of the pope and is binding upon Roman Catholic nurses in all our public institutions to deny to such all communication with evangelical truth. This is solemnly declared by the churches of Romanism before the committee of the senate in Albany, N. Y., in presence of some of the leading Pado-baptists of the state. "What do you think of it?" asked a leading Methodist. "It is all right." "How is it all right?"

Romanism invented the mode, has a patent on it and has a right to use it. Protestants that would oppose Romanism owe it to Christ and truth to pluck up this root of error and unite together in honoring the example of our Saviour. Can it be done? Recently has the pastor of the Regent's Park chapel in London, said to Pado-baptists: "You may be baptised as a believer, without becoming a member of the Baptist denomination. You may be baptised and still continue in communion with that Christian body with which you have been accustomed to worship. This rite is a personal matter between the Lord and the individual believer. What answer will Pado-baptists make to this kind offer?"

3. Christian baptism has its place. It follows believing rather than precedes it. Mark 16: 16 distinctly says: "He that believeth and is immersed shall be saved." The same truth is brought out in the story of Philip and the eunuch. Philip preached Christ to the eunuch. "And as they went on their way they came unto a certain water, and the eunuch said: See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be immersed? And Philip said: If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest. And he answered and said: I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the

chariot to stand still; and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he immersed him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip, and he said unto the eunuch, he went on his way rejoicing, a member of the universal church. The same with Peter and Cornelius. Acts 8: 35-40.

SMALL CHRISTIAN OR ROMANISH BAPTISM FURTHER?

This question is asked not to give offense, but to lead to action. It is to be answered by Christians and not by denominations. The desire for union is widely felt. Could we see the need of it in all its bearings the desire would be increased and thousands and perhaps millions would leave the ranks of sects and join a great Pauline Propaganda animated not only with the desire to preach the gospel to those that are in Rome, but to form an aggressive force that should resist the encroachments of papalism, and first by the spirit not of Paul a Becket, who desired to rescue the sepulchre of Christ from the hands of the infidels, but rather with that of Paul, the apostle, who, following Christ into His liquid tomb, began a crusade against a world-wide infidelity.

Immersion is borne in obedience to Jesus Christ. For three centuries it furnished in its Jordan current the stream into which the obedient believer found his place of burial to the world and his hope of triumph in the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit. He came, the blessing of the Highest in which His sonship was proclaimed and His victory assured. Then came the Romish Arve that struck the bed of the river, and the stream was hindered. The Romish mart strode the representative of Rome and asked, "Who protests?" There was no voice heard. The Lollards and the Lombards, the Waldensians and the Paulicians were slain. Three years passed. Luther finds a Bible chained to an altar. He reads it. He hears the voice as he climbs Pilate's staircase in Rome, "The just shall live by faith." The mist is scattered. The Bible is translated. The Jordan is uncovered. Believers multiply, who desire to be baptized. They win the mastery. The Arve of pouring and sprinkling is being thrown back. Let us have hope. God is with us. Let us have faith. He is with us. Let us have love. He is with us. Let us have peace. He is with us. Let us have joy. He is with us. Let us have mercy. He is with us. Let us have grace. He is with us. Let us have the Word when Peter spoke to Cornelius' household, "Can any man forbid water that these should not be immersed, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be immersed in the name of the Lord."

Why do you trample on the fourth commandment, which commands you to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy? asked a Congregationalist of a Romish priest.

"The church gives a dispensation," replied the priest, "commanding the attendance upon the mass in the morning and permitting us to employ the rest of the day as it may please us. Hence picnics, base ball games and Sunday excursions are allowed."

"The church has no right to do it," said the good brother.

"The church has the keys and can set aside any doctrine it desires to disown." "No, you do not," replied the priest.

"It is easily done," said the priest, "who do you get sprinkling or pouring as baptism?"

"From the Bible." "You must be poorly read in the Scriptures to say that. They teach immersion. Rome instituted sprinkling and pouring."

Had not the Romanist the advantage of the Pado-baptist? Can Pado-baptists afford to be chained to this dead body of Rome, and set aside the teachings of Christ? Know they not that if they do so, they will lose the right to their own side immersion as baptism, she may go on and sweep out of the life of the church the distinctive doctrines of the gospel of Christ? If she can set aside immersion she may do the same with other Christian and ancient commandments, banish the Bible as it is, and pose her ritual. Millions begin to see this new altar called. To-day Romanism is the one opposing force in the pathway of the church of Christ. Does not the world look upon her as a Christian? Is there need to be afraid the commission which commands Christians to make disciples and immerse them? Can Christians unite in throwing off the trammels of Rome, in rejecting her practices, and in accepting the plain and positive teachings of our Lord as revealed in His Word, and permit the obedient in spirit to follow Christ in practice, without regard to their surroundings?

Let us to our Redeemer and Saviour incline to obedience. There are many reasons for it. There is no dispute in regard to immersion. It satisfies the conscience. It permits the believer to fulfil all righteousness. It is the only mode of baptism that is in the Bible. He who walks with Christ trod with Him in the grave and shares with Him the hope of the resurrection. Immersion is a privilege rather than a necessity. We follow Christ because we love Him, and because we desire to be good and faithful servants, and to be rewarded and joy, and so we ask him to "suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

At this hour Romanism that holds in that two hundred and fifty millions of people in the world, has been free liberty, block the chariot wheels of Christianity and fetter the progress of truth. She rests the foundations of her hope upon entrenched error. Believing that the word of God should be taken as the rule of faith and practice, we make an appeal to the churches of the world to supplant error with truth and to reject pouring and sprinkling as the bequests of Rome and adopt immersion as the gift of Jesus Christ. This done, we will have a united Christian Church organizations may remain, but the Christ spirit will pervade them.

Whether this appeal could be more effective if made by some organization brought into existence to save Romanism, or to fight Romanism, the power confronting our church life in all lands, is a question being mooted.

Christian immersion is an accredited fact. The sun of truth is too high in the sky, longer to attempt to ignore it. The scholarship of the world has been true enough to truth to declare. It is for the people to rise and claim their right to have the word of God perfectly translated. The revised version has swept into the grave unnumbered errors. Baptism is the most simple and the most complex of all the rites of the church as well as the heathen abroad have "immersed" enter the thoroughfare of a world's speech and the result will be a unity of action as there is now a unity of spirit.

Fidelity to Christ is the secret of success not only in opposing Rome, but in winning the world to Christ. If union there shall be, it must be a union in Christ, not out of Him. Let us draw near to the Jordan and behold its crowning glory. It was not that its waters stayed their march for Israel under Joshua's lead or for Elijah and Elisha to pass through, but its crowning glory is in the fact that the Son of God Himself was immersed, and when He had risen from the tomb and looked heavenward, the recognition came and the Father's voice was heard saying, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." That assurance is enjoyed by every believing

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They who have visited Geneva, Switzerland, will recall the conflict between the Arve and the Rhone. The Rhone finds its fountain source in the beautiful lake of Geneva. The Arve comes from the foot of distant ice glaciers and is thick with the debris of the valleys through which it flows. She strikes the Rhone as an enemy, and her muddy current threatens to destroy the beauty of the stream. But in time the conflict ends and the Rhone in triumph masters her foe and sweeps on a rejoicing river to the sea.

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Fidelity to Christ is the secret of success not only in opposing Rome, but in winning the world to Christ. If union there shall be, it must be a union in Christ, not out of Him. Let us draw near to the Jordan and behold its crowning glory. It was not that its waters stayed their march for Israel under Joshua's lead or for Elijah and Elisha to pass through, but its crowning glory is in the fact that the Son of God Himself was immersed, and when He had risen from the tomb and looked heavenward, the recognition came and the Father's voice was heard saying, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." That assurance is enjoyed by every believing

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Why Not? Why not thank the minister for the sermon which has brought a word of comfort, stimulus, and cheer? Many a pastor feels the lack of those words more than is commonly supposed. It is not an easy thing for him to work whom as much in behalf of those who are loved and would find help, without ever being assured that he has met their needs or excited their gratitude.

The very effort of a preacher to fill his place acceptably tends to exhaust his nervous force, and to bring a doubt if after all, he has succeeded in the work to which he was set. When, therefore, not one of his hearers acknowledges help received, or expresses thanks for acquired benefit, the sensitive preacher is tempted to depression lest his work was a failure. A venerable pastor once said: "I have been preaching now more than thirty years, and there are members of my church who have never in all that time told me that any word I had spoken had been service to them, or that they were grateful for its speaking." How could such an experience be otherwise than depressing?

"But," it is said, "a pastor ought to go faithfully in his appointed work, without being dependent on warm words for his encouragement."

Of course he ought to; and most pastors do this; but that does not relieve any hearer of his duty to speak fitting words of thanks and cheer. A father once said to his faithful but her children though none of them ever thank her for her kindness; and a wife should be true and unerring in her home duties while her husband fails to say anything in recognition of her fidelity; but those children and that husband ought to be ashamed of themselves for never thanking her who loves and helps them; and a church member who does not thank his pastor for speaking wise and fitting words in the pulpit has reason to be heartily ashamed of his thoughtless and neglectful silence.

It is not praise nor compliment that a good pastor needs for his encouragement. It is a recognition of his special service to a hearer, with thanks for the timely words of his well-chosen words. He wants to know who has been helped by each particular phrase of the truth, that he may better shape his preaching to the necessities of those before him. And he craves the assurance that the message he brings has touched some heart and that he is gratefully thanked. Thanks are not necessarily flattery. The receipt of them will hardly endanger a clergyman's spiritual standing.

There are warm-hearted and thoughtful persons who have their truth in mind and who are always prompt to speak the help from a sermon or prayer-meeting talk, and to thank whoever has thus ministered to them for what they have gained from him. In any church such persons are a power for good. They do much to promote good preaching. Even a stranger coming into their field of influence feels the inspiration of their thoughtful and considerate recognitions of faithful service, and is made glad and made stronger accordingly.

A number of such persons ought to be multiplied. It will be those who have hitherto refrained from expressing in such cases the gratitude they have had in their hearts, will henceforth say plainly to their pastor or occasional minister that they are grateful. Thanks are not to them for their good, and will be free to thank him heartily for each special service by which he has given to them assistance or enjoyment.—Exchange.

The Restful Yoke. Mark Guy Peare tells us of an incident which occurred in connection with a sermon of his on the invitation to the weary and heavy-laden: "I had finished my sermon, when a good man came to me and said: 'I wish I had known what you were going to preach about. I could have told you something.'"

"Well, my friend," I said, "it is very good of you. May I not have it still?" "Do you know why His yoke is light, sir? If not, I think I can tell you."

"Well, because the good Lord helps us to carry it. I suppose, if I had not Justinian, Blackstone and the English Parliament; its doctrines, as the sum of infallible teaching, tower above those of the Sanhedrin, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the council of Trent. Every phase of literature, every norm of wisdom, is in the Bible. It ministers to all tastes and arouses the slumbering intellects of all who can comprehend the difference between reality and fiction, and who incline to virtue rather than to vice. Ruskin confesses his indebtedness to the Bible, Homer and Sir Walter Scott for his mental discipline; Charles Reade pronounces the characters in Scripture a literary marvel. Matthew Arnold daily read the New Testament in Greek for its style; Milton could not have written Paradise Lost without Genesis; Keats's witchery of style is traceable to the New Testament; and the Book has gone into all professions and among all classes to awaken a uniformity of thought and similarity of speech respecting the soul's eternity and God. Job has taught the poets the art of construction, and David has sung an undying melody into the ears of the race. The Book of Ruth is the model of the noblest of Gathar and Daniel abound in incomparable dramatic elements; Isaiah has planned the statesman for oratorical flights; Jeremiah has opened the fountains of pathos and sentiment in pathetic souls; Ezekiel has furnished a noble style of judicial denunciation for the criminal lawyer; Paul has taught the thinker to reason and the essayist to write; John has instructed theologians and teachers that great truths are not obscure, and complex ideas are most simple; and Moses and Christ have inspired judges with dignity and clothed their words and decrees with justice and solemnity. Of all books, whether rhetoric, logic, vocabulary, poetry, philosophy, history, or science, it is the most simple and the most carefully studied, its literary spirit and form should be closely traced and discerned, and its truth should be reverently incorporated into the daily speech, thought and life.—Rev. Dr. J. H. Merwin, in the New York Christian Advocate.

Be cautious of believing ill, but more cautious of reporting it.

March of Christianity. It lacks two years of a century since William Carey called for India as a missionary of the newly formed Baptist Missionary Society. There are now two hundred missionary societies in the Christian church, with 7,000 missionaries and assistants, and with over 30,000 native helpers, and every land open for the proclamation of the gospel as far as law is concerned. In India there are half a million of professed Christians and over a million of adherents. Burma has over 30,000 members of the church. China has over 1,000 missionaries with their assistants and over 130,000 professed Christians. The first Protestant missionary landed in Japan in 1854, and now the membership is over 25,000, with over 16,000 children in their Sabbath schools. Their contributions as yet have been nearly \$150,000. Madagascar, the Sandwich Islands, the Friendly Islands, the New Hebrides and other islands are, many of them, as fully Christianized as portions of our own native Africa. Their contributions as yet have been nearly \$150,000. Madagascar, the Sandwich Islands, the Friendly Islands, the New Hebrides and other islands are, many of them, as fully Christianized as portions of our own native Africa. Their contributions as yet have been nearly \$150,000.

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