

DESIGN OF BAPTISM.

BY R. MILLIGAN IN SCHEME OF REDEMPTION.

Seldom, if ever, is the full design and import of a Divine ordinance formally stated in the Holy Scriptures. In this respect God often acts the skillful physician. He has an object to be accomplished; some disease to be eradicated from the human soul. He provides and administers that remedy, and leaves us to infer his design from the effects produced, and the general statements and incidental remarks made concerning it.

True, indeed, it is often stated in the New Testament that Baptism is for the remission of sins. But this is just as true of faith, repentance, and confession, as it is of Baptism. They are all for, or, rather, in order to the remission of sins. Compare Mark xvi, 16; Acts ii, 38; iii, 19; xvi, 31; Rom. i, 16; x, 10, etc. They are all links in the chain of God's appointed means, which serve to bring the sinner under the influence of that blood which alone can procure his pardon and tender him just before God. And hence, to say that Baptism is for the remission of sins is to give but its general design, which it has in common with faith, repentance and confession. But besides this, it was I think, evidently intended,

1. To remind us of the burial and resurrection of Christ. This seems evident for the following reasons: 1st.—It is certainly in harmony with the effect produced on the mind of every intelligent person who sees the ordinance properly administered. As he beholds the candidate for Baptism buried in the water and again raised out of it, he is involuntarily led to think of the burial and resurrection of Christ.

2. It is in harmony with God's gracious plan and purpose to commemorate the great and leading events of his administration by means of suitable rites and ordinances. The completion of the Atlantic creation, for instance, was commemorated by the Sabbath; the sparing of the first-born of the Children of Israel when the first-born of the Egyptians were slain, by the Passover; the giving of the Law from Mount Sinai, by the feast of Pentecost; the sojourn of the Israelites in the desert, by the feast of Tabernacles, etc. And hence it would seem to be peculiarly appropriate that the three great and leading facts of the gospel, viz., the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Christ, (1 Cor. xv, 1-4), should also be commemorated. The first has been commemorated by the Lord's Supper, and certainly nothing could more appropriately commemorate the second and third than Christian Baptism. True, indeed, in a sense and in one aspect the Lord's Day very forcibly reminds us of the resurrection and triumph of our blessed Lord and Redeemer. But an event so very important as this deserves to be commemorated and illustrated in every conceivable way. It was not enough to sacrifice the one goat as a sin-offering on the Day of Atonement to cover the sins of the people; a scape-goat was also found: to be necessary in order to bear these away into a state of complete and everlasting separation. And just so it is with respect to the resurrection of Christ. The time when is historically represented and commemorated by the Lord's Day; but the act of the living God? It is symbolically represented and commemorated by the ordinance of Christian Baptism.

3. The Apostle seems to intimate this pretty clearly by connecting Baptism with the burial and resurrection of Christ. See Rom. vi, 4, and Col. ii, 12.

4. To indicate to us in the most impressive way possible the great changes which then and there takes place in our own relations, that is, our transfer from the Kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of Christ. Col. i, 13. And hence we are all baptized by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Matt. xxviii, 19. Without the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit producing in our hearts faith, hope, love and repentance, Baptism is but an abomination, and can, of course, be of no benefit to any one. There must of necessity be a renewing influence of the Holy Spirit before there can be a moral birth of water. But the man who has been begotten by the Spirit of God is, according to the Divine arrangement, introduced by his Baptism into the Kingdom of Christ, (John iii, 5), made partaker of the Holy Spirit, (Acts ii, 38), and constituted an heir of this eternal inheritance. Rom. viii, 12-17.

5. To indicate to us in like manner, our change of state; or, more particularly, our death to sin and our resurrection to a life of holiness. This point is presented with great force by the Apostle Paul in the first part of the sixth chapter of his letter to the Romans. In the closing paragraph of the fifth chapter he speaks of the great and superabounding fullness of the grace of God in the Scheme of Redemption. "Moreover," says he, "the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin has reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord."

6. But just at this point of his argument Paul perceived that the Jew would, in all probability, urge an objection. To the blind Pharisee or Sadducee this would seem to be entirely too much grace, and he would therefore, no doubt, attempt to turn Paul's whole argument into ridicule, or to reduce it to a practical absurdity, by endeavoring to show that its tendency would be to induce men to sin more and more. "What shall we say, then?" would be his reply. "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" Certainly not, says Paul. The supposition implies a manifest absurdity; for "how," says he, "can we who have died to sin live any longer therein?" That is, how can we who have been separated from sin continue to live in it? But, Paul, will you please to inform us when, and where, and how we were separated from our sins? What, says he, "do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death?"

A little reflection on the meaning and force of the proposition into will enable us to perceive and comprehend the force of the Apostle's argument. It is a picture of transition, and always implies a change of relations and a change of state, and hence, also, a change of influence. Thus, for instance, when a man, in order to avoid the violence of a storm, enters into a house, he is shielded and protected by the house; and when he recklessly plunges into debt he suffers from the annoyances and inconveniences of debt, and when he falls into a paroxysm of anger, love, or any other passion he is not protected by the house, but is exposed to the storm.

And just so the man who is, by the Divine arrangement, baptized into the death of Christ is made to realize and to enjoy all the blessings and benefits of his death. And hence we see why it is and how it is that Baptism is for the remission of sins. It procures for us pardon, not by virtue of any intrinsic efficacy in itself, abstractly considered, but simply by bringing us, through the Divine arrangement, into contact with that blood which cleanses from all sin. And "therefore we are buried with him (Christ) by Baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Compare, also, Acts ii, 38; Ephesians v, 26; Titus iii, 5; Hebrews x, 22, etc.

7. It is probable that Baptism was intended also to typify or foreshadow our own death, burial, and resurrection. 1st. Because this is its natural and necessary tendency. Whenever and wherever we see a baptism properly administered, we are led to think not only of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, but also of our own. 2d. Because, in 1 Cor. xv, 29, Paul draws from it an argument in proof of the final resurrection. "Else," says he, "what shall they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?" As much as to say, "What is the meaning of baptism if there is no resurrection of the dead? On that hypothesis, why are you baptized for or on account of the dead? Of what avail or advantage will it ever be to you or to any one else thus to symbolize a falsehood?"

"NO CROSS, NO CROWN." There is a great gulf fixed between the teachings of the world and the teachings of the gospel, on the subject of easy living. According to the popular view, the one thing worth living for is to have money to spend, fine pictures to admire, pleasant books to read, soft carpets for the feet, easy couches for tired limbs and delicate dishes for the palate; and yet the God whom we believe in and worship has only revealed himself to human eyes and hands as one who was crucified, whose brow was wounded with thorns and whose side was pierced through with a spear; and the gospel which he brought teaches that all pampering of the body and all undue indulgence of its desires, so far from being the supreme object of life, may be a snare and stumbling block to the soul. If there are any of us who really believe in our hearts that personal enjoyment is the true object of our lives, let us honestly acknowledge to ourselves that we are lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, and so go back to crown with roses the forgotten statues of the kindly pagan gods who loved not life and the beauty of sense. There ought not to be room in due house for both the cross of Christ and the ivy-crown of the wine-god, or the myrtle of the goddess of pleasure. "No man can serve two masters," so runs the old saying, but the lesson is hard to learn. Nevertheless it is one which must be learned sooner or later, when every man must make the deliberate choice whether he will count his own pleasure the chief object of his life, or whether he will yield his will, for pleasure or for pain, to the will of God. And on that one decision hangs every man's destiny for both here and hereafter.—The Gospel of St. John.

A NEW DEPARTURE.

"I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service."—PAUL. I am not sure but that I have made an important discovery in reading the apostle's statement as quoted. Now much has been said against co-operations, missionary societies, etc., and some ask in a threatening manner to produce a "thus saith the Lord" for your co-operation, etc., and having looked in vain, I find it not; yet I feel sure there is a "Lord's way" and Paul is generally regarded as very good authority on all such matters. I tremble on the brink about launching this new born idea upon the minds of a sound brotherhood, but "where the Scriptures speak, we speak," etc., laying this before the readers of the CHRISTIAN WORKER. Just at this point we are afraid that Paul will be classed among the unsound ones, for "wages" means "price, reward for services rendered." It seems that some of the churches did not wait for Paul to "rob" them, but sent to him necessarily voluntarily. At any rate the clear duty of those who preached the gospel is to "rob" the churches, taking wages from them to do service," where the gospel has never been heard, as at Corinth for instance. If it was in accordance with the spirit of God for Paul to thus "rob" the churches then we ought to do the same now, or else stop talking about our "Bible plan."

While I write this my heart leaps at the prospect of a final settlement of all differences. These churches certainly did cooperate in paying wages to Paul. We need not insist on "co-operation," because the word does not occur in the new testament. Let us now lay aside all this unscriptural talk, and call the work "PAULINE ROMANISM." Ezekiel! Now the ills of the church are all healed and we are back to primitive practice. This term "rob," I cannot understand in the sense of "highway robbery," but rather, that he took what they contributed, but writing now to please those who contend for the Lord's way as stated in the Bible, I will leave it "rob," and this word admits of no failures in the work, because if it is not given willingly then rob the churches, that is take it by force; hence the treasury will always be full. I have often wondered why it was that Paul had so many brethren with him in his labors, but they would be a necessity if required to rob the churches, when they were unwilling to give, and it would take quite a force to rob some of the church now. The idea of sending just one man out to do this work is preposterous. I admit that it is late in the day to begin advocating this, "thus saith the Lord," plan, but it is "better late than never." Is it not a wonder that the Campbell, Franklin, Rowe, Errett, McDiarmid, et al never thought of this? The supreme satisfaction enjoyed by the writer of this can be "better felt than told."

Now let "the Ontario Co-operation," be set to one side as unscriptural, and let those who have been opposed to it rally to this new one—the "PAULINE ROMANISM" plan. Yet I fear there may be some flaw in this new plan, that some one will not be pleased with it, but I have quoted Paul's exact language, and there cannot be any objection to that, can there, Mr. Editor? Here I lay down my pen, and send this out on its mission, hoping it will be like the "broad cast upon the waters," and will be gathered up after many days. Here is to be your brother in Christ, and one that is



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