

Our Contributors.

Naaman's Seven-Fold Baptism.

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In 2 Kings 5: 10 and 14 we read: "And Elisha sent a messenger unto him (Naaman) saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee and thou shalt be clean. . . . Then went he down and baptized himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God, and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."

The question is, How did Naaman, in obedience to the man of God, baptize himself at the Jordan? I answer, he sprinkled the water upon the part affected, as the law of God required. Now for the proof. Naaman was a leper, and the prophet, being a man of God, would command him to do what the law of God required for the cleansing of the leprosy. What was that? Turn up Lev. 14: 7: "He shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean." Mark carefully the important bearing on the argument of the expression "seven times." Baptists tell us there was "a bathing" in connection with cleansing from leprosy. That is true, but as we shall show by and by, ceremonial bathing was never by plunging into water, and it was done but *once* in connection with leprosy. Naaman baptized himself seven times, and the law of God (Lev. 14) did not require anything to be done seven times but the sprinkling. Therefore Naaman's baptizing himself seven times was his sprinkling the part affected by the leprosy seven times as the law of God required. And so the first Bible baptism is clearly a baptism by sprinkling. But there are other considerations putting the mode of Naaman's baptism beyond all doubt.

In Luke 4: 27, our Lord says Naaman was cleansed (*ekatharisthe*), the very word that is used in Leviticus 14 where sprinkling is distinctly mentioned as the mode.

Naaman baptized (Heb. *tabal*, Gr. *ebaptisato*) himself seven times. The scholar will observe that *tabal* is here used as the equivalent of *rachats* in verse 10—"he baptized himself seven times according to the saying of the man of God." What was that saying? "Go wash (*rachats*) in Jordan seven times," v. 10. An examination will show that *rachats* never means "dip," but "to perform ablutions with water applied to the person." I have counted fifty three instances of its use in the Old Testament, and after a careful examination of each, I make this statement. Take a few instances. Joseph washed (*rachats*) his face to remove the tear-marks after his weeping, Gen. 43: 31. Did the great ruler of Egypt dip his face into the water for this purpose? The "elders washed (*rachats*) their hands over the heifer," Deut. 21: 6. Here the Greek is *nipto*, which even Dr. Carson says, "does not mean to dip." And we know how the Jews washed their hands. "Elisha poured water on the hands of Elishah," 2 Kings 3: 11. In 1 Kings 22: 38, the armor of Ahab, after battle, being stained with blood, was washed (*rachats*). Must we suppose that the armor was dipped in order to wash the blood-stains from it? In Gen. 43: 24; 18: 4; 19: 2; 24: 32; Ex. d. 30: 19, 21; 40: 31; Judges 19: 21; 1 Sam. 25: 41; 2 Sam. 11: 8, we find *rachats* in connection with foot-washing. We know the mode was to

put the water upon the feet, not the feet into the water. Proof positive of this is found in Luke 7: 44: "Thou gavest me no water upon my feet" (*epi podas*). Such being the import of the word *rachats*, we say without hesitation, that if Naaman dipped himself or was dipped, it was not "according to the saying of the man of God," but in express contravention of it.

Tabal, the word expressing the action of Naaman in baptizing himself, we are told by Baptists, means "dip." And while it is not denied that it may sometimes be used in that sense, it is most positively denied that it is restricted to that narrow significance. It occurs fifteen times in the Old Testament, and according to some of the best lexicographers, such as Stokes, Schindler, Leigh, and Furstianus, the meaning of the word is exhausted, "if an object merely touches the liquid, or is touched by it." The last named scholar defines the word to *moisten*, to *sprinkle* as well as to "dip." Robert Young, L.L.D., in his "Greek and Hebrew Analytical Concordance to the Bible," defines *tabal* to *moisten*, to *besprinkle*, and under these definitions he ranges all the fifteen instances of its occurrence. *Tabal* cannot mean "dip" in Gen. 37: 31. It would have been physically impossible to dip (in the Baptist sense) Joseph's coat in the blood of a kid. The coat was stained or smeared with the blood. The LXX. has it "*emolunan ton kitona to haimati*." *Moluno* means "to soil, to stain, to smear." *To haimati* is the instrumental dative, and must be rendered "with the blood." Nor can *tabal* mean a Baptist dipping in Lev. 14: 15, 16, where the priest is directed to dip the finger of his right hand in a few drops of oil held in the palm of the left hand.

The case of Naaman was that of partial leprosy. This is clear from v. 11. He expected that Elisha would "wave his hand (R. V.) over the place" like the modern animal-magnetizer. It was therefore enough to ceremonially wash or baptize the part affected.

Naaman's baptism was not for a physical or medical purpose. It was not intended to cure the leprosy. God alone could cure the leprosy, just as He alone can cure sin. It was a ceremonial cleansing, symbolic of the cleansing of the leprosy, and pointing forward to the "blood of sprinkling" which cleanseth from all sin.

But why wash in the Jordan, and nowhere else? Because the cleansing of the leper, according to the law must be by sprinkling with "running water," Lev. 14: 5, 6, 50 52. Healing to the leper meant the renewing grace of God, and for this none but the water of life that flows in the river of the heavenly Canaan will suffice. As Palestine was a type of heaven, the one river of Palestine became the proper type of that "river of God, which is full of water." It is only in the hymns that "Jordan" signifies death.

Baptists tell us that "washing" can only be by dipping, not by sprinkling. Let us see. The word "wash" simply signifies "to make clean." It is not a word of mode. In Ezek. 36: 25, the Almighty says, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you." Here, then, is a washing or cleansing by sprinkling. In Luke 7: 44, the Saviour says, "She hath washed my feet with her tears." The Syriac

says, "Baptized my feet with her tears." The Psalmist in Psa. 51: 7, "Purge (Greek, sprinkle) me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Here according to the Hebrew idiom, the word "was" is parallel and equivalent to "purge me with hyssop." The mode is not a matter of doubt. The religious washings were not for physical cleansing, but for the purpose of symbolizing and shewing forth the cleansing (washing) of the heart by the blood of Christ (blood of sprinkling) applied by the Spirit of God. The blood of Christ, thus applied, "cleanseth from all sin," and this precious truth has ever been symbolized in the Church of God by the sprinkling of pure water. We may, therefore, safely conclude that this was the mode of Naaman's baptism.

Woodstock, Ont.

Schemes of the Church.

The total contributions received in the Toronto office for the schemes of the church for the year ending 29th February was \$296,850 15. As some of the committees are meeting this week, so that the exact expenditure of each fund is not definitely known, I can only report, generally, as follows.—The Home Mission Fund is well out of debt. The Augmentation Fund is also out of debt. The same is true of the French Evangelization Fund, the Pointe-aux-Trembles Fund, Knox and Montreal Colleges, the Widows' & Orphans' Fund and the Assembly Fund. While the funds named are all out of debt, it is a matter of regret that the receipts of the year for the French Evangelization and Pointe-aux-Trembles were less than the expenditure, so that the Reserve Fund had to be drawn upon to meet the deficiency. The receipts from congregations for the Aged & Infirm Ministers' Fund are about the same as last year, with a considerable increase in the rates received from ministers. It will be a few days before a decision is reached regarding the rate at which the annuities for the current half-year will be paid, so that at present I cannot state how the fund may be.

I regret very much to report that the Foreign Mission Fund is greatly in debt, probably to the extent of \$25,000. This is not owing to diminished receipts, because the revenue of the year is \$6,000 in excess of last year. It is entirely owing to the expansion of the work. In their report to last Assembly the Foreign Mission Committee stated, "The estimated amount required for this year is \$35,000 in excess of the receipts from the church last year. In other words, to meet the expense of carrying on the work for the current year it will be necessary to receive from the church \$35,000 more than was got last year. This means practically an increase of ninety per cent. The additional expenditure is consequent upon the enlargement of the work and could not well be avoided." The church has responded to the appeal of the Committee by increasing its givings to the extent of \$6,000, leaving a shortage of about \$25,000, although the exact figures will not be known for a few days, until the annual statement from Honan is received. The amount received by the Foreign Mission Committee for legacies has been about \$8,000 or \$9,000 for the last few years per annum. Only \$1,745 was received last year.

It is greatly to be desired that contributions be forwarded earlier in the year. More than half the total receipts were received in the last three weeks of February. It is thus impossible for the Committees of the church