

# PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

## CONCERNING BAPTISM.—IV.

BY REV. W. A. M'KAY, B.A., WOODSTOCK, AUTHOR OF "IMMERSION A ROMISH INVENTION."

From the Christian Standard.

MR. EDITOR,—You have devoted a great deal of your attention, in your review of my book, to the definition of real baptism on page 23. In so doing I think you have done right, for undoubtedly the meaning of *baptizo* constitutes the *casus belli*. To your extraordinary treatment of that definition I shall refer at length by and by. What I purpose at present to do is to examine your own definition of *baptizo*.

In your issue of March 18th, you say: "If baptize, as a command from Christ, means to immerse in water, then that is the thing to be done." And in your "First Principles," p. 116, you say: "We have no difficulty in defining the term (baptism). We say that it means immersion. We are willing to test this definition in all the uses of the word, classical and scriptural, literal, metaphorical, poetical, or symbolical." On p. 117 you say: "It (water) has a necessary association with Christian baptism;" i.e., Christian baptism is always "immersion in water." Again you say: "This (that Christian baptism is immersion in water) is uniformly admitted, even by the stoutest advocates of sprinkling." And on p. 130 you say: "While there is continual doubt and fear on the part of thousands of persons about their sprinkling, there is no doubt whatever in regard to immersion. (The italics are not mine, but yours.)"

Now this definition is exceedingly short. It is, however, to be greatly regretted that it is not more precise in meaning; for, of all words, *immerse* is the most elastic, and it is made by immersionists to mean anything the exigency of the occasion may require. Sometimes we are told it means putting a person into water; but at other times we are told it means the contrary action of putting water on a person; and then again we are told it means neither the one nor the other of these actions, but the *state of being under* the water. With Carson, it is "dip and nothing but dip;" but Morrell says, "It is quite evident that the word also bears the sense of *covering by superfusion*." Dr. Cox says: "A person may be *immersed by pouring*." Dr. Carson says: "If all the water in the ocean had fallen on him, it would not have been a literal immersion." Dr. Gale says: "The word *baptizo*, perhaps, does not so necessarily express the action of putting under water, as in general a thing's *being in that condition, no matter how it comes so*." (Gale was nearer the truth than he imagined.) Thus we see these "learned" immersionist doctors fighting, not back to back, but face to face, each using the word in a sense repudiated by the other. What the one tells us is "quite evident," the other assures is "very absurd."

You, Mr. Editor, judging from your practice, use the word as meaning to "put into and under water;" but if this is the meaning of *immersion*, pray what does *submersion* mean? Then, after defining the word *baptizo* to mean *immerse*, you go on and use the word *dip*. But to dip is one thing; to immerse is quite another. The Atlantic cable has been immersed in the ocean for many years. Will you say that it has been dipped? The learned Dr. Conant uses no less than seven different English words when he tries to translate *baptizo*, and then has to confess that not one of the seven gives the precise meaning of the Greek word, although "*merse*" comes nearest. However, you have no difficulty; "it means to immerse."

If *baptizo* always means to immerse, why do you and others speak of baptism by immersion, i.e., immersion by immersion! This surely is absurd. Suppose we try your definition—"immerse in water"—on some Scripture instances. How would our Lord's words in Matt. iii. 11, sound if read according to your definition: "He shall '*immerse you in water*' with the Holy Ghost and with fire?" Take the words of Paul, in 1 Cor. xii. 13: "By one Spirit are we all '*immersed in water*' into one body." Take the words of our Lord, in Mark x. 38: "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of and be '*immersed in water*' with the '*immersion in water*' that I am '*immersed in water*' with?" And again, Luke xii. 50: "I have an '*immersion in water*' to be '*immersed in water*' with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?"

And, with your definition of "the thing done," it seems that the question of Paul, in Acts xix. 3, would answer itself: "Into what, then, were you immersed in water?" Of course the answer would be, "They were '*immersed into water*'."

But while, Mr. Editor, you thus define *baptizo* to be always, in every possible case, immersion, and, in Christian baptism, immersion in water, you nevertheless frequently prefer to use the word "dip." I shall, therefore, give you the benefit of *dip*, and try that word also. How would it sound to read of men being *dipped into Moses* (1 Cor. x. 2), *dipped into Christ* (Gal. iii. 26), or *dipped into His death* (Rom. vi. 3), "the doctrine of dippings" (Heb. vi. 2), "divers dippings" (Heb. ix. 10), "one dipping" (Eph. iv. 5), "dipping doth now save us" (1 Pet. iii. 21).

Such rendering is absurd, if not profane. It is no reply to this to tell us, as we have been told a thousand times, that *sprinkling* would answer no better. Presbyterians have never been so hard pressed for argument as to say that *baptizo* means to sprinkle. I have already shown that water, as a religious symbol, was always applied to the person; never, so far as the record goes, was the person plunged into and under the water. But while this was the uniform mode of accomplishing ritual or outward water-baptism, yet no Presbyterian, so far as I know, has ever maintained that the word *baptizo* meant to sprinkle or pour.

The editor of the "Standard" surely knows that the meaning of a word, and the method by which that meaning is accomplished, are two entirely different things. The method of anointing was by pouring, but to anoint did not therefore mean to pour. So the Scriptural method of baptizing with water is by sprinkling or pouring, but to baptize does not on that account mean to sprinkle or pour, any more than it means to dip. The idea of mode is never in the word, and to force it in makes absurdity or nonsense in very many instances. But more of this anon.

I am not yet done with your definition of *baptizo* as a dipping-immersion. You are aware that our Lord spoke of dipping on no less than five occasions when he had no reference to the ordinance of baptism. And in every such instance when he meant to dip, He used the verb *bapto*, a word that is never once applied to the sacred ordinance. The following are the instances: "Send Lazarus that he may dip (*bapto*) the tip of his finger in water" (Luke xvi. 24); "He it is to whom I shall give a sop when I have dipped (*bapto*) it; and when He had dipped (*bapto*) the sop He gave it to Judas" (John xiii. 26); "He that dippeth (*bapto*) his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me" (Matt. xxvi. 23); "It is one of the twelve that dippeth (*bapto*) with me in the dish" (Mark xiv. 20).

Now, Mr. Editor, if, as you say, baptism is immersion in the sense of dipping—i.e., putting an object into water or other element and then immediately withdrawing it—how is it that our Lord never uses *baptizo* when by His action it is certain He meant to dip, but always *bapto*; and then when He refers to the sacred ordinance He never once uses *bapto* (to dip), but always *baptizo*? Had He intended that His disciples should be dipped, it is reasonable to suppose that He would have used the verb *bapto*, as He did when the finger was dipped in water, and when the sop was dipped in the dish. But no; when He spoke of the religious rite He never once said *bapto*, but always *baptizo*; and when He referred to dipping He never once said *baptizo*, but always *bapto*. There is no exception to this rule; and therefore it is clear that by *bapto* our Lord meant one thing, and by *baptizo* another, and that with Him to dip was not baptism, and to baptize was not to dip.

The practice of dipping into water as a religious rite is utterly repugnant to the language and institutions of Christ, and it has not the least vestige of authority in the Word of God. Not a command, not an example, not a metaphor, nor even an illusion, can be logically construed into a sanction of this Romish and unseemly practice. It is an unwarranted attempt to thrust a human ritualism into the sacred volume; and the result, in numberless cases, has been that a tank or a tub, with its "much water," has been substituted for the adorable Saviour and the outpouring of His Spirit.

And yet, in the face of all this, the editor of the "Standard" has the hardihood to proclaim, "We have no difficulty in defining the term. It means immersion. We are willing to test this definition in all

the uses of the word, classical and scriptural, literal, metaphorical, poetical, or symbolical." To persons in hopeless bondage to a theory, such language may seem to indicate high courage, strong conviction, and a profound knowledge of the subject under discussion. I will not characterize it, in your own gracious words, as the "confidence of ignorance," but I venture to say that to all intelligent, sober-minded persons who have studied both sides of the baptismal controversy, it indicates the loud but vain boasting of one who is not a son of Solomon.

Strong statements are not always strong arguments, but the very reverse. It is not long since the Church of Rome told us, with all the confidence, you, Mr. Editor, can assume, that the earth was flat and immovable, and that the sun, moon, and stars revolved around it. She quoted more Scripture for this theory than you can for yours: she gave the names of more "learned men" who believed it than you can for dipping into water; she said, like most immersionist writers say of their theory, that it was "not more light, but more honesty" that was required to believe it. Luther, whom you quote as such high authority for immersion, said so too. But now that theory, so confidently and so arrogantly held for ages, is forever exploded; so, also, as Bible knowledge and general intelligence advance, will your dipping-immersion theory, for which you are wholly indebted to the same Church of Rome, fall into disuse as a religious rite and have no existence except in the history of error.

[To be continued if the Lord will.]

## CHRISTIAN JOY.

Assuredly, if there is a being in the universe that has a right to be joyous, it is the Christian. He is an heir of God and a joint heir with Jesus Christ. His treasures are "laid up." His privileges and his inheritance are transcendently glorious. He has sources of joy that angels may not claim. He may call the Saviour his elder brother, and approach the awful presence of the infinite and eternal God with assurance of acceptance and pardon and peace. The mission of the Comforter is to him, and the Word of Him whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, is pledged, that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate" him "from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." His joy is an ocean that is boundless, that has no ebb in its flowing. He is to rejoice evermore. The arm that he leans upon is tireless; the fountain of love from which he draws is absolutely measureless in its depth. Though the earth shall dissolve and the heavens pass away, the Christian knows that his hope is sure, and that all things, pain as well as pleasure, the discipline of toil and privation, and suffering patiently borne, no less than the sunshine of prosperity, and the stimulus of earthly joys, "will all work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose."—*Western Recorder*.

## WHAT THE WEARY NEED.

Happy they who can go unto God their joy, when they need heart rest. What does the weary need? What does the tired child want at eventide, when the little head is weary even with play? What but the good mother, beyond whom the little one cannot look and need not look? For God's light beams through her loving eyes, and God's voice breathes in her gracious words. And are we much stronger than children, we children of a larger growth? And are there not times in our life when we are tired, ay, even of pleasure, when we sigh for rest and sorely need it? And do we not need an infinite love, an infinite strength, an infinite tenderness? Blessed are they who know their need and their Helper! Blessed are they who can say, "I will go unto God, my exceeding joy!"

WHAT the church wants is the under-propping of solitary prayer, the strength that comes from secret communion with heaven.

IT is a folly for an eminent man to think of escaping censure, and a weakness to be affected by it. All the illustrious persons of antiquity—and indeed of every age in the world—have passed through this fiery persecution.—*Addison*.