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OPEN LETTERS ON BAPTISM.

LETTER NO. III.

MONCTON, N. B., May 1, 1878.

REV. JOHN BROWN, Baptist Minister:

Dear Sir and Brother,—

IV. LEXICOGRAPHICAL TESTIMONY.

The testimony of the Greek lexicons is important. We should remember however, that such testimony is human, and, therefore, not infallible. You are no doubt aware that some lexicons are designed to explain classic Greek, where baptizo is used in the sense of overwhelming with debts, taxes and burdens; and intoxicating, drowning sinking ships, inundating, etc.—that is, it is used in the sense of abusing, aspersing, pouring abuse upon people; but in the Scriptures it is never so used. In classic Greek it was never used in any religious or ceremonial sense.

Some lexicons, on the other hand, were written solely to define New Testament Greek. These vary according to the taste or purpose of the lexicographer. In these lexicons New Testament words are, at times, explained from New Testament standpoints, and at other times from the classic standpoint, and, hence, these lexicons are more or less mixed, and perplexing, and misleading.

The point upon which you appear to desire information is, not whether baptizo, in classic Greek, means sometimes "to immerse," which of course, it does; but whether the lexicons give sprinkle, or pour, among their significations of that word. Let me give you the testimony of some of the best Greek lexicons, so far as they indicate that baptizo may be correctly rendered either "to sprinkle" or "to pour upon." Please allow me, also, to refer you to the Southern Baptist Publishing Society Report of the "Great Corrollon Debate," 1876, pages 27-31, where this topic is discussed, and whence I am drawing largely for materials for these letters.

First of all, I will give you four authorities, who did not write lexicons, but who spoke from the standpoint of lexicography, defining, and rendering the word in question. They are earlier than any lexicons we have that defines baptizo—Heyschius and Suidas, who belonged to the fourth and tenth centuries, only defined partially the root baptizo.

1. Tertullian, who wrote in the year 190, defines baptizo "to sprinkle," (perfundere.)
2. Julianus, 4th century, a most learned critic, defines it "sprinkle" (perfundere.)
3. Augustine sanctions this as to its religious import.
4. Euthymius, a learned Greek father of the fourth century renders baptizo "to sprinkle," (rantizo.)
5. Schwarzius—"to sprinkle, to besprinkle, to pour upon."
6. Grimeshaw—"besprinkle."
7. Kouma, a native Greek, "besprinkle."
8. Wahl, 1831, "to sprinkle," (perfundere.)
9. Parkhurst—"wash, wet, besprinkle."
10. Suicer—"immersion or sprinkling."
11. Sophocles, "bathed (baptized) in tears."
12. Schneider, "sprinkle, wet."
13. Leigh—"to sprinkle."
14. Wolfius—"sprinkle."
15. Walrus, "sprinkling or immersion."
16. Vossius—"to sprinkle."
17. Arat—"perfusion."
18. Schatgenius, "to pour forth."
19. Stephanus, "New Testament meaning, abluo, lavo, cleanse, wash, besprinkle."
20. Scapula, "New Testament meaning, abluo, lavo, cleanse, wash, besprinkle."
21. Hedericus, "New Testament meaning, abluo lavo, cleanse, wash, besprinkle."
22. Budrus, abluo lavo, cleanse, wash besprinkle."

23. Schrevelius, "to wash, to sprinkle."
24. Ewing, "pour abundantly upon."
25. Gazes—native Greek scholar, "shed forth."

The remaining Greek lexicons, from which we will quote, are among the best extant. They have, however, been mutilated, in some of their editions, so far as the word baptizo is concerned. Some editions, or parts of editions of these lexicons, do not give "to sprinkle," or "to pour upon," as meanings of baptizo, while other editions, or parts of editions do. It is very easy, therefore, for some controversialists to affirm that certain great lexicographers give only to dip, or only to plunge, or only to immerse, as the meaning of baptizo. I will quote from the uncut editions.

26. Stokius—who holds a very high rank among lexicographers, gives among other meanings, "wash, wet, besprinkle;" he says: "The washing or cleansing can be, and generally is accomplished by sprinkling the water, Mark vii. 4—Luke xi. 38. Hence, it is transferred to the sacrament of baptism."

27. Schreusner says: "(1) To immerse in water; to plunge into water, from baptizo. But in this sense it never occurs in the New Testament, but frequently it does in Greek (classic) writers. (2) to wash, or sprinkle, or cleanse with water.....Not only to wash, but to wash one's self, can be proved by many passages. Hence it is transferred to the solemn rite of baptism."

28. Liddell and Scott—"to wet, to pour upon, etc.

29. Frederic Passow, who died in 1833, devoted his life to the preparation of his great lexicon. It is admitted by German, English and American scholars to be the most learned, critical and scientific Greek lexicon ever published. The edition of 1841 is in three volumes of nearly two thousand pages each, double columns and fine print. The popular German lexicon of Drs. Rost and Palm is a successor to that of Passow. Liddell and Scott's lexicon is chiefly a reprint and abridgement of Passow's. Passow says "Baptizo, from baptizo, oft and repeatedly to immerse (one immersion is not baptism),.....to moisten, to wet, to sprinkle,.....generally to besprinkle, to pour upon, to overwhelm, to burden with taxes, debts, etc.;.....to baptize, to suffer one's self to be baptized; to bathe, to wash."

Now brother Brown, in the presence of such testimony as these twenty-nine witnesses, bearing upon the question under consideration, do you not see how absurd it is to say, as your leading writers often do: "All the lexicons teach what the Baptists teach." "All the great and learned men, of all the ages, believe just what the Baptists believe about the word baptizo." "All the scholars OF NOTE in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, and all the rest of the world, have admitted again, and again, and again, and always must admit, that baptizo never had, and never can have but one meaning, and that meaning is either plunge, or immerse, or dip?" (See Cramp, Cox, Conant and yourself.)

V. PRIMARY MEANING OF BAPTIZO.

Will you allow me, brother Brown to remind you that immersionist writers get strangely confused and mixed sometimes with regard to the primary meaning of baptizo. Some of them affirm that its primary meaning is to immerse. You need not search far nor long, if you will adopt proper methods, to discover how greatly your people are in error upon that point. If you will carefully examine the authorities you will ascertain that the following statements are correct:—

1. No lexicon gives immerse, or dip, as a meaning of baptizo, in Greek, earlier than Polybius, B. C. 165; next comes Diodorus Siculus, B. C. 66 to 32; next Strabo, B. C. 54 to A. D. 54; and still later Josephus and Plutarch.
2. Though baptizo, in later classic Greek, means to immerse, it is a derived, a late, remote, and rare meaning.
3. The laws of language, and the science of language, show that to sprinkle is the primary classic meaning of the word baptizo.
4. The lexicons show that immerse is the latest of all the meanings of baptizo.
5. No Greek writer used baptizo in the sense of immerse in the earlier ages of Greek literature.
6. All the earliest occurrences of baptizo, for centuries, were cases of metaphor-

ical use only, and in the sense of sprinkle and pour—not one of them dip—not one of them immerse. Pindar, born B. C. 522, Aristophanes, B. C. 450, Alcibiades, B. C. 400, Demosthenes, B. C. 385, use it for asperse, and pour abuse upon the people. Plato, born B. C. 429, uses it three times to intoxicate, and once to confound with questions. Aristotle, so far as I can discover, was the first to use baptizo in literal sense, and he uses in the sense of "to overflow," whose primary meaning is aspersion.

7. Aristotle used baptizo in the sense of "overflow," two hundred years before Polybius. Hence, baptizo meant overflow two hundred years before it meant immerse. Immerse therefore was not the primary meaning of baptizo.

8. Plato used the word baptizo in the sense of "overwhelm," nearly two centuries and a half before baptizo was used in the sense of immerse. According to Plato, baptizing meant applying the element to the object—the element coming upon it.

Let me refer you, for additional information on this topic, to two Baptist sources which you may appreciate

1. You will find in the Halifax Christian Messenger, of May 31, 1876, an article by "J. Brown," which I assume was written by yourself, wherein you say: "P. does not like my dogmatism. That I can not help, but I can assure him that baptizo means to dip, only to dip, and nothing but to dip, and can never be made to mean anything else." I don't know what effect this quotation had upon "P." He may not have liked it. He may have had unreasonableness. He may not have had any taste for "dogmatism." But, so far as I am concerned, it is quite satisfactory. You don't give any authorities that prove what you say about the dipping business. So much the better for that. I never knew any one else that did. And, on the other hand, the easy and confident manner with which you "assure him" the dipping matter is all right, is really fine. There is a clever ring about that way of putting it. The dipping theory, probably was never more satisfactorily proved than you have proved it. Who would ask for anything better than this: "I can assure him that baptizo means to dip, only to dip, and nothing but to dip, and never can be made to mean anything else?"

2. The other Baptist source of information to which I desire to refer you is brother Ingham. Mark how he, with Conant, Carson, Campbell, Cox, Cramp and other immersionist lights before him, renders baptizo! He gives one hundred and sixty-nine quotations in his book from Greek authors, with baptizo, in some form or other, in each, and he renders it fifty times "overwhelm" and only once "dip." Once only "dip," out of one hundred and sixty-nine times! And he—Ingham, a Baptist minister! What is the matter with Ingham!

Who is right, Brother Brown, Ingham or yourself? What are we to infer, when your doctors so disagree, on definitions, and on radical and fundamental principles? Does baptizo always signify dip? Does baptizo always signify immerse, as some Baptists affirm? Does baptizo always signify plunge, as other Baptists affirm? There must be something wrong, brother, when the authorities of your church are so contradictory. The truth is always consistent with itself. Where is the difficulty? Has it never occurred to you that your creed needs revision, and correction, much more than our good old Bible does, and much more than our valuable Greek lexicons do?

I am, dear brother, Yours truly, D. D. CURRIE.

THE MIRIMACHI PRESBYTERY REPLIED TO BY REV. H. MCKEOWN.

A copy of the Mirimachi Advance has reached us, with the following letter in its correspondence columns. It would seem from its tenor that the subject has been in agitation in the local prints for some time, though this is the first article bearing upon it which has come to our notice. Two things are here maintained by Mr. McKeown—that the preacher was sent to the ground in dis-

pute by request of the residents there, and that the Trustees have publicly refuted the charge of double dealing in respect to the deeding of the property. Yet we observe by the proceedings of the Presbytery, elsewhere published, that the Report maintaining those serious charges was adopted by the Presbytery of Mirimachi.

ESCUMINAC CHURCH.

MR. EDITOR:—Communications on this subject have occupied your columns for some time past, censuring the good people of Escuminac with collecting moneys under false pretences, and the Methodist church with fraud. These anonymous writers were fully and manfully refuted by the Trustees of the said Church over their own names. I then thought the matter was at an end, as one of these writers professed to write for the information of the Presbytery; especially, as I never dreamed that this ecclesiastical body arrogated to itself the exclusive right to occupy this region of country, and sit in judgment on the religious faith and actions of others.

I have carefully watched the spirit and actions of the few, who have with a zeal worthy of a nobler cause, endeavoured to disturb the peace of a community, arouse the spirit of persecution, and charge a Christian Church with dishonesty. But to my surprise, your last issue contained a report of a Committee who profess to have investigated the whole affair. This official act makes my duty plain, and, however reluctantly I enter the field of religious strife, duty calls me to the aid of injured innocents. God will defend the right. We must suppose that this Committee were vested with ecclesiastical, and all needed authority for the full discharge of the duty assigned them, as they have given their report to the public. From their report we find that the Methodist Conference, and the Trustees of the Escuminac Church were on trial for their past offences. Here are two distinct charges; one against the Conference of the Methodist Church, the other against the actions of the Trustees of Escuminac Church. Now, if the spirit of christianity or even fair play, had actuated this Committee in their investigation of the acts of the Conference, they should have, to say at least, requested the Chairman of the District in which the offence was committed to be present, and answer to the wrong doings of which the Conference had been guilty. The burden of the offence, and that in which all the following evils are found is contained in the first section of the report as follows:—

"After careful and extensive enquiry your Committee find"—that the Methodist Conference had sent a preacher to that section of the country before the District meeting had been petitioned to do so.

In defence of this charge against the Conference I have to say, that if the Committee had made themselves as well acquainted with the records of the District meeting of which they write, as they profess to be with the County records, they would have seen that for two years previous to the appointment of which they complain, a young man was asked for in this part of our work. In possession of this information the Committee would not have been driven to such extremities in their attempt to establish what they hoped was a fact, which had no foundation in truth. The first fact with which this Committee would corroborate their statements and condemn the action of the Conference in their appointment of a young man to labour in this section of country, is certainly conclusive in making manifest the spirit of the Committee and nothing more. Must not the readers of that report be amused, to say the least, when they learn that the Methodist Conference of New Brunswick was arraigned before the Mirimachi Presbytery for appointing one of their ministers to a certain field of labour. However the heart might be under the influence of a narrow theology, and a sectarian bigotry. I was not prepared in this age of intelligence to see such statements made by any persons, more especially Christian ministers. To save the Presbytery of Mirimachi from again putting themselves in such an unenviable position before the country, as to call in question the action or authority of the Methodist Conference as to the stationing

of its ministers, I will give to the Committee, the commission under which the Methodist Church is enrolled, Mark 16 chap. 15 v. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel, &c."

As to the charge against the Trustees of the Escuminac Church, they are quite able to answer for themselves, which they have done to the satisfaction of all who are not under the power of sectarian bigotry.

The committee would make their report to resemble the scorpion that has its sting in its tail, when it states that these Lay preachers administered the ordinance of baptism.

To the intelligent who know that there are no Lay Preachers in the Methodist Conference, the report will lose its sting although the viper will be apparent to every reader.

H. MCKEOWN.

CANADA is to receive the five millions for the fishery. This paragraph, from the daily telegrams, will be good news to our people everywhere.

WASHINGTON, May 15.

The President sent to the Senate late this afternoon, a message enclosing a communication from the Secretary of State on the subject of the result of the deliberations of the Fishery Commission appointed under the Treaty of Washington. The President recommends the appropriation of the necessary sum with such discretion to Executive of Government in regard to its payment as, in the wisdom of Congress, the public interest may seem to require.

AN ATLAS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL SERIES OF SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS.—We copy from the S. S. Banner, a notice of a useful and presentable book, a copy of which has reached us:—

"Case's Bible Atlas. Price, \$1. Especially prepared to accompany the International Series of Sabbath-school lessons. The maps are engraved on copper and printed in colours by the Messrs. W. & A. K. Johnston, Edinburgh, Scotland, the best map makers in the world. Size, quarto, 9x11 inches; convenient for class use. The letter press descriptions (16 pages) are very full and interesting. The maps are sixteen in number and include in detail all the lands mentioned in the Bible. The alphabetical index enables the reader to find any place in a moment. Every person teaching a Sunday-school class needs a Bible Atlas. Every Bible student needs one. This is one of the best Bible Atlases we know. It has received very warm commendation from numerous Sunday-school workers. Every Sunday-school Library at least ought to have one for reference.

No one can read, much less teach the Bible intelligently without having clear conceptions of the geographical relations of the places mentioned. Study with a map and without is like the difference between being lost in the woods and walking along a travelled path. The book is sold through canvassing agents, who will be supplied at publisher's prices. Single copies sent to any address, post-paid, on the receipt of price, \$1, by the General Agent for the Dominion, Emily J. Andrews, Strathroy.

The Religious Herald, Richmond, Va., mentions an interesting fact:—

"There is a very prominent and very zealous Methodist layman in this state, who refuses to allow his children to be christened in infancy, because he fears that when they grow up and are converted, they may become dissatisfied with such baptism and desire to be immersed, and so be obliged to join the Baptists to accomplish that desire. Of course no Methodist preacher can consistently immerse one who has been christened in infancy. In order to save his children to the Methodists, this gentleman deliberately sets aside one of the foundation principles of Methodism. He does not seem to be afraid of the spread of Baptist doctrines, but simply of Baptist church membership."

We have heard of a case somewhat similar. A Congregationalist declined to have his children christened in infancy, in order that they might not be deprived of the opportunity of being "baptized" on profession of faith. But he was not understood to assume that they would insist on baptism in our sense of the word.—The Watchman.

The above has been going the round of the Baptist papers. Crumbs of comfort, surely! We know of a Baptist deacon who has his children baptized, or permits it. What his motives are we cannot tell. Probably he has light which he does not choose to use in a more open way. But what do such solitary cases prove? Absolutely nothing. One swallow does not make a summer.