

believe to be its genuine import, as absolutely conclusive. The question of the use of outward ordinances is with us a question, not as to the authority of Christ, but as to His real meaning. We reverently believe that, as there is one Lord and one faith, so there is, under the Christian dispensation, but one baptism,¹ even that whereby all believers are baptized in the one Spirit into the one body.² This is not an outward baptism with water, but a spiritual experience; not the putting away of the filth of the flesh,³ but that inward work which, by transforming the heart and settling the soul upon Christ, brings forth the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, in the experience of His love and power, as the risen and ascended Saviour. No baptism in outward water can satisfy the description of the apostle, of being buried with Christ by baptism unto death.⁴ It is with the Spirit alone that any can be thus baptized. In this experience the announcement of the Forerunner of our Lord is fulfilled, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."⁵ In this view we accept the commission of our blessed Lord as given in Matthew xxviii. 18, 19 and 20th verses: "And Jesus came to them and spake unto them saying, All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (R.V.) This commission, as we believe, was not designed to set up a new ritual under the new covenant, or to connect the initiation into a membership, in its nature essentially spiritual, with a mere ceremony of a typical character. Otherwise, it was not possible for the apostle Paul, who was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles,⁶ to have disclaimed that which would, in that case, have been of the essence of his commission when he wrote, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel."⁷ Whenever an external ceremony is commanded, the particu-

1. Eph. iv. 4, 5.

2. I Cor. xii. 13. R.V.

3. I Pet. iii. 21.

4. Rom. vi. 4.

5. Matt. iii. 11.

6. II Cor. xi. 5.

7. I Cor. i. 17.