

MODE OF BAPTISM.

EXTRACTS FROM A SERMON PREACHED BY REV. ST. ALEX. ROBINSON, D.D.,
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IS IMMERSION VALID BAPTISM?

The statement has been made that the Westminster Assembly which framed our symbols was nearly evenly divided between baptism by sprinkling and pouring, and baptism by immersion, and that immersion was lost by only one vote. Whereas the vote was unanimous for sprinkling or pouring, and the only disputed question was whether immersion should be recognized as baptism at all. And the exclusion of dipping was lost by only one vote. That you may distinctly understand the case and know how to meet this oft-revived falsehood, I read you the account of the matter from the journal kept by the great D. Lightfoot, a member of the Assembly, under the date of August 8, 1644.

"After a long dispute it was at last put to the question, whether the Directory should run thus: 'The minister shall take water and sprinkle or pour it with his hand upon the face or forehead of the child,' and it was voted so indifferently that we were glad to count the names twice, for so many were unwilling to have dipping excluded that the vote came to an equality within one—twenty-four for reserving (excluding) dipping and twenty-five against it; and there grew a great heat upon it; and I first proposed that those who stand for dipping should shew some probable reason for it. Dr. Temple backed me in it," etc.

And yet the ill-informed are told that the Presbyterian Standards, but for one vote, would have prescribed "dipping" as the mode of baptism, though only by one vote was dipping saved from being declared no baptism.

DIPPING INVOLVES ESSENTIAL ERROR.

In another point of view, important issues are involved. Pressed by the exigencies of the argument, these theorists take positions which really subvert the great ordinance of baptism which symbolizes the work of the Holy Spirit in purifying the soul by applying "the blood of sprinkling," just as the Lord's Supper symbolizes the sacrifice of Christ for sin. Yet, though not a hint of such an idea as baptism symbolizing a burial appears through the whole story of the ministry of our Lord and of the planting of the Christian Church, these theorists seize upon a mere rhetorical figure of the Apostle Paul, having no reference to the ritual of baptism with water, but to the *real* baptism of the Holy Ghost, urging that in that baptism Christians have died unto sin and should live unto righteousness and are buried, as they are crucified, with Christ, and are risen with him to a new life of holiness; and out of this mere figure, "buried with him by baptism," they construct an altogether new symbolism for baptism, in place of, or in addition to, Christ's symbol.

They will have baptism symbolize, not the work of the Holy Spirit in cleansing the soul, but the burial and resurrection of Christ. The water symbolizes the grave in which Christ was buried; nay, as some of them put it, "the womb out of which issues the new born soul." Here, as is usually the case with ritualism, some of the great doctrines of grace are sacrificed to a mere external rite. In this respect this dipping theory involves essential error against which all evangelical Christians are bound to testify.

If men may at pleasure substitute for or add to the meaning of Christ's appointed symbols, why may they not add a paragraph to the Scriptures repealing or amending His sacraments? If these theorists may modify the sacrament of baptism, and make it symbolize the burial of Christ instead of the work of the Holy Spirit, why complain of Rome for modifying the Lord's Supper into the sacrifice of the mass? Our Lord arranged two sacraments—one to symbolize His own work in the sacrifice for sin, the other to symbolize the work of the Holy Spirit in applying the benefit of His atonement in the purification of the soul. But these theorists change Christ's arrangement and will have both sacraments to represent the work of Christ—one to symbolize the mere incident of His

burial—and no sacrament at all distinctly to symbolize the work of the Holy Spirit.

Hence the confusion of ideas which you will find among all adherents of "dipping" concerning the work of the Holy Spirit—a confusion which prepares the way for the heresy which believes in no personal Holy Ghost, and makes the mere ritual "dipping" the washing away of sin.

BAPTIZO NEVER MEANS DIP

I proceed now to remark

1. That while freely admitting, with "all the scholars," that a pre-eminent meaning of *baptizo* in classic Greek—to immerse, sink, drown, overwhelm, etc., yet neither in classic Greek nor in the New Testament does it signify "to dip;" that is, to put temporarily into the water and take out again. In its germinal idea there is no provision for taking out. Those who dip call themselves "immersionists;" but "to immerse," from the Latin, does not mean to put in and take out, but simply to *submerge*, without reference to taking out. According to the theory that *baptizo* means "dip and nothing but dip," its advocates should call themselves "Dippers," and not take shelter under the *alias*, Baptists. This translation of this third chapter of Matthew should begin, "In those days came John the Dipper, and they were dipped in Jordan, confessing their sins."

2. In the New Testament, *baptizo* means, ritually, to "wash with water," when not used in reference to the purifying of the soul by the Holy Spirit. In the Gospels "washing" and "baptizing" are used interchangeably in the Greek, though it does not appear in the English translation. Thus, in Matt. xv. 2, it is said the Pharisees found fault because the disciples did not wash (*nipsontai*, their hands when they eat bread. But in Luke xi. 38, it is said the Pharisees wondered that Jesus had not first washed (*ebaptisthe*—"did not baptize himself") before dinner. Evidently both these places refer to the same thing, and the washing and baptism are equivalent. In Mark vii 2-4, where the same cavil of the Pharisees is recorded, the words "wash" and "baptize" are used interchangeably by the same writer, and that in a manner shewing that neither "wash" nor "baptize" denotes immersion, but "pouring." Says the record: "The Pharisees, seeing some of his disciples eating with common (that is, unwashed) (*nipsontai*) hands, found fault, for the Pharisees and all the Jews, unless they wash (*nipsontai tee pugnes*) their hands with the fist—*i.e.*, by water poured upon them—do not eat, and unless they are washed (*baptizontai*, from the market, they do not eat. And many other things there be which they have received to hold, as the washings (*baptismons*) of cups and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables."

And it is noteworthy that the Sinaitic Codex reads in this place *rantizontai* ("sprinkle" in place of "*baptizontai*," shewing that the copyist deemed these terms equivalent. Surely, no one can fail to see that in these places washing and baptizing are taken as equivalent terms, and the proof has the more force in that the usage is in reference to ritual washings. And that these washings were performed by applying water to the person or thing, and not the person or thing to the water, is manifest from the expression "wash me with the fist" (*nipsontai tee pugnes*), evidently by having water poured upon their hands. According to the Pharisees, one could not wash ceremonially in a basin of water, for the first dipping of the hands would render that water defiled. So general was the usage of washing by pouring water on the hands that, as seen from 2 Kings iii. 11, the circumlocution for an attendant or servant is Elisha, "which poured water on the hands of Elijah." Plainly, therefore, *baptizo*, when ritually taken in the New Testament, means a ceremonial purification with the water, without reference to the mode of applying the water. And such, also, is the usage of the Greek version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, with which the writers of the New Testament were familiar. Naaman, when told "go wash in Jordan," went and baptized himself (*ebaptizato*) seven times in Jordan (2 Kings iii. 10, 14).

(Concluded next week.)

HOUSEHOLD LOVE.

We sometimes wonder whether most families take into account the blessedness and beauty of household love, or that tender, strong, sweet sentiment, which more than anything else binds the members of one family together, and unites them to each other in ties which even death cannot break. There are few people who would not be horrified were they told that they did not love their near kindred, and, really, in the great crises of life, the coldest prove that they have some affection. But there is far too little demonstration of most homes. We are afraid or ashamed to shew how much we care for our brothers and sisters, and often there are cross, snappish words, and bitter thoughts, and unkind looks, where there should be only peace and mutual helpfulness. Many a wife drags wearily through a long day, performing her duties in a hopeless way, when a few loving words from her husband, a few words of appreciation and praise, would have given her courage and cheer.

It isn't the things you do, Charlie;
It's the things you leave undone,

says Phoebe Cary, in one of those homely strains of hers which go straight to the heart. Another little newspaper wail, which has kept afloat because of buoyant truthfulness, tells how the good wife arose in the morning, how she had the milk, and the butter, and the bread, the dishes, the breakfast, the children, the dinner, and the mending, on her hands, and how tired and spiritless she felt, till her husband came in, and called her "the best and dearest wife in town," and then how light the labour seemed, and how easy were the tasks. Wives, too, sometimes need to be reminded that their husbands are overcome by troubles and sorrows, that they are struggling with temptations and trials every day, and that they need to be strengthened, stimulated, and encouraged by gentleness and kind attention. There are women in the world whose only idea in life is that they shall be considered, their convenience consulted, and their indolence ministered to. A selfish, sordid, narrow-natured woman, can make it almost impossible for her husband and sons to succeed in life's conflicts. We know one home which was wrecked, so far as earthly happiness was concerned, because the wife, instead of being helpful, was devoted to luxury and ease, spending the money her husband toiled to earn, on laces and silks, and extravagances of various kinds, till he grew discouraged, and his nobler qualities were choked and stifled. Alas! when woman's hand pulls down her home! Every wise woman buildeth her house, and is its queen. There cannot be one law in the household for the husband and another for the wife. Both must work and live together; and if there be true love between them, they will endure the hardness of life very bravely and cheerily.

Children should be loved through their little tempers, through their occasional naughtiness, and through the days when they are not sweet, but trying and captious. The dearest children have such days. One is puzzled to know why Lulu, who went to bed a cherub, should be a little fury in the morning; why Harry, usually candid and open as the day, should at times be sullen and disagreeable. There are often physical reasons for these transformations. You have had sour bread. You have been letting rich pastry and cake enter too largely into your bill of fare. You have suffered the delicate child and the strong one to sleep together, or the fresh air has not vitiated the sleeping apartment sufficiently. Perhaps you are not confidential enough with your children, and do not make yourself acquainted as you ought with their companions. But whatever mistake you make, be sure you love them, and shew them your love.

It is a beautiful picture which is made by the story of Charles Kingsley's life with his children. "I wonder," he would sometimes say, "if there is so much laughing in any other home in England as in ours?" "A child crying over a broken toy is a sight I cannot bear," he said, and never was he too busy with sermons or books to mend the toy and dry the tears, if the little grieved one came to him. And he agreed with Richter that children have their days and hours