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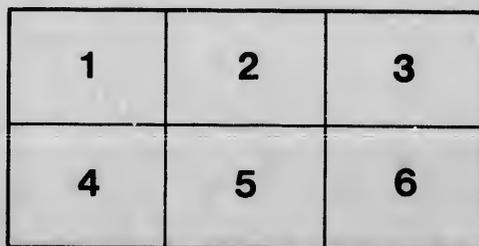
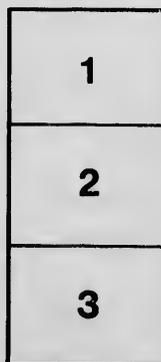
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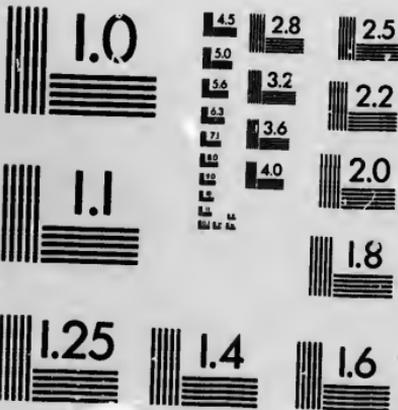
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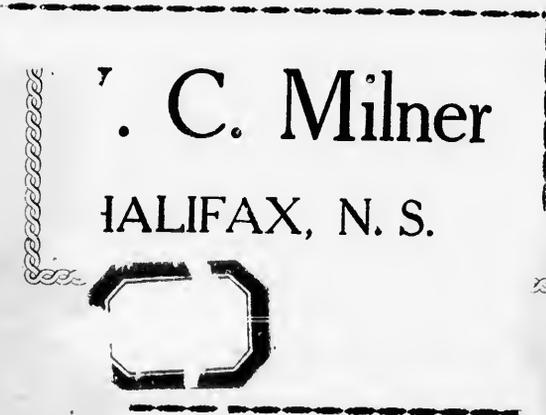
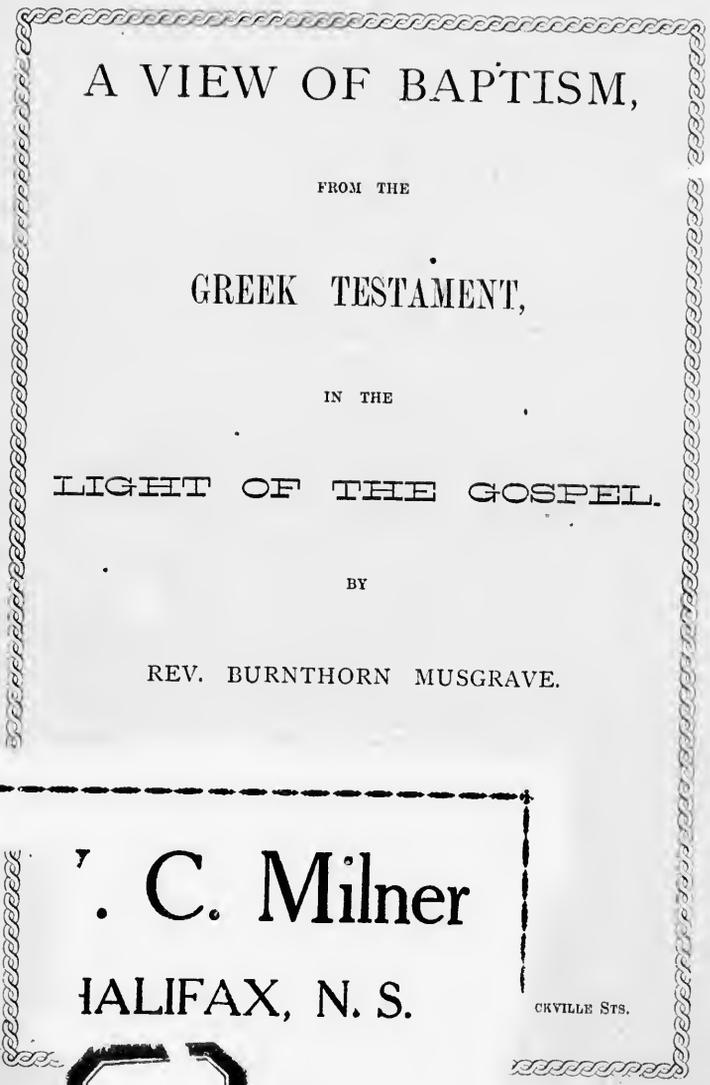
A VIEW OF BAPTISM,
FROM THE
GREEK TESTAMENT,
IN THE
LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL.

BY
REV. BURNTHORN MUSGRAVE.

J. C. Milner

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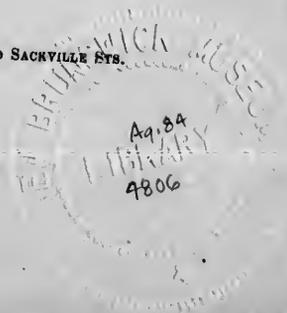
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A VIEW OF BAPTISM,

From the Greek Testament, in the Light of the Gospel.

IT is supposed by Baptists that what they call "immersion" is the only true form of Christian Baptism; and that the only proper recipients of this ceremony are believers, as believers, on the profession of their faith.

The first idea, of "mode," involves a question in Greek scholarship; the second idea, of "subject," is purely a matter of Scriptural intelligence.

1. The verb "Baptizo" is not a word of the purest Attic Greek: it is not to be found in Thucydides in Xenophon, or in Demosthenes, in Euripides, in Sophocles, or in Æschylus.

Greek verbs ending in "izo" are verbs of intention and effect, never of mode. Thus, "hormizo" is "to bring a ship into harbour": "horizo" is "to set up a boundary," "to limit": "emphanizo" is "to make manifest," "to exhibit": "eggizo" is "to draw near": "sophizo" is "to make wise": "photizo" is "to enlighten": "hubrizo" is "to insult": "elpizo" is "to expect": "thesaurizo" is "to lay up treasures," "to hoard."

It is simply impossible to attach the idea of exact mode to any of these verbs.

In consistency with the force of other Greek verbs of the same termination—Dr. Angus, in his *Handbook of the English Tongue*, (at page 13, of my edition) writes,—“For ‘Baptize’ the Anglo-Saxon was ‘fullian,’ to perfect, to make full, to purify.” Accordingly, the proper distinctive meaning of the Greek verb “Baptizo” is “to make full, to flood so as to fill, to drench, to saturate.”

Thus in Scripture, on the day of Pentecost, (in Acts 2:4) we read, “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.” Our Lord, using this very verb, had told His disciples “John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.” Our Lord also, after His own ceremonial Baptism by John, used this same verb to foretell that He should be filled, or saturated, with suffering—“I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!”

And there are three uses of this verb in common Greek which verify strictly this meaning.

The coast is said to be “baptized” by the tide. Drunken men are said to be “baptized” with wine. Ships which ship seas are said to be in danger of being “baptized,” *i. e.*, filled. Internal saturation is essential to the proper use of this Greek verb “baptizo,” while there is a proper Greek verb, “bapto,” for the sudden insertion into, and withdrawal from, a liquid.

But this word "bapto," "to dip," is never once applied to Christians in the New Testament. On the other hand, another ecclesiastical word of intention and effect—"rhantizo," from the Septuagint, (analagous to "baptizo," and almost synonymous with "rhaino," the proper Attic word which means "to sprinkle") is applied to Christians in Hebrews 10:22, in a very marked passage, which describes real Christians as "sprinkled as to the hearts from an evil conscience, and washed as to the body with pure water."

The compound Greek verb for "washed-off" is again applied to disciples in 1 Cor. 6:11—(in the middle voice,) "but ye have washed-off yourselves for yourselves."

And our Lord uses both the proper Greek verbs for washing (that for complete bathing, and that for partial washing,) in John 13:8, 10, when he says—
"If I wash thee not thou hast no part with me
he that is bathed needeth not save to wash for himself (middle voice) his feet"

We find the commencement of the practice of Christian Baptism in John 3:22, and 4:1, 2.

Our Lord's missionary injunction after His Resurrection must consist with that practice of His disciples which he had previously sanctioned.

But our Lord's own baptism by John (which was a submissive acknowledgment of Jehovah's prophet, and a ceremonial preparation for His own ministry according to Levitical requirement at thirty years of age) could

not in reason be identical with Christian Baptism: for the essence of Christian Baptism is that we "put on Christ," (Gal. 3:27), that we are "baptized into, or unto, Christ Jesus" (Rom. 6:3); and it is inconceivable that Christ should put-on Himself, or that He should be committed, (*i. e.*, entrusted) or disciplined to Himself.

Our Lord, as our substitute, fulfilled the ceremonial as well as the moral law on our behalf; and this ceremonial law (Exod. 29:4, and Levit. 8:6) enjoined that the priests were to be first washed with water, then anointed with oil, and afterwards sprinkled with blood. Our Lord accordingly as our High Priest was first washed by His forerunner, then anointed by the Holy Ghost from Heaven, and afterwards sprinkled with blood, when He tasted death on Calvary.

(Blood is always the symbol of death, as oil is that of grace, and water is that of cleansing).

And these several baptizings by washing, by pouring, by sprinkling, in Exodus 29, were particular instances of some of the "various baptizings" mentioned in Hebrews 9:10, (translated "divers washings") under the Levitical dispensation. These ceremonial purifications, (or symbols of cleansing and qualifying) are indicated in the New Testament by the plural of a Greek noun "baptismos," used in Mark 7:4, and Hebrews 6:2, as well as in Hebrews 9:10; but the one real internal baptism of Christians is invariably described in the singular by another cognate noun of effect, "baptisma," "baptizedness"—as in the passage "one Lord, one faith,

one baptizedness" (Eph. 4 : 5) : "for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body ; and have been all made-to-indrink one Spirit," 1 Cor. 12 : 13.

Unless we understand the distinction of meaning between baptisimos, an external ceremonial rite, and baptisma, an internal spiritual reality, we cannot reconcile the statement of Hebrews 9 : 10 with that of Ephesians 4 : 5 ; nor can we comprehend the force of 1 Peter 3 : 21, which distinguishes the efficacy of the antitype which "doth now save us" (the internal reality which includes the response of a good conscience towards God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ), from the futility of the external type which figures the putting away of the filth of the flesh.

In order to discover the most scriptural form in which the rite of Baptism can be administered by pastors and missionaries, we must revert to the statements in John 3 : 22, 26, and 4 : 1, 2. It is plain that our Lord's disciples did in His life time on earth make other disciples to Him by baptism. But no account of their mode is given in the New Testament, while the Holy Ghost has clearly apprised us that "Jesus Himself did not baptize." We who hold our Lord's divine nature can see that any administration by Himself of the rite would have conferred that internal reality which He alone can give to the symbolical water baptism. A sharp distinction is made by John the Baptist between water baptism and the real spiritual baptizedness. "I have baptized you with water but

He Himself shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." Mark 1 : 8. And this vital distinction is affirmed by Jehovah's prophet, in every one of the four Gospels ; as though it were repeatedly and sedulously revealed to us as most momentous matter.

It is recorded once in John 1 : 33, that John the Baptist was limited to the use of water by inspired direction. It does not follow that he baptized the Saviour precisely as he baptized the multitudes. We know that he preached to the people "the baptizedness of repentance (Luke 3 : 3) for the remission of sins ;" and that he declined at first to baptize the Saviour. The Greek proposition "en" tells us nothing of mode ; for this same preposition tells us that "they that take the sword shall perish by (en) the sword, Matt. 26 : 52 ; and that they "were baptized by, or with (en) the Holy Ghost," when "the Holy Ghost FELL ON THEM as on us at the beginning," Acts 11 : 15, 16. And this passage (Acts 11 : 15, 16, in connexion with Acts 10 : 44, 45,) proves absolutely that the verb "baptizo" does not express dipping. How then did Christ's disciples ceremonially baptize fresh disciples ?

Our Lord was a Jew : and his first disciples were Jews : and the declaration has come to us from our Lord's own lips—"Salvation is of the Jews." His disciples would surely observe some Jewish ceremonial precedent. Every Levitical "baptizing" was a symbolical cleansing, a ceremonial purification. We have two such precedents—one for the congregation in Numbers 19 : 19, and one for the leper in Leviticus, 14 : 7, 8.

(Sin is the leprosy of the soul : and Christ's Church is the congregation of those who come to Him for cleansing from sin.)

Both these precedents demanded a public sprinkling, and subsequently a private bathing.

A perfect typical "baptizing" has two parts—the first figurative, simple, and decorous for a public administration ; the second personal, private, thorough, seeking for, and actually appropriating to self, the benefit betokened by the first.

As the first disciples of our Saviour were not "priests," and as their action simply "discipled" to their Teacher additional followers, the precedent of Numbers 19:19, 20, seems to be the general precedent best suited to guide the practice of the earliest Christian disciples. And if our *a priori* inference on this matter appears at all weak, our *a posteriori* proof is blazing and conclusive.

The averment is this—that a perfect Baptismal ceremony consists of two parts, a prior public typical sprinkling, and a subsequent private typical bathing, washing, cleansing.

The passage in Numbers 19: 19, 20, is this—"And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall purify himself and wash his clothes and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even. But the man that shall be unclean and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from

among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the Lord: the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him: he is unclean."

This double ceremonial purification is referred to in Ezekiel 36 : 25, where Jehovah Himself promises to perform for His people the dual realities typified in Jewish symbol. Jehovah engages first to sprinkle (Why to "sprinkle," except that he refers to His own ceremonial appointment?) clean water on His people that they may be clean; and secondly, to cleanse them, Himself, from all their filthiness and from all their idols.

The same double type is recognized in the New Testament—in Hebrews 10 : 22—where we are represented as "*sprinkled* (in) our hearts from an evil conscience, and *bathed* (in) our body with pure water."

(The "pure water" is the word of God. John 15 : 3, and Eph. 5 : 26.) And the same two emblems of cleansing are alluded to by Ananias in Acts 22 : 16, when he urges St. Paul—"And now why tarriest thou? Standing up baptize thyself (first emblem); and wash away for thyself thy sins (the second emblem); calling for thyself (the second emblem realized) upon the name of the Lord."

(Paul had already received the Holy Ghost, and yet he is required to take the sinner's place in baptism. The three Greek verbs are in the middle voice.)

That ceremonial practice which is ordered in the Law; which is ratified by Jehovah Himself in His

own promise through his prophet Ezekiel, and which is established by corresponding statements of the clearest reference in the Epistle to the Hebrews and of close analogy in the Acts, can hardly be declined, and can never be discarded by Christians.

We rejoice to know that ours is a spiritual and not a ceremonial religion, that we are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and that as many of us as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ; still we regard sprinkling as by far the most scriptural and instructive as well the most spiritual and submissive form of baptizing disciples to Christ.

2. For when asked, Who are the proper subjects of Christian Baptism? we answer clearly—Disciples of Christ, as sinners, and not as believers. The Baptist idea, that Baptism is confined to believers as believers, impairs the Gospel of the Grace of God, and entirely misunderstands the relation of this ordinance to the Gospel itself.

The Gospel comes to us, and begins with us, as sinners.

“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save SINNERS.”

“God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet SINNERS, Christ died for us.”

“When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the UNGODLY.”

“Good and upright is Jehovah; therefore will He teach SINNERS in the way.”—Psalm 25: 8.

The ordinance of Baptism declares that God in Christ is willing and ready to receive and to teach sinners. Therefore Baptism has been rightly called "a visible Gospel for the world."

The Lord's Supper exhibits Christ as the support and joy—the bread and the wine—of His people; but Baptism belongs to sinners, who need cleansing as sinners, and teaching as disciples or learners.

Water is the symbol of teaching as well as of cleansing. "He that watereth shall be watered," is evidently "he that teacheth shall be taught." The Hebrew verb used in Psalm 25 : 8, which is translated "will teach" or "will instruct," is literally "will sprinkle," or "will water, sinners in the way." And the proper, exact, and literal translation of the clause in Hebrews 6 : 2, which is rendered "of the doctrine of baptisms," is "of the baptizings of teaching."

The "great commission" is to disciple all nations, baptizing them—filling them, perfecting them, or purifying them—into the Name of the Triune God, teaching them to observe all things that Christ has commanded.

Baptismal water is the sign
That sin needs cleansing Grace ;
While, at the feast of bread and wine,
Believers find their place.

The one requirement for all ceremonial Baptism is our common sinfulness.

(Even our Saviour's Baptism was not an exception to this statement; for Christ was both the victim and

the Priest: and He came as the sin-bearer and was baptized as the High Priest offering up Himself the substitute. "He shall appear the second time *without sin* unto salvation": therefore He appeared the first time *with sin*.)

Since all ceremonial Baptism is symbolical cleansing; although Baptism to John could not be Baptism to Christ, yet Christian Baptism, like John the Baptist's, is based on the acknowledgment of sin. "They were all baptized by John at Jordan confessing their sins,"—(Matt. 3 : 6, Mark 1 : 5), not professing their faith. And the Apostle Peter is equally clear upon this point when he preached "Change your minds, and be baptized *every one of you* in the name of Jesus Christ, for (or unto) the dismissal of your SINS, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Baptism *for the remission of sins*, (*i. e.*, in order to the forgiveness and removal of sins) has always been the teaching of the whole Catholic Church of Christ.

And it is plain that St. Paul's Baptism was a confession of his need *as a sinner*: for Ananias urges him *to wash away his sins*, not to avow his faith, even after he had been converted by a miracle, and had subsequently received the Holy Ghost through the laying-on of Ananias' hands.

The qualification for this ordinance is our sinship, not our sonship.

And it is on this ground that we commit infants to the arms of our risen and Divine Saviour in a public

ceremony, in order that He alone may really baptize them—regenerating and renewing them by His Word and Spirit

We administer Baptism to all who need as sinners to be disciplined to the Saviour, and are willing to be taught by Him.

In the case of our infants, in love and duty to them, we know their need; and we assume their consent, (precisely as the mothers did, in Luke 18 : 15,) so far as to carry them to Christ the Author and Finisher of all real faith: then Christ's ministers disciple them by sprinkling them in public, and committing them to Christ's Grace, with the prayer of faith that they may for themselves realize the second part of the type by betaking themselves to Christ in secret prayer, and by washing themselves and "their robes," ("their clothes," Levit. 14 : 8, and Numbers 19 : 19,—typifying their habits) "in the blood of the Lamb."

This ordinance is not rightly administered in the sight of God except on the ground of Christ's Grace, and with the open confession, on the part of the congregation, of the applicant's sinfulness and crying need of that Grace.

Our faith, feeble, fluctuating, and defective at its best, is no valid occasion for Baptism; which ought always to be administered "looking away" (from ourselves) unto Jesus the Founder and Perfecter, the Beginner and Finisher of the faith. The only text that sanctioned any other conception is now ascertained

to be spurious, viz, Acts 8 : 37. Every true Baptism ought to be an illustration of two revealed truths in connexion—"Where sin abounded Grace did much more abound." "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us: but if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

In the disciple sin, and not faith, needs to be washed away. We can wash a dead body, but we cannot make it eat and drink. Ministers of Christ do sprinkle and even try to wash dead souls with the Word of Christ; but the entrance of life into a soul by the Holy Ghost can alone enable that soul to feed upon Christ.

Thus there is no warning against hasty Baptism in the Word of God, as there is against a profane and undiscerning participation in the Lord's Supper. On the contrary, we read (in contented ignorance of its meaning) of those "who are baptized for the dead."—1 Cor. 15 : 29.

The most dangerous feature of the Baptist theory is that it makes a ceremonial performance the *terminus ad quem* of the Gospel.

The "ministration of the spirit" is then supposed to terminate in an *opus operatum*.

"Having begun in the Spirit" immersionists are "made perfect in the flesh" by a carnal ordinance. Obedience to this particular form is made the condition of communion. And thus "close communion" divides confessed believers.

This is nothing but "the concision."—Philippians 3 : 2, —the cutting-downwards, the severance, which sunders the body of Christ; as contrasted with the "circumcision," the cutting-round, which encircles and encloses the body of Christ in its separation from the world. "The circumcision" here represents the true Church. "For we are the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

Christ's body is a spiritual body. It comprehends "the spirits of just men made perfect," some of whom like Isaac Watts and Matthew Henry were sprinkled in infancy, and some of whom, like James Montgomery and other Moravians, have been baptized, kneeling, without any water at all; but all of whom have been penetrated and therefore baptized by the spirit of Christ.

As a matter of fact, the English verb to immerse is used in two totally different senses. In one sense it means to submerge, in another it means to permeate. When we say that Britain was immersed in superstition in the time of the Druids, we really mean that Britain was then permeated and filled with superstition. In this sense we might use the Greek word baptizo, but this verb is never used in the sense of baptizo "to put in, and take out of, a liquid."

Penetration and permanence are both included in the proper distinctive sense of baptizo.

The distinction between baptismos and baptisma is essential to real Christianity. It is a distinction which

cannot be ignored in other Greek nouns with these respective terminations.

"Horismos" is "the setting up of a boundary": "horisma" is "the boundary set up."

"Merismos" is "a dividing of shares": "merisma" is "the portion, or share." "Heligmos" is the rolling of a coil: "heligma" is the coil. The ceremonial word baptismos is a baptizing: baptisma is the baptizedness.

May the Lord the Spirit of Light explain to His people the connexion of the divine sequence—"One Lord, one faith, one baptizedness"—"baptisma."

This is "THE baptizedness" of Romans 6 : 4 to 8, and of Colossians 2 : 12, to which our ceremonial baptizing, mentioned in Romans 6 : 3, significantly points.

This is a real death—"that we being dead to sins should live unto righteousness," 1 Peter 2 : 24: "for he that is dead is freed from sin," Romans 6 : 7. We are "co-sepulchred with Christ through the baptizedness unto the death."

This is the baptizedness which Christ Himself declared that He had to be baptized with, after His own ceremonial Baptism, and which was typified by the killing of the ram and the sprinkling of its blood, in Exodus 29 : 20, and Leviticus 8 : 23, 24; and which Christ also told His disciples that they likewise should be baptized with (Mark 10 : 38, 39,) after their ceremonial baptism.

Lest we should be misled by the word "buried," we must remember that Christ was not interred, but that

his body was put laterally into a sepulchre which was "quarried in the rock," Matt. 27 : 60, "which had been quarried out of rock," Matt. 15 : 46, "cut in stone," Luke 23 : 53, and that a stone was rolled to the door of the sepulchre. The verb translated "buried" is the same verb that would be used for cremation, (See Donnegan's Lexicon) and is certainly not intended to convey to us any idea of submergence.

John the Baptist was certainly precluded from any use of blood, or of the ashes of an heifer, or of anything else except "water," to typify the "living water"; but it would seem most probable, from Hebrews 9 : 13, that he sprinkled "the crowds" that came to be baptized by him, to whom he preached the baptizedness of repentance. He did not exact any condition from those whom he addressed as a "generation of vipers," Luke 3 : 7 : and it seems clear that he baptized Pharisees and Sadducees, Matt. 3 : 7, 11, unto the baptizedness of repentance, Matt. 3 : 11.

Four practical conclusions result from our examination of the New Testament on Baptism :—

1. Ceremonial Baptism is God's Ordinance, enjoined by Christ, directing sinners to the Grace of God in Christ; and we may not discard it, like the Quakers, who cut down the sign-post because it is not the road.
2. This ordinance, instituted by divine appointment for disciples in the Church of Christ, points to the need of regeneration (the new birth from above) for sinners. To require regeneration first, and to refuse baptism

except to those who are already in Christ by faith, is to call back those who are running in the road in order that they may hug the sign-post. This is the Baptist error.

3. "Baptismal Regeneration" confounds the sign-post with the living movement of the traveller. "The washing of regeneration" is the washing caused by regeneration: as "the renewing of the Holy Ghost" is the renewing caused by the Holy Ghost. Therefore "the washing of regeneration" is a much more vital matter than the supposed "regeneration" of washing.

4. The typical Jewish ceremonies had a real spiritual significance, which we should seek to understand, and desire to realize, as the children of God.

St. Paul, in the same sixth chapter of Romans in which he has, in verse 3, urged the significance of Baptism, says in verse 17, "But ye have obeyed from the heart that type of teaching whereunto ye were delivered." (See Revised Version and Greek Text.)

He there refers to ceremonial Baptism as a "type" (mark, figure) of teaching to which disciples (learners) have been committed; and he recognizes the truth that the heart must ratify for itself the purification that is indicated by the type.

The Word of Grace, like "the rain which cometh down from heaven," comes to us from above. Grace always precedes faith. Thus Christ disciples nations by His teaching. But under the influence of this teaching the redeemed have obeyed the injunction: "Wash you,

make you clean." They have called on the Name of the Lord, and have prayed, "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin." They have bathed themselves by faith in the Grace of Christ, and "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

That Baptism (the sign-post) is rightly placed at the commencement of the Christian course, is apparent by analogy from the journey of the Israelites. They "were all baptized unto Moses," (that is discipled to Moses, and not submerged to Moses) "in the cloud and in the sea," at the outset of their journey.

And this place of the Ordinance is directly substantiated by the Greek text in Acts 8:16—"For as yet He (the Holy Ghost) was fallen upon none of them, but only having been baptized they began-to-be for the Name of the Lord Jesus." (This clause is very imperfectly translated in the English versions. The second Greek verb is not the auxiliary, but a particular verb of very special force, signifying "they were in the beginning to the Name of the Lord Jesus,"—having been baptized:" "But only having been baptized *they began* unto the Name of the Lord Jesus.")

Since Christ is Immanuel (God with us), it is faith, and not superstition, which honours Him, by hastening publicly to confide every sinful soul, whether infant or adult, to His regenerating and sanctifying Grace.

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