

SCRIPTURAL BAPTISM

By William Dudley Nowlin

Baptism Is the Immersion of Believers Only, in Water; Upon a Profession of Faith in Christ as Savior and Lord, (Converted Church Membership) Symbolizing a Burial and Resurrection; the Rite Being Administered by Scriptural Authority, and in the Name of the Trinity.

No one will deny that the following baptism is scriptural:

a scriptural subject - a believer;

a scriptural act - immersion;

a scriptural design - a burial and resurrection;

scriptural authority - a New Testament church.

The only authority we have for baptizing anybody is found in the commission (Matthew 28:19) which says make disciples and baptize them.

THE SCRIPTURAL SUBJECT - DISCIPLE

The specification of one thing in a law, command or contract is positively the prohibition of every other thing. If this were not true, there would be no definiteness in laws, commands or contracts. When you give a man a contract to build a house of stone, the specification of stone is the prohibition of any and all other materials; and if the contractor should build the house of brick, claiming that the contract did not prohibit the use of brick, the court would decide that the specification of stone was itself the prohibition of brick.

When God commanded Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt offering, the specification of Isaac was the prohibition of his wife, Sarah, or any other member of his family, and had Abraham offered up any other member of his family he would have been guilty of the sin of rebellion against God. Had he offered Isaac and in addition thereto, offered his wife, Sarah, saying, "If God is pleased to have me offer up my son, he will be pleased the more to have me offer up my wife also, therefore, I'll please God abundantly," he would have been guilty of murder.

When God told Noah to build an ark of gopher wood, the specification of gopher wood was the prohibition of every other wood. It was not necessary for God to prohibit everything he did not want, for the specification of what he did want was itself the prohibition of what he did not want.

Yet some people say, "God is so gentle, tender and loving that he will not require his children to do a thing which is not pleasant or convenient." Now, so far as I know, God has never asked his subjects whether it was pleasant or convenient for them to obey or not. If there ever was a person who could have said, "It is not pleasant to obey Thee," Abraham was that person. He might have said, "It is not convenient," for the "certain mountain" in the land of Moriah was a three days' journey.

"Well," replies someone, "whether God consults our pleasures and conveniences in an act of worship or not, I do know every man has the right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience." No, we have no such rights except as against men. Whatever religious rights we have we get from the Word of God, and we nowhere find that we have the right to worship him according to the

"dictates of our conscience." If God had given us infallible guides in our consciences, then he would not have given us the Bible as a guide.

Again, if God gives us the right to worship according to our consciences, then he must judge us according to our consciences. But Paul tells us that "God will judge men by Jesus Christ and according to my gospel." When Paul was persecuting the church, he did it in all good conscience, but he had a Jewish faith and so had a Jewish conscience, but just as soon as his faith was changed, his conscience was changed. A Christian faith has a Christian conscience; a heathen faith has a heathen conscience. When judgment decides a thing is right, conscience says, "Do it," but conscience never speaks until judgment has decided. The Bible gives you the right to worship God according to your best understanding of his Word, and the fact that God holds you responsible for the obedience of his Word is proof that it can be understood. God would not hold men responsible for the obedience of a law, which they could not possibly comprehend.

We have both precept and example for the baptism of disciples and only disciples.

1. Let us notice the precept. "*Go ye into all the world and make disciples of all the nations baptizing them.*" "Them" is a personal pronoun and is used in the place of "disciples." The specification of "them" - the disciples - is the prohibition of all others. There are some, however, who say "them" means the disciples and their children. A pronoun can never include more than is embraced in the noun for which it stands, so the word "them" is co-extensive with the word "disciples." But suppose we admit for argument's sake that "them" can include more than is embraced in its antecedent. Now, if it does that in one case, it does it in all cases, for the same cause will always produce the same results. So if when it says "baptize them" it means "them and their children" when it says the angels shall separate the wicked from the just and cast "them" into outer darkness, it means them and their children. Every principle of logic and argument that will entitle the children of the disciples to baptism will serve to cast the children of the wicked into outer darkness.

It may be replied, however, that "we do not hold this position on grammatical grounds, but that the inherent righteousness of the children of disciples entitles them to baptism." Then the same logic would say the inherent evil of the children of the wicked consigns them to damnation, and that proves too much. Righteousness is an imputed thing and cannot be transmitted. "But what about circumcision?" That was a national rite; baptism is a religious rite, and one cannot take the place of the other. To convince you that baptism did not take the place of circumcision, and that circumcision still had its own place after the institution of baptism, *it is sufficient to remind you that Paul was baptized after he was circumcised and that Timothy was circumcised after he was baptized.* If baptism had come in the room and stead of circumcision, then there would have been no place for Paul's baptism, for he had circumcision, and there would have been no place for Timothy's circumcision, for he had baptism. Circumcision still had its own place as a national rite. But suppose we should admit that children ought to be baptized, it is still enjoined upon them to be baptized as disciples when they become such, *for in this commission there is no provision made for those baptized in infancy.* The commission does not say, make disciples and baptize them, provided they have not previously been baptized *before they became disciples*, but make disciples and baptize them. The commission neither gives recognition to, nor makes provision for, infant baptism.

2. We will notice the examples. We not only have biblical precepts for the baptism of disciples only, but we have biblical examples also. We have the example (1) of John: It is said "Christ made and

baptized more disciples than John." So we see John "made and baptized" some disciples. Again, we learn that John refused to baptize some because they had not been discipled, saying, "Ye generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee the wrath to come?" If you do not know what the Bible means by "a generation of vipers," let Christ answer. In Matthew Christ says, "Ye generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things?" and again, "Ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" So we understand from Christ, that a generation of vipers is a generation of evil people; a generation of people who are exposed to the "damnation of hell"; in short unforgiven sinners.

The reason why John did not baptize these people is very obvious - they were unforgiven sinners. If he had been baptizing the subjects of the damnation of hell in order to make them the subjects of heavenly bliss this would have been his opportunity. But Baptist-like he said, "Bring forth the fruits," or evidences, of your repentance. They said then "What must we do?" Not what must we do to be saved, but "What must we do to satisfy you that we have repented and are proper subjects for baptism?" John said prove it by your lives. "Let him that hath two coats impart unto him that hath none, and him that hath meat, do likewise." This is Christianity reduced to its simplest human terms.

Then came the publicans to be baptized, and said unto him "Master, what shall we do?" John gave the publicans the severest possible test, for publicans; he said, "Exact no more than that which is appointed you." So John baptized only disciples.

(2) We next have the example of Christ. It is said "Christ made and baptized more disciples," though "Christ himself baptized not." Christ was consistent in practicing what he taught his disciples to practice.

(3) The example of the apostles. The apostles baptized only disciples or believers. "When they believed, Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." "Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house, and many of the Corinthians hearing, *believed and were baptised.*"

"Can any man forbid water that these should *not* be baptized *which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?*"

There is neither precept nor example in the Word of God for the baptism of a non-believer. There are four cases of household baptisms, but in every case there is something said in the connection to indicate that they were all disciples. For example, it says the jailer "was baptized, he and all his, straightway," (Acts 16:33) but it says in the very next verse he "rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house." So they were all believers. I take it then that the specification of "them" in the commission is the prohibition of the baptism of non-disciples.

We know Christ did not baptize any infants for the Bible says so. John (4:2) says "Jesus himself baptized not." If he didn't baptize anybody we know he didn't baptize infants.

The unconscious infant, or rather infant without ability to think or reason, has no religious obligations, since no ability means no responsibility.

The Bible knows absolutely nothing of the baptism of any except disciples, or believers.

WHAT THE SCRIPTURAL ACT OF BAPTISM REQUIRES

The following from the pen of Dr. John Watson, the famous author of "Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush," and distinguished Presbyterian divine, is illustrative: "Without doubt the perfect idea of baptism is realized when one having come to years of discretion, makes his profession of faith in the Lord, knowing what he has done, and having counted the cost, and then is immersed in the waters of baptism." Can any Baptist give a better statement of the act of baptism than this eminent Presbyterian has done?

The duty of baptism is enjoined upon every disciple of our Lord. The Greek word *baptizo*, from which we get our word baptism, means to dip, to immerse. Jesus was baptized in the river Jordan, and his act, whatever it was, was descriptive of this word as he used it in the commission, which is our only authority for baptizing anybody. In this Greek word he tells us what to do, and in his act, which Paul calls a burial, he shows us how to do it. The symbolism of baptism (burial and resurrection) requires immersion, which is in perfect accord with both the meaning of the Greek word which Jesus used and the act which he performed. Therefore, the command to be baptized is a command to be immersed, and no other act is obedience to this command.

Nearly all the divisions and confusions in Christendom are due to the failure to properly translate two Greek words, namely, *baptizo* and *ecclesia*. Had the King James translators, and all others since their day, correctly translated instead of transferred *baptizo*, Christendom would not be confronted today with the huge absurdity of calling three different and distinct acts baptism. Had *baptizo* been translated immerse - its only meaning - no one would have been silly enough to call sprinkling or pouring immersion. And a failure to properly translate the Greek word *ecclesia* (compound of EK out of and KALLEIN to call - hence, to call out or call together) has likewise wrought untold mischief. Had *ecclesia* been invariably translated assembly, or congregation, its only legitimate meaning, it would have furnished no shelter for the vast ecclesiasticisms of today. The largest body that can exist under this word, properly translated, is an assembly, or congregation.

The Bible says there is "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5), not three baptisms. Then all the baptisms but one are substitutes.

It is one of the laws of human nature to substitute the easier for the harder - never the harder for the easier. Either immersion or sprinkling was instituted by the Lord as baptism; the other is a substitute. According to all known human practice, the easier and more convenient is the substitute. Now, if you can tell which of the two is the easier and more convenient, you can tell which is the substitute.

Since baptism is a test of our love for and our loyalty to Christ, the harder and more exacting, is the act, the better is the test.

The following is not philosophy, nor sophistry, nor even argument, but a "thus saith the Lord" on the subject.

It is well for us to "learn not to go beyond the things which are written" (1 Corinthians 4:6, R. V.). Where God speaks, let men keep silent.

WHAT THE SCRIPTURAL ACT REQUIRES:

[This is a part of the author's tract on "The Scriptural Act of Baptism" of which more than 50,000 have been printed and circulated.]

1. Water.

"Here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (Acts 8:36.) "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized!" (Act 10:47.)

Then the scriptural act of baptism requires "water."

2. Much water.

"And John was also baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, because there was *much water* there." (John 3:23.) "And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the River of Jordan." (Mark 1: 5.) Then, the scriptural act of baptism requires "much water."

3. Going down into the water.

"And they went *down both into the water*, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized." (Acts 8:38.) Then, the scriptural act of baptism requires "going down into the water."

4. A Burial.

"Therefore we are *buried with him by baptism, into death*; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been *planted together in the likeness of his death*, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." (Romans 6:4, 5, 6.) "*Buried with him in baptism*, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." (Colossians 2:12). Then, the scriptural act of baptism requires one to be "buried in baptism," and raised "in the likeness of his resurrection."

5. Coming up out of the water. "And Jesus when he was baptized, went *up straightway out of the water*." (Matthew 3:16.) "And when they were *come up out of the water*, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip that the eunuch saw him no more" (Acts 8: 39). "And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway *coming up out of the water*, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him" (Mark 1:9, 10). Then, the scriptural act of baptism requires a "coming up out of the water."

It will be observed that the writer has not taken one Scripture which mentions "baptism" and another which mentions a "burial" and put them together to make out a case. Neither has he taken one Scripture which speaks of "baptism" and another which speaks of "going down into the water," nor one Scripture which mentions "baptism" and another which speaks of "coming up out of the water" and put them together to make out a case; but he has taken the Scriptures which speak of being, "buried in baptism," "And they went down into the water . . . and he bap-tized him," "And Jesus when he was baptized went up straightway out of the water." No, the case is made out in the Scriptures. It takes no juggling of Scriptures to make out a case of immersion.

If the purpose of baptism is to wash away sins what must have been its meaning to him who knew no sin? Whatever baptism meant to Jesus it must mean to us for he said "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." "Thus" means in this manner. Jesus could not be an example for us in the matter of baptism if the Act means one thing for him and another thing for us. A man is not lost because he refuses to be baptized, but he refuses to be baptized because he is lost. If he loved Jesus, he would obey him, for Jesus says: "If a man love me, he will keep my word," and "He that loveth me not, keepeth not my word." The man's refusal to obey Jesus proves that he does not love him, and, therefore, is not saved.

THE DESIGN, OR SYMBOLIC IMPORT, OF BAPTISM

The authority for baptism arises from the command of the Master, but the beauty, the dignity and the meaning of the ordinances are derived from its symbolic and prophetic import. Baptism declares, in symbol, our death and burial to sin and our former life, and our resurrection to a new life; and at the same time declares our faith in a crucified, buried and risen Savior, with a prophecy of our own resurrection from the dead. These are the fundamental doctrines symbolized in baptism, therefore any act for baptism which fails to symbolize these truths fails to be baptism.

The ordinances were instituted for specific purposes. The Lord's Supper was instituted to "show forth the Lord's death," and any change in the ordinance which destroys this purpose destroys the validity of the ordinance. Anything which fails to symbolize the Lord's death cannot be the Lord's Supper, for the Lord's Supper is the showing forth, in symbol, of the Lord's death.

The same is true of baptism. While baptism has a specific form it has a specific design, and just as the changing of the form invalidates the ordinance so the changing of the design destroys its validity.

Any act, for baptism, which fails to symbolize a death, a burial, and a resurrection cannot be baptism, since baptism is the symbolizing of a death, burial and resurrection, as Paul tells us in Romans (6:3-13).

1. *It will be observed that baptism symbolises a death.* The apostle says of those who "have been baptized into Jesus Christ, who died once unto sin, likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God." Then the first great fact symbolized by our baptism is our death to sin. The province of baptism is not to procure, but to declare, our death to sin. A burial presupposes a death. We bury dead people, and the burial declares the fact that they are dead.

It will be observed that Paul in this sixth chapter of Romans is talking about Christian people who have declared their death to sin by being baptized into the death of Jesus Christ. He says, "Shall we continue in sin? We who are dead to sin, who were buried with him by baptism into death?" "God forbid."

Thus you see that the first great fundamental fact symbolized in our baptism is our death to sin, which is declared by our burial to sin.

On page 295 "*Ford's Christian Repository*," April, 1893, I find the following remarkable statement of "the meaning of our baptism":

"No one who was present will ever forget the thrill that went through the audience in the lecture room of the First Baptist Church, Chicago, years ago, when that beloved young evangelist, Henry Moorehouse, said in his impassioned way: 'And you Baptists, you ought to be the holiest people on earth. You have been with your Savior in his burial. Other Christians there are who have not been there, but you have. You have stood at the edge of the watery grave, and have looked back on the world and said, "Good-bye, world; good-bye, my old life, and my comrades, and my old self; my old pleasures and my sins good-bye! Once I was yours; I lived with you and enjoyed you; I was one among you. But the Lord Jesus sent his Spirit and I fell sick; sick of soul; sick unto death. And then I died. I am dead to you. You can no longer move me. And this is the day of my burial. For now I am to be buried with my Lord; and when I rise it will be to live with my Lord on the other side of the resurrection, in the power of a new life.

'Good-bye!' And then you were buried with Christ in baptism. And among the people of Christ's on earth you ought to be of all the most holy."

This was Henry Moorehouse, the "Boy Preacher," whom D. L. Moody met in Dublin in 1886, and who followed Moody to Chicago and preached seven great sermons from John 3:16. (See "*Shorter Life of Moody*," Vol. I, p. 55, for further information.)

2. *Baptism symbolizes a burial.* Paul says, "We are buried with him by baptism into death." Again, in Colossians (2:12), he says, "Buried with him in baptism." Can there be the slightest doubt about what the apostle means here? I think not. Ford, in his "*Christian Repository*," May, 1899, page 294, quotes from [John] Tillotson, Archbishop of Canterbury, in his "Sermon on the Resurrection of Christ" as saying:

"Being buried with him in baptism. For full understanding of this expression we must have recourse to that parallel text (Romans 6:3-5) which will explain to us the meaning of this phrase:

'Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.' "Where we see that to be baptized unto the death and resurrection of Christ is to be baptized into the similitude and likeness of them; and the resemblance in this, that as Christ, being dead, was buried in the grave, and, after some stay in it, that is, for three days, he was raised again out of it by the glorious power of God, to a new and heavenly life, being not long after taken up into heaven to live at the right hand of God; so Christians, when they were baptized, were immersed into the water . . . their bodies being covered all over with it; which is, therefore, called our being buried in baptism into death; and after some short stay under water, were raised or taken up again out of it, as if they had been recovered to a new life, by which was spiritually signified our dying to sin, and being raised to a divine and heavenly life through the faith of the operation of God; that is, by that divine and super-natural power which raised up Christ from the dead. So that Christians from henceforth were to reckon themselves dead unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ, as the apostle speaks (Romans 6:11)."

Dr. John A. Broadus, who was recognized by all denominations as a man of ability, scholarship and fairness, writing from Greenville, S. C., and published in the "*Repository*" of June, 1895, page 334, says of "Buried with him by baptism":

"That the apostle in this image of burial, alluded to the action of baptism, viz.: immersion, has, until lately, been scarcely ever questioned. The most eminent men of every age have admitted it, even men who in practice substituted some other action, and some of whom have expressed regret that through the change thus made the apostle's beautiful image is obscured. Among the fathers Clement of Alexandria, Athanasius, Chrysostom, Augustine, and very many others, have expressly asserted that such was the allusion. Luther said the same, followed by all German writers since, with very few exceptions. So with the Church of England men, from the beginning until now, and with Wesley and Adam Clarke. And so with Turretin, Baxter, the Westminster Assembly, Doddridge, Chalmers, and Hanna. Indeed, the allusion is so obvious and impressive, and the denial of it leaves the expression so destitute of force and meaning, that it readily occurs to every mind, and would never have been questioned save in the most desperate exigencies of controversy."

But did the Romans really bury their dead? It is claimed by some that the Romans did not really bury their dead, and, therefore, could not have understood an allusion to a custom of which they were entirely ignorant. It is evident that burying the dead was common among Asiatics, the only custom among the Jews, of whom the church at Rome was principally made up, and must have been entirely familiar to the Romans. It is unpardonable ignorance or something worse that prompts professed scholars to assert that "Paul could not have alluded to a burial by the words "'Buried with Christ by baptism'; this passage Romans burned and knew nothing about burying their dead."

We close in the language of Conybear and Howson in their "*Life and Travels of Paul*":

"'Buried with Christ by baptism'; this passage cannot be understood unless it be borne in mind that the primitive baptism was immersion. It is needless to add that baptism was (unless in exceptional cases) administered by immersion, the convert being plunged beneath the surface of the water to represent his death to the life of sin, and then raised from his momentary burial to represent his resurrection to the life of righteousness. It must be subject to regret that the general discontinuance of this original form of baptism, though perhaps necessary in our northern climates, has rendered obscure to public apprehension some very important passages of Scripture." - Volume I. page 439.

3. Baptism symbolizes a resurrection. Paul says we are not only buried with him in baptism, but he exclaims that we "are also risen with him through the faith of the operation."

While baptism symbolizes our death to sin, and our burial to sin and our former life, it also symbolizes our resurrection to a new life. "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection," says the apostle. In 1 Corinthians 15:29 Paul asks the question, "What shall they do which are baptized for the dead if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?" Paul shows here that baptism is in some way associated with the resurrection, and that if there is no resurrection, baptism is meaningless. Why are they baptized, asks the apostle, if the dead rise not? The Scripture is variously interpreted.

Many of the various and absurd interpretations are not worthy of mention. One, however, we shall notice: "Vicarious baptism." Prof. Marcus Dods, D.D., in the *Expositor's Bible* says, after mentioning several interpretations which he rejects: "The plain meaning of the words, however, seems to point to a vicarious baptism in which a living friend receives baptism as a proxy for a person who had died without baptism." He says, "Such a custom prevailed to some extent among the primitive Christians, although it was never admitted as a valid rite by the church Catholic."

The Rev. E. P. Gould, D.D., in the *American Commentary on the New Testament*, says: "Baptism for the dead is baptism instead of them, and so in behalf of them; in other words, vicarious baptism. It is baptism for, or instead of, those who have died believing in Christ, but were unable themselves to be baptized."

We see these two commentators believe that the reference is to vicarious baptism, and yet both of them speak of the practice as superstitious, unscriptural, foolish and absurd.

Is it possible that Paul, a man of such sagacity and logical powers, to say nothing of inspiration, could have been guilty of seeming to sanction a practice so absurd and superstitious? It should be borne in mind that Paul is here making an argument on the resurrection of the dead, and not an argument on baptism, and so uses baptism only so far as it has reference to the resurrection of the dead.

If "baptized for the dead" here does not mean "baptized with reference to the resurrection of the dead" it is entirely out of place in this argument. S. H. Ford, D.D., LL.D, in the "*Christian Repository*," of March, 1903, has the following on this text: "We are baptized for the resurrection of the dead. The preposition translated 'for' will bear this rendering; it often means 'on account of' and hence 'with reference to.'" Robinson, a Pedo-Baptist (Lexicon article *Baptizo*), says: "With reference to 1 Corinthians 15:29, baptized on account of the dead; why baptized into a belief of the resurrection of the dead if in fact the dead rise not?" Bloomfield, after giving supposed meanings of the words, prefers the one we have given. He was an Episcopalian, but finds believers' immersion in this figurative language. He says, "How simple and agreeable to the context is this view of the sense will appear from the examination of the minute and accurate Gerdesius, and that it should be the general interpretation and such as unlettered persons generally form in their minds is a proof that it cannot be really, though it is grammatically, harsh. This interpretation, then in its simplicity carries on it the stamp of truth. There is, with reason, supposed to be a reference to the confession which precedes baptism. Wilt thou be baptized in this faith in hope of resurrection? There may also be (as the ancient commentators think) an allusion to the ancient mode of baptism by immersion, which, while testifying to a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness, also had reference to the Christian's communion with his Lord, both in death and in his resurrection from the dead.

"Baptism is a voiced gospel act, testifying before the world the faith and hope of the baptized. Christ died and rose again and I died in him and shall rise again. But if the dead rise not, why is this action? Why show forth the resurrection of the dead? This is its simple and sublime meaning."

Adam Clarke, LL.D, the great Methodist commentator, says: "The sum of the apostle's meaning appears to be this: If there be no resurrection of the dead, those who, in becoming Christians, expose themselves to all manner of privations, crosses, severe sufferings and a violent death can have no compensation, nor any motive sufficient as an emblem of death, in voluntarily going under the water, so they receive it as an emblem of the resurrection unto eternal life in coming up out of the water; thus they are baptized for the dead, in perfect faith of the resurrection. The three following verses seem to confirm this sense." The preposition here translated "for" can be, and often is, translated "with reference to." I am unable to understand how any of the commentators in the light of the context, ever reached a conclusion other than that "baptized for the dead" meant "with reference to the dead," or "with reference to the resurrection of the dead." We repeat, if this is not the meaning, then it has no connection with the argument Paul is making and is entirely out of place.

The resurrection of the dead is one of the greatest facts in the gospel. Christ makes his Messiahship, his Sonship, his sacrificial work, all to rest upon the fact of his resurrection. The empty tomb is the Joy and Hope of Christianity. If the resurrection of Christ could be overthrown, the whole fabric of Christianity would fall like a broken shaft. And as Paul says, we would be "of all men most miserable." But he declares, "Now is Christ risen from the dead." The same apostle tells us that "we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father even so we also should walk in newness of life." In our baptism we symbolize his death by being buried with him, and in coming forth from the watery grave we symbolize his resurrection. Is there any baptism other than immersion that can symbolize these great doctrines? Nay, verily. Affusion for baptism just as aptly illustrates Christ's birth or Crucifixion or Transfiguration as it does his burial and resurrection. But a scriptural baptism aptly and beautifully illustrates a burial and a resurrection. It prophesies of the time when these vile bodies of ours shall be raised and fashioned after the likeness of his glorious body, and

when we shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and when we shall be ushered into the presence of the Father, there to reign with him forever and forever.

Baptism is the greatest experience in the life of a Christian, except that fact which it symbolizes, his death to sin and his birth to a new life.

Those who do not baptize by immersion have no symbol to symbolize the burial and resurrection of the crucified Lord. Symbolically they leave him in the grave.

THE AUTHORITY TO BAPTIZE

It takes more than baptism to make a Baptist, and more than immersion to make a baptism.

Jesus committed to somebody, or something, the authority to baptize. The commission, where the only authority is given to baptize, says "Go ye, disciples, baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. . . and lo I am with you always even unto the end of the world." If the promise to be "with you to the end of the world" was to his church then the authority to baptize was to the church for it is the same you. "Go ye," and "I will be with you." Baptists believe that scriptural baptism is administered only when administered to a scriptural subject, in a scriptural way, for a scriptural purpose, and by scriptural authority. An improper subject, an improper act, an improper design or an improper administrator makes an improper baptism. If baptism is a church ordinance it must be administered by church authority. Paul said to the church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 11:2) "I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you." Bear in mind that this is addressed to "the church of God which is at Corinth." "Were the ordinances delivered to the church? Paul says so. Did the church keep the ordinances? Paul says they did.

Dr. J. G. Bow says in: "*What Baptists Believe and Why They Believe It*," page 51.

"Some seem to think anybody claiming to be a minister, belonging to any organization claiming to be a church, performing the act for any design suiting his fancy, may perform this divinely appointed ceremony. Of course all will admit that irreligious persons are excluded from the class of administrators. Then, again, if they are known to be irreligious, whatever they may claim, they cannot have this right. For instance, the Mormons, Universalists, etc.

"Again, all religious societies not claiming to be churches cannot scripturally administer the ordinances - such as the Young Men's Christian Association, Epworth Leagues, Christian Endeavors, Young Peoples' Unions, etc. Very well, then, when Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Campbell, and others started the churches which bear their names, these were then no more churches than the above-named societies are now churches. What people, regarding and expecting the approval of Christians, would be willing to recognize and receive the ordinances administered by the Young Men's Christian Association? Another question: Will their long continuance secure to them the right to administer baptism? When Alexander Campbell was excluded from the fellowship of the Baptists, was he authorized to administer the ordinances for the church that excluded him, or for any other church? If not, by what authority can the sect he founded be now authorized? If there is a straight road between two cities, and another straight road turns from it at any angle, how far must this second road go before it becomes identified in course and destiny with the first? In other words, how old must an error be to make it right?

"Again, Baptists believe that since in its introduction baptism was administered by divine authority, and since there is no declaration of a change in the method of administering the ordinance there should be a commission from God to administer the ordinance now. John said he was sent to baptize with water (John 1:33). True, there has been no direct personal command to the preachers of this day from God, but Jesus commands his church in Matthew (28:19) to teach (make disciples) all nations, baptizing them, etc. It is, of course, not expected that a church as an organization, does the baptizing, but that it is done by the order of and under the direction of the church; and hence one is thus authorized to baptize by the church and for the church, which has a commission from Jesus to go, to teach, to baptize. As "Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus himself baptized not but his disciples - John 4:22) so a church in obedience to the commission (Matthew 28:19) makes and baptizes disciples, though the church baptizes not but her selected and duly appointed ministry. If the commission to evangelize the world is to the church, then the command to baptize is to the church, and hence baptism administered by the authority of a scriptural church is by divine commandment as truly as was that of John the Baptist. If the command is to the church, then one not under the direction of and authorized by a scriptural church is not a scriptural administrator of baptism.

"Surely Jesus knew it was necessary to have a divinely appointed proper administrator, hence 'He came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.'

"Someone may say, 'Yes, the commission does commit the ordinances to the church, but there may be other places in the Scriptures where they are committed to individuals.' Yes, John the Baptist had a commission direct from heaven to baptize (John 1:6 and 33).

Philip when he baptized the Eunuch was acting under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Anyone with a direct commission from heaven to baptize has a perfect right to baptize without church authority, otherwise he has not. These two exceptions only prove the rule.

Dr. E. C. Dargan has well said, "Correcting errors in doctrine and practice has apostolic precedent and example. The twelve men who were baptized at Ephesus because what they called baptism had been performed upon insufficient grounds afford an instructive example. The very fact that the exact defect in their case is somewhat obscure lends emphasis to the general position that where a so-called baptism is inadequate or wrong it should be replaced by a baptism properly administered."

MODERN SCHOLARSHIP AND THE FORM OF BAPTISM

The controversy on the form of baptism is practically settled among scholars. If anything in the New Testament is clear, it is that scriptural baptism is the immersion of believers.

The writer is indebted to his friend and former teacher, Professor A. T. Robertson, one of the foremost Greek scholars of the world, for the following:

"When one quotes an antiquated and partisan lexicon in favor of sprinkling, he should be sure to give the date. No modern Greek lexicons give any other meaning for *baptizo* than dip. Scholarship today has standardized the lexicons for universal use and the Baptist position is completely triumphant. A man today who argues that *baptizo* means to sprinkle or pour, throws suspicion on his scholarship and is on the defensive."

"**1. Greek Lexicons.** I do not propose to quote a single Baptist scholar. In fact, no Baptist has made a Greek lexicon. The Standard Greek lexicon for the world for ancient Greek is that by Liddell and Scott, the two Church of England scholars. It is entitled '*A Greek-English Lexicon*,' and is the eighth edition and dated 1901. It says, '*Baptizo*, to dip in or under water.'

"Sophocles, a native Greek, has produced a Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods (date 1870), covering precisely the time when the New Testament was written. He says, 'Baptize, to dip, to immerse, to sink.' He gives numerous examples and adds, 'There is no evidence that Luke and Paul and the other writers of the New Testament put upon the verb meanings not recognized by the Greeks.'

"The modern Greek is in use today, and the word baptizo is given by Contopoulos in his '*Modern Greek and English Lexicon*' (date 1869) as meaning 'to wet, immerse, tinge.' As is well known, the modern Greeks practice immersion only and use *baptizo* for the act. They are supposed to understand their own language.

"The standard lexicon of the Greek New Testament is by Thayer, of Harvard University, entitled '*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*' (date 1887). He says, '*Baptizo*: **1.** Properly to dip repeatedly, to immerse, to submerge. **2.** To cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water.'

"Cremer's '*Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek*' (dated 1892; ninth edition in German, 1912) is the standard lexicon for theological terms and the work of a famous German scholar. He says, '*Baptizo*: immerse, submerge.'

"There are one or two new lexicons of the Greek New Testament by German scholars that are not translated into English. One is by Preuschen under date of 1909, and is entitled '*Vollstandiges Griechisch-Deutsches Handwörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments*.' He says that *baptizo* means '*ins wasser tauchen*,' 'to dip into water.' The most recent of all New Testament Greek lexicons is by Ebeling under date of 1913. It is entitled '*Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testaments*.' He makes *baptizo* mean '*tauchen ein, unter*.' 'To dip in, under.' It is useless to quote dictionaries that are out of date. Those quoted above are the latest, and the best in the world, and they are unanimous and conclusive.

"**2. Bible Dictionaries.** If we turn to the Bible dictionaries we shall find a similar story. The Bible dictionary longest in use was edited by Smith. The article on baptism is written by Prof. Frederick Meyrick, of Trinity College, Oxford University, a Church of England scholar. It says, 'Hence Baptisma, properly and literally, means immersion.'

"*The Bible Dictionary* (five volumes, 1899-1904) in most frequent use today is that edited by Hastings. The article on baptism is written by Alfred Plummer, the famous scholar of the Church of England. It says, 'A death to sin was expressed by the plunge beneath the water, and rising again to the life of righteousness by the return of light and air; and hence the appropriateness of immersion.' Dr. Plummer, however, it should be said, argues against the necessity of immersion today on the grounds of convenience and expediency. On the contrary, in Hastings' '*Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*' (2 vols., 1905-1908), Dr. Marcus Dods, late principal of New College, Edinburgh, the leading New Testament scholar of Scotland and Presbyterians, says in the article on baptism, 'To use Pauline language, his old

man is dead and buried in the water, and he rises from this cleansing grave a new man. The full significance of the rite would have been lost had immersion not been practiced.'

"3. *Commentaries*. If we turn to the great modern commentaries, we find the same result.

Among Methodist scholars, let us take the following: It is proper to quote John Wesley ('Notes on the New Testament on Romans 6:4'), since he is the founder of Methodism. Wesley says, 'We are buried with him. Alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion.'

"Prof. G. G. Findlay is one of the foremost Methodist scholars of England, and writer on First Corinthians in the '*Expositor's Greek Testament*' (1900). In explaining how the Israelites were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea (1 Corinthians 10:2), he says, 'The cloud shading and guiding the Israelites from above and the sea making a path for them through its midst and drowning their enemies behind them, were glorious signs to our fathers of God's salvation; together they formed a *loutron palingenesias*, (Titus 3:5), inaugurating the national covenant life; as it trod the miraculous path between upper and nether waters, Israel was born unto its divine estate.'

"Prof. A. S. Peake, another great British Methodist scholar, writes on Colossians in the '*Expositor's Greek Testament*.' In the comment on Colossians 2:12, he says, 'The rite of baptism in which the person baptized was first buried beneath the water, and then raised from it, typified to Paul the burial and resurrection of the believer with Christ.'

"Presbyterian commentators are equally explicit. Calvin, in his commentary on Acts 8:38, says, 'Here we see how baptism was administered among the ancients; for they immersed the whole body in water.'

"Principal James Denny, of the United Free Church College (Presbyterian), Glasgow, writer on Romans in the '*Expositor's Greek Testament*.' On Romans 6:4 he says, 'Therefore we were buried with him (in the act of immersion), through that baptism into his death - burial being regarded as the natural sequence of death and a kind of seal set to its reality.'

"Prof. A. B. Bruce, also of the United Free Church College, Glasgow, wrote in the same series on the 'Synoptic Gospels.' On Matthew 3:14 he merely alludes to the symbolic significance of the rite as denoting death to an old life and rising to a new.

"Finally, let us hear some of the great Episcopal (Church of England) commentaries. Lightfoot, almost the greatest of all commentators, in his '*Commentary*' (1890), on Colossians 2:12, says, 'Baptism is the grave of the old man, and the birth of the new. As he sinks beneath the baptismal waters, the believer buries there all his corrupt affections and past sins; he emerges thence, he rises regenerate, quickened to new hopes and a new life.'

"Prof. H. B. Swete, of Cambridge University, in his great '*Commentary on Mark*' (1898), says on 1:9, 'With the added thought of the immersion, which gives vividness to the scene.'

"Let us conclude with Sanday and Headlam ('*Commentary on Romans*,' 1859), on Romans 6:4, in the '*International Critical Commentary*,' Prof. Sanday is the leading Biblical scholar of Oxford University, as Swete is of Cambridge University. He says, 'It expresses symbolically a series of acts corresponding to the redeeming acts of Christ: Immersion - Death. Submersion - Burial (the ratification of death). Emergence - Resurrection.'"

"A Settled Question. With this showing of modern scholarship, Baptists properly claim to have won their contention beyond the shadow of a doubt.

"In confirmation of all this it is perfectly natural to find *baptizo* used in the Septuagint in 2 Kings 5:14, 'And Naaman went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times.' And also Josephus uses *baptizo* for the dipping and drowning of Aristobulus (*Antiquities*, Book XV, chapter 3, section 3).

"Every passage in the New Testament is intelligible with the meaning of immersion. No instance has ever been found in any Greek writing where *baptizo* means to sprinkle or to pour. It always means to dip either literally or metaphorically.

"The New Testament uses *rantizo* for sprinkle and *ecclieo* for pour, but neither of these occurs in the New Testament for the act of baptism, but always *baptiso* is used, which means dip."

We take it that nothing more needs to be said on the form of baptism.

Baptism, though not essential to salvation, is absolutely essential to Christian obedience and to the declaration of those great truths which Baptism alone symbolizes and declares.