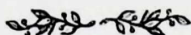


BAPTISM



ITS SIGNIFICANCE

ITS IMPORTANCE

ITS FORM



*“As many of you as have been baptized into Christ
have put on Christ.”*

BAPTISM

BAPTISM A SEAL OF FAITH

IN THE FOURTH chapter of Romans we learn that after Abraham exercised faith toward God, he was given the sign of circumcision which was a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had before he was circumcised. It will be necessary for the student to read this chapter carefully before proceeding further. The same chapter tells us that we must walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham. What were the items of faith which Abraham believed?

First, according to the promise of God, Abraham looked for an everlasting possession in the earth, Gen. 17:7-8. Second, he looked for a son and heir in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed. Paul says that the heir (seed) was Christ, Gal. 3:16. It was upon exercising faith in these things that God gave Abraham the seal of circumcision whereby he sealed his covenant with God in blood.

Inasmuch as we are to walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, and inasmuch as Christian fellowship requires a seal, it is necessary for us to see what that seal is. Before we are ready for the seal, we must exercise the necessary faith—the faith which Abraham had. In Col. 2:10-12, we read, “And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein ye also are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”

Then burial in baptism is Christian circumcision. It is in baptism that we take the blood seal. Christ shed His blood in death and burial, and by symbolizing death, burial and resurrection we take upon us His blood and arise to walk the new life. As Abraham was required to believe God in what God promised, before he was circumcised, so we must believe what God promised before we can be properly baptized. Simply dipping a person in water does not necessarily constitute baptism.

We find this principle of truth exercised in the great commission and in the teaching and practice of the apostles to whom the commission was given. The commission was, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."—Mark 16: 15-16.

First, the candidate must hear and believe the gospel. Having heard and exercised faith in what he has heard, upon repentance he is ready to take the seal. By an examination of the Acts, it will be found that the apostles followed this order of things. Peter preached the gospel on the day of Pentecost. That gospel contained the promise of God's kingdom with Christ sitting upon David's throne, a Christ risen from the dead. Expressing belief in these things, the hearers were exhorted to repent and to be baptized for the remission of sins.

Philip preached to the people of Samaria and when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women. They were not ready for baptism until they had heard and believed. The eunuch said to Philip, after Philip had taught him, "See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip conditioned his readiness to baptize him only upon his expression of belief in the things which he had heard. In every instance recorded it will be found that the knowl-

edge of and belief in the gospel preceded baptism.

Some questions then. Will dipping in water a little child or any person who knows nothing about the gospel have any saving effect on such person?

Will it help matters any to dip any person in water who believes something for gospel other than that which Christ and the apostles preached?

Does it not stand to reason that before we can legally seal a covenant or contract, we must know what that contract is? Should we not enter in upon the subject of baptism with a great deal of care?

He who does away with Christian baptism in his system of religion does away with the means God has given by which the covenant with God may be legalized. The Children of Israel exercised the same blood mark in leaving Egypt. Had they left the blood off their door posts, it would have meant severe loss to them even though they had fulfilled every other requirement God made of them.

MORAL GOODNESS CANNOT TAKE THE PLACE OF OBEDIENCE IN BAPTISM

We now call your attention to the record in Acts ten. Here we find a man whose moral qualities would entitle him to entrance in among the best of people. The description given him would entitle him to church membership in most of the popular churches of the day and no questions asked. Here is what is said of him: he was devout; one that feared God; gave much alms to the people; prayed to God always; was a man of good report among the nation of the Jews.

Here was a good man; but his moral goodness alone could not save him, for he was in an unsaved condition. By referring to Peter's language in the eleventh chapter we learn as much, for we read in the thirteenth and fourteenth verses as follows: "And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send

men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house SHALL BE SAVED." Going back we find, according to Peter's speech to Cornelius as recorded in the tenth chapter, that Cornelius knew the gospel. While they were talking, that Peter might understand that God accepted Gentiles as well as Jews, the Holy Spirit fell upon them in baptismal power, and then it was that Cornelius was baptized. The only difference we can see between Cornelius before and after meeting him is that difference which took place in baptism.

If moral goodness alone could save one, then Cornelius was entitled to salvation. The question may arise, Why should not salvation be based upon the terms of moral goodness? There are many good reasons why it should not be so. First, as Paul argues in Romans four, if we could earn salvation by good works, God would OWE us salvation and we would have nothing to thank Him for. Salvation is a gift based on the works of faith; it is a gift of God. Were salvation based upon good works, men would be led away from humility and would become puffed up with the consciousness of their own good qualities. The practice of faith toward God leads us ever into that realm of humility in which alone the human being can find that perfection which can make him to enjoy himself to the greatest degree. Regarding Lydia's conversion to Christianity we have the same facts standing out, Acts 16. In the fourteenth verse it is recorded that she was a religious woman. She was a worshiper of God and every evidence goes to show that she was sincere and devoted in her faith as much as many are today who worship God. If her sincerity and devotion could work out for her salvation, why was it necessary for Paul to come along to disturb her quiet, peaceful way? Being a God-fearing woman and one who worshiped God, why was it necessary for her to be baptized? And yet we find the text expressly stating that she was baptized.

All are familiar with the statement made by Peter (1 Peter 3:19), wherein he shows that as the ark was the means of saving eight souls by water, even so in a figure, baptism doth also now save us. Then Paul shows conclusively that baptism into Christ is necessary if we would become heirs according to the promise made to Abraham.

“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. . . . And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Galatians 3:27, 29.

MUCH WATER NECESSARY FOR TRUE BAPTISM

The only scriptural water baptism is by immersion. John baptized where there was „much water”. John 3:23. Could there be any excuse for this statement if sprinkling or pouring, either of which would not require “much water”, were authorized or practiced? If either of the latter named actions were practiced, would it not be much more likely that where many were to be baptized it would be easier to bring the necessary water to them rather than to take so many to the water? Baptism is called a “burial”, a “planting”, Rom. 6, and it is spoken of as “going down into the water and coming up out of it again”, Acts 8:38, 39.

Furthermore, in the word, “baptism” we have a Greek word transcribed and not translated. Elsewhere this same Greek word is properly translated “dip”, where it has no relation to water baptism. In Luke 16, in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man is made to say, “Send Lazarus that he may DIP the tip of his finger, etc.” Again Christ said to those who asked Him who it was that should betray Him, “It is he that DIPPETH with me, etc.” Again we read of one whose “vesture is DIPPED in blood.” In each instance the word “dip” is translated from some form of the Greek, *baptizo*.

We have at hand a German Bible. In it we find the

first verse of Matthew 3, the following: *Zu der Zeit kam Johannes, der Tauffer*, etc. The English of this is, "In those days, came John the Baptist." Ask any German to give you the meaning of "tauffer", and see what he will tell you. I asked one once upon a time what it meant when he didn't know what my design was in asking it, and he said, "Id means dat you get soaked."

In type this idea of immersion is sustained. The children of Israel were buried in a watery grave in their passage through the Red Sea. Paul refers to this as a national baptism unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, Rom. 10. The Israelites were entirely hidden from the Egyptians under water, for a cloud covered them and hid them. Baptism is also given as a figure of burial. As Christ was buried and arose, so we are buried in baptism with Him to arise to walk in a newness of life.

What purpose can people have in wishing to discuss the subject out of the Bible? Why do they seek to change God's plans and purposes? Do they not know this is a dangerous proceeding? Saul tried it only a little, for while the commandment had gone out to destroy EVERYTHING, yet Saul kept back only a little alive, and that only for an apparently good purpose if we are to believe his story; yet it cost him a kingdom. The prophet was told to eat nothing while in the land of the enemy. Yet with good purpose, so he thought, he ate and lost his life. How dare people be so careless about the ordinances of God? Is it because vanity takes hold and molds their actions? We need to flee vanity. It is as poison to us. Let us seek rather a state of deep humility, for in its atmosphere alone can we develop best that character which God purposes for us.

As against baptism it is urged that the winters of our latitude make the thought of being immersed in the extremely cold water of our winter time out of the question. We know of instances where candidates applying for immersion in the winter time have been told by the "shep-

herds'' to wait until warmer weather. Recently when the water was full of slush ice, we were called upon to baptize a sister whose health was far from rugged. She went through the ordeal without a fear and came out of the water knowing that she had been obedient to that form of doctrine which had been delivered her. We have never heard of a case where severity of the weather ever brought harm to the willingly obedient. Let us not seek excuses to avoid what God commands, but rather let us seek to do His will, knowing that He will ask nothing of us in the performance of which He will not protect us.

—S. J. Lindsay, in *The Restitution Herald*, February, 1916.

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