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Sprinkling, or Pouring, the Scriptural Mode of Baptism.

“For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.”—ACTS i. 5.

IT is strange that Presbyterians do not have more to say upon this subject. Our church has always given its greatest attention to what we consider of more importance—the doctrines of salvation and the question, “how should man be just with God?” (Job ix. 2.) But whereas these are more momentous themes, the others which pertain to form and ceremony are not to be slighted. There is a general misapprehension among our brethren of the Baptist Church as to just what we Presbyterians do believe on the subject of baptism. Intelligent and well-informed persons of that denomination have told me they supposed that all Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, Lutherans, Moravians, and Episcopalians believed that the original mode of baptism was by

immersion, and that we had adopted sprinkling because it was more convenient, which, of course, is a mistake. We believe that the Bible mode of baptism was sprinkling or pouring. That is the doctrine of the Presbyterian Church throughout the world. As to what the ordinance means, so great an authority as the Rev. Dr. Jeter, a distinguished Baptist divine, now deceased, but whose fragrant memory still lives, said: "This is an outward ritual washing, symbolic of a moral one, as said Ananias to Saul, 'Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.'" That is precisely the position of the Presbyterian Church. In this declaration, Dr. Jeter did not agree with the majority of his denomination as to the meaning of the ordinance, but the Baptist position is stated correctly by Dr. Pendleton, when he says: "Baptism represents the burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ," and so they speak constantly of the "liquid grave." That is the belief of the Baptist Church, a great and noble body of Christian people, whom we love and admire, and with whom we are willing and anxious to hold the closest possible fellowship and communion. The Baptist position is that immersion is the only valid form of baptism, and the Presbyterian, that it signifies the outpouring of God's spirit, and

that the mode in scripture was by sprinkling or pouring; but that the exact form of baptism is not essential to the validity of the sacrament.

We hold that while sprinkling or pouring is the proper mode, immersion will do, and we think we are logical in this. We believe, likewise, that ordination to the ministry should be by several Presbyters. A man is ordained to the ministry by the laying on of the hands of a body of men. Our Episcopal brethren, whom we hold in high esteem, believe that ordination can only be effected by the laying on of hands by an Episcopal Bishop. Now, we believe in ordination by a number of Presbyters, but we also hold that Episcopal ordination *will do*; and so when a minister comes to us from the Episcopal Church we receive him without reordination, though his ordination was not done exactly according to what we think was the scriptural method.

So in regard to confirmation, we do not receive members into the church by what is called confirmation, the laying on of a bishop's hands, but when an Episcopalian comes with his letter to join us, we take him on his certificate, just as if he had come from another Presbyterian congregation, because confirmation will do. And this is logical, for it is not right to put a form on

the same footing with a great spiritual fact, and it is the spiritual fact that the form stands for, which must be held sacred above all things. Faith and repentance are necessary to salvation, and so when a man from the world comes to join the church, we ask him if he believes in Jesus Christ as his Saviour, if he is sorry for his sins, and determined to lead a religious life. We cannot receive a man from the world into the church unless he answers *yes* to these questions. These are the spiritual things that belong essentially to religion, and without which a man cannot be saved. Now we think these are the things to set up above all ceremonies, and to require at the hands of every man that would be a communicant of the church, and we deem it a mistake to put a ceremony on the same footing with regeneration, as manifested in faith, repentance, and love, and to say that a man cannot be considered a member of the church unless he has been confirmed by a bishop, or has been baptized in a particular form. It will be objected, why then will not Presbyterian ministers baptize persons by immersion, as well as by sprinkling, when requested to do so? The answer is, we accept persons who have been immersed, because the validity of an ordinance does not depend upon its

exact form, but when we administer it, we *must act according to what we believe was the practice of the Apostolic Church.* This is necessary to the dignity, order and propriety of church administration.

We think that the position of our dear brethren of the Baptist Church is wrong in holding that *only* immersion is baptism, for many reasons: One is because it leads necessarily and logically to a practice which is repugnant to the Christian instinct. That practice is "close communion." It is embarrassing to the Baptists, because it goes against their Christian instinct for fellowship with all saints. Most Baptists of England teach open communion. Mr. Spurgeon practised it. I have communed at his table. It embarrasses our dear Baptist brethren, who have to maintain "close communion," because they love their brethren of other churches; their instinct of son-ship to God makes them desire fellowship, and many a Baptist parent, whose child is a member of the Presbyterian church, longs to sit with him at the table of our Lord. To avoid this embarrassment, the Baptist ministers often say that "close communion" is a misnomer, and that it should be called "close Baptism." But this will not stand, because they do not admit to their communion

persons of other denominations who have been immersed, as for example, the "Disciples" or "Christians," who uniformly baptize in the same manner as the Baptists do. A person must not only be immersed, but must also be a member of the Baptist communion, or he cannot sit at their table. So it is "close communion" after all.

The Baptist may hold that immersion is the original scriptural mode because he believes it, but he makes a grave error in declaring that it is the *only* mode, for that mistake leads to close communion, which unchurches the great majority of Christians, though God acknowledges them by giving them his Spirit.

I remember in the city of Savannah, an eminent Baptist minister from England, one of Mr. Spurgeon's friends, whom I knew well. He insisted upon communing with other denominations, and did so according to the custom of most Baptists in his native country, and he was told that he must desist, or be expelled from the church. He said he could not go against his conscience, and he was at the age of about fifty, a gray-haired minister of Christ, cut off from the communion. Now I say that a doctrine which leads necessarily to such an act must be wrong. Just exactly as with regard to Apostolical succession in the great and

noble Episcopal church. The Episcopalians have a right to believe and teach that ordination should be at the hands of the Bishop, ordained in a regular line of succession from the Apostles, though we think they cannot prove it. But they make a grave mistake in holding that ordination can be by no other way. If a man *must* be ordained by an Episcopal bishop, and in no other way, then ministers of other denominations have not been ordained. It is a necessary consequence, therefore, that they cannot be admitted into an Episcopal pulpit to preach, or administer the sacraments. Now I say that a position which leads to a conclusion so repugnant to the highest Christian instinct, and which is so embarrassing to our dear brethren of the Episcopal church, must be wrong. The premises of human logic must be tested by the necessary conclusions which flow from them. It is a great mistake to put ceremony on the same footing with faith, love, and repentance. In other words, the church of God should have charity in things pertaining to form and ceremony, and allow liberty in them, maintaining with all the power of her being, the monumental facts of Christianity, demanding a personal religious experience, and exalting the great doctrines that cluster around the cross, and

about the person of our Saviour—those mighty realities that pertain to eternity—and not make essential, things that confessedly are for time.

The word *baptize* is the English form of the Greek word *Baptizo*. The reason why the translators of the Scriptures did not translate it, is because there is no word in the English language which means just the same thing as the Greek word *Baptizo*. The nearest word to it is *wash*. The word *Baptizo* is used in secular Greek literature, in a great many different ways, and with different meanings. To illustrate, Pindar, born five hundred and twenty years before Christ, used it in speaking of the cord on a fishing net, to say that the cord was baptized, when thrown into the water. Plato, born four hundred and twenty-nine years before Christ, spoke of people being baptized by drinking too much wine; also of a youth who was baptized by hard questions put to him. A ship that sank in the sea, was said to have been baptized; a man was baptized by his own tears that fell on his face. And in one place the blood of a frog is said to have baptized a lake. The word is used in secular Greek writings in many senses, the prevalent idea being to wash, but in the New Testament it is used for one purpose. What is that? We are to learn by the

Scriptures themselves. It is very common—universal indeed—for a word to be taken out of its general uses and adapted to a particular purpose; and in the vocabulary of any society, art, science or religion, this is necessarily the case. Take the Greek word “deacon”—it means servant, but we use it in religion, getting warrant from the Scriptures, as the title of an office in the church of God. “Elder,” or presbyter, means old man, but in its technical religious sense it is applied to an officer of the church; and an elder is not always an old man. We have elders in our church who are young men. It is the name of an office. And so the Greek word “deipnon,” which means “supper,” applied in general Greek literature to feasts, festivals, dinners and suppers, and all kinds of gatherings for repast, is taken up by the Scriptures and used in a technical and religious sense for the Lord’s Supper. It has been devoted to a peculiar supper or feast of our religion. The Lord’s Supper was instituted after the passover meal had been eaten, and we know that only a small portion of bread and wine was used in this sacrament. So we might take one meaning of “deipnon” and say that the disciples ate at the Lord’s Supper, until satisfied, and drank until they had enough, in this holy ordi-

nance. This seems to have been the view of the Corinthians, as we read of St. Paul reproving them for eating and drinking to excess, at the Lord's table, saying they had "houses to eat and drink in," and, "if any man hunger, let him eat at home." This sacrament did not involve the use of much bread and wine. It is not in keeping with spiritual things that men and women should come together and eat plentifully and drink to their satisfaction in a holy ordinance. When physical things are used to represent spiritual it should be sparingly, and the Lord's Supper was not instituted until the evening repast was over. And so in baptism, we must get the meaning of the word from its religious use in the Scriptures, and there alone can we determine exactly what it describes. We must learn the meaning of astronomical terms by reading astronomy, and of religious terms by reading the great book of religion, which God has written for our instruction.

If baptism refers to the burial of Christ, and not, as we think, to the outpouring of God's Spirit upon the soul, by which it is cleansed from sin and brought into union with Christ, it stands for the same spiritual truth as the Lord's Supper. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper stands for the atonement, the death of Christ, and one sac-

rament is enough for that. The great work of the Holy Spirit is just as essential as the atonement. No man can be saved, except the Holy Spirit be poured out upon him, and his heart be changed. If we apply both sacraments to the work of Christ, we have nothing left for the Spirit's work, which is just as necessary as the atonement.

While we do not consider this a question of fundamental importance, nor that it is necessary for a man to believe in baptism by sprinkling in order to be a member of the church, or be saved, we think that a sacrament which represents a spiritual truth, should resemble the spiritual act which it stands for. If baptism meant the burial and resurrection of Christ, then there would be some strength in the argument that immersion was the right form, but it would be necessary, even then, to prove it from the Scriptures. Of course immersion resembles the burial of Christ in some degree at least: not that Christ was buried by being put down into the ground, as men are in this day, but by being introduced into a chamber, being carried through a door, for he *was* so buried in an artificial chamber cut in the side of a rock. There are hundreds of such tombs in Palestine now. There is some resemblance, how-

ever, between the act of burial and the ceremony of immersion. But if baptism signifies the outpouring of God's Spirit upon the soul, and the washing away of sin, then the sacrament ought to resemble that. To put a man into the water is not a fitting description or symbol of the outpouring of God's Spirit.

Throughout the Old and New Testaments, baptism is associated with the outpouring of God's Spirit. The two things go together, and should not be separated. So when John the Baptist came preaching, he said, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." (Matt. iii. 11.) Christ said, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John iii. 5.) And Christ says: "John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." It is needless to multiply these texts, they are so numerous; but the outpouring of God's Spirit and baptism are spoken of together, the one as the symbol, and the other as the thing symbolized, and the putting of a man into the water is not an apt illustration or symbol of the outpour-

ing of God's Spirit upon the soul. When John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, it was as a Hebrew priest, doing what the Hebrew priesthood were universally recognized as appointed to do. A very large function of their office was the sprinkling of the people, either with the blood of the sacrifice which symbolized the blood of Christ, or with the water of purification, as described in the nineteenth chapter of Numbers. The Apostle Paul speaks of these sprinklings and washings of the Old Testament as "divers washings"—the Greek word being "baptisms"—"divers baptisms." John came preaching, and, like any other priest, baptizing the people, and no hint is given of the introduction of a new form. The Jews would have been quick to complain at any innovation by one of their own priests upon a ceremony of their religion which was performed constantly before their eyes.

Christ and John lived under the old dispensation. The old dispensation closed, and its mission was accomplished when Jesus died on the cross. Jesus being a Jew was circumcised, he kept the passover, he attended the Temple services and recognized the religion of the country and people.

Now when Christ came to the river Jordan to

de baptized by John, John forbade him, saying : "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me." The Lord declares : "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness," all things required by the law of our religion. And John baptized him with water, while the Father baptized him with the Holy Ghost, who descended upon him from above. He was thus installed publicly in his Messianic office for the Jews and for the world, that he might offer himself as a sacrifice on Calvary, and having risen from the grave might ascend to heaven, and there as the High Priest continue his intercessions for us.

But Christ being the divine and everlasting priest of whom all other priests were only types, never baptized any one with water which was the symbol, but with the Holy Ghost which water symbolizes.

The Baptists argue that Christ was immersed, from the use, in the Scripture narrative, of the expressions "baptized of John *in* Jordan," and "coming up out of the water." We would set against these the words of John in this connection "I indeed baptize you *with* water," and also the fact repeatedly mentioned that simultaneously with Christ's baptism "with water"—the symbol, the Holy Ghost, that which was symbolized,

came down upon him. It would have been very singular, or indeed meaningless, to put the Lord down into the water as a symbol of the descent of the Holy Ghost. As the killing of a lamb for sacrifice is an appropriate type of the death of Christ, so is sprinkling or pouring a fitting symbol of the descent of the Holy Ghost. We think that the English version of the New Testament proves that Christ was not immersed, but if we go back to the inspired Greek, the evidence is still stronger for our mode. The argument of the Baptists is, that Christ's baptism must have been by immersion because the Greek preposition *eis*, which is used in the case *must* mean into, and *apo* *must* mean out of. Supposing these two prepositions did mean only *into* and *out of*, it would not prove immersion. It might prove that Christ stepped into and *out of* the water. It would not prove that John put the Lord under the water. In that country where people did not then, and seldom do now, wear shoes, it would be most natural for persons about to be baptized by sprinkling, especially if there were a great multitude of candidates, to step *to*, or possibly *into* the edge of the river, and stand there while water was poured or sprinkled on their heads. But the use of the words *eis* and *apo* does not even prove that the Saviour stepped

into the water, as we see from the use of *eis*, it occurs in Matthew iv. 1, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit (*eis*) into the wilderness"—the wilderness being an arid, treeless region, where it would be impossible to get under anything except by going into a cave. Was he immersed into the wilderness? It was just as if one said: He went into Galilee. Again, Matthew v. 1, "He went up (*eis*) into a mountain," does not imply that he went inside of or under the mountain. In John xx. 3-6, "Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came (*eis*) to the sepulchre." "The other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first (*eis*) to the sepulchre" . . . "yet went he not in!" In the succeeding verses where their going into the sepulchre is described, it was necessary to use a double *eis*, and to say *kai eisēthen eis to mnemeion*; equivalent to saying, and he entered in the sepulchre. If the use of *eis* in the narrative of Christ's going to Jordan to be baptized, proved that Christ went into the water, it would not follow then that he was immersed, but it does not even prove that he stepped into the water.

So in the case of the Eunuch baptized by Philip. The same word *eis* is used, and it simply means that he went to the water. The Scrip-

ture says they went down *both* into the water, *both* Philip and the Eunuch, and (that is, *after* they had gone *into*, or, better translation, *to*) "he baptized him." If the *eis* refers to the baptism, and proves that the Eunuch was immersed, it also proves that Philip was immersed also; but the fact is, it proves nothing about it, for it was after they had gone (*eis*) to the water that the baptism took place. In the last verse of this chapter we read that "Philip was found *at* (*eis*) Azotus," which is strong confirmatory proof that *eis* cannot be shown to express always the idea of *going into*. In this chapter *eis* is used eleven times, and only *once* translated *into*; the other translations are "to," "in," "with," "unto," and "at." It is evident that it simply refers to *locality*.

The other Greek preposition which our dear Baptist brethren build their theory of immersion upon is *apo*, which they claim refers to the coming up *out of* the water in the performance of baptism. But if it could be proved that it always meant *out of*, it would only show that the baptizer and the baptized stepped out of the water, not that either one had been immersed in it. But even this cannot be proved. See Matt i. 17, "Generations *from* (*apo*) Abraham to David, . . . and *from* (*apo*) David until the carrying away into

Babylon, . . . and *from (apo)* the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ." We could not say "out of Abraham to David." In Acts ix. 8, we read, "Saul arose from (*apo*) the earth." It could not mean *out of* for he had not been *in* or under it. Matt. xxv. 28 reads, "Take the talent *from (apo)* him," not *out of* him, and in the same chapter, verse 41, "Depart from (*apo*) me," not *out of* me; and in Acts xxvii. 34, "Not a hair shall fall *from (apo)* the head of any of you;" not *out of* as if the hair were inside the head. The New Testament is full of passages in which *apo* is used in similar senses. Like *eis*, *apo* refers to locality, and it usually means from. It can be made to mean *out of* by a context which necessarily implies it, and also by adding another preposition, as in English we say *out from*.

It does not prove that Jesus and the Eunuch were immersed, but that they were *not* immersed. When Jesus was baptized he went (*eis*) to the water, and came *from (apo)* the water, and so the Eunuch.

What was the Eunuch doing when Philip met him? He was reading at what is now the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. The books of the Bible were not at that time divided into chapters, but he was reading in the book of Isaiah, at that place

which describes the sacrifice of Christ for sin. The description of Christ begins in the preceding chapter. The last verses of that chapter read:

"Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

"As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:

"So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider."

This is what the Eunuch was reading when Philip came to him in the chariot, and we find that Philip took from that passage of Scripture, the succeeding verse as the text of his sermon, and his preaching was so effective that the Eunuch confessed Christ and desired to be baptized. Now, in the face of the passage the Eunuch was reading, how could Philip have baptized him in any other way than by sprinkling? Christ was going to sprinkle many nations—by his church, his ministers—with water, and to sprinkle many nations with the outpouring of his mighty Spirit from his own great hand and sceptre.

An argument for sprinkling or pouring may be drawn from the fact that the baptisms by the

apostles frequently occurred in a prison, or a home where it would have been impossible for the ordinance to have been administered by immersion, without great preparations in the way of preparing a pool and filling it with water. If these baptisms had been by immersion there would have been some account given of these preparations, or of the persons concerned going to some body of water where it could be practicable. But there is not a word or hint of any such thing. The plain inference from all these passages is that when a man confessed Christ, in his home, or in a prison, he was baptized at once without any elaborate preparation, such as immersion would have involved.

There are some passages which we must mention, in passing, the first is 1 Cor. x. 2: "And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." But the Egyptians were the only ones immersed. Another is where it is said of Noah and his family in the ark: "Eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us." Noah and his family were not immersed. It was the wicked of the lost world who were immersed and destroyed.

The water saved Noah by destroying the wicked world, thus saving him out of its corruption, and

so with the children of Israel at the Red Sea. There is nothing in either case to prove any mode of baptism.

The strongest texts in the Bible for our dear Baptist brethren (I am going to call them that when I mention them, because I love them, and do not like to differ from them about anything) are those two texts: "Buried with him in baptism," and "Buried with him by baptism into his death." Those are the two great passages which they depend upon. Let us see: "Buried with him by baptism *into his death*." "*Into his death*." What does that mean? It means that by this ordinance, the death of Christ becomes our death, and therefore His burial is our burial. Baptized into a faith, we become partakers of that faith; baptized into a church, we become members of that church; and baptized into a slain sacrifice, we become partakers of its death. In the fifteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians St. Paul says: "Why are we then baptized for the dead?" These were Christian Hebrews the Apostle was writing to; and those Gentile Christians who have the whole Bible and can read in the nineteenth chapter of Numbers where it declares if a man touched a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, he was ceremonially unclean,

until he had been baptized by being sprinkled with water, and the ashes of a red heifer which had been burnt with cedar wood. Then after a specified time he was ceremonially clean, and could enter the temple again. What did that mean? It meant that the penalty of sin is death. A man who had touched a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, was considered to have become ceremonially unclean. God would not allow that man to go to the temple to serve and to worship. Must the man be killed? No. A substitute must be killed in his place—something must be punished for him, and the death of another must be made his death, that he may go to the house of the Lord. And so this red heifer, without a spot or a blemish, was chosen, and put to death, to atone for the ceremonial uncleanness of him who had touched a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave. And then the priest, under a minute prescription, allowing no liberty whatever in the method of its application—was to take the water containing the ashes of the slain animal, and sprinkle the body of the unclean: and so the man was considered, before the law, as having been punished and set free.

Now then, buried with Christ by baptism into his death, signifies that baptism by which we are

brought into connection with Christ—a vital connection, baptized into his death, and so his death becomes our death. We are baptized into him by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and instead of this being a text for the immersion theory, it is a strong one for sprinkling or pouring as the scriptural mode of baptism, because the ordinance prescribed in Numbers xix., to which this passage plainly refers, was a baptism by sprinkling, and no other.

“One Lord, one faith, one baptism,” and what baptism is that? Anything which is put on the same level with “one Lord” and “one faith,” must be a spiritual thing that is everlasting in its effects. The Holy Ghost would not say, one Lord (pointing to Christ), one faith (pointing to that immortal thing that saves the soul), and then, “one baptism,” meaning water baptism. It means the baptism of the Holy Ghost, by which we are cleansed from the pollution of sin and born into Christ. “The Spirit, and the water, and the blood—and these three agree in one:” the Spirit is poured out—nobody disputes that; the blood is sprinkled, and the water must also be poured or sprinkled if the three are to agree in one.

It is worth considering that the immense majority of the Christian church hold that sprinkling,

or pouring, was the Bible form, and that only fifteen millions (that is the number of the Baptist denomination) hold to immersion; that the Presbyterian Church with its 35,000,000, the Methodist with its 21,000,000, the Episcopalian with its 21,000,000 or 22,000,000, and the Lutherans with their millions, all hold to sprinkling or pouring. This does not prove it, of course, because the truth is sometimes with the minority, but it raises a strong presumption that the opinion of the immense majority of the Christians in the world is right on this matter.

Another consideration: would it be at all likely that Christ would institute a sacrament which could not be administered except under peculiarly favorable circumstances? On the deserts of Arabia, on the plains of our own West, in the cold regions of the frozen North, and in the sick room, where some poor man was about to die, immersion would be a physical and absolute impossibility. It would seem that God in appointing a sacrament, would adopt such an act as could be performed anywhere, which would be practicable where men can live; and so we can baptize by sprinkling a man in a prison cell, on the scaffold, on a sick-bed, however ill he may be, on the deserts of Arabia, or on the deck of a ship.

Wherever a man can live, the sacrament may be safely administered.

A strong argument is found in the remains of the old carvings in the Catacombs at Rome. The Catacombs are artificial caves, or chambers, cut in the soft rock, under the city of Rome, of immense extent, with here and there a chapel for worship, and burial places where we can see that in ancient times, in the ages of persecution, under the heathen religion of ancient Rome, God's people took refuge in the bowels of the earth. Here they lived and worshipped, and here they buried their dead. And under the influence of that same kind of religious sentiment which we have, that comes so strongly into exercise when we are in extreme trouble, they associated religion with the death of their friends, and wrote religious truths on their tombs. We find on the faces of tombs in the Catacombs, pictures of the baptism of Christ. I have seen them myself. Dating back to the early ages, locked up there, and hidden away as they were for hundreds and hundreds of years, now brought to light by careful exploration, they seem like voices from the dead, testifying to the truth. Some of these pictures represent the Saviour's baptism, depicting him, standing at the edge of the river Jordan, while

John the Baptist (some of them showing him with a bunch of hyssop in his hand, some with a shell, and some with the simple hand) poured or sprinkled water on his head. As these pictures were placed on the rocks a thousand and a half years ago, they have great force and authority in the determination of this question. And a little over a year ago I was wandering about the ruins of Ephesus, where St. John lived, and Timothy also, and where St. Paul taught, and I found an ancient baptismal urn, which any one may see now by going to the site of that ancient city. It was a great marble vase, four or five feet in diameter, but only six inches in depth, made with taste and skill, evidently as an ornament to some ancient Christian church, but it would have been impossible to immerse a baby in it, much less a grown person.

The testimony of the early Christian writers is also in favor of sprinkling or pouring. Jerome, in the year 321 A. D., writing on a passage in Ezekiel, speaks of "pouring out the clean water of baptism." And Basil, an ancient Greek Christian, in the year 310 A. D., and Origen 184 A. D., both speak of the pouring of water on the sacrifice of Elijah, as the baptism of the sacrifice by water. Cyprian, a Latin writer, who died 260 A. D., called affusion the baptism of the church.

St. Lawrence, in 250 A. D., spoke of a soldier being baptized by water poured from a pitcher. Clemens, Alexandrinus born 105 after Christ, speaks of a backslider going back, "baptized with his own tears."

We think that in this brief, and condensed argument we have shown that sprinkling or pouring is the scriptural mode of baptism, and ought to be maintained by all branches of the Church of Christ.

I would to God that all the children of Christ believed that whatever may be the forms and ceremonies under which people worship, if they have faith in Jesus they are all brothers and sisters, who have a right to every privilege and every sign of fellowship, and my argument is not in the faintest manner controversial. It is simply for the instruction of our people in our own doctrine. We receive all evangelical denominations into every fellowship; in the pulpit, at the communion table, and into the membership of the church, and every Christian denomination is recognized by the grand old Presbyterian Church. We may be pardoned for loving the house of our fathers, as a grand old monument for truth and liberty, and charity. Let us all strive after charity among all denominations, and this is to be gotten not by controversy, but by co-operation and fellowship in Christian work and prayer.

INFANT BAPTISM.

"And I baptized also the household of Stephanas."--

I COR. i: 16.

THE query is, "Who may be baptized?" but as there is no difference of opinion among Christians about the baptism of adults who profess faith in Christ, and who have not been baptized, and therefore no special need of argument upon that subject, we will confine our discussion to the question, "May infants be baptized?"

The position of the Presbyterian Church on this subject is, that the infants of believing parents are members of the church, and that as such they are entitled to the sign of church membership, which is baptism. Therefore, if we can prove that the first statement is true, that infants are members of the church, it necessarily follows that they have a right to baptism, which is a sign and seal of that membership. So our task is to prove the membership of the infants of believers in the church of the living God.

The first argument is, that in all lands, under

all kinds of governments, infants are recognized as citizens. It matters not whether the country be under a monarchy or a republic, the rule is universal, always has been, and doubtless will be to the end of time, that infants are citizens of the nation. If one of our children should be attacked in a foreign country where we were traveling, he would be defended by the agent of the American government there. If he being innocent of crime, were taken captive and put in prison, the government of the United States would recognize his citizenship, and demand his instant release, which if not complied with, would be enforced by arms, and, if necessary, the entire naval and military power of the nation would be brought into requisition to save that little child from its enemies. Every one of our children is a citizen of the American nation by virtue of its birth. Here is a man who was born in Great Britain, who chose for himself a home in America, and who went through certain prescribed forms in order to become a citizen. In doing so, what was the effect upon his minor children? They became citizens by their father's act. Because their father is a citizen, they are citizens, and are entitled to the protection of the government, and to all the privileges of this favored land. It is true they are not en-

titled to exercise all the privileges of citizenship unless they possess the necessary qualifications, and the qualifications are two: a proper age and a proper character. The second is as important as the first, for though the man come to the age of twenty-one, he is not allowed the highest privileges of citizenship unless his character be worthy; for, if he has broken the laws he is confined in prison, and is not allowed to exercise the suffrage which belongs to him by birth.

So in the visible kingdom of our God and Saviour, the children are born members. When a man joins the church of God on earth, he brings his children with him. They are members, under the protecting care of the government of this kingdom; they are entitled to the blessings which belong to such membership; they are entitled to instruction, and opportunities for worship, and defence from the world, and when they obtain the proper qualifications for full citizenship, they are admitted to its exercise, those qualifications being age and character, just as in the State. A child must be old enough to understand what religion is before he come to the communion; must believe in Christ intelligently, repent of his sins, and ask for himself the full privileges which are his birthright. He must not only be old enough,

but as in his relations to the State, he must have the proper character, and that comes from what we call conversion or regeneration. He must be of proper age, and must be born again, and when he shows himself possessed of these qualifications, he is admitted to full membership, in voting, holding of office, and in coming to the Lord's table.

Now, it would be a very strange thing if, in all the governments of the world, Christian and heathen, the membership and citizenship of little children were recognized, and yet in the government of God, who is most merciful and kind and good, the little ones should be left out.

It cannot be denied that, in the Old Testament, infants were members, and in the seventeenth chapter of Genesis, the ordinance of circumcision is prescribed as a recognition of their inclusion in the covenant and the church. If we can prove that there has been but one church and kingdom of God on earth, and that the law recognizing the membership of children has never been repealed, but only the seal and sign of it changed, it is demonstrated that infants are still members of this church. The essential ordinances signified the same thing under the Old Testament as under the New, the difference being that

circumcision was for male children only, while baptism is for both male and female, the position of woman being more advantageous under the New than under the Old. Circumcision was emblematical of putting away the sins of the flesh, and the cleansing from sin, in the Old Testament, just as baptism signifies it now, representing the outpouring of God's Spirit, by which we are born again, separated from the world, and joined to Christ. The Passover set forth the coming sacrifice of the Lamb of God, who was to be slain for the world, and whenever the pious Jew partook of this ordinance it was to him very much what the Lord's Supper is to us now, only that was prospective, looking forward to the promise to be fulfilled, while ours is retrospective, looking back to that which has been accomplished. As the atonement has been accomplished, a slight symbol, a simpler ordinance, is put in the place of the older one as a memento and seal; and so, instead of the sacrificial lamb and the sprinkling of its blood, we have now the breaking of bread, and the pouring of wine, which stand for the breaking of Christ's body and the shedding of his blood. And so as the Spirit's work has been more clearly manifested in the New Testament, the symbol of his outpouring

consists of pouring or sprinkling a small quantity of water on the head.

The church in all ages has been established upon the covenants between God and man. All the covenants of God made with men have included the children. When God made a covenant with our first parents, in Eden, it was for them and their posterity. If Adam had chosen good, and not evil, it would have been for our blessedness, for our everlasting weal; but he chose evil, and so his posterity suffer with him in the same condemnation.

And when God made a covenant with Noah, it was in these words: "Behold, I establish my covenant with you, and your seed after you."

God has placed in the human heart a great instinct, which, when a man comes to be a father, and a woman comes to be a mother, asserts itself above every other instinct, in the desire for the welfare of their progeny. God, who made that instinct, and who has put it in man for the welfare of the race, has established in his church the means of satisfying it, and as the father and mother, recognizing their infirmity and imperfection, but longing for the welfare of their child, would bring their child to God, and consecrate it to his service; so God in all his covenants has said: "To

thee and thy children," thus answering this mighty God-given instinct, which belongs to all mankind.

When the Lord called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, he said in the seventh verse of the seventeenth chapter of Genesis, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and thy seed after thee." I am so glad that ringing word, "everlasting" was put in, that God made this covenant with Abraham, not for a temporary period, not for the Jewish nation, which was afterwards to come into existence, but as an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto Abraham and his seed after him forever: and that in the New Testament, when the sacred work of redemption had been accomplished, and the church, which had been kept stationary, was sent out into the world on a pilgrimage and mission to carry this redemption to all men—then the seed of Abraham was to increase, not by blood, but by faith: and so that covenant which God made with Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees, when he was ninety and nine years old, for him and for his seed, to be an everlasting covenant, was not alone for the Old Testament worthies, but it was for Peter, James, John,

Mary, Martha, Lazarus, and was for us, in this advanced time. And the mighty wing of this Abrahamic covenant spreads abroad to the end of human history, and throws its protecting shadow over all the children of the faithful who love God and keep his commandments.

The covenant was given to the church, not to Abraham and his family alone, and many of the promises of that covenant were not conferred under the Old Testament at all. Now then, if the church of God has received these promised blessings, it has received them under the new dispensation, and is receiving them now. So God either broke his covenant, not giving to the church what he covenanted or the church has continued down to the present time receiving still the gracious fulfillment of the promises of God. And St. Paul says: "Therefore, it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed, not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham." "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." That is the next thing to a mathematical demonstration.

The kingdom of God in this world is one in all ages. When organized it was with himself as

king, in the second person of the trinity. He says in the second Psalm: "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." When the Jews asked Samuel for a temporal sovereign, like those of the surrounding nations, and Samuel reported it to God, the Lord said: "They have not rejected thee, but have rejected me." God had assumed to be the head of this kingdom; but he granted their request, that they might see their folly, and that others might see the folly of turning aside from his government, and gave them a human king, Saul, just such a man as they wished, a man of brilliant talents, and handsome person, who could walk before them in the paths of worldly might and glory, as a worthy representative of their ambitious desires. But Saul proved unfaithful, and God, as he so often does, bringing good out of evil, determined that through this human royalty which had been established over his people, he would bring about his own purpose, and cause them to return whence they had set out, to the kingship of God himself, in Israel. And so he made David king and gave him a promise: "And when thy days shall be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish *his* kingdom." And

in the time of Daniel he said: "In the days of this king (the promised king) shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed." To what kingdom did the prophet refer? The kingdom of God. David and Solomon had passed away, and the Holy Land had been preyed upon by the nations of the earth. Their royalty had been destroyed, and God promised, through Daniel, that the kingdom should be restored. So says the prophet Amos ix. 11-12: "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old, that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the Lord that doeth this."

God gave promises repeatedly, that the kingdom should be *restored*; not a new kingdom established, but the old one reinstated. And we read in Isaiah ix.: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace, there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and

upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

The restoration of the kingdom of David was continually prophesied, and also it was prophesied that this kingdom should be enlarged. We read: "Of the increase of his government there shall be no end. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth." And again he asks: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing. The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his anointed, saying: Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree, the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."

And so when the king came, standing on the

accumulated works of his life, the redemption of mankind, and the full proclamation of God's eternal truth, he said: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." My kingdom is to be an everlasting kingdom. It is to be extended to all lands. Go now and establish it in "all the world." And so we see that whereas God had allowed Israel to have a human king, in granting their request he had arranged that out of that rule of a human sovereign there should at last spring the rod of Jesse, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and that in this there should be fulfilled his own eternal purpose, that he would himself be the king of Zion.

Now, as it is no new kingdom, but the same old kingdom, and as there has been no repeal of the statutes that marked children as citizens in it, they are citizens still. It is true that the whole temple service, and its accompaniments, have passed away, but it is also true that the elimination of that splendid service left the church like it was before as to its covenants, government, and citizens. The church, governed by elders, away back in the earliest periods, was recognized by God, when he sent Moses to take possession of his people in Egypt, and lead them into Palestine. This government was kept up, through all

the ages, while the temple service was maintained; the same as the church government of the New Testament period, that by elders. We read that the Apostle Paul went about "ordaining elders in every city," not establishing a new church, but extending the old, to the ends of the earth—the same government, the same laws, the same king, and the same citizenship.

The whole temple service was arranged around the sacrifice. That is what it all meant. It was collectively but a magnificent altar, on which sacrificial animals were slain, as the type of the coming Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.

When Christ died, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, as a promissory note is canceled when it is paid, and shortly, by divine providence, the temple itself was destroyed. And so temple, priesthood, sacrifice, and all, like a rainbow that spans the heavens of time, supporting a mighty promise on its arch, having accomplished their purpose, faded away.

We read also of the kingdom of God as the Church of God, not only in the new dispensation, but the old. David says in the twenty-second Psalm, twenty-second verse: "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the con-

gregation will I praise thee." And Paul repeats: "Both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified, are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the *church* will I sing praise unto thee." David wrote, "In the midst of the *congregation* will I praise thee," and the apostle quoted it, "In the midst of the *church* will I sing praises unto thee," so that the congregation of Israel, according to St. Paul, is the same as the church. So it was in the *church* that the Son was to praise the Father, and the martyr Stephen, speaking of him, says: "This is he who was with the *church* in the wilderness."

It will not do to declare that the church was organized after Christ, on the day of Pentecost. The church is as old as the promise of redemption. There was no need for a new organization of the church. If there had been a new church organized under the new dispensation it would have been distinctly stated. A matter of such tremendous import could not have been left out. Other things of less importance are minutely described, but there is no hint anywhere in the New Testament of a new kingdom.—a new church—being established in the world. And if the

converts to Judaism, who came into the fellowship of the apostles had been required to discontinue the recognition of their children as members of the church, there would have been a greater outcry than could have been caused by almost anything we could imagine. There was no such outcry; there were no words spoken to indicate that as the children had been recognized in the church of the Jewish epoch, they would be left out in the Christian.

In Romans xi. 17 we read, "And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them," etc. The meaning of this passage is plain enough. Some of the Jews were broken off and rejected, and in their places the Gentiles, though apparently unworthy and unpromising, were introduced into the church of God, and made partakers of its glorious privileges. The *root* or *tree* in this passage cannot be the early converts from among the Jews, but must be the ancient and covenant people of God. There has never been but one church of God on earth, existing under different institutions and enjoying different degrees of light and blessing. There has been but one olive tree, divinely nurtured from age to age.

When our Lord came into the world, what do

we find? Little children were brought unto him, that he might put his hands on them and pray: and the disciples rebuked those that brought them, but Jesus said: "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me, for of such is the *kingdom of God*." Was it a superstition that caused these parents to bring their children to Christ? Was it a mere compliance with a sentimental wish that caused him to lay his hands upon them? It was a recognition of their rights and privileges in the church of the living God, and of the fact that they could receive spiritual grace even in infancy.

The first recorded case of infant baptism was in the Red Sea. "And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot, men, besides women and children, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." These words are from 1 Corinthians, tenth chapter, second verse, and they show that, with God as administrator, and the great sea and cloud for the means, the men and the women and *children* were all baptized together.

After our Lord's ascension, the disciples and apostles went abroad preaching the gospel, and saying: "Repent and be *baptized*; . . . for the

promise is unto you, and to *your children*," etc. Acts ii. 38, 39.

The call is to be *baptized*, because of the *promise*. What promise? The Abrahamic—that which was sealed with *circumcision*, which included *your children*. Could the promise which included the children be a reason for the parents' being baptized (as now a substituted form of the seal when the new dispensation was inaugurated), and not be also a reason for the children's being baptized?

We read that St. Paul and his companions, in obedience to the Macedonian cry, passed over into Europe, and that in Philippi he found some women on the Sabbath, by the river side, in "a place where prayer was wont to be made." They preached to them, "and a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard them, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her *household*." It was when Lydia accepted Christianity, and believed in Christ, that she was baptized, "and her *household*."

Another case is that of the jailor, in the sixteenth chapter of the Acts. During the night of the imprisonment of Paul and Silas in Philippi,

when they were singing and praising God, "suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken, and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. And the keeper of prison awakening out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm, for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved. And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, *and thy house*. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house; and he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, *he and all his*, straightway."

In Romans, sixteenth chapter, we read: "Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus. Likewise greet *the church that is in their house*." In the New Testament, where individuals are mentioned as being baptized, if there is anything said about those individuals having a family, in every single case the statement is made that the household were baptized also.

If none are to be baptized but those that believe and confess publicly, it would be most remarkable that in every case where there was a man converted, and that man had a family, every one of his household should become a Christian at the same time: That is hardly supposable. Nor is it supposable that in all these numerous cases there could have been no little children in the many families where we read that the father or mother, or both, accepted Christ.

It is objected that the command is, "Believe and be baptized," and that belief *must* precede baptism. But we read not only, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved," where belief comes first, but we also read, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God," in which case the water baptism, is put first, and that by the Saviour himself.

Our dear Baptist brethren, when they receive a man into the church by their form of baptism, which they confidently and honestly believe in, do not usually re-baptize him if he afterwards prove himself not to have been converted at all, and is dropped from the roll, and subsequently becomes converted and joins the church a second time. They recognize the first baptism, administered

now confessedly before the man was a Christian, which shows that even they, by their own practice, are obliged to admit that baptism may precede conversion. And in such a case as I have mentioned, which is one of a thousand, that man may eventually become a minister of the gospel. It is all right—their custom is right and proper; but if that man should become a minister of the gospel, I do not see how he could afterwards preach that no man may be baptized until he is converted, when he himself was not converted until long after his baptism.

After the apostles had departed, and the church was sent upon its great mission without any inspired men, but with an inspired Bible, the doctrine of infant membership was held universally, and practiced by the great body of Christians, and has been since the time of the apostles until the present day. With all the controversies that rent the church of God in the early ages, there was no controversy on this subject until the sixteenth century. There were controversies as to the person of Christ, as to whether his was a divine or human nature, and on many other questions, but no controversy as to the right of infants to membership in the church of God. It was taken for granted, as an established institution

that pertained to all human governments, and one that had belonged to the church of God from the beginning. We learn from the writings of Origen, one of the most learned men of the church, who was brought up in Alexandria, Egypt, that being in early times the great educational centre of Christendom, and who spent a considerable part of his life in Palestine, that "the church received an order from the apostles to give baptism even to infants"; and other early Christian writers speak of it as the general practice of the church. The great Augustine, than whom, perhaps, no mightier teacher of the church has lived since St. Paul, in his writings in the fifth century, refers often to infant baptism as the universal practice of the church. It was after the beginning of the Reformation, in the sixteenth century, that the privileges of infants as members of the church was questioned; but then, and up to the present time, by only a small portion of the great church of God on earth. The Baptist Church is a noble body, and it is doing, and has done a great work for God and men. We wish them God speed, but we wish also that they held to this ancient practice and institution of the church. Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Moravians, fully

eight-tenths of the Protestant Church, hold to infant church membership; and so do Roman Catholics, Greeks, Armenians, Copts, and even Mohammedans and Pagans, recognize in whatever religion they profess, the membership of their offspring. And in the Jewish synagogues in this day this is the custom. And when a Gentile now wishes to become a Jew, he must submit to the ordinances of admission into the Jewish Church, and he takes his little children with him.

We may consider for a moment in conclusion, the object of infant baptism, which is to put the children, at the critical period of their existence, under the care of the church, and to make them inheritors of God's promises. The effect upon the parent of having his child baptized, must be most beneficial. At the ordinance of baptism they do not assume any responsibility, they recognize one which exists, and they take a vow to perform the duties that belong to it. They say, these children are members of the church; God has given them to us; they are heirs of the same promise. They recognize it; thank God for it; and in the presence of God, angels and men, they take a solemn vow that they will properly discharge their responsibility. The parents must be influenced by this holy sacrament. When they

kneel down to pray, when they are teaching their children the truths of God's word, when they walk before them, setting an example for righteousness or evil, as the case may be, it must be a potent influence for keeping them in the path of duty, and in moving them to do their duty to those whom God has committed to their hearts and homes. And the effect upon the children, too, is most salutary. When they come to years of knowledge and discretion, and are reminded that they are citizens of the kingdom of God; that for them, by their beloved parents, was taken a vow in their childhood, when they consecrated them to the service of God. It must and does have an influence to bring them to Christ. And if parents keep those promises (God keeps his), the result is the salvation of their offspring.

When Jesus came into this world, as a little child, born in Bethlehem, heralded by angelic choirs, and designated by heaven with the starry jewel on its finger, a very unfortunate occurrence took place, as we might say. A great number of little children about Bethlehem, and the coast thereof, were put to death by king Herod, that he might destroy this coming Prince. What was the result? There was added that day to the heavenly company a host of souls of these pure

infants, regenerated by God's Spirit, rising as the first great tribute from earth of those who were saved after the advent of our Lord.

Whereas it was cruel in Herod, and the curse of God rested upon him for this massacre of the innocents, yet now we can congratulate those "whose angels behold the face of our Father in heaven;" can congratulate them that it was God's will "that not one of them should perish," and that they have gone to glory and to everlasting rest. And I think that Christ must have had always, on this account, as well as others, a tender regard for little children, when he remembered that his birth was marked red on the earth's bosom by their blood. And so he said many beautiful and sweet things about them; took them up in his arms and blessed them, and declared that "Except ye become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."

How beautiful is a baptismal scene, where Christian parents in prayer and faith present their children to God, and say, "We are weak, but thou art mighty, hold us with thy powerful hand," while they invoke the blessing of God's Spirit, symbolized in the application of water. It is a scene that God and the angels love to dwell upon; and for simple beauty, there is nothing

that transcends it in all the ordinances of religion. Let us be faithful to the great institutions of our church, and the kingdom of God. And parents, be ye faithful to those vows which have been made in God's presence and consecrated by his sacramental seal.

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