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YOUNG READERS' PAGE

GENERAL CHURCH NEWS

servant would not seek a wife for his son Isaac among the heathen idolaters of Canaan, but from among those who knew the true God. And why was he so much concerned about this matter? He did not want his son unequally yoked; but he wanted Isaac and his wife to be equally yoked together that they might realize the divine ideal in marriage.

Then the Christian, surely will not take the vows of the holiest of human covenants, a very sacred and almost awe-inspiring act, beginning a new life of twain made one, without appearing before God, and in his invisible but felt presence launch out on the matrimonial sea of life. "Marriage was honored by our Saviour—who came to restore corrupt nature from the ruin of the fall—by his presence and the working of his first miracle. Thus was this endearing relation hallowed by the beginning of miracles, as well in the time of this new creation as in that of man's original formation." Thus to the Christian marriage is a very sacred thing.

And may I say by way of parenthesis, that to my mind, instrumental music during the marriage ceremony proper is sacrilegious. Music before and

following the ceremony is not necessarily out of place. But when the Minister begins, everything else should cease. I have had people, forced to sit in the rear of the audience, say to me after the ceremony, "we could not hear what you were saying." Therefore anything that detracts from or mars a divine institution is foreign to it and should be excised. Surely God cannot be pleased with that which mars his divine institution; and that is why I say that instrumental music should not be permitted during the marriage ceremony.

So to return, Christians will not only seek the presence of their God in the marriage, but also his presence and blessing ever in their anticipated blissful wedlock.

As Christians launch out on the matrimonial sea, it is fitting that they pray the prayer of the fishermen of Brittany when they launch out on the waves in their fishing boats, "Keep us, O God, for our boat is small, and the ocean is so wide."

This, as I see it in God's Holy Word, or by necessary inference therefrom, is the Christian Doctrine of Marriage.

*Collins, Miss.

The Mode of Baptism in the Early Church

By Rev. Wm. C. Robinson, D.D.*

In a series of advertisements they are running in the Saturday dailies of Chattanooga, our brethren of the Church of Christ are showing a tremendous zeal for their denominational positions. But their zeal is not always matched by their accuracy of statement. We have called attention to their misrepresentation of Calvin's doctrine of infant baptism. In later ads they assert and reassert that the Baptism of Novatian in 251 was the first case of affusion in Church History. Since the Journal has recently carried the articles of Dr. John Scott Johnson on the biblical basis of affusion I shall not go into that aspect of the case at this time.

The first writings after the books of the New Testament are the Apostolic Fathers. These articles are found in convenient form in Loeb's Classical Library. Among the Apostolic Fathers there is a booklet called the Didache or The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles. Canon Streeter of England dates the Didache 90-100 A.D., others date it twenty-five or fifty years later. It thus antedates the baptism of Novatian by a century or a century and a half. In the seventh chapter of the Didache we read: "Now concerning baptism, baptize thus: Having first taught all these things, baptize ye into the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, in living (running) water. And if thou has not living water, baptize into other water; and if thou has not cold, then in warm. But if thou has neither, pour water thrice upon the head in the name of Father and of Son and of Holy Ghost."

This shows that there never was a time in the early Church when immersion was the only valid

form of baptism. These early Christians on occasion used affusion and the scruples against baptism by sprinkling were only of later origin in the Church.

The reference in the first part of the statement to baptism in running water points to some form of immersion, but whether or not that form was total submersion as practised by the immersionists in this country is another matter. One of the ablest of the Roman Catholic scholars, Mgr. Duchesne in this book on *Christian Worship* concludes that the ancient custom in Rome was to bring the candidates to the end of a large baptistery where the water was about waist deep and then plunge their heads under streams pouring into the pool. Our greatest American Presbyterian scholar, Dr. B. B. Warfield, comes to similar conclusion in his *Studies In Theology*, pp. 345-386. He finds two apparently conflicting lines of testimony. The documents generally speak of immersion with sprinkling as form, allowable for the sick. On the other hand, the archaeological remains, the pictures in the catacombs, generally show the water being poured upon the head of the candidate as he stands in the stream.

Following the great archaeologist De Rossi, Warfield concludes that the normal form of baptism in the early church combined immersion and affusion in a single rite. The monuments bear witness to affusion as the completion of the act and Gregory of Nyssa, the *Great Catechism*, testifies to a trine immersion completed by having "the water poured thrice on us" (Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, second series, pp. 502f). There is an interesting confirmation of this ancient

custom in the present mode of baptism used by the Syrian Church of Jerusalem, thus: "The priest . . . first lets the candidate down into the baptismery. Then laying his right hand on the head of the person to be baptized, with his left hand he takes up water successively from before, behind and from each side of the candidate, and pours it upon his head, and washes his whole body."

Affusion thus recognizes that part of the baptismal services which the pictorial representations regarded as the most important. It magnifies the testimony to the work of the Holy Spirit whom God poured out upon His Church through the risen Christ. It symbolizes the Divine act, and the downcoming of the Holy Spirit. And the Church needs today as she has never needed since the days of Luther the magnifying of God's activity. The Church is the place where God acts and man serves. Salvation is by faith not by works, by the grace of God not by the goodness of man, by the merits of Christ not by the works of the sinner. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He Saved us through the washing of regeneration, even the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He poured upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Letter To An Unsaved Father

By Rev. John B. Vail*

My Dear Friend:

These bitter months of war, with its fearful trail of destruction, death, heartache and hate, have caused us to probe deeply into our thoughts, for some satisfactory answer to such questions as "What is this world, anyway?", and "Why is man here, and where is this human race headed?"

Certainly, the evidence of today is convincing enough, even if the past were not, that the good intentions and the moral strength of natural man, are not capable of coping with the evils inherent in the race. To date, war is the only answer that even highly civilized man has been able to give, when nations' interest clash. Even now, there is nothing on the horizon that assures us that unregenerate peoples have found, or will find, another answer.

But, behind this upheaval and repeated failure of man, a mighty principle is working. God, the Sovereign Ruler of the universe, is drawing out of this mass of humanity, a people for Himself. The world is an immense test-tube, and in it, a people of God, and for God, is being precipitated. The world is a furnace, and in it, a people of God, and for God, is being refined.

God invites every man to be His, through the simple but decisive act of faith in Jesus Christ—receiving Jesus as Saviour and Lord. The invitation is three-fold: the Bible invites you, the church invites you, and the Holy Spirit, speaking directly to your conscience, invites you, to "Come". Some come. Some do not. Those who respond to God's gracious invitation, and yield their first and full allegiance to Jesus—to these comes the privilege of being sons of God. We are immediately

cleared of all charges, and enrolled in the Book of Life. "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

We immediately receive the Holy Spirit, Who takes up His abode in our hearts. We are kept by God's power through this life, to come into our full Inheritance, hereafter.

You are invited. We urge you to accept this gracious offer which God makes to you. Your children would surely follow you and their mother, in this God-given heritage.

The alternative? A restless soul, without an anchor for today, or hope for tomorrow. In the Great Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, Omnipotent Creator of All, each man finds his soul's desire fully satisfied,—and peace.

We, as your friends, do earnestly hope that you will recognize and accept what God is offering to you, in His Son, Jesus Christ.

"Just as I am, without one plea but that
Thy Blood was shed for me, and,
That Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O, Lamb of God, I come."

Most Sincerely Yours.

An Evangelical Manifesto

An Issue By The Plymouth Conference For
The Advancement Of Evangelical Scholarship.
Plymouth, Mass., August 18.

In view of the world-wide catastrophe of two world wars through which humanity has passed in thirty years; and in view of the failure of modern philosophy, both idealistic and naturalistic, to save western culture from disintegration and collapse; and in view of the general ethical irresponsibility growing inevitably out of a man-centered philosophy of life, and the growing moral decadence in family and social life, the increasing stress between capital and labor, the widespread infiltration of modern life by such evils as the liquor traffic, crime and youth delinquency; Therefore

(1) We summon men everywhere to repentance for personal, social, national and international irresponsibility and sin which has brought upon men everywhere a divine judgment;

(2) We plead with men to turn to Jesus Christ as the all-sufficient Saviour of men, urging upon them individual commitment to the Christian world-life view which by its dynamic lifted the ancient world above paganism and barbarism, and is the only hope for the modern world.

(3) We call for a repudiation of the man-centered attack on modern problems and for a return to the study of the Holy Scriptures in which God holds forth to man the good tidings of redemption and discloses the only world and life view through which man learns to live in accordance with the will of God, resulting in social, national and international righteousness as the only basis for the preservation of our Christian civilization.