

LECTURE LXIII.

BAPTISM.

SYLLABUS.

1. Is water Baptism, by God's appointment, a permanent ordinance in the Church?

Turretin, Loc. xix, Qu. 12. Hill, bk. v, ch. 6, § 1, 2.

2. What are the signification and effects of Baptism? Consider the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Does Baptism represent, as Immersionists say, the burial and resurrection of Christ?

Turretin, Qu. 19, § 1-16. Armstrong on Baptism, pt. ii, ch. 2, pt. i, chs. 8, 9. Dick, Lect. 89.

3. What formulary of words should accompany baptism? and what their signification? Are any other formalities admissible? or sponsors?

Turretin, Qu. 17. Dick. Lects. 88, 89. Knapp, § 139.

4. Was John's Baptism the Christian sacrament of the new dispensation? For what signification was Christ baptized by him?

Turretin, Qu. 16. Armstrong, pt. i, ch. 9. Dick, Lect. 88. Calvin's Inst. bk. iv. ch. 15, § 7, 18.

5. State the classic, and then the scriptural meanings of the words βαπτω and βαπτίζω and their usage when applied in the Septuagint and New Testament to Levitical washings.

Armstrong, pt. i, chs. 3, 4, 5. Rice & Campbell's Debate, Prop. 1. Dale's Classic Bap. Dale's Judaic Bap. Carson on Bap.

6. Show that a change of meaning and mode takes place in the word βαπτίζω, in passing from a secular to a sacred use.

Armstrong, pt. i, ch. 1, &c. On whole, Conf. of Faith, ch. 28.

THE general remarks made concerning the sacraments, and applied to baptism, will not be repeated. The earlier

Socinians disputed the perpetual obligation of water-baptism, as the Quakers now do of both the sacraments, and on similar grounds.

They plead that the new is intended to be a spiritual dispensation; that salvation is always in the New Testament conditioned essentially on the state of heart: that Paul (1 Cor. i: 17) says, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel:" and that the water-baptism administered by the apostles was only a temporary badge to separate the Church from Jews and Pagans at its outset. Quakers suppose that the only sacraments to be observed in our day are those of the heart, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and the feeding on Christ by faith. The answers are: That the Old Testament, with its numerous types and two sacraments, was also a spiritual dispensation, and saving benefits were then, just as much as now, conditioned on the state of the heart; that the commission to baptize men was evidently co-extensive with that to disciple and teach them, as is proved by the accompanying promise of grace; that the commission to baptize lasts at least till all nations are converted, which is not yet accomplished; that it was after the most glorious experiences of the true spiritual baptism, at Pentecost, that the water-baptism was most industriously adminis-

tered; and that Paul only expresses the inferior importance of baptising to preaching, and his thankfulness at having baptized only three persons at Corinth, in view of the unpleasant fact that that Church was ranking itself in parties according to the ministers who introduced them to membership.

The folly and falsehood of baptismal regeneration have been already pointed out in the former lecture. All the arguments there aimed against the *opus operatum* apply here. The error most probably grew as superstition increased in the primitive Church, out of the unguarded use of the sacramental language by the early fathers, whose doctrine on this point was sounder. We know that baptism, in supposed imitation of Titus iii: 5, was currently called regeneration as early as Justin Martyr and Irenæus. It is easy to see how, as men's ideas of sacred subjects became more gross, this figurative use of the word introduced the real error.

According to the Shorter Catechism (Qu. 94) baptism "doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagements to be the Lord's." And in the Confession, chapter 28, those benefits of the Covenant of Grace are farther explained to be remission of sins and regeneration. Each part of this definition we can abundantly substantiate from scripture. See Gal. iii: 27; Rom. vi: 5; Jno. iii: 5; Titus iii: 5; Col. ii: 11, 12, &c.; Acts ii: 38; Mark i: 4; Acts xxii: 16, &c.; Rom. vi: 3, 4; 1 Cor. xii: 13; Matt. xxviii: 19; Rom. vi: 11, 12.

One of the most remarkable things about Baptism, to the attentive reader of Scripture, is the absence of all set explanations of its meaning in the New Testament, and at the same time, of all appearance of surprise at its novelty. Not so with the other sacrament although that was a continuation of the familiar Passover. These things, among others, convince me that Baptism was no novelty to the Jews, either in its form or signification. It was the thing symbolized by the Hebrews' purifications *καθαρισμοί*. The idea of the purification included both cleansing and consecration; and the formalities represented both the removal of impurity from the person, in order that it might be adapted to the service of a holy God, and the consequent dedication to Him. Now, the main idea of Baptism is purification: and the element applied, the detergent element of nature, symbolizes the two-fold application of Christ's satisfaction (called His blood) and the Holy Ghost, cleansing from guilt and depravity, and thus also consecrating the cleansed person to the service of a holy God. Here then, we have involved the ideas of regeneration and remission, and also of engrafting and covenanting into Christ's service. This view will be farther substantiated in treating the words *βαπτισμός* &c.

2. Meaning of
Baptism.

Derived from Jew-
ish Purifications.

Now the Immersionists, (for what purpose we shall see), have departed from the uniform faith of Christendom, on this point: and while they do not wholly discard the purification, make baptism primarily symbolical of Christ's burial and resurrection. They teach that, as the supper commemorates His death, so baptism commemorates His burial and rising again. True, the believer, in commemorating His death in the supper, receives also a symbol of the benefits purchased for us therein. So, in commemorating His burial and resurrection, there is a symbolizing of our burial to sin, and living again unto holiness. But the main meaning is, to set forth Christ's burial and resurrection. Only three texts can be quoted for this view. Rom. vi: 3-5; Col. ii: 12, and I Cor. xv: 29, and especially the first.

Now our first objection to this view is its lack of all Bible support. He would be a hardy man, who would base any theory on the exposition of a passage so obscure as I Cor. xv: 29. The most probable explanation is, that the Apostle here refers to the Levitical rule of Numb. xix: 14-19. Were there no resurrection, a corpse would be like any other clod; and there would be no reason for treating it as a symbol of moral defilement, or for bestowing on it, so religiously, the rites of sepulture. But this exposition presents not a particle of reason for regarding Christian baptism as a commemoration of Christ's burial. The other two passages are substantially identical: and, under the figure of a death and rising again, they obviously represent a regeneration. Compare especially Col. ii: 11, 12; Rom. vi: 4. So likewise the figures of circumcision, planting, and crucifixion, all represent the same, regeneration. This the immersionist himself cannot deny. The baptism here spoken of is, then, not directly a water baptism at all: but the spiritual baptism thereby represented. Col. ii: 11. It is the circumcision "made without hands." Rom. vi: 3, 4. It is a baptism not into water, but into death, i. e., a death to carnality. Therefore it is clear the symbolism here points to the grace of regeneration, and not to any supposed grace in Christ's burial. His burial and resurrection are themselves used here as symbols, to represent regeneration. As justly might the immersionist say that baptism commemorates a crucifixion, a planting, a building, a change of a stone into flesh, a putting off dirty garments; because these are all Scripture figures of regeneration, of which baptism is a figure. Nor is there in these famous passages any reference to the mode of baptism, because first the Apostle's scope in Rom. vi, forbids it: and second, the same mode of interpretation would compel us to find an analogy in the mode of baptism, to a planting and a crucifixion. See Scott in loco.

But second: by making baptism the commemoration of

No Proper Sacramental Analogy. Christ's burial, and resurrection, the sacramental analogy (as well as the warrant) is totally lost. This analogy is not in the element to the grace; for in that aspect, there can be no resemblance. Water is not like a tomb, nor like the Holy Ghost, nor like Christ's atoning righteousness. Nor is bread like a man's body, nor wine like his blood. The selection of the sacramental element is not founded on a resemblance, but on an analogy. Distinguish. The bread and wine are elements, not because they are like a body and blood, in their qualities: but because there is a parallel in their uses, to nourish and cheer. So the water is an element of a sacrament, because there is a parallel in its uses, to the thing symbolized. The use of water is to cleanse. Where now is any analogy to Christ's burial? Nor is there even a resemblance in the action, not even when the immersionist's mode is granted. Water is not like a Hebrew tomb. The temporary demission of a man into the former, to be instantly raised out of it, is not like a burial.

Christ's Burial Not Vital. Third: If we may judge by the two sacraments of the old dispensation, and by the supper, sacraments (always few) are only adopted by God to be commemorative of the most cardinal transactions of redemption. Christ's burial was not such. Christ's burial is nowhere proposed to us as an essential object of faith. His death and the Spirit's work are. His death and resurrection are; the former already commemorated in the other sacrament. And besides; it would seem strange that the essential work of the Holy Ghost should be commemorated by no sacrament, while that of Christ is commemorated by two! In the old dispensation the altar and the laver stood side by side. And here would be a two-fold covenant, with two seals to one of its promises, and none to the other!

And last: The Immersionist is involved by his theory in intense confusions. In the gospel history, Christ's death preceded His burial and resurrection: so the commemoration of the death ought to precede. But the Immersionist makes it follow, with peculiar rigidity. Again: the Supper was only practised either when the death was already accomplished, or immediately at hand; so that its commemorative intent was at once obvious. But the baptism was instituted long before the burial. Did it then point forward to it? Are sacraments types? And this difficulty presses peculiarly on the Immersionist, who makes John's baptism identical with Christian. What then did John's baptism signify to Jews, before Christ was either dead or buried, and before these events were foreknown by them?

In Matt. xxviii: 19 the formulary of words to be employed is given by Christ explicitly, *ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι*, &c., and this preposition is retained in every case but one. Had our Saviour said

3. Baptism in Whose Name?

that baptism should be ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι (dative), &c., His meaning would have appeared to be that the rite was applied by the authority of that name, i. e., hebraice, of that person. The one case in which this formulary occurs (Acts x : 48) is probably to be explained in this way ; but the uniform observance of the other formulary, in all the other cases (especially see 1 Cor. i : 13 and x : 2), indicates clearly that the meaning of the rite is, that it purifies and dedicates us unto the Trinity, bringing us into a covenant relation to Him. Here we see an additional argument for the definition given in § 1, of the meaning of baptism, and against the Immersionist idea.

Cases are not unfrequent (e. g., in Acts viii : 16 ; x : 48 ; xix : 5) in which no name is mentioned but that of Christ. But I think we are by no means to infer hence that the apostles ever omitted any of the formulary enjoined by Christ. Jews would have no objection to a baptism to God the Father. (John's was such, and exceedingly popular). They were used to them. But Christ Jesus was the stumbling-block ; and hence when the historian would indicate that a Hebrew had made a thorough submission to the new dispensation, he would think it enough to say that he had assumed Christ's name. The rest was then easy to believe and was therefore left to be inferred.

The Church of Rome accompanied baptism with a number of superstitious rites, of which she still retains the most, and the Church of England, a part. They were, blessing the water in the font, exorcism, renouncing the Devil, anointing in the form of a cross, anointing the eye-lids and ears with spittle, breathing on the candidate, washing the whole body *in puris naturalibus*, the baptism proper, tasting salt and honey, putting on the white robe, or at least, taking hold of a white cloth, and an imposition of hands. The last, now separated from baptism, constitutes the sacrament of confirmation. We repudiate all these, for two reasons : that they are unauthorized by Scripture, and, worse than this, that their use is suggestive of positive error and superstition.

The use of sponsors, who are now always other than the proper parents (when any sponsors are used), in the Episcopal and Romish Churches, has grown from gradual additions. In the early Church the sponsors were always the natural parents of the infant, except in cases of orphanage and slavery : and then they were either the master, or some deacon or deaconess. (See Bingham, p. 523, &c.) When an adult was *in extremis*, and even speechless, or maniacal, or insensible, if it could be proved that he had desired baptism, he was permitted to receive it, and some one stood sponsor for him. If he recovered, this sponsor was expected to watch over his religious life and instruction. And in the case of Catechumens, the sponsor was at first some clergy-

Superstitious A d-
juncts.

Sponsors.

man or deaconess, who undertook his religious guidance. It was a universal rule that no one was allowed to be sponsor unless he undertook this *bona fide*. How perverted is this usage now! Our great objection to the appearance of any one but the natural parents, where there are any, or in other cases, of him who is *in loco parentis*, as sponsors, is this: that no other human has the right to dedicate the child, and no other has the opportunity and authority to train it for God. To take these vows in any other sense is mockery.

The Reformers strenuously identify John's baptism with the Christian, arguing that his mission was a sort of dawn of the new dispensation, that it was the baptism of repentance, an evangelical grace, and that it is also stated (Luke iii : 3) to be for the remission of sins. But later Calvinists hold, against them and the Immersionists, that it was a baptism for a different purpose, and therefore not the same sacramentally, however it may have resembled as to mode, that of the Christian Church. Their reasons are, that it was not administered in the name of the Trinity, and did not bring the parties into covenant with Christ. 2nd. It was not the initiatory rite into the Church, and did not signify our ingrafting into Christ, for the old dispensation still subsisted, and those who received the rite were already in the Church of that dispensation, whereas Christ's was not yet opened, and therefore could not receive formal adherents. But, 3d, Paul seems clearly (Acts xix : 5) to have repeated Christian baptism on those who already had John's. Calvin and Turretin indeed evade this fact by making verse 5 the words of Paul (not of Luke), reciting the fact that these brethren had already (when they heard John) received baptism. But this gloss is proved erroneous, not only by the whole drift of the passage (why had they not received charisms?), by the force of the $\mu\epsilon\nu$ and $\delta\epsilon$, but above all by this: that if this verse 5 means John's baptism, then John baptized in the name of Jesus. But see Jno. i: 33; Matt. xi: 3. John's baptism was therefore not the sacrament of the new dispensation, but one of those purifications, preparing the way of the Messiah about to come, with which, we believe, the Jewish mind was familiar.

The interesting question arises: With what intent and meaning did Christ submit to it? He could not repent, and needed no remission. We think it clear He could not have taken it in these senses. Says Turretin: He took it vicariously, doing for His people, all that any one of them owed, to fulfill the law in their stead; and He refers, for support, to the fact that He punctually conformed to all the Levitical ritual,—was circumcised, attended sacrifices, &c. But the cases are not parallel. Christ as a Jew, (according to His humanity), would properly render obedience to all the rules of the dispensation under

4. Nature of John's Baptism.

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Intent of Christ's Baptism.

which He came vicariously; but it is not therefore proper that He should comply with the rules of a dispensation to be wholly founded on Him as Mediator, and which rules were all legislated by Him. This for those, who assert that John's baptism was the Christian Sacrament. There is no evidence that Christ partook of His other sacrament. See Luke xxii : 17. And while His vicarious attitude would make a ceremonial purification from guilt appropriate, it would not make a rite significant of repentance appropriate. Christ did not repent for imputed guilt, which did not stain His character. Nor would the other part of the signification apply to Him: for this imputed guilt was not pardoned to Him: He paid the debt to the full.

There seems then, to be no explanation; except that Christ's baptism was His priestly inauguration. John, himself an Aaronic priest, might naturally administer it. His age confirms it; compare Luke iii : 23, with Numb. iv : 3. A purification by water was a part of the original consecration of the Aaronic family. See Levit. viii : 6; or better, Exod. xxx : 17-21, &c. The unction Christ received immediately after, by the descent of the Holy Ghost. And last, John's language confirms it, together with the immediate opening of Christ's official work.

We now approach the vexed question of the mode of baptism. The difference between us and immersionists is only this: whether the entire immersion of the body in water is essential to valid baptism. For we admit any application of water, by an ordained ministry, in the name of the Trinity, to be valid baptism. The question concerning the mode is of course one of meaning and usage of the words descriptive of the ordinance. But this preliminary question arises: of what usage? that of the classic, or of Hellenistic Greek? We answer, chiefly the latter; for the obvious reason that this was the idiom to which the writers of the New Testament were accustomed, especially when speaking Greek on a sacred subject. And this, enlightened immersionists scarcely dispute. Another preliminary question arises: should it be found that the usage of the words *βαπτίζω*, &c., when applied to common and secular washings, gives them one uniform meaning, would that be evidence enough that its meaning was precisely the same, in passing to a sacred ritual, and assuming a technical, sacred sense? I reply, by no means. There is scarcely a word, which has been borrowed from secular into sacred language, which does not undergo a necessary modification of meaning. Is *ἐκκλησία* the same word in the Scriptures, which it is in common secular Greek? *Πρεσβύτερος* means an elderly person, an ambassador, a magistrate. Is this the precise meaning of the Church presbyter of the New Testament? He might be a young man. Above all is this change marked

5. Real Question as to Mode. Neither Etymology nor Secular Use Defines it.

in the word for the other sacrament, *δειπνον*. This word in secular, social use, whether in or out of Scripture, means the evening meal; and usually a full one, often a banquet, in which the bodily appetite was liberally fed. The Lord's Supper is usually not in the evening; it is not a meal; and by its design has no reference to satisfying the stomach, or nourishing the body. See I Cor. xi. Indeed, it is impossible to adopt a secular and known word, as the name of this peculiar institution, a Christian Sacrament, without, in the very act of adopting it, superinducing upon it some shade of meaning different from its secular. Even if the favorite word of the Immersionists, immersion, were adopted, as the established name in English, of the sacrament; it would *ipso facto* receive an immediate modification of meaning as a sacramental word. Not any immersion whatever would constitute a sacrament. So that this very specific word would then require some specification. Thus we see that the assertion of the Immersionist, that *βαπτίζω* is a purely specific word, and, as a name of a sacrament, admits of no definition as to mode, would be untrue, even if it were perfectly specific in its common secular meaning, both in and out of Scripture. We might grant, then, that *βαπτίζω*, whenever non-ritual, is nothing but plunge, dip under, and still sustain our cause.

But we grant no such thing. Let it be borne in mind that

6. Immersionist Pos- the thing the Immersionist must prove is no
tulate as to Usage of less than this: that *βαπτίζω*, &c., never can
Words. mean, in secular uses, whether in or out of
the Scriptures, anything but dip under, plunge; for nothing less
will prove that nothing but dipping wholly under is valid bap-
tism. If the words mean frequently plunging, but sometimes
wetting or washing without plunging, their cause is lost. For
then it is no longer absolutely specific of mode. Let us then
examine first the non-ritual or secular usage of the words, both
in Hellenistic (Sept. Josephus) Greek, and in the New Testa-
ment. We freely admit that *βάπτω* very often means to dip,
and *βαπτίζω* still more often, nay, usually, but not exclusively.

And first, the trick of Carson is to be exposed, by which
he endeavors to evade the examination of
The Root *βάπτω* to be Examined. the shorter form, *βάπτω*, on the plea that *βαπ-
τίζω* and its derivatives are the only ones ever
used in relation to the sacrament of baptism. True; but by
what process shall we more properly discover the meaning of
βαπτίζω than by going to that of its root, *βάπτω*, from which it is
formed by the simple addition of *ίζω*, meaning verbal activity,
(the making of anything to be *βαπτ*). Well, we find the lexi-
cons all defining *βάπτω*, dip, wash, stain. Suidas, *πλύνω*,
to wash clothes. These definitions are sustained by the well
known case, from the classics, of Homer's lake, *βεβαμμένον*,
tinged with the blood of a dying mouse, which Carson himself

gives up. But among the instances from Hellenistic Greek, the more important to our purpose, consult the following: Rev. xix : 13, a vesture stained with blood, *βεβαμμενον*; Luke xvi : 24; Ex. xii : 22; 1 Sam. xiv : 27; Levit. iv : 6, 7; Dan. iv : 33. So there are cases of the secular use of the word *βαπτίζω*, where immersion is not expressed. See the lexicons quoted by Drs. Owen and Rice, in which it is defined, not only to immerse, but also to wash, substantiated by the cases of "the blister baptized with breast milk," in classic Greek, and of the altar, wood and victim of Elijah baptized by pouring on water in Origen. Hence, the common and secular usage is not uniformly in favor of dipping.

But if it were, the question would still be an open one; for it may well be, that when transferred to religious ritual, the word will undergo some such modification as we saw uniformly occurs in all other words transferred thus. We proceed, then, one step nearer, and examine the meaning of the word in the Septuagint and New Testament, when applied to religious rituals, other than the Christian sacrament itself; that is, to Jewish purifications. And here we find that the specific idea of the Jewish religious baptism was not dipping, but an act symbolical of purification, of which the actual mode was, in most cases, by affusion. In 2 Kings v : 14; Naaman baptized himself (*εβαπτίζατο*) seven times in the Jordan. This may have been dipping, but taking into account the Jewish mode of purification, was more probably by affusion. Eccl. xxxiv : 25; the Septuagint says: "He that baptizeth himself (*βαπτίζεται*) after he toucheth a dead body, if he touch it again, what availeth his washings?" How this baptism was performed, the reader may see in Numb. xxxi : 19, 24, and xix : 13-20. In Judith xii : 7, this chaste maiden is said to have baptized herself at a fountain of water by a vast camp! In Josephus Antiq. Bk. 4, ch. iv., the ashes of the red heifer used in purifying are said to be baptized in spring water.

In the New Testament there are four instances where the Jewish ritual purifications are described by the term baptize; and in all four cases it was undoubtedly by affusion. Mark vii : 4; Luke xi : 38; John ii : 6; Heb. ix : 10; vi : 2. (The last may possibly be Christian baptism, though its use in the plural would rather show that it included the Jewish.) Now that all these purifications called here *βαπτισμοί* and *καθαρίσμοι* were by affusion, we learn, 1. From the Levitical law, which describes various washings and sprinklings, but not one immersion of a man's person for purification. 2. From well known antique habits still prevalent in the East, which limited the washings to the hands and feet, and performed them by affusion. Compare 2 Kings iii : 11; Exod. xxx : 21. 3. From

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comparison of the two passages, Mark vii : 4, and Luke xi : 38 ; with Jno. ii : 6. These water pots were too narrow at the mouth, and too small (holding about two bushels) to receive a person's body, and were such as were borne on the shoulders of female servants. 4. From the great improbability that Jews would usually immerse all over so often, or that they could. 5. From the fact that they are declared to have practised, not only these baptisms of their persons, but of their utensils and massive couches. Numb. xix : 17, 18. It is simply preposterous that these should have been immersed as often as ceremonially defiled. Last, the Levitical law, which these Jews professed to observe with such strictness, rendered an immersion impossible anywhere but in a deep running stream, or living pit of a fountain. For if anything ceremonially unclean went into a vessel of standing water, no matter whether large or small, the water was thereby defiled, and the vessel and all other water put into that vessel, and all persons who got into it. See Levit. xi : 32 to 36.

It is true that Immersionists pretend to quote Talmudists (of whom I, and probably they, know nothing), saying that these purifications were by immersion; and that Solomon's "sea" was for the priests to swim in. But the Talmud is 700 years A. D., and excessively absurd.

Now, if the religious baptisms of the Jews were not by dipping, but by affusion; if their specific idea was that of religious purification, and not dipping; and if Christian baptism is borrowed from the Jewish, and called by the same name, without explanation, can any one believe that dipping is its specific and essential form? Immersionists acknowledge the justice of our inference, by attempting to dispute all the premises. Hard task!

Inference.