

# *Baptism:* *Our Lord's Command.*

CONTAINING A REPLY TO  
"THE QUESTION OF BAPTISM,"  
BY MR. A. MADSEN,  
METHODIST MINISTER.

By  
A. R. MAIN, B.A.

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." — 1 Thess. 5:21.

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Cobb Publishing  
2016

## PREFACE.

This book deals with the subjects and action of baptism, and is intended to help those who are desirous of doing the will of God. Much interest has recently been aroused in the subject of baptism, and much writing has been done on the pædobaptist side. While this book contains particularly a reply to Mr. Madsen's treatise on The Question of Baptism, recently published with the approval of the Literature Committee of the Methodist Church of Victoria and Tasmania, its interest is not therefore merely ephemeral; for the arguments met herein continually recur. It will be noticed that we have given many quotations concerning baptism from learned pædobaptists. We may state that none of these are inserted at second-hand. We have sought to verify every quotation. While we trust that we have not misrepresented the teaching of any man, we have, above all, endeavored to be true to the Word of God. No religious question can be rightly settled till it be decided in harmony with the Scriptures. Our work will be abundantly rewarded if some readers are led to study the New Testament with the sincere desire to learn and do the Savior's will. We have no doubt of the result in that case.

A. R. MAIN.

# Introduction to the 2016 Edition

This book was originally published in Australia, 1913, by the Austral Publishing Company of Melbourne. We have not changed any content from the original, but we have made some changes that we believe you will find worthwhile: (1) We have Americanized the spelling of words [for example, *baptise* is now *baptize*], (2) We have corrected incorrect Scripture references [usually, this was simply a reference to the wrong chapter in a book], (3) We have also corrected punctuation mistakes when we came across them.

Also, just like with every other book that we have published, we have completely reformatted it to give it a more pleasing look. We have changed the font size, increased the size of the headings, and just overall tried to give it a facelift.

We are happy to present “Baptism: Our Lord’s Command” by A.R. Main.

Bradley S. Cobb, editor

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## Baptism: Our Lord's Command.

“Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men.” — MARK 7:8.

“The authority of men, though learned and pious, is worthless, when set against the authority of God; and tradition, valuable in its own subordinate sphere, becomes unmixedly pernicious when employed to propound a doctrine, or establish an ordinance.” — J. STACEY (Methodist).

All Christians deeply regret that the most sacred Bible themes should be matters of controversy, and that amongst believers in the Scriptures. The Divine Sonship of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Lord's Supper, Baptism — it is sad to think that these have been made the occasion of strife and bitterness.

Our sorrow, however, will not relieve the situation, or prevent those who are not content with that which the Lord has revealed from teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men. The ordinance of Baptism particularly is now being made the subject of discussion. Many recently, having seen that the sprinkling of water upon the face of an unconscious infant has no divine authority, have accordingly as believers been buried with Christ in baptism. The building of a baptistery in St. Paul's Cathedral has attracted the attention of many to the New Testament ordinance.

An evidence of the interest aroused is seen in the number of letters of enquiry which have been sent to the religious papers. Pædobaptists are having forced upon them the necessity of justifying their position. The success of the Scoville mission called forth many sermons intended to counteract the teaching and practice of the Churches of Christ. The Methodists especially have felt constrained to defend the practice of affusion, and of infant baptism. The Spectator, the Methodist organ, has labored zealously in the cause. Three little pamphlets on *Should Only Believers be Baptized? Does Scripture Teach Immersion?* and *Is Baptism Necessary to Salvation?* — all written by the same author and published by the Spectator Publishing Co. — are being widely circulated. The religious book depots stock and advertise a book by Mr. A. Madson, Methodist minister, assistant editor of the Spectator, entitled, *The Question of Baptism, a Handbook on Infant Baptism*. This book goes out with the imprimatur of the Literature Committee of

the Victoria and Tasmania Conference of the Methodist Church. This Committee — including E. H. Sugden, M.A., B.Sc., Master of Queen's College, W. Morley, D.D., W. Williams, D.D., and R. Ditterich, who is also editor of the *Spectator* — cordially recommend the manual “as a very important and weighty statement of our doctrinal position in relation to this Sacrament.”

Members of Churches of Christ welcome the unusual interest being taken in the subject of baptism. We feel that while many will be content to read the tracts and books referred to and to accept without question the statements therein, a great number will go to the Word of God, as did the Bereans of old, to see whether these things are so. Therein we shall rejoice, for when a man is willing to accept the Scriptures as the sufficient guide to baptism, we know the inevitable result. When what we are assured is the teaching of God's Word is thus being written and spoken against, it is clearly right that we should examine the arguments being put forth. This we intend to do, giving special notice to the publications referred to, yet bringing other pædobaptist statements under review. If sprinkling is baptism, we wish to know it and to practice it. If it is not, we wish others to know it and so cease to leave the commandment of God for the traditions of men. It is but obeying the precept of God's Spirit to “put all things to the test” and “retain the good.”

As we proceed, we hope to speak the truth in love. We lament the lapse on the part of Mr. Kelly, the editor of the *Presbyterian Messenger*, in writing and publishing an undignified reference to certain unspecified “villainous proselytisers” who provide “a blend of spiritual conceit and bad manners sufficient to win for them the contempt of honest men.” The baptismal controversy really cannot be settled by a scream! Such language hurts its user. A weak cause alone could need such weapons. One who has the truth of God can afford to be courteous. We do not need to impute motives in order to show that a doctrine is erroneous. We do not sanction error because we are polite. It was a pædobaptist who said, “An endeavor to detect error and to establish truth is an act of friendship to every member of the body of Christ.”

Why do we notice the matter at all? Partly, because silence would be taken as weakness. The reiteration of arguments, often answered though they have been, needs a new reply. Some people



are being confirmed in their disobedience. Were baptism an unimportant thing, as trivial as some of our religious friends delight to declare it, we would not trouble to write. But that which Jesus did and commanded cannot be unimportant. Again, Christian union, for which all lovers of the Lord must work and pray, cannot come without agreement on the subject of baptism. "One baptism" appears in the Scriptures as one of the things included in "the unity of the Spirit" (Eph. 4:3-6); and we can only get such unity when we agree to follow the plain teaching of the Word of God.

### ***HOW MAY WE SETTLE THE QUESTION?***

No one knows one whit more of the Lord's will concerning baptism than what the Bible says. "To the law and to the testimony" (Isa. 8:20) is still good advice. The Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation (2 Tim. 3:17). The Scripture was given "that the an of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Tim. 2:17). Did Paul speak the truth? Or do we need to take the word of men, wise theologians and teachers? Or, again, do we require to go to the post-apostolic age to see what the Lord would have us do? If the Scripture may furnish us "completely," then it is preposterous that we should go to the second and third centuries to learn the subjects of baptism. Yet this is what the pædobaptist always does; he gets no reference to infant baptism till the later period, and then he reads into the apostolic age the results of his research.

The Church of England and the Methodist Church state the Scripture's sufficiency in, these words: "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." The Presbyterian Confession of Faith agrees with this, and says: "Unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men"; and again, "The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself." We cordially agree with these words, and therefore occupy our present position. Members of Churches of Christ are familiar with the watchword, "Nothing ought to be received into the faith or worship of the church, or be

made a term of communion amongst Christians, that is not as old as the New Testament.”

“Baptism,” says the Westminster Confession of Faith, “is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ.” Similarly, the Church of England and the Methodists teach that “there are two sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel; that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.” If this be so, where shall we seek for instruction concerning baptism? Surely in the New Testament. As we proceed, we shall find that the leading arguments of pædobaptists are drawn from the Old Testament, from extra-scriptural Judaistic practice, and from church usage in the centuries after the apostolic age. Strange that this should be necessary in the case of a New Testament ordinance “ordained of Christ”! The first mention of infant baptism is several generations too late to be “in the Gospel.” Is it not significant that, while every minister who sprinkles water upon a baby claims to do it in the name of the Lord Jesus, he cannot get an instance of sprinkling as baptism in the Word of God? He uses the name of the Lord as authority for that which the Lord never asked. We have infants mentioned in the New Testament, and we have baptism often mentioned, but we never have the infants and the baptism mentioned together. We have no command and no example: yet men without a solitary word of sanction from Jesus Christ use his name as authority for an unscriptural ceremony.

As we proceed, we shall see that advocates of infant baptism lay special stress on the fact that their practice is not specifically forbidden in the Word of God. Mr. Madsen, in many places (as in p. 14 of his book) makes this plea. In this introductory article, it will suffice to call attention to the extraordinary claim involved in this. Methodists say, and we all agree, that baptism was “ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel”: now they ask us to give a passage which expressly forbids infant baptism. Does the Lord ordain all he does not forbid? Rather does he expect us with his positive institutions to do that which he ordained: “What thing soever I command you, that shall ye observe to do: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it” (Dent. 12:32; Cf. Rev. 22:18-19). As soon as we learn to speak where the Bible speaks, infant baptism will disappear. Our Lord rebuked the Pharisees for making void the word of God by their traditions. One of the traditions was the

washing before meals (see Mark 7:3-4). Regarding this, the Pharisees could truthfully say there was no command in the Scriptures which expressly forbade it.

But they exalted a human ordinance and made it a religious practice; and for this Jesus rebuked them. Again, there is not on earth a Protestant who will consistently act on the principle that an express prohibition is needed in order to exclude a practice as an ordinance of the Lord. It is not expressly stated in Scripture that there is no such place as purgatory, that auricular confession is wrong, that extreme unction must not be practiced. Shall we say what is not forbidden is permitted? Rather will we take the view of the New Zealander of simple faith who met all the arguments of the Roman Catholics regarding worship of the Virgin and the saints, auricular confession, and so forth, with the one word: "It can't be right; for it is not in the Book." Infant baptism is not in the Book; and the attempt to get it in on the ground that it is not expressly forbidden will, if successful, bring in with it a host of practices which Protestants agree in rejecting.

Moreover, if we go to the post-apostolic age, when infant baptism is first mentioned, and seek to argue from this later practice to its primitive use, we get into similar trouble. We have either to say that the later practice does not prove an apostolic custom or to admit a host of things which Protestants reject as unscriptural. North Africa, so much appealed to regarding infant baptism, has also infant communion early in the third century. Again, "Tertullian speaks not only of baptism and the laying on of hands, but also mentions unction, the consignation or imposition of the sign of the cross, and lastly a mixture of milk and honey given the newly initiated to drink" (Duchesne). A great number of superstitious and unscriptural practices were in existence at the time when we get the first explicit mention of infant baptism. While, then, we may have to deal with the post-apostolic age to a certain extent in following pædobaptist arguments, that will not be because we attach great importance to the views of Cyprian or Tertullian. These were great men, but not inspired teachers. If there were unanimity in the Church Fathers — which there is not — on the subject of infant baptism, we should still demand that the practice be shown to be right from the Word of God. For us, that is the final court of ap-

peal. And neither infant baptism nor sprinkling as baptism is found therein.

# New Testament

## Example and Precept.

“When they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” — ACTS 8:12.

“It must be at once admitted that the New Testament contains no clear proof that infants were baptized in the days of the Apostles.” — J. A. BEET, D.D. (Methodist, formerly Professor of Systematic Theology in the Richmond Theological College, England).

In times such as the present, when advocates of infant baptism are bestirring themselves to defend their cause, this question must be in the minds of many, Why is their zealous and labored defense so necessary? We do not hear of numbers of people ceasing to believe in the validity of the immersion of believers as we do hear of defections from the ranks of those who believe in sprinkling water upon infants. Why do so many people leave their old position and as believers receive baptism? The answer is found in a significant difference in the authority for the respective positions. The advocate of believers' baptism has as his warrant the plain statement and example of the Lord and his apostles. The pleader for infant baptism has neither of these. See the difference in *example*. There are clear Bible instances of the baptism of believers. Three thousand who “gladly received the word” were baptized (Acts 2:11); the Samaritans, “when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ,” “were baptized, both men and women” (Acts 8:12); the eunuch, instructed in the things of the Lord, was baptized (Acts 8:35-38); “many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized” (Acts 18:8). What about the pædobaptists? They cannot produce a solitary text of Scripture which states the baptism of an infant. That is why men leave their ranks and submit to that for which there is explicit warrant of God.

Look also at the difference in *command*. Is there a command for the baptism of a believer? Yes. Mr. Madsen challenges our right to use the commission in this connection — the commission in which the apostles were instructed to make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them (Matt. 28:19), in which it is said that “he

that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). So we do not press this now, but will examine it later. We have the following definite cases besides. People who were pricked in their heart, believing they had crucified the Messiah, were commanded to “repent and be baptized” (Acts 2:38). Gentiles on whom the Spirit had come, people speaking with tongues and magnifying God (who were therefore not unconscious infants) were “commanded” to be baptized (Acts 10:44-48). Saul, a penitent believer, was commanded, by a special messenger from God, “Arise and be baptized” (Acts 22:16). What of the pædobaptist? If he will produce one such command regarding an infant, the controversy will end. But there is not one such command for this thing, said to be done in the name of the Lord. Many, accordingly, are ceasing to be pædobaptists.

It is only fair to notice here that Mr. Madsen challenges our right to argue from the example of Cornelius and his company (Acts 10). He says: “But, if as the Baptists appear to contend by citing the proof passage relating to Cornelius and Peter, only believers who have received the Holy Ghost are proper subjects of baptism, then the commission imposes an impossible obligation. To make such believers is beyond even the ability of apostles”. (*The Question of Baptism*, p. 15; cf. p. 69). Regarding the reception by Cornelius and the others of the Holy Spirit before baptism, we are quite, content to take Mr. Madsen’s words: “It is manifestly all exception, and was Divinely intended to surprise Peter, and change his mental attitude towards the Gentile world” (p. 69), or Dummelow’s explanation — “a miraculous assurance that the Gentiles were not to be excluded from the gift of the Holy Spirit, but were to be baptized.” But why, pray, may we not quote Acts 10:44-48 as a proof of the baptism of believers? It would be a little grotesque to quote it is a warrant for the baptism of infants who do not and cannot believe; for they are not “all here present in the sight of God, to hear all things that have been commanded” (Acts 10:33), nor do they “speak with tongues and magnify God” (v. 46). Does our use of the instance make us “appear to contend” that “only believers who have received the Holy Ghost are proper subjects”? Mr. Madsen’s own reference to “an exception” saves us from such appearance. Again, it is not only those who reject infant baptism who quote Acts 10:44-48 as a warrant for believers’ baptism. Pædobap-

tists agree that the baptism of believers is right, and they often quote Acts 10:47 in proof. For instance, Bannerman in his *Difficulties about Baptism*, prepared at the request of the Publications Committee of the Free Church of Scotland, — a book to which Mr. Madsen refers and from which he quotes, — says: — “Suppose a minister of our own Church, or of any other of the Churches which believe in Infant Baptism, in the position of Peter with Cornelius, or of Philip with the Eunuch, or of Paul with Lydia and the jailer of Philippi; he would act precisely in the same way as the apostles and the evangelist did. He would baptize each and all of these four persons as *believers*.” So also T. Withrow, who was a Professor of Church History in Londonderry, in his *Scriptural Baptism* wrote: “Every instance recorded in Scripture of faith being required in order to baptism, is a case where *we* would require faith in order to baptism. The 3000 at Pentecost (Acts 2:40, Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:18), and the disciples at Ephesus (Acts 19:5), were, up to that period, Jews, who, on entering into the Christian Church, were baptized, after making a profession of faith, but who would not have received the ordinance from us on any other terms. The same condition, previous to baptism, we would have demanded from the Eunuch (Acts 8:35), from Cornelius and his friends (Acts 10:47), and from Lydia (Acts 16:15). “Now, if it were right for these pædobaptist controversialists to quote the case of Cornelius as a warrant for their occasional practice of baptizing believers, why should it be wrong for us? If their argument is not vitiated because they “appear to contend” that “only believers who have received the Holy Ghost are proper subjects for baptism,” why should ours be?

The above is but one instance of a fairly general contradiction in pædobaptist arguments. We shall notice it chiefly when we deal with the Scriptures alleged to be in favor of infant baptism: “Almost every part of Holy Writ adduced by any Pædobaptist in favor of infant sprinkling is acknowledged by some Pædobaptist or other to contain no proof, no valid argument, in favor of the hypothesis.” And so with their other lines of proof. When attacked from one quarter, we could move aside and confidently let another pædobaptist meet and answer the former antagonist.

## ***SOME STRIKING ADMISSIONS.***

We have very many acknowledgements, on the part of believers in infant baptism, of the lack of Bible precedent or instruction. We give a few citations by way of example:

“The N.T. contains no explicit reference to the baptism of infants or young children.” — C. Anderson Scott, in Hastings’ *Dictionary of the Bible*.

“What is expressly commanded by Christ in regard to baptism is, that those who are made disciples by the preaching of the gospel should be baptized, *i. e.*, those who had been heathens or unbelieving Jews, but had come to believe in Jesus. These only are referred to in Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15-16; and in all the instances in which baptism is said to have been administered, it was to such persons.” — James S. Candlish, D.D., Professor of Systematic Theology in the Free Church College, Glasgow, in *The Christian Sacraments*, in a paragraph headed “The express command insufficient.”

“As baptism was closely united with a conscious entrance on Christian communion, faith and baptism were always connected with one another; and thus it is in the highest degree probable that baptism was performed only in instances where both could meet together, and that the practice of infant baptism was unknown at this period.” — Neander, *History of the Planting and Training of the Christian Church by the Apostles*.

“It is impossible to shake off the impression of the fact that the New Testament contains no direct reference, whether historical or doctrinal, to the practice of infant baptism.” — J. C. Lambert, B.D., in *The Sacraments in the New Testament*.

“True, the New Testament contains no express command to baptize infants; such a Command would not agree with the free spirit of the gospel. Nor was there any compulsory or general infant baptism before the union of church and State.” — P. Schaff, *Apostolic Christianity*.

Someone may say that these quotations do not carry us far, since there may be no command or example in the Scripture for infant baptism and yet the practice be necessarily inferred from the Scriptures. We therefore direct attention to the following admissions:

“Not only is there no mention of the baptism of infants, but there is no text from which such baptism can be securely inferred.”



— A. Plummer, M.A., D.D., Master of University College, Durham, in *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. I.

“It is probable that all that is said in Scripture about baptism refers to the baptism of adults.” — *Ibid.*

“We have all reason for not deriving infant baptism from apostolic institution, and the recognition of it which followed somewhat later, as an apostolical tradition, serves to confirm this hypothesis.” — Neander's *Church History*.

“Baptism was originally, of course, in the name of Jesus, and it was only administered to adults; all that has been read into the Acts of the Apostles about the baptism of children is pure fancy.” — Dr. Willibald Beyschlag, Professor of Theology at Halle, in *New Testament Theology; or Historical Account of the Teaching of Jesus and of Primitive Christianity according to the New Testament Sources*.

“In the Apostolic age, and in the three centuries which followed, it is evident that, as a general rule, those who came to baptism came in full age, of their own deliberate choice. We find a few cases of the baptism of children; in the third century we find one case of the baptism of infants.” — Dean Stanley, *Christian Institutions*.

“Men are not born Christians, but made Christians. This remark of Tertullian may have applied to the large majority even after the middle of the second century, but thereafter a companion feature arose in the shape of the natural extension of Christianity through parents to the children. Subsequently to that period the practice of infant baptism was also inaugurated; at least we are unable to get certain evidence for it at an earlier date.” In a footnote is added: “Here, too, I am convinced that the saying holds true, ‘*Ab initio sic non erat*’” (from the beginning it was not so). — Adolf Harnack, Professor of Church History in the University of Berlin, in *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*.

“There is not one word in the New Testament which even suggests in the slightest degree that spiritual blessings are, or may be, conveyed to an infant by a rite of which he is utterly unconscious. And the suggestion contradicts the broad principles underlying the kingdom of God.” — J. Agar Beet in *A Treatise on Christian Baptism* (see also above).

We do not quote these men as if the matter can be settled by mere human testimony. Nor do we suggest that they are of the opinion that the practice of infant baptism is out of harmony with the principles of the New Testament. The concessions are all the more remarkable because they come from believers in infant baptism. This has to be borne in mind, and may keep some from being misled by the facetious irony of Mr. Madsen when he says: "The wonder is that the practice survives, when, as announced by the Baptists, the weight of scholarship repudiates it" (*The Question of Baptism*, p. 84). We unhesitatingly say that the weight of scholarship is against the view that sprinkling of water upon infants is baptism as warranted by New Testament command or example. The reason why "the practice survives" is that men are not content with that for which there is express warrant; they agree that believers' baptism and immersion are warranted, but think that something else will do as well. We have a wholesome respect for scholarship, ancient or modern. We find, however, that what a man will say as a scholar and historian is one thing; what he will say as a theologian, and especially as a controversialist *in extremis*, is often quite a different thing. We wish modern practice to harmonize more with modern scholarship.

### ***SCHOLARLY AUTHORITIES.***

Under this heading, the author of *The Question of Baptism* seeks, by citation from men of undoubted scholarship, to answer those who "are never tired of objecting that infant baptism is not only repugnant to the sense of Scripture, but that it is opposed by modern scholarship." We have already quoted from a number of believers in infant baptism who admit that the practice is not inferable from Scripture. We may now notice three of Mr. Madsen's "scholarly authorities." Here is a paragraph from page 85 of *The Question of Baptism*:

"Three scholars may be cited who certify on historic grounds to the propriety of infant baptism. (1) Prof. Gwatkin affirms: 'As regards infant baptism, there can be little doubt that it dates back to the Apostolic age.' In thorough accord with Dorner, it is maintained, 'the principle of infant baptism (is) that even the infant of an hour belongs to Christ' (*Early Church History*). (2) Prof.

McGiffert lays it down as indisputable that the practice of baptizing infants was a 'common' one before the end of the second century' (*History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age.*) (3) Dr. Kurtz, reviewing the historical position, asserts that infant baptism was 'universally held to be proper. Tertullian alone opposed it.' (*Church History, Vol. IV.*)”

We strongly recommend as many as possible to go to the public libraries and refer to the books whence these quotations are taken. If they will do so, they will learn of the straits to which the latest apologist for infant baptism is reduced, and also, incidentally, they will be led to ponder on the ethics of quotation. The paragraph quoted above must have been written in the fond belief that few or none would take the trouble to look up the references.

1. H. M. Gwatkin, Dixie Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the University of Cambridge, in his *Early Church History to A.D. 313*, 1909, Vol. I, *on the same page* in which he says that “there can be little doubt that it dates back to the apostolic age,” continues:

“On the other hand, we have decisive evidence that infant baptism is no direct institution either of the Lord himself or of his apostles. There is no trace of it in the New Testament. Every discussion of the subject presumes persons old enough to have faith and repentance, and no case of baptism is recorded except of such persons” (pp. 249-250).

In the light of this, what becomes of the fairness of the use to which Gwatkin's name is put in the paragraph in question?

Notice again the context in which Gwatkin refers to “the infant of an hour.” He says:

“Even in the fourth century some of the best women of the time, like Anthusa and Monnica, did not feel bound to baptize their children in infancy; and a writer of no less unquestioned orthodoxy than Gregory of Nazianzus advises that it be put off till the child ‘can frame to speak the mystical words.’ This is every way illogical, but at all events it gives up the principle of Infant Baptism, that even the infant of an hour belongs to Christ” (p. 250).

The intelligent reader need only be asked to compare this with Mr. Madsen's alleged quotation.

2. A. C. McGiffert, Professor of Church History in Union Theological Seminary, New York, is similarly treated in the paragraph

in question. Since McGiffert wrote *A History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age*, would it not be well to quote what he says regarding the apostolic age? After all, we are more interested in the first century than we are in the second. McGiffert On the apostolic age was not quoted because he did not there support the pædobaptist position. Read Madsen on McGiffert, in paragraph quoted above, then read McGiffert, who writes:

“Whether infants were baptized in the apostolic age, we have no means of determining. Where the original idea of baptism as a baptism of repentance, or where Paul’s profound conception of it as a symbol of the death and resurrection of the believer with Christ prevailed, the practice would not be likely to arise. But where the rite was regarded as a mere sign of one’s reception into the Christian circle, it would be possible for the custom to grow up under the influence of the ancient idea of the family as a unit in religion as well as in other matters. Before the end of the second century, at any rate, the custom was common, but it did not become universal until a much later time” (p. 543).

Prof. McGiffert, it will be seen, holds that infant baptism would not be likely to grow up where Paul’s doctrine was accepted. Infant baptism, then, must have become more “common” as the apostolic doctrine was departed from.

3. The statements in Kurtz’s *Church History* have also suffered at the hands of our author, who quotes but a part of a sentence, and who fails to inform us as to the *period* in which and the people by whom Kurtz says infant baptism was “universally held to be proper.” As a fact, that period was the post-apostolic age. In that part of his history which deals with the “primitive church,” Kurtz says:

“Equally impossible is it strictly to demonstrate that infant baptism had been practiced by the apostles, although this is probable (Acts 2:39; 16:33; 1 Cor. 7:14).”

There is no universally proper custom suggested here. Of the *following* period, Kurtz writes:

“The Fathers generally connected baptism and regeneration. Hence, in theory, the baptism of infants was generally recognized, although it was not universally introduced. Tertullian ‘alone decidedly opposed it’ (T. & T. Clark’s Edition, Vol. L, pp. 118-119).

Controversialists, it will be perceived, will do strange things with their authorities. Scripture and human testimony alike need to be strained to get apparent warrant for the pædobaptist practice.

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## The Commission.

“Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you.” — MATT. 28:19-20.

“Teach, *matheeteusate*, make disciples of all the nations, bring them to an acquaintance with God who bought them, and then baptize them in the name of the Father.” — DR. ADAM CLARKE, Methodist.

“The rite thus termed presupposes a good deal that is not always expressed. “(a) The person baptized has repented of his sins, and baptism implies the consequent forgiveness of them (Acts 2:38). “(b) Baptism also implies belief in Christ. The person baptized expressed this belief, and was regarded after baptism as a disciple of Christ.” — W. C. ALLEN, in *International Critical Commentary* on Matthew.

We have already seen that pædobaptists are not agreed as to the Scriptural warrant for their position. Some of them — as J. A. Beet, Methodist, and A. Plummer, Anglican — cheerfully allow that there is no text from which it may be clearly inferred that the practice was apostolic. Others, however, believe that there is a valid argument by way of inference. We shall, therefore, examine some of their proof texts, beginning with our Lord’s commission.

The tract on *Should Only Believers be Baptized?* published by the Spectator Publishing Co., and now being circulated by Methodists, has this extraordinary pronouncement on Matt. 28:19:

“A ‘disciple,’ according to this verse, is a baptized person. ‘Make disciples, baptizing them.’ In other words, by baptism claim them for Christ that they may be taught all things whatsoever He had commanded. That is the very thing we do in infant baptism. The Apostles were to disciple, or baptize, all the nations. Surely ‘the nations’ includes children! Nothing in the text excludes them.”

This is in harmony with the greater part of what is said in Mr. Madsen’s chapter significantly entitled “The Baptizing Commission.” So the Methodist Church in Victoria and Tasmania through its Literature Committee seems to vouch for such an interpretation as is given above.

The first thought that comes to us is that pædobaptists do not act on the above. They are not wont to baptize infants because they are infants, part of the “all nations.” There has been many a pretty difference amongst advocates of infant baptism as to what infants are to be baptized. Avoiding minor differences, we note that the following questions have been raised: Must both parents be members of the visible church? or, will one Christian parent suffice? Must the parents be communicants? Or, are all infants without exception eligible? The Westminster Confession of Faith says that “the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized.” The practice is generally limited to cases in which the infants are children of believers. A missionary who went to a place and caught and baptized the children of unbelievers would, we are constrained to believe, receive a well-deserved reprimand from his pædobaptist official board. If this is so, then infants are not baptized because as infants they are included in the “all nations” of the commission.

Again, the argument that infants may be baptized because they are in the nations would prove altogether too much for the pædobaptist. Idiots, deists, atheists, drunkards, are as truly part of the nations as the infants are. Our friends repudiate with horror the thought of baptizing these on the ground of their being in the nations. Here are two syllogisms, one of which is as valid as the other: (1) All nations are to be baptized (*i. e.*, disciplined; so Methodist tract says); infants are in the nations; therefore infants are to be baptized. (2) All nations are to be baptized (*i. e.*, disciplined); idiots and drunkards are in the nations; therefore idiots and drunkards are to be baptized. If the one argument is false, as all our friends agree, so is the other. If one objects that persons who are idiots or drunkards are folk on whom it would “obviously be a scandal to confer baptism,” we answer that this very objection itself shows that being in the nations is not the ground of baptism. There must be some additional ground. Infants are not baptized *because* they are in the nations. Baptism alone will not disciple.

It is absolutely essential to Mr. Madsen’s argument that “discipleship” be shown not to involve any belief or instruction. Otherwise, it is evident that it would be ludicrous to suggest that infants may be disciplined by baptizing. We shall examine, therefore, the amusingly futile attempt to dissociate discipleship from instruction and belief. In doing so, we deem it fair to state that the following

argument has not cogency against all pædobaptists; for, as a fact, as we shall abundantly prove, many of them, including some of the best Methodist scholars and divines, reject entirely Mr. Madsen's interpretation.

On page 18 of *The Question of Baptism* are "three facts to which attention is directed": "(i) There were persons who 'believed' on Christ, who never received any teaching whatever, and had never even seen the Savior. An instance of this is — the Samaritans who believed on the testimony of the woman who had had five husbands, as recorded in John 4:39."

I assure the reader of this that a Methodist preacher in Victoria published these sentences as a "fact." Apparently, he did not do it as a joke. We may remark that we do not see that it was a marvelous thing that they who "had never even seen the Savior" yet believed, seeing that possibly a few hundred million folk on earth today are in that case. But the Samaritan men believed without "any teaching whatever!" And Mr. Madsen is penning this as a means of proving that "'teaching,' or preaching, was not even necessary to induce people to believe," and this in order to help his case in making disciples by baptism of infants who cannot believe! If pædobaptists will give all persons before baptism as much-teaching or preaching as the Samaritans got and with as happy an issue, the present controversy will cease. John says, "Many of the Samaritans believed on him because of the word of the woman, who testified, He told me all things that ever I did" (John 4:39).

The second of "the three facts" is stated thus:

"(2) Our Lord had 'disciples' who, though receiving instruction, were not 'believers.' This appears in the reference to the people who went back and walked no more with Him, as related in John 6:66."

Accordingly, it is held "that 'to disciple,' it was not necessary to make persons 'believers.'" One question will suffice: Did the folk who disbelieved and went back and walked no more with Jesus continue to be regarded as disciples? If Mr. Madsen's argument is to stand, he must answer — Yes. We would like a proof from John 6. "(3) Many 'believed' in Christ who were not 'disciples.' For example, the Jews who witnessed the raising of Lazarus from the dead (John 11:45) — and those who would not confess Christ lest they should be put out of the synagogue (John 12:42)."



We may express cordial agreement with the fact that not all believers are disciples. This fact, however, does not begin to suggest that one can be a disciple without being a believer. If one asks how one can be a believer without being a disciple, we can ask Mr. Madsen to answer: "It is manifest that in the New Testament 'to disciple' means to bring into Christ's school — the Church — those who are willing to be taught, how to become Christians, the initiatory sign of discipleship being baptism" (p. 16). A believer who would not confess Jesus (as in John 12:42) was manifestly not willing to come into Christ's school. It is curious that Mr. Madsen did not see that in the quotation just made he is answering his own statement that Methodists disciple the infants by baptizing them; for infants have no will to come into Christ's school, or to be taught. He answers also the words of the Methodist tract, "to disciple, or baptize," which seem to identify the two things. "To baptize" can hardly be "to disciple" if baptism is simply the initiatory sign of discipleship.

Pædobaptist controversialists sometimes make great capital out of the fact that in the commission "teaching" is mentioned after "baptizing." We cordially agree that the New Testament does not contemplate anything like probation or the catechumenate of the later centuries. But we wholly dissent from Mr. Madsen's claim that, since "teaching" follows baptism, therefore discipleship need not involve previous instruction or present teaching of any kind. Already we have seen how ludicrous are the attempts to dissociate instruction, belief and discipleship, based on John 4:39; 6:66, and 12:42. There is instruction needed to make a disciple, and the baptized disciple then needs to be taught to observe all that the Lord commanded.

In his zeal against Dr. Carson, the well-known Baptist writer, Mr. Madsen endeavors to show that Alexander Campbell contradicted Carson's view that the commission itself limited the subjects of baptism to believers. With us, neither Campbell nor Carson is authoritative. The one man might contradict the other as often as Methodist expositors contradict Mr. Madsen, and yet it would be true that no one could get authority for infant baptism in Matt. 28:19. We are interested, however, in accuracy and fairness of representation, and so beg to point out that Alexander Campbell's position is not that which the person who only read *The Question of*

*Baptism* would necessarily believe it to be. Mr. Madsen quotes A. Campbell as follows: —

“Does not the active participle always, when connected with the imperative mood, express the manner in which the thing commanded is to be performed? Cleanse the room, washing it; clear the floor, sweeping it; ... Convert the nations, baptizing them, are exactly the same forms of speech. No person, I presume, will controvert this. If so, then no man could be called a disciple or convert ... until he was immersed” (p. 20).

Now, while A. Campbell (who, by the way, was not the “Founder of the Disciples,” as Mr. Madsen declares) wrote that one could not be called a disciple unless he was baptized, he did not agree with the view of Mr. Madsen, that baptism apart from previous belief could make a disciple of anybody. He held that the word “disciple” itself carried with it the idea of previous instruction. He said:

“We have two words of very different meaning, occurring in the same verse, translated by one and the same word, *teach*. These are *matheteuoo* and *didascoo*. They are visibly and audibly different words. They are not composed of the same characters, nor of the same sounds. They are just as different in sense. They both, indeed, mean to impart instruction; but it is a different kind of instruction. The first indicates that instruction necessary to make a *disciple*: the second imparts that species of instruction afterwards given to one who has become a disciple with regard to his duties” (*Christian Baptism* pp. 220-221).

Again Campbell wrote:

“A disciple, then, according to the commission, is one that has heard the gospel, believed it, and been immersed” (“*Christian System*,” p. 198).

Thus Alexander Campbell repudiated the notion that baptism alone could disciple. We could scarcely expect, however, that his position would receive better treatment in *The Question of Baptism* than that awarded to “scholarly authorities” among pædobaptists.

It is possible that an attempted answer to the foregoing may be made, as follows: A. Campbell was forced to admit that the participle “baptizing” after the imperative “disciple” declared the manner in which the imperative should be obeyed; and that is enough to support the claim in *The Question of Baptism*. The other state-

ment of Campbell, that “disciple” involves previous instruction may be said to be an unsupported statement of his, made in order to bolster up his belief in believers’ baptism. We therefore, in reply, point out that there are candid and scholarly pædobaptists who, while they tenaciously believe that baptizing is the method of making disciples, also declare that previous instruction or belief is implied in the command to disciple.

Prof. H. B. Swete, writing on the commission in *The Expositor*, takes this view. He says:

“The church is bidden not only to baptize those whom she discip-les, but to instruct the baptized. Evangelistic work is implied in *matheeteusate*.”

E. E. Anderson, M.A., in his recent Commentary on Matthew, explicitly states that baptism “is not spoken of as a rite which fol-lowed the being made a disciple,” yet acknowledges the antecedent belief in discipleship. He says:

“Christian baptism, requiring as its condition repentance, and implying faith in Christ, and symbolizing the forgiveness of sins through Christ, was the rite by which one became a disciple and entered the Christian Society.”

S. Cheetham, in his well-known *Church History*, writes:

“From the earliest times a profession of faith was required of him who would be baptized. When the Lord charged his apostles to admit men to discipleship by baptism into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, it is clear that he required faith in the Holy Trinity as a condition. A man must ‘confess the good confession’ in order to receive baptism.”

The name of Olshausen is referred to in *The Question of Bap-tism* as against the restriction of the commission to the baptism of believers. It was worse than rash to use Olshausen’s name, as the following quotation shows:

“That some have altogether misunderstood this passage (as we have already intimated) is manifest from their interpreting the *matheeteusate* as something which should precede baptism, just as if the meaning of the words had been, ‘first instruct, then baptize them.’ But the grammatical construction does not warrant such a mode of interpretation; for the two participles *baptizontes* and *did-askontes* are precisely what constitute the *matheeteuein*. And again, that view is contradicted by the apostolic practice, according

to which instruction never preceded baptism. On the contrary, baptism followed upon the mere confession that Jesus was the Christ. But when, through baptism, the believer had become a member of the community of the saints. then, as such, he participated in the progressive courses of instruction which prevailed in the church.” — OLSHAUSEN on Matt. 28:19.

Meyer, the great German exegete, is as definite as any that the baptizing is something in which the discipleship is to be consummated, not something that must be done after making disciples; but he does not believe that therefore there is no present teaching or belief involved. He says on the “teaching them” that since it is not said baptizing *and* teaching, therefore the word “teaching” is not co-ordinate with but subordinate to “baptizing,” “intimating that a certain *ethical teaching* must necessarily accompany in every case the administration of baptism: *while ye teach them to observe everything*, etc. This moral instruction must not be omitted when you baptize, but it must be regarded as an essential part of the ordinance. That being the case, *infant* baptism cannot possibly have been contemplated” in “baptizing,” nor, of course, in “all the nations” either. As before, we have here allowed pædobaptist to answer pædobaptist. On the general question of the bearing of the commission on the question of infant baptism, we may say that many scholarly advocates of infant baptism deny absolutely that the commission will furnish the requisite authority for it. We give a few quotations, the first two being from well-known Methodist writers:

Richard Watson, in his *Theological Institutes*, refers to the commission as showing the form of words used in baptism the authority conveyed, and third, by “the faith required of the person baptized, — faith in the existence of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.” He says that “in the primitive church, men were not baptized in order to their being taught, but taught in order to their being baptized.” “The A.V. has the right meaning in ‘teach.’ It was through the instruction (13:52) which prepared for baptism that baptism itself came to be called ‘illumination.’” — Prof. W. F. SLATER, of Didsbury College, Matt. 28:19 in *The Century Bible*.

“*Baptizing them* — Christ enjoins that those who have submitted to the gospel, and professed to be his disciples, shall be baptized; partly that their baptism may be a pledge of eternal life be-

fore God, and partly that it may be an outward sign of faith before men. — JOHN CALVIN.

“‘Make disciples of all the nations’ (Mt. 28:19), implies those who are old enough to receive instruction.” — A. PLUMMER, in *Hastings’ Bible Dictionary*.

“What is expressly commanded by Christ in regard to baptism is, that those who are made disciples by the preaching of the gospel should be baptized, *i. e.*, those who had been heathens or unbelieving Jews, but had come to believe in Jesus. These only are referred to in Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15-16.” — PROF. CANDLISH, Presbyterian, whose book was recently recommended by Mr. Kelly in the *Presbyterian Messenger*.

Apart from the views and comments of men, we may see from the New Testament itself what the verb *matheeteuo* means. The Westminster Confession of Faith admirably says that “the infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself.” The verb translated in R.V. of Matt. 28:19 by “make disciples of” is found besides in the following places, and in these alone, in the New Testament: Matt. 13:52; 27:57; Acts 14:21. The first says: “Every scribe who hath been made a disciple to the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old,” That there are knowledge and belief here is obvious. In the second passage, Joseph of Arimathæa is said to have been Jesus’ disciple. This man is thus described: “A good man and a righteous ... who was looking for the kingdom of God” (Luke 22:50-51); so he could hardly have been as uninstructed as the infants, which Mr. Madsen thinks he discipled by baptizing! In Acts 14:21 Luke says, “When they had preached the gospel to that city, and had made many disciples,” Paul and Barnabas returned. Here was preaching preliminary to discipleship. That is, in every other case in which the verb *matheeteuo* is used in the New Testament there is previous instruction. The attempt, then, to eliminate it in Matt. 28:19 must fail miserably.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> It may be added that we believe that the commission as recorded in Mark 16:15, 16 may rightly be used in conjunction with Matt. 28:19, 20 as showing the need of preaching, belief, baptism, and subsequent teaching, in the order named. The Methodist tract, *Should Only Believers be Baptized?* states our view exactly when it says of Mark 16:16, “This does not apply to infants at all.” The terms of the commission applied to those to whom the message was preached.

The writer of *The Question of Baptism*, after claiming that the commission gives warrant not only for the baptism of believers, but also for their infant children, declares, “We have to study the religious history, training, and acts of the Apostles, to discover what the commission meant, and how it was interpreted” (p. 21). If this is so, then infants are not directly warranted by the commission. If infant baptism were preached from the beginning by virtue of the presence of infants in “the nations,” why have we in the history of the “acts of the Apostles” — held by Mr. Madsen necessary to the interpretation of the commission — no mention of the act of baptizing an infant? We have mention of the baptism of believers, men and women. The inferential argument from Acts 2:39 and other Scriptures we shall notice later.

It is interesting to see the anxiety which pædobaptist writers manifest to throw the onus of proof on those who practice believers’ baptism. When we ask for a definite Scripture warrant for their practice, they seek to turn the tables by asking us to produce a passage which expressly excludes infants. Over and over again, in *The Question of Baptism* such an attempt is made. The chapter on “The Baptizing Commission” has it: The commission does not directly exclude infants; therefore, it is held, infants are Scriptural subjects of baptism. The disciples, it is declared, could not exclude them without an explicit command so to do. Such a claim is, as was mentioned in our first article, utterly wrong. We seek to do what the Lord warrants, not to do everything that he has not expressly prohibited. We may here add that the disciples learned to take this view of the word. John says a man must not go onward, take the lead, or transgress the teaching of Christ, he must abide in it (2 John 9). So we gather that the commission authorizes what it includes; it does not authorize all it does not explicitly exclude. The only hope of getting infant baptism in the Bible is to argue that the Lord did not say: Thou shalt not baptize infants! But neither did he say: Thou shalt not baptize unbelievers. He did authorize preaching

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We refrain here from pressing the use of Mark 16, because our pædobaptist friends, however frequent their references to and use of Mark 16:9-20 on non-controversial occasions, always object to its quotation regarding baptism, on the ground that the passage “is not in the oldest copies of Mark’s Gospel.” We have a sufficient number of Scriptures for our position without stopping to argue the genuineness of this passage.

and baptism of those who accepted the gospel message; and in doing these things we know we are abiding in his teaching.

One of the chief objections to Mr. Madsen's treatment of the commission is that it makes too much of baptism. Baptism, as ordained by our Lord, must be a good thing. God has attached special promises to it. But the Bible never suggests that the application of water, however performed, can make anyone a disciple. An infant cannot believe, cannot repent, cannot confess Christ; but it cannot object to having some water sprinkled on it; and the last-named act, according to Mr. Madsen, makes him a disciple who was not a disciple before! Jesus says: "Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27). Madsen says: "We disciple the infants by baptizing them." With all due respect to the author of *The Question of Baptism*, we prefer the statement of the Lord Jesus.

We have dealt at some length with the commission, because our opponents refer to it as "the strategic passage upon the question in Scripture," and as "our authority for administering baptism." From our study we see that in consistency we must either say that the commission warrants our baptizing anybody at all who is in "the nations" (and our Methodist friends will not say this), or we must hold that there is no warrant for the baptism of infants and others who are uninstructed and non-believing.

## The Argument from Circumcision.

“He that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every male throughout your generations, he that is born in the house or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed.” — GEN. 17:12.

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers ... In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old.” — HEB. 8:8-9, 13.

“When they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” — ACTS 8:12.

Advocates of infant baptism ever claim that the apostles had to interpret the command to baptize in the light of their previous knowledge of Jewish practice. Hence the appeal to the Old Testament. Now, it might reasonably be urged that the apostles had a nearer and more direct example than anything found in the Old Testament Scriptures. Mr. Tait, Presbyterian minister, in his booklet on *Christian Baptism*, says: “The disciples would understand Christ’s command in the light of what they knew of John’s baptism.” If this were so, they would know that the people baptized by John confessed their sin (Matt. 2:1-6), and that repentance was so much the condition of John’s baptism that it was called “the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins” (Mark 1:4). We get a striking parallel with this in the very first occasion on which the apostles acted on the instructions of the commission; Peter told heart-pierced enquirers: “Repent and be baptized” (Acts 2:38).

Our friends, however, invariably get to the Old Testament, and find the strongest support of their position in infant circumcision. Herein is a marvelous thing. Baptism “was instituted by Christ,” as Mr. Tait says. It is, according to the Westminster Confession, “a sacrament of the New Testament.” Yet pædobaptists go to the Old Testament to learn the subjects of what is a New Testament rite. They cannot get infants in connection with baptism in the New; nor can they get baptism in conjunction with infants in the Old: but they do get infants in the Old and baptism in the New, and then try desperately hard to show that the Bible “identifies circumcision



with baptism” (as Mr. Madsen says), or, as the more common statement is, that baptism came in the room of circumcision. He who wants authority for circumcision of male infants naturally goes to the account of the institution of circumcision, and there he gets it (Gen. 17:12). He who wishes authority for the baptism of infants cannot get that anywhere in the Bible. There is a significant difference here. Mr. Madsen tries to forestall such a criticism as the foregoing by saying:

“Any objection raised by Baptists against our appeal to Old Testament usage for light upon the meaning of Christian baptism re-acts upon their own method of argument, inasmuch as they appeal to the Old Testament, and the classics, for light and authority to justify their *mode* of baptism by immersion” (pp. 84-85).

When we quote the Old Testament on the action of baptism, it is because the very word “baptize” whose meaning we seek to know, and cognate words, are found there (in the Septuagint version). When a man goes to the Old Testament for infant baptism, he does not find any infant baptism there: the words and the idea are alike absent. He gets in the Old Testament minute instructions regarding a different rite, and then wrests such in order to support a practice which has not a tittle of Scriptural authority either in Old Testament or New.

Should a twentieth century Disraeli arise to write another book on *Curiosities of Literature*, he may find some instances in pædo-baptist apologies for their practice. I have some gems, two of which on our present theme I would like others to enjoy with me.

1. In *Infant Baptism in the Bible*, James Pollock, M.A., writes:

“Jesus plainly shows us that we must search the Old Testament Scriptures about infant baptism. ‘When the chief priests and scribes saw the children crying in the Temple, and were ‘sore displeased,’ Jesus said, ‘Yea, have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast Thou perfected praise?’ S. Matt. 21:15-16. Compare with this our Lord’s words to Nicodemus, ‘Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?’ S. John 3:10. In the former place our Blessed Lord speaks of children, in the latter of the new birth ‘of water and of the Spirit:’ in the former He applies to the children that followed Him an Old Testament saying about ‘babes and sucklings;’ in the latter, He takes it for granted that a ‘master of Israel’ ought to be able to see the meaning of the

doctrine of Christian Baptism: Do you see the need of Infant Baptism? Have you ‘never read’ your Bible?”

In reply, suffice it to say that no one denies that you can get “babes and sucklings” in one place and baptism in another; but the infant texts are not the baptism texts, or vice versa. Mr. Pollock’s contribution to the exegesis of John 3 merits notoriety, if only as a means of adding to the gaiety of nations.

2. In the Methodist tract, *Should Only Believers be Baptized?* appears the following sentence, which lets us know of the haste which must have been manifested in preparing literature to stay the exodus from the paedobaptist ranks:

“Ask any reasonable Jew why his child should not be baptized under the New Testament as well as circumcised under the Old, and what could he answer but, ‘Yes’?”

We have always thought that this is the situation, but we hardly expected a Victorian Methodist Publishing Co. to so candidly confess it. If it really be so, it only shows that that Jew is as deficient in Scriptural reasons as are our Methodist friends. If one ask *us* why a *believer* in Christ should be baptized, we point him to the command (Acts 2:38; 22:16) and to the example (Acts 8:12; 18:8). If believers in infant baptism when asked “Why?” can only answer “Yes,” they really must forgive us for suggesting that their reason is not very cogent.

### ***THE PÆDOBAPTIST ARGUMENT STATED.***

The argument is that in “the Jewish Church,” or “Old Testament Church,” infants were found. There is church continuity or identity. Baptism has taken the place of circumcision. Seeing that there is no express command to exclude infants, the apostles must have understood that such are to be included in the church, and that consequently they are fit subjects of baptism. We give three statements from paedobaptist controversialists:

Mr. Madsen, in *The Question of Baptism*, writes:

“God had a Church in the Old Testament, and gave directions as to the persons who should be admitted to its membership, and the method of admitting them” (p. 22). “It would appear to the mind of St. Paul that the circumcision of the Old Testament passes into the baptism of the New, just as, similarly, the Passover passes

into the Lord's Supper," etc. (p. 23). "Old Testament circumcision" "was the Sacrament of admission into the membership of the Church of God before the coming of Christ" (p. 23). "One of our arguments for the practice is that God, having granted privileges to infants in the Old Testament, such as Church membership on receiving the sign and seal of it, is not likely to withdraw similar privileges from infants in the New Testament. If there has been a reversal of the Divine complacency, where is the evidence of it? We baptize infants on the basis that God has not changed His mind regarding their admission into His Church" (p. 84).

Bannerman, in *Difficulties About Baptism*, writes:

"The Church of God has been essentially *one* from the beginning" (p. 63). "The infant children of believers were members of the Church, it is admitted, from the days of Abraham to the days, of Christ. When were they put out of their privileges as such, and why?" (p. 65). "The only change is that Baptism has taken the place of circumcision — being, as the Apostle of the Gentiles calls it, 'the circumcision of Christ;' just as the Lord's Supper has taken the place of the Passover," etc. (p. 65).

T. Withrow, in *Scriptural Baptism*, uses similar language:

"The Church, into whose membership infants were introduced by an express appointment of God, is the same in all essential particulars with the Church that now exists" (p. 42). "To produce from the New Testament any express statute re-affirming the membership of infants in the Church, is what we are not bound to do. Except the Old Testament is a dead letter — a bundle of waste paper — there is no need for it" (p. 45).

## **REPLY.**

Before examining in detail the argument stated above, we may mention that pædobaptists do not agree among themselves on this question. just as we find some who seek to justify infant baptism on the ground that infants are *in* the church, while others (as Mr. Madsen) say that infants are brought *into* the church by baptism, so in the case of infant circumcision: some declare it to be an initiatory rite, while others declare it was received by those who were in "the Jewish Church" and covenant. They cannot all be right.

We have before referred to the case with which pædobaptist arguments can be answered by pædobaptists. We find a good illus-

tration of this in the circumcision argument. After reading what Messrs. Madsen, Bannerman and Withrow say, consider the following from the pen of an able and learned believer in infant baptism. The quotation is long, but interesting:

“Very frequently we hear an argument like the following, in support of the view that infant baptism was the regular practice from the earliest days of the Church. The members of the Jewish Church, it is said, had been accustomed to circumcise their children; and so the baptism of children would be regarded by the first Christians as a matter of course and a matter of right. Any seeming exclusion of infants from the blessings of the covenant, in which they had fully shared under the former economy, would inevitably have created such a disturbance as would have left some traces upon the early history of the Church. It might just as well be argued that because at the Jewish Passover young children were present as partakers of the feast, therefore the first Christians, as a matter of course and a matter of right, would bring their little children to the Lord’s table. Moreover, it must be borne in mind that circumcision was a rite which applied not to all children, but only to *male* children. The circumcision of a male child, therefore, could not immediately and as matter of course become the ground of a claim that children of both sexes should be baptized. And if it was the case under the Jewish dispensation that a girl or a woman enjoyed the privileges of the covenant by her very birth as a Jewess, coupled with her relation to the head of the family, is there any reason to doubt that Jewish Christians would have no great difficulty in accepting the baptism of parents as carrying with it a present share for their young children in the privileges of the Christian community? Besides, it must always be remembered that the Christianity which meets us in the New Testament is not in the main a Jewish Christianity at all, but a Gentile Christianity. The analogy of Jewish circumcision would not naturally suggest itself to Paul’s Gentile converts as a reason for seeking baptism on behalf of their children. And Paul himself, who first worked out the relation between the two dispensations, and pointed to a certain correspondence between baptism and circumcision, does not give any evidence of having pressed upon his Gentile converts the duty of having their infant children baptized.” — J. C. Lambert, B.D. in Kerr

Lectures, *The Sacraments in the New Testament*, 1903, pp. 202-204.

We could afford to wait until our opponents answer their pædobaptist brother; but, since the circumcision argument is the strongest one that can be presented in favor of infant baptism, we shall risk the charge of doing a superfluous thing and give an independent reply to the views now being disseminated.

The validity of the argument drawn from infant circumcision as stated by Mr. Madsen depends upon three things, not one of which is true:

1. That there is Church identity or continuity in the Old and New Testaments.
2. That circumcision admitted Jewish infants into “the Church of God” or “the Jewish Church.”
3. That baptism has taken the place of circumcision.

### **CHURCH CONTINUITY.**

Mr. Bannerman expressly says: “The Church of God has been essentially *one* from the beginning.” Such a belief is necessary to Mr. Madsen’s argument also, for it obviously would avail nothing to prove that infants were members of another “church” and proceed to argue that *therefore* they were in the church which is “the body of Christ.” If “the church” be not identical, there is no point in Mr. Madsen’s talk about God not having changed His mind regarding admission into His church.

(a) We note the unscriptural phraseology which Mr. Madsen and others are forced to use in order to give their argument even the appearance of cogency. They talk of “the Jewish Church,” “the Old Testament Church,” but such expressions are foreign to the Bible. The term “the church of God” — applied in *The Question of Baptism* to an Old Testament people — is never so used in the Bible. God and His people called it a nation (see Ex. 32:10; 33:13; Hag. 2:14; Mal. 3:9; Acts 10:22; 26:4; etc.). Pædobaptist writers call it “the Jewish *Church*” because to say that the Jewish nation and the church which Jesus loved and for which He gave himself are identical is “rather too gross a form of speech for Christian ears.” In Acts 7:38 we have the phrase “Church in the wilderness” (R.V. marginal reading, “congregation”). J. Vernon Bartlett, Prof.

of Church History in Mansfield College, Oxford (a pædobaptist), in his commentary on Acts, writes: “The better rendering is ‘assembly,’ as in Deut. 9:10; 18:16; for it is a particular gathering in the wilderness of Sinai that is in question, and not the corporate being of Israel throughout their wanderings.”

(b) We have divine warrant for saying that, whether God’s people of old were or were not a “church,” the church of Jesus Christ was not in existence for centuries after Abraham’s children had been what Mr. Madsen calls admitted into the church by circumcision. In Matt. 16:18 we have the Savior’s words to Peter, “Upon this rock I will build my church.” “I will build” settles for ever the question of church continuity or identity in Old and New Testaments. Dummelow’s Commentary well says: “The whole text speaks of the future. Christ says not ‘I build,’ but ‘I will build’; not ‘I give,’ but ‘I will give,’ referring to the future for the explanation.” It is folly to argue that because infants are included in the Abrahamic covenant therefore they are to be found in the church which was not established till nineteen hundred years after the days of Abraham.

(c) The Jewish nation, or “the Jewish Church,” is not the church of Christ, for the former was “national, temporal, and fleshly: the other for all nations, eternal and spiritual.” In order to admission into the Jewish community, “no intellectual, moral, or spiritual qualification was required of any man.” Abraham’s descendants were in “the Jewish Church” by generation; only twice-born persons are in the church of the living God.

(d) The futility of going back to the Old Testament is apparent when we remember that the Old Covenant has passed away (Heb. 8:7-13). Should one dare to say that the conditions of admission must be the same in the New as in the Old, the inspired writer will give a sufficient reply: “The priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law”(Heb. 7:12). We do not say God has “changed His mind”; we do not dream of saying the Old Testament is “a bundle of waste paper”; — we simply believe God when He says there is a change of the law. No one, apostle or other, ever excluded infants from the church of Jesus Christ, for they never were in it. Similarly, the apostles never “officially cancelled” circumcision “as a rite of the Christian Church” (as Mr. Madsen says they did), for the simple reason that there never was

such “a Christian sacrament” as circumcision, and there is no text in Scripture which even remotely suggests that there was.

In the light of the definite Scriptural statements that the church of Christ was not established till after the words of Matt. 16:18 were spoken, and that there is a change of law in the New Covenant, what becomes of Mr. Madsen’s statement that “there is no argument which Baptists urge against infant baptism, which cannot also be urged against infant circumcision”? When God desired that Abraham be circumcised, he commanded it. When God wanted Abraham’s male children to be circumcised, what did He do? He gave once more the definite command: “He that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every male throughout your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any foreigner that is not of thy seed” (Gen. 17:12). As a *doctrine*, infant circumcision is “*actually asserted — as a practice, actually commanded*; and clear and undeniable instances, with divine sanction, are recorded.” Does this hold good of infant baptism? No pædobaptist dare say so. And the change in covenants and law forbids us taking it as a necessary inference that infants are now in the Church of God *because* they formerly were in “the Jewish Church.”

### ***DID CIRCUMCISION ADMIT INFANTS INTO THE CHURCH?***

Our Methodist friends are arguing that since circumcision “was the sacrament of admission into the membership of the Church of God before the coming of Christ,” and since the apostles insisted on “baptism as the initiatory sacrament of admission to the membership of the Church,” *therefore* baptism, as circumcision, should be administered to infants. This argument is already shattered, as we have proved that the requisite church identity or continuity does not exist. The body of Christ into which baptism is initiatory (1 Cor. 12:13) was not in existence in the days of Abraham.

Now, we shall prove that the second assumption of Mr. Madsen and his confreres is also groundless. We deny that it can be proved that Jewish children were ever initiated into “the Jewish Church” by circumcision. They were circumcised because they were in, not in because they were circumcised. If this be so, then

the fact that baptism is an initiatory ordinance, while circumcision was not, will strongly militate against the pædobaptist position.

It may be noted that we may improve upon our usual custom of beginning our refutation of Mr. Madsen's argument by quoting other pædobaptists against him. On this occasion we prefer to quote the author of *The Question of Baptism* against himself, since he is more likely to acknowledge the worth of this authority. After earnestly contending for circumcision as "the Sacrament of admission," Mr. Madsen writes:

"The covenant promise was so jealously guarded that a dreadful threat rested upon the uncircumcised — 'he shall be cut off from his people.' Here was excommunication pronounced upon such as neglected circumcision" (p. 25).

We beg to point out that you cannot "cut off" anything from that to which it was not previously attached. You cannot put one out of a place which he never was in. It is impossible to excommunicate or expel from a church one who never was a member of it. For instance, it would be beyond the power of anybody on earth to excommunicate me from the Methodist Church. Methodists do not "excommunicate" unbaptized infants from their church; such are simply not in; to get in, according to Mr. Madsen, they must be baptized. Accordingly, it is evident that if the uncircumcised were excommunicated, as Mr. Madsen says they were, circumcision was not initiatory.

We could stop here; but somebody might say that after all this was only one of the numerous cases of pædobaptist inconsistency, and that Mr. Madsen's first position was right, even if his second was inconsistent with it. We therefore remark that circumcision did not initiate the children to "the Jewish Church," for:

1. God said of "the uncircumcised male" that "that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant" (Gen. 17:14). So it was Mr. Madsen's second position that was right, and his contradictory first position must be wrong.
2. Circumcision was not initiatory in the case of half the members of "the Jewish Church." Females were assuredly in as well as males; yet only the latter were circumcised. Circumcision did not make them members.



3. During the forty years' sojourn in the wilderness, none were circumcised, yet they were in "the Church" and covenant (Josh. 5:2-9).

We have next to notice the third assumption of the pædobaptist argument from circumcision. The question is,

### ***HAS BAPTISM TAKEN THE PLACE OF CIRCUMCISION?***

Mr. Madsen gives himself an unnecessarily severe task, for he declares that Paul "identifies circumcision with baptism." Mr. Madsen ought to know that this is an absurd way of talking, for no two things can be identical: a thing is only identical with itself. If baptism be identical with circumcision, then everyone baptized was circumcised, and all who were circumcised were baptized. Abraham's male children were not recipients of baptism, but of circumcision. The one act was a cutting of flesh; the other, Mr. Madsen would say, is an application of water. Remarkable identity!

To save Mr. Madsen's credit, we shall charitably suppose he meant what his pædobaptist brethren generally say, viz., that "baptism has taken the place of circumcision." This is Bannerman's statement. This is vital for the theory. True, the Bible never says that baptism came in the room of anything; but, Bible or no Bible, the pædobaptist cause demands that the one ordinance has taken the place of the other. If this cannot be proved, then our friends are in a sad case.

Argument from resemblance or analogy is proverbially weak. It does not follow that because two things are alike in several particulars, therefore they will be found to be alike in other particulars. In the case of circumcision and baptism, the dissimilarities outnumber and outweigh the resemblances. We have the following reasons, among others, for not believing that baptism has come in the place of circumcision (to say nothing of the ludicrous view that baptism is identical with circumcision):

1. Males only were the subjects of circumcision; but both males and females are subjects of baptism. "Every male

- among you shall be circumcised” (Gen. 17:10). “They were baptized, both men and women” (Acts 8:12).
2. Circumcision was ordained to be performed on the eighth day. See Gen. 17:12; Lev. 12:3. If the circumcision law holds good and applies to baptism, why do not our friends keep the law to which they appeal?
  3. Baptism is into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19), “into Christ” (Gal. 3:27), and initiates into the “one body” which is the Church of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). Circumcision did not initiate the children of old into the above, or even into “the Jewish Church.”
  4. Male servants, or slaves, and their male infants, were circumcised as property, and without regard to faith. Advocates of infant baptism never claim that it occupies this place.
  5. The qualifications for circumcision were flesh and property. In Christianity, “the flesh profiteth nothing.”
  6. Circumcision, requiring neither intelligence, faith, nor any moral qualification, neither did nor could communicate any spiritual blessing. No one ever professed to put on Christ in circumcision. The opposite holds good of baptism.
  7. Idiots were circumcised; for neither intellect nor any exercise of it was necessary to a covenant in the flesh. Is this true of baptism?
  8. The right of a child to circumcision did not depend upon the intelligence, faith, piety or morality of its parents. Why, then, in substituting for it infant baptism, are the benefits withheld because of the ignorance or impiety of the parents?

Infant baptism does not in this particular exactly fill the place of circumcision. New Testament practice also disproves the assertion that baptism took the place of circumcision.

1. The three thousand who on Pentecost gladly heard the word and were baptized (Acts 2:41) who were they? Jews all. The apostles did not yet realize that Gentiles should be received in on the same terms with the Jews. Every male among them was already circumcised. Paul was circumcised the eighth day (Philip. 3:5); yet was commanded to be baptized (Acts 22:16). In the case of these

persons, it is simply absurd to suggest that baptism came in the place of circumcision. On the paedobaptist view of church continuity or identity, they must have been twice initiated into the Church of God!

2. Mr. Madsen has a paragraph headed "Circumcision Cancelled." He could not begin to prove that for descendants of Abraham circumcision was ever cancelled. James told Paul that it was reported of him that he told "the Jews who are among the Gentiles" "not to circumcise their children"; and he asked Paul to do certain things so that "all shall know that there is no truth in the things whereof they have been informed concerning thee" (Acts 21:20-24). Paul agreed to do as advised, which shows that the report was certainly false. If Paul knew that baptism came in the place of circumcision, it is impossible to explain his attitude. If James believed it, why did he not seek to pacify his Jewish brethren with Mr. Madsen's explanation? The fact is it was a libel to say that Paul told the Jews not to circumcise their children. Yet we know that Jews who had been circumcised were commanded to be baptized. So the theory that baptism came in the room of circumcision is exploded. The penalty for not being circumcised is today what it ever was, the "being cut off from Abraham's recognized posterity."

Mr. Madsen refers to the decision of Acts 15, and says the apostles "formally discredited circumcision, and officially cancelled it as a rite of the Christian Church."

Again, he writes:

"Circumcision being thus officially cancelled as a Christian Sacrament, and Christ having ordained baptism as the sign of admission into His Church, the conclusion is obvious and unavoidable, that Baptism thereafter held the field, and circumcision died out. This Council gave the Old Testament rite its death-blow in all Christian thought, and obliterated it from all Christian practice" (p. 29).

Now, as circumcision never was a "rite of the Christian Church," it needed no cancellation in this regard. If Mr. Madsen means to say that circumcision ceased to be practiced by Christians, after the decision of Acts 15, then he ought to read his New Testament more carefully. The very next chapter says Paul "took and circumcised" Timothy. The rite surely had not "received its death-blow" if Paul could do this. Years after, as we have seen,

Paul agreed with James that there was no truth in the report that the apostle to the Gentiles had told Jews not to circumcise their children. Circumcision never was “a Christian Sacrament”; while, on the other hand, it was not interfered with by the apostles as a practice which believing Jews could continue to observe in the case of their own children. What Acts 15 settled by apostolic authority, and what Paul afterwards contended for, was that the Gentile Christians should not be required to submit to circumcision. But Paul never once gave a suggestion that either Gentiles or Jews were exempt on the *ground* that baptism had taken the place of circumcision.

### **COLOSSIANS 2:11-12.**

It is this passage which Mr. Madsen declares makes it evident that “St. Paul identifies Circumcision with Baptism.” It will be well, therefore, to notice the text. Paul says: “In whom [*i. e.*, Christ] ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.”

Later, in *The Question of Baptism*, Justin Martyr is quoted as declaring: “We have received not carnal, but spiritual circumcision, and we have received it through baptism.” Dr. Carson is referred to as saying that “the circumcision of Christ came in the room of the circumcision of Moses” and that “circumcision and baptism correspond in meaning.” Thereupon Mr. Madsen adds a remark which has a naiveté which is in some respects charming, but which should hardly deceive a Methodist baby, that “the matter of correspondence being admitted on both sides, we may pass on,” etc.

Is it necessary to point out that there is a vast difference between saying that we receive Christ’s spiritual circumcision in baptism and saying that that circumcision is baptism? Many who believe the former deny the latter. Mr. Madsen has in great part reproduced John Wesley’s argument, except that Wesley evidently did not believe that baptism was identical with circumcision, but rather that “baptism came in the room of circumcision,” “our Lord

appointing one positive institution to succeed another.” Wesley, in his *Notes on the New Testament*, writes:

“*With a circumcision not performed with hands* — By an inward, spiritual operation. In putting off, not a little skin, but the *whole body of the sins of the flesh* — All the sins of your evil nature. *By the circumcision of Christ* — By that spiritual circumcision which Christ works in your heart.

“Verse 12. Which he wrought in you, when ye were as it were buried with him in baptism.”

We may accept every word of that, and be far from suggesting that the “circumcision” of verse 11 is the “baptism” of verse 12.

Meyer says on the passage:

“It is not, however, baptism itself ... that is meant by the circumcision of Christ.” While he does not think “not made with hands” proves this, yet he considers that what is meant is “the spiritual transformation, that consecration of a holy state of life, which takes place in baptism.”

In Dummelow’s Commentary, which is cited in other connections by Mr. Madsen, and which is thought so highly of by the Methodist Church of Victoria that it is prescribed as a text-book in each of the four years of the Probationers’ Course of Study, — there is the following paraphrase of Col. 2:11: —

“You need no physical circumcision, for in your conversion you received a spiritual circumcision, not the mere cutting away of a fragment of the body, but the removal of the whole carnal nature. Really, this went back to the death of Christ in which He underwent this spiritual circumcision.”

Prof. A. S. Peake, in the *Expositors’ Greek Testament*, has this comment:

“The Apostle does not merely leave them with the statement that they have been made full in Christ, which rendered circumcision unnecessary, but adds that they have already received circumcision, not material, but spiritual, not the removal of a fragment of the body, but the complete putting off of the body of flesh ... A definite historical fact is referred to, as is shown by the aorist. This was their conversion, the inward circumcision of the heart, by which they entered on the blessings of the New Covenant. The outward sign of this is baptism, with which Paul connects it in the

next verse. But it cannot be identified with it, for it is not made with hands.”

There are two things in Col. 2 which to us seem conclusive against Mr. Madsen’s use of the passage as part of an argument in favor of infant baptism:

1. The circumcision which the Christian has is “not made with hands.” Of no baby which I have ever seen “baptized,” was it true that the operation was “not made with hands.”
2. Paul says the Colossians had “been buried with him in baptism, wherein” they “were also raised with him through faith in the working of God.” No babe since the world was, at the time of baptism, had faith in the working of God, though I have seen many manifest considerable displeasure with the work of men. It is this reference to faith in Col. 2:12, which makes the Methodist Prof. Beet refer to Paul’s statement as one of two “most important assertions about Baptism in the New Testament” which “are altogether inapplicable to the Baptism of infants.”

The foregoing study of the circumcision argument shows that baptism is not the same ordinance with circumcision; that on the contrary it was an ordinance of a different covenant in which there was a change of law; that baptism was an initiatory rite as infant circumcision was not; that the Church of Jesus Christ into which baptism is initiatory was not established for nineteen centuries after Abraham’s receiving of the covenant of circumcision; and that there is no pædobaptist body on earth which would claim that the subjects of circumcision (as mentioned in Gen. 17) are the same with the subjects of baptism. From all of which it follows that there is no need to talk about God’s having or not having changed his mind, and that it is foolish to suggest, as Mr. Madsen does, that the apostles had need of a definite command to exclude infants if they were to understand that “the baptizing commission” did not include infants. The apostles knew that whereas God, when he desired infant circumcision, had specifically commanded it, he had given no such instruction in the case of the baptism of infants. So the apostles did not exclude; they simply refrained from the impiety of including what the Lord had not included, which is precisely

what we want our paedobaptist friends now to do. That the apostles so refrained is obvious from their practice and teaching as recorded in the New Testament, as implied in the acknowledgment of the distinguished Methodist theologian and exegete, Prof. J. A. Beet, when he writes: "The entire teaching of the New Testament about baptism is valid only of those whose baptism is a confession of personal faith."

## Jewish Baptism.

“The Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants.”

“We note that only children born before their fathers’ conversion received this Jewish Baptism. This difference from Christian Baptism, and the uncertainty about the date of its origin, make the Baptism of Proselytes an uncertain basis for argument.” — Prof. J. A. BEET, Methodist.

Pædobaptist apologists generally attempt to support their argument by reference to the proselyte baptism of the Jews. They cannot get cases of infant baptism in the Bible — Old Testament or New, — so they are extremely anxious to obtain them in Biblical times if not in Biblical writings. To those who have been brought up to regard the Scriptures as their sole rule of faith and practice, this may prove an uninteresting study. All who are content to believe that God meant us to learn his will from his Word will not bother much about proselyte baptism. Mr. Madsen says: “Baptist advocates strongly deny the prevalence of baptism among the Jews in our Lord’s time.” Some of them doubtless do this, because we have no recorded instances there. But the chief objection which is taken to the pædobaptist position here is this, that whether or not Jews baptized proselytes and infants does not begin to touch the question as to those whom the Lord Jesus would have baptized. He who wants to know whom the Jews of later days baptized, naturally goes to Jewish uninspired writings. He who wishes to know those whom the Lord desired to be baptized, will equally naturally go to the inspired Scriptures which are given to make us complete (2 Tim. 3:17). It is ludicrous to suggest that God meant us to learn his will as to the subjects of baptism from extra-biblical sources, or from the very people who so sadly rejected the gospel of Christ.

It is important that believers in God’s Word should be warned against accepting specious arguments which might undermine its authority. In the common pædobaptist treatment of proselyte baptism there is such a danger. It will often be found that controversialists seek for the origin of Christian baptism, or of John’s baptism, in the supposed Jewish practice. Mr. Madsen quotes from A. Plummer, who in Hastings’ *Bible Dictionary* writes thus: “Assume that baptism for proselytes was a well-established custom when John began to preach, and we have an obvious reason why John



adopted the rite. Not that this was his only reason; but that, so far as the custom was of any influence, it was a recommendation and not an objection. And the same argument applies to Christian baptism, which becomes more, and not less, intelligible when we consider that it was preceded by baptism for proselytes and the baptism of John.”

That reference to “an obvious reason why John adopted the rite” is mischievous. What Plummer put guardedly is often expressed more rashly. *The Colac Reformer*, of 10th September, reports a sermon by a Presbyterian minister, in which report appears the following:

“When John came on the scene there was baptism among the proselytes. Firstly, there was circumcision, secondly there was baptism, and thirdly they had to make an offering or sacrifice in the temple. That was absolutely necessary for the Jewish proselytes. John made a selection from the three rites, and he chose baptism — spiritual cleansing.”

“John made a selection”! I prefer my New Testament way of speaking: “There came a man, *sent from God*, whose name was John” (John 1:6). “That he should be made manifest to Israel, for this cause came I baptizing in water” (John 1:31). “He that sent me to baptize in water” (John 1:33). We would not like by unscriptural modes of speaking to seem to give reason for being ranked with those who would have liked to say John’s baptism was from men, and not from heaven (Matt. 22:24-27).

Even if we assume (and it is wonderful the number of assumptions which have to be made with the Jewish proselyte baptism argument) that John knew of Jewish baptism, how far does that assumption carry us? John knew of proselyte baby baptism and so preached “the baptism of repentance” (Mark 1:4)! Therefore, also, we read that the people “were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins” (Matt. 3:6)! Anyone can see the weakness of the argument, the halting of the logic. If baby baptism were in existence before, and if John “selected” the rite, he must have altered one important part of it, for, save in the case of our Lord who knew no sin, there is not a hint that anybody who did not repent and confess his sins was baptized by John.

The argument from proselyte baptism consists of an inference added to another inference. (1) It is not *proved* that proselyte bap-

tism was practiced in the days of Jesus or of John. Most modern writers seem to believe in its existence. They do not so believe on the ground of express mention or stated example. Read the following:

“What is wanted is direct evidence that before John the Baptist made so remarkable a use of the rite, it was the custom to make all proselytes submit to baptism; and such evidence is not forthcoming.” — A. PLUMMER, in Hastings’ *Bible Dictionary*.

“It is uncertain whether the later rite with which Jewish proselyte baptism was performed ... was in existence at the foundation of the Christian Church.” — P. DREWS in *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopædia of Religious Knowledge*.

“The details of the act of reception [of proselytes] seem not to have been settled definitely before the second Christian century.” — THE JEWISH ENCYCLOPEDIA.”

Someone may ask, How then can Plummer say, as he does, that the fact of proselyte baptism in the days of John “is not really doubtful”? The answer is that there is very great difficulty in believing that the Jews who so opposed Christ would have later borrowed a Christian rite; Plummer calls this a monstrous supposition. Most, I think, in this agree with Plummer, though some yet vigorously deny the validity of the inference, holding that the lack of any mention in the Bible and Apocrypha, in Josephus and Philo, and in the older Targumists is inexplicable if the rite existed.

(2) It is, then, an inference only, and that not an absolutely necessary one, that such baptism existed in early days. It is also an inference — and that so wild that to state it is almost sufficient to refute it — that the subjects of John’s baptism or of Christ’s must have been settled by the subjects of Jewish baptism.

Pædobaptist controversialists are by no means agreed amongst themselves as to the weight to be attached to this argument, even while they agree on the early existence of proselyte baptism. Particularly, has there been difference of view as to infant baptism.

Edersheim, speaking of the Jewish views, says:

“In regard to the little children of proselytes, opinions differed.” *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. II, p. 746.

We call attention to J. Agar Beet’s view as stated at the beginning of this article. He also states:

“It is therefore more probable than not that this undoubted Jewish practice was as early as the days of Christ. Usually, though apparently not always, the young children of such converts were also baptized, as undoubtedly their boys were circumcised. This proselyte baptism, if then practiced, would naturally suggest the Baptism of the young children of converts to Christianity.”

E. Von Dobschutz, Professor of N.T. Exegesis in the University of Breslau, after speaking of the threefold ceremony of circumcision, immersion, and sacrifice, says:

“The relation of this rite to the Christian sacrament of baptism has given rise to much discussion, but the present tendency to derive Christian baptism from the immersion of proselytes is incorrect, especially as the existence of sacramental ideas is not certainly proved in connection either with immersion or circumcision.” — In *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia*.

Here is another striking statement:

“Sometimes the attempt is made to strengthen this argument from circumcision to baptism by a reference to the baptism of the proselyte. When a proselyte was baptized, it is said, his whole household, down to its youngest member, was baptized with him; and it may be supposed that the Christian practice would conform to this custom ... Opinions differed, however, on the subject of the baptism of the children of proselytes ... And in any case, the analogy from proselyte baptism is not one that it is safe to apply to Christian baptism; for whatever may be thought about the younger children of the household, it is exceedingly unlikely that the older children would be baptized by the apostles on the mere ground of their father’s faith, as the analogy from proselyte baptism would suggest.” — J. C. LAMBERT, in *The Sacraments in the New Testament*.

Surely these quotations will show that the argument from proselyte baptism to infant baptism as a Christian rite is far from being proved when it is rendered reasonably probable that proselyte baptism existed in the days of the Lord Jesus. If Beet confesses that it is “an uncertain basis for argument,” we need not blush with shame merely because Beet’s brother Methodist, Mr. Madsen, tells us we “are fighting a hopeless issue.”

To anyone who is interested in the amount of weight to be attached to the argument from Jewish proselyte baptism, assuming

such a thing existed in the days of Jesus, we commend a consideration of the following facts. These are conclusive against the argument as generally presented.

1. The proselytes spoken of were introduced not into the church of Jesus Christ, but into the Jewish nation. "If, then, the little children of proselytes were, with their parents, grafted into the Jewish nation, it follows not that the children of Christians should, in like manner, be received into the church — which is not national but spiritual — which the Lord requires shall be composed of those only who are twice born, not of those born of the flesh nor of the will of man; but solely of those who are born again; born of God."

2. Mr. Madsen and his brethren persistently argue that baptism came in the place of circumcision. They never give proof of this, of course. Now see how their own argument that the baptism of John or Jesus was adopted from the earlier Jewish rite destroys the cogency of their former reasoning. If both baptism and circumcision were needed to initiate proselytes, surely in their case the baptism did not come in the room of circumcision. If the New Testament ordinance were framed on the analogy of the Jewish proselyte practice, then how could New Testament baptism come in the room of circumcision? If our friends are right now, they were wrong before; if they were right before, they are wrong now. They could not twice be right; but they could be, and are, twice wrong.

3. How little weight Mr. Madsen himself really attaches to the analogy of Jewish proselyte baptism may be shown. The "Jewish baptism" was immersion. See the quotation from Von Dobschutz above. Plummer tells how the proselyte "plunged beneath the water, taking care to be entirely submerged." So also Lightfoot says. Dr. Brandt, in Hastings' *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, writes: "The convert made a complete immersion." J. V. Bartlett in the same *Encyclopædia* remarks: "Immersion seems to have been the practice of the Apostolic age, in continuity with Jewish proselyte baptism." The *Jewish Encyclopædia* speaks of the *tebilah* or "bath of purification." Now, Mr. Madsen is not very keen on immersion; he is only keen on the analogy of Jewish baptism so far as it seems to serve his purpose.

4. Overlooking the difference between a Jewish "bath of purification" and a Methodist sprinkling, and assuming that proselyte baptism was practiced in New Testament days, and further assum-

ing that infants were baptized with their parents, we are still very far from the practice of pædobaptists now. For what children were, in the case of proselytes, so baptized? Edersheim says:

“Unborn children of proselytes did not require to be baptized, because they were born ‘in holiness.’”

Lightfoot, whose “*Horæ Hebraicæ*” is a storehouse of pædobaptist argument, and is quoted by Mr. Madsen, says:

“The sons of proselytes, in following generations, were circumcised indeed, but not baptized.”

J. Agar Beet writes:

“We note that only children born before their fathers’ conversion received this Jewish Baptism.”

Proselyte baptism was not repeated on the posterity of those baptized, not given to any born after their parents became proselytes. If this pattern, then, were to guide us, then “only the children of Christians born before the conversion and baptism of their parents would be entitled to baptism, while all born afterwards would remain unbaptized.” Compare this with pædobaptist practice. Our friends really ought to allow that we are in good company when we decline to be bound as to the subjects of Christian baptism by any Jewish procedure. They themselves decline, to be thus bound. Their consistency must improve, and their reasoning also; else tracts, sermons and books alike will fail to stop the numbers from turning to the precept and practice of the Word of God and hearing, believing, being baptized.

## Family Baptisms.

“If, indeed, on other grounds, we were sure that infants were baptized by the apostles, it would be natural to conclude that a household was baptized, its infant members, if there were any, would not be left out. But, in the absence of any such assurance, these cases really prove nothing at all.” — J. G. LAMBERT, in *The Sacraments in the New Testament*.

The argument from household baptisms, or, as some, including Mr. Madsen, prefer to call them, “family baptisms,” — is, despite its manifest weakness, a favorite one with pædobaptists. That the New Testament records the baptism of some households is certain. That one of these households contained an unbeliever or an infant too young to believe, no one could prove if his salvation depended upon it.

We have good reason for objecting to the way in which our Methodist friends put the matter. Mr. Madsen writes:

“The Baptist theory, with respect to these household baptisms, requires proof that every single member was not only capable of exercising faith, but actually believed, before receiving baptism.”

At the risk of repetition, we must point out that this is not precisely the case. Baptists and members of Churches of Christ agree in baptizing believers in Christ. When they are challenged as to their warrant for so doing, they point to New Testament command and example (*e. g.*, Acts 2:38; 8:12; 10:47-48; 18:8). Our friends perforce agree that we have Scriptural authority for so baptizing. When pædobaptists baptize babies, we simply ask that they produce Scriptural warrant for their practice, as we are quite willing to give for ours. The question is, Can they give this authority? it is a poor evasion of the issue to ask us to prove that no member of the households was incapable of believing or did not believe. It is *their* practice, not ours, which needs justification. Why do they not give one Biblical instance of or one single command for this thing which they do in the name of the Lord? They need to show, what they have ever failed to show, that any baptized household in New Testament days contained an unbeliever or one incapable of belief.

Again, Mr. Madsen writes:

“We, however, follow Apostolic practice, and baptize the convert’s family with him.”

This is as rich and ingenuous as the comment of Albert Barnes, the Presbyterian divine, that the story of Lydia “affords a strong presumptive proof that this was an instance of *household* or infant baptism.” If household, why infant? Disciples of Christ believe in and practice household baptism. In his pamphlet, *One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism*, issued in answer to a pædobaptist tract specially circulated to counteract the effect of his work in one of his great American missions, Charles Reign Scoville says: “Many whole households have come to Christ during this meeting, and no infants either.” The point is not then whether household baptisms are Scriptural, but whether our pædobaptist friends “follow apostolic practice” when they baptize unconscious infants on the strength of parental faith. If there was such “apostolic practice,” why does not Mr. Madsen give us chapter and verse, and end the discussion? We have authority for what we practice; surely we are right in asking similar authority from him. Let him produce the proof, and not try to shift the obligation.

It is sometimes said there are “five family baptisms in the New Testament.” In reality, there are only three cases distinctly recorded as instances of household baptisms — the households of Lydia (Acts 16:15), of the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:33), and of Stephanas (1 Cor. 1:16). Mr. Madsen deals with these three.

### ***CORNELIUS.***

The case of Cornelius is often referred to, but it is not explicitly stated that this was a family baptism; Lambert, as will be seen from a subsequent quotation, holds the contrary. Acts 11:14, “Who shall speak unto thee words, whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy house,” is favorable to the view that all the household of Cornelius was included in the baptism. In any case, since the people baptized with Cornelius are said to be “all here present in the sight of God, to hear all things that have been commanded” (Acts 10:33), and since they spoke with tongues and magnified God (10:46), they must have been in a very different case from any babies baptized by Mr. Madsen. So, whether we have in Acts 10 a case of household baptism or not, we certainly have not a case of baby baptism.

## **CRISPUS.**

The household of Crispus, it is generally believed, was baptized. No one that I know of disputes it. Mr. Madsen may not have referred to it in his chapter on "Family Baptisms," because it is not specifically stated that the household was baptized; or there may have been other reasons for the silence, such reasons as will naturally suggest themselves to one who, remembering that Mr. Madsen claims to "follow apostolic practice and baptize the convert's family with him," reads carefully the following Scripture:

"And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized" (Acts 18:8).

This notable passage does not appear in the chapter in which the Methodist champion endeavors to enlighten his people on New Testament family baptisms.

## **THE JAILER.**

His story is recorded in Acts 16:23-34. We are told that the jailer "was baptized, he and all his" (verse 33). The question is, Were there any infants here? If not, the pædobaptist position gets no support from this household. Now, Luke says Paul and Silas "spake the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house" (v. 32), and that the jailer "rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in God" (v. 34). Methodist babies are not wont either to have the word preached to them nor to rejoice greatly at the operation of what our friends call baptism. The preaching and the rejoicing prove that Mr. Madsen does not in this case of household baptism get his authority for infant baptism.

I would like to quote a few sentences from *The Question of Baptism*. Of verse 34, above referred to, Mr. Madsen writes:

"This whole verse is utterly opposed to their [i. e. 'the Baptists'] contention, for it proves that the jailer brought Paul and Silas from the prison quarter proper, into his own private apartments — his home, in fact; so that the rejoicing was a purely domestic one, and confined to the bosom of his family circle."

How the fact that the rejoicing was a domestic one confined to the jailer's family circle goes to prove infant baptism and upset the



Baptists' contention is not very clear. An attempted distinction between *oikos* and *oikia* will not help here.

Will Mr. Madsen try to prove either of the following proposition., That there were infants in the prison quarter proper, but not in the family circle; or, That the infants of the domestic circle could hear the word and rejoice, whereas the prison quarter ones could not? If he cannot prove one of these, then I fancy that even careful Methodist readers of his sentence quoted above will write it down for the nonsense it is.

Again, Mr. Madsen says of Paul's words: "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, *thou and thy house*":

"Why should the Apostles give to an enquirer after personal salvation such a comprehensive answer, which opened the door of salvation to the man's family upon his belief, if they had not intended to disciple the family by baptizing them into the Christian Church on the strength of that belief? Had no family issue been involved, the Apostles might just as well have replied: 'Believe and thou and all mankind will be saved.'"

That is an extraordinary passage. We are in it told, not merely that the house was *baptized* because of the jailer's faith, but that "the door of salvation" was opened "to the man's family upon his belief." The former view is risky; but the latter is outrageous. Here is a comment of Alford, the great Church of England scholar and divine, whom Mr. Madsen himself quotes on household baptisms:

"And thy house" "does not mean that his faith would save his household, — but that the same way was open to them as to him: 'Believe, and thou shalt be saved: and the same of thy household.'"

John Wesley's comment on verse 34 is:

"*Thou shalt be saved, and thy household* — if ye believe. They did so, and were saved."

Meyer, the German commentator, writes:

"For the sake of this requirement of believing, they set forth the gospel to the father of the family and all his household."

Who give sense: Alford, Wesley and Meyer or Madsen? Certainly not all four. If his view is not accepted, then Mr. Madsen cannot see why Paul should have said, "Thou and thy house," rather than "Thou and all mankind." I regret his inability to see why, but really the answer is very plain. You see, Paul happened to be in the presence of, not "all mankind," but, as Luke tells us in the very

next verse, “all that were in his house.” It is natural for a speaker to tell his *hearers* that they may be saved, and how they may be.

Again, Mr. Madsen quotes a distinguished Presbyterian Professor as referring to Paul’s answer to “the jailer’s selfish cry about himself.” The selfishness in the jailer’s cry is as purely a figment of the imagination as are the unconscious infants in the jailer’s house. Is a man selfish because he says, “What must I do to be saved?” Would God that men’s selfishness were often manifested thus, so that they will learn of Christ and obey him as the jailer did. It is a gratuitous insult to the man to call his a selfish cry.

### **STEPHANAS.**

In 1 Cor. 1:16 Paul writes: “I baptized also the household of Stephanas.” In this passage there is no reference whatever to the number, sex or age of the household. In the same letter there occurs this verse: “Ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have set themselves to minister unto the saints” (16:15). We often quote this passage as showing that there were no unconscious infants in the household at the time of the baptism. Mr. Madsen denies that 1 Cor. 16:15 proves this. He writes:

“But what is, perhaps accidentally; overlooked, is that the baptism of the ‘household,’ and the ministry of the ‘house,’ of Stephanas did not follow one another in an immediate order. When Paul recalls the baptism of this family, he mentions it at a time so long before he writes of it, that he is quite uncertain in his recollection as to the names of the persons he had then baptized.” There is no need for an advocate of believers’ baptism to overlook, accidentally or otherwise, the lack of the “immediate order” referred to. The question is as to the amount of time which elapsed between the baptism and the ministering on the part of the house. I hope that Mr. Madsen “accidentally overlooked” the fact that we are not without the data necessary to judge of the duration of the interval. It is grossly misleading to ignore this data and write of “a time so long before.”

Paul tells us that he himself baptized the household of Stephanas (1 Cor. 1:16), and that the house of Stephanas was “the firstfruits of Achaia” (1 Cor. 16:15). When did Paul first preach in

Achaia? Every Sunday School child ought to know that it was during his second missionary journey. See the record of that tour in Acts 15:36-18:22. 1 Corinthians, it is generally agreed, was written within six years of the beginning of the second missionary journey; and it is obvious that Paul did not get to Achaia for a considerable time after beginning his journey. For the tour and the Epistle respectively, the following dates are given: Dummelow, 49-50 and 55 or 56; Conybeare and Howson, 51-54 and 57; Ramsay, 50-53 and 55. Now it hardly needs argument that Methodist babies sprinkled by Mr. Madsen do not set themselves to minister unto the saints within five or six years of their "baptism." So the case of Stephanas will not help his cause. The suggested difference between "household" and "house," I shall notice later.

### **LYDIA.**

Lydia's is the one instance of a household baptism in which the immediate context itself does not prove that infants were not among the baptized. We agree with Mr. Madsen in his belief that Acts 16:40, which says that Paul and Silas "entered into the house of Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed," does not settle the matter. But we heartily disagree with the ludicrous reason which Mr. Madsen advances for this belief:

"Unless the Baptists contend that a Sister is a Brother, in defiance of all proper discriminating terms of sex, Lydia was not present at this farewell gathering" (p. 43).

A person who writes thus ought to read the epistle which Paul later wrote to Philippi. In it he addresses his readers generally as "brethren" (Philip. 1:12; 2:1; 2:17; 4:1, 8); yet he can send a message to two sisters (4:2). Paul in this did not write in defiance of proper discriminating terms; he did what we all do today.

While the story of Lydia does not of itself explicitly exclude infants, it yet contains no suggestion that infants were either present or baptized. The only folk of Philippi mentioned as being present at the river-side meeting were women (verse 13).

Before any support whatever can accrue to the pædobaptist position from this woman's case, four things have to be assumed: (1) That Lydia had her children with her so far away from her home in

Asia; (2) That at least one of her children was too young to believe; (3) That Lydia had any children at all; (4) That Lydia was a married woman. No pædobaptist could give any proof for any one of these assumptions. Let him try! Yet without such imaginations, the case does not support the pædobaptist claim. Now, assumption is not a good enough warrant for a church ordinance.

We say that it is only right to interpret Lydia's case in harmony with the other believing households and with the uniform teaching and example of the New Testament. If infant baptism were elsewhere authorized or recorded, we might assume it here; but this precept and example cannot be produced.

### ***OIKOS AND OIKIA.***

These two words are of very frequent occurrence in the New Testament. Both are translated "house" or "household." Frequently our pædobaptist friends, when they are clearly shown to be unwarranted in seeking to get authority for their practice from the accounts of the "family baptisms" as given in our English versions, hazard the argument that the use of the Greek word *oikos* rather than of *oikia* in certain texts tends to prove their case. The person who is utterly ignorant of Greek is apt to be persuaded that there may be something in such an argument. The theory demands that there is a clear and uniform difference in meaning between *oikos* and *oikia*; if there is not, then to insist on the distinction in a few stated passages would be manifestly wrong. We hope to show, firstly, that there is no such settled and constant difference; and, secondly, that, if there were, still the pædobaptist argument lacks cogency.

For the sake of the interested reader of English alone, it may be mentioned that in the passage generally cited in connection with household baptisms, *oikos* occurs in Acts 11:14; 16:15, 31, 34; 18:8; 1 Cor. 1:16; and *oikia* in Acts 16:34 and 1 Cor. 16:15.

Mr. Tait, Presbyterian minister, whose little book on *Christian Baptism* has just been issued under the auspices of the Publications Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, uses the argument. He, much more clearly and strongly than Mr. Madsen, puts it as follows:

“These instances are instances of the baptism of families, not of households. In the New Testament the word *oikos* means ‘a family’ in the narrower sense of a unity under a common head, and *oikia* means ‘a household’ in the wider sense, including servants and dependents. It is the narrower word, which means ‘a family,’ that is invariably used in speaking of the baptism of several persons; and the wider word, meaning ‘a household,’ that is used when things are said of the persons composing it, which could not be said of children. Paul tells us that he ‘baptized the family of Stephanas,’ but when, in the same letter, he speaks of this good Christian, and those associated with him, as having ‘set themselves to minister unto the saints,’ his words are: ‘Ye know the household of Stephanas.’ Luke tells us that Paul and Silas said to the Philippian jailor, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy family’; but when he tells us of their ‘speaking the word of the Lord unto him,’ he adds, ‘with all that were in his household.’ Of Lydia, Luke says: ‘And when she was baptized and her family.’ When we speak of ‘a man with a family’ we mean a father with children. When Paul and Luke speak of baptizing families, or families being baptized, and carefully distinguish between families and households, it certainly looks as if they meant us to conclude that there were children in these families, and that they were baptized with their parents” (pp. 18-19).

We call attention to the ingenious way in which Mr. Tait begs the question to be proved by translating *oikos* by “family” and *oikia* by “household.” He does not try to prove the right to this difference in rendering. Our English translators, both of A.V. and RV, do not thus distinguish, nor has the American Standard Revised Version regarded the alleged difference. Yet all the translators knew something of Greek.

Again, one may ask, How will the distinction help Mr. Tait’s argument? Bannerman — who was honored by the Publications Committee of the Free Church of Scotland as Mr. Tait has been by that of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria — says *oikia* “means ‘household’ in the wide sense, ‘an establishment,’ including not only children, but relatives, servants and dependants.” Similarly, Mr. Tait speaks of *oikia* as “the wider word.” But if *oikia* is wider, embracing the children and others also, how can it be maintained that *oikia* “is used when things are said of the persons composing

it, which could not be said of children"? Nobody has dared to say that *oikia* differs from *oikos* in that the former excludes the children which may exist in the latter; Messrs. Bannerman, Tait and Madsen treat *oikia* as the wider, more embracing, term. Let us apply, therefore. "They spake the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house" (*oikia*; Acts 16:32). Well, whatever children are included in *oikos* must be included in the wider term, *oikia*; and this wider "household" as well as narrower "family," then, consisted of folk old enough to hear the word of God.

Once more: In Acts 16:34 we are told the jailer "rejoiced greatly, with all his house (*panoikei*). The household could not only hear the word, but take such an intelligent interest in it, and be so delighted with obedience to and acceptance by the Lord as, to rejoice greatly.

Mr. Tait's argument, with its show of precise scholarship, breaks down hopelessly. Mr. Madsen quotes from Grimm's Wilke's Lexicon of N.T. Greek as to the meaning of the word *oikia*. We, as others, cordially accept the meanings as there stated. This lexicon gives the following meanings of *oikia*: (a) Prop. an inhabited edifice, a dwelling. (b) The inmates of a house, a family. (c) Property, wealth, goods. Of *oikos*, it says: 1. A house: (a) strictly, an inhabited house. (b) Any building whatever. (c) Any dwelling place. 2. By metonymy, the inmates of a house, all the persons forming cite family, a household. 3. Stock, race, descendants of one. Cremer's Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek gives the following meanings of *oikos*: (1) a dwelling; (2) a household or family; (3) household concerns. Bagster's Analytical Greek Lexicon is in harmony with the above. Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon is in accord, and fails to harmonize with the alleged distinction so necessary to our opponent's argument.

Mr. Madsen, however, thinks he can get some help from *oikia*. He writes:

"A second illustration from John 4:49-53, is submitted. In verse 49, a nobleman appeared to Jesus: 'Sir, come down ere my child die.' The force of this appeal as an example of an argument lives in the exact wording of it: 'Come down ere my *little child* die.' Then in verse 53, when the healing deed had taken place, it is reported of the nobleman: 'And himself believed and his whole house (*oikia*).' As Dr. Rentoul points out — 'Every believing

household was baptized.’ Thus in John 4:49-53, we have ‘a clear and interesting proof that in the household — whether the term *oikia* or *oikos* be used, the *little child* was an integral member, and took the status of its parent’s faith.” *The Question of Baptism*, p. 46.

The unsophisticated reader may want to know what the cure of the child of the nobleman has to do with the subjects of baptism: the “little child” in question was healed, not baptized. Yet such a person will on second thoughts appreciate the subtlety of this pædobaptist argument. Its point is that a “believing household” may include a child which is not old enough to believe personally, but which takes “the status of its parent’s faith”; for it is plainly stated, “Himself believed with his whole house,” and yet there was a “little child.” So, the argument implies, even if the baptized households were believing households, that fact would not exclude infants from them.

To most people it will be a sufficient reply that John *says* the whole house believed; and, therefore, the child, however little, was old enough to believe. Our friends, however, apparently hold that this is excluded by the term “little child” (v. 49, *paidion*, diminutive of the *pais* of verse 51). But does *paidion* prove that a person so called was too young to believe? John, who records this story, evidently did not think so, for he represents Jesus as applying this word to the disciples who went fishing:

“Children [*paidia*], have ye aught to eat?” (John 21:5). If one object that this is an accommodated use of the word, we can refer him to Mark 5:39, “The child [*paidion*] is not dead, but sleepeth.” Of what age was this *paidion*? Mark says she “rose up, and walked, for she was twelve years old” (v.42). Now, if a person of twelve years of age is called in the New Testament. *paidion*, by what right does Mr. Madsen, or anyone else, seek to suggest that the nobleman’s ‘little child’ was of such a tender age that he could not believe, but must take the status of his parent’s faith? Are pædobaptists who use this argument ignorant, or are they seeking to impose on other people’s ignorance? The word *paidion* does not of itself suggest inability to believe, and John distinctly says the nobleman’s whole house did believe. I agree with John rather than with Mr. Madsen. It would be no trouble at all to us if the household of Lydia, the jailer, or Stephanas, contained children of the

age of the “little child” of Mark 5:39. We have baptized children of such an age, on confession of their faith in Christ. It is a far cry from this to the baptism of “the infant, mewling and puking in the nurse’s arms.”

In *The Question of Baptism*, again we read:

“Thayer, Grimm’s American translator, ‘holds that in Attic Greek, *oikos* means one’s household establishment, regarded as an entire property; but *oikia* means the dwelling with its inhabitants. In the N.T. he thinks the words are used with discrimination, and yet in some passages ‘it would seem that no distinction can be insisted on.’ The passages he gives of this kind will not help the Baptist advocates” (p. 46).

Even in this passage, it is acknowledged that there is no uniformly maintained distinction in meaning between *oikia* and *oikos*. If so, who is to judge in any one case as to whether the distinction is implied? The admission of Thayer at once prevents any pædobaptist from taking a short-cut to his conclusion from the use of the one word rather than of the other in any verse of Scripture. But Thayer’s passages are said not to be such as would help the advocate of believer’s baptism! Would it not be well to give Thayer’s verses?

Thayer writes as follows:

“In Attic (and esp. legal) usage, *oikos* denotes one’s *household establishment*, one’s *entire property*, *oikia*, *the dwelling itself*; and in prose *oikos* is not used in the sense of *oikia*. In the sense of *family*, *oikos* and *oikia* are alike employed. ... In the N.T., although the words appear at times to be used with same discrimination (*e. g.*, Luke 10:5-7; Acts 16:31-32, 34; cf. John 14:2), yet other pass[ages] seem to show that no distinction can be insisted upon: *e. g.*, Matt. 9:23; Mark 5:38; Luke 7:36-37; Acts 10:17, 22, 32; 17:5; 19:16; 21:8; 11:11-13; 16:15; 1 Cor. 1:16; 16:15.”

The impression which this definite quotation from Thayer makes on the reader is not precisely similar to that made by the summary of Thayer given in *The Question of Baptism*. It will be noted that Thayer includes 1 Cor. 1:16 and 16:15 in his list of passages which “seem to show that no distinction can be insisted upon.” Now the inclusion of these directly contradicts the use which Mr. Tait has made of these very Scriptures (see extract above). So, despite the assertion that Thayer’s passages will not help us, it is



evident that Thayer assists to this extent, that he declares against the use which the chosen representative of Victorian Presbyterians has made of the words *oikia* and *oikos* in 1 Corinthians.

### **PÆDOBAPTIST ADMISSIONS.**

We have by an independent examination shown that there is no cogent argument in favor of infant baptism to be drawn from the New Testament accounts of the baptism of households. It is interesting to find candid pædobaptists themselves admitting the weakness of their brothers' argument. We do not quote the following to prove our position, for it needs no further proof. Yet the reader may reflect that the argument advanced by Mr. Madsen must be weak indeed to be so summarily rejected by such an array of scholarly pædobaptists.

“The attempt is frequently made to found at least an inferential proof upon the fact that we read in the New Testament of the baptisms of certain ‘households.’ The argument is one which possesses very little weight. And it would possess little weight even though we knew, which we do not, that there were infants in any of the three households that are spoken of as receiving baptism. If, indeed, on other grounds we were sure that infants were baptized by the apostles, it would be natural to conclude that when a household was baptized, its infant members, if there were any, would not be left out. But, in the absence of any such assurance, these cases really prove nothing at all. They still leave us face to face with the preliminary inquiry, Whom did the apostles regard as the proper subjects of the ordinance? In two out of the three cases just referred to, the weakness of the argument is brought home to us by other expressions that are used with reference to those very same family groups. The verse which reports the baptism of the Philippian jailer and his house is immediately preceded by another which tells that Paul and Silas ‘spake the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house’ (Acts 16:32). In 1 Corinthians, again, Paul informs us that he baptized the household of Stephanas (1:16); but in the same Epistle he describes that household as having ‘set themselves to minister unto the saints’ (16:15). These expressions, of course, do not prove that there were no infants in the houses referred to. But they do prove that when certain things are

attributed to a household collectively, the language must be read with this limitation, that only those members of the house are meant to be included to whom those things properly apply. The baptism of a household, therefore, it must be said again, proves nothing, so long as we do not know whether the apostles regarded infants as proper subjects of the administration.” — J. C. LAMBERT, in *The Sacraments in the New Testament*.

“There is no trace of it [Infant Baptism] in the New Testament. Every discussion of the subject presumes persons old enough to have faith and repentance, and no case of baptism is recorded except of such persons, for the whole ‘households’ mentioned would in that age mean dependants and slaves, as naturally as they suggest children to the English reader.” “This is the usual sense of *oikos* in N.T., when it is not a building.” — H. M. GWATKIN, Dixie Professor of History in the University of Cambridge, in *Early Church History to A.D. 313*.

Meyer, the German commentator, says of Lydia:

“Of what members her family consisted, cannot be determined. This passage and ver. 33, with 18. 8 and 1 Cor. 1:16, are appealed to in order to prove *infant baptism* in the apostolic age, or at least to make it probable.” He refers to Bengel’s word, “Who can believe that in so many families there was no infant?”

Amongst other remarks, Meyer gives the following as being against the attempted proof:

“(1) If, in the Jewish and Gentile families which were converted to Christ, there were children, then baptism is to be assumed in *those* cases, when they were so far advanced that they could and did confess their faith on Jesus as the Messiah; for this was the universal, absolutely necessary qualification for the reception of baptism. (2) If, on the other hand, there were children still incapable of confessing, baptism could not be administered to those to whom that, which was the necessary presupposition of baptism for Christian sanctification, was still wanting. ... Therefore (4) the baptism of the children of *Christians*, of which no trace is found in the N.T., is not to be held as an apostolic ordinance, as, indeed, it encountered early and long resistance; but it is an *institution of the church*, which gradually arose in post-apostolic times in connection with the development of ecclesiastical life and of doctrinal teaching.” — *Commentary on Acts*.

H. E. Plumptre, the well-known Church of England commentator, wrote of Lydia:

“The statement that ‘her household’ were baptized has often been urged as evidence that infant baptism was the practice of the apostolic age. It must be admitted however, that this is to read a great deal between the lines, and the utmost that can be said is that the language of the writer does not exclude infants. The practice itself rests on firmer grounds than a precarious induction from a few ambiguous passages. (See Matt. 19:13-15). In this instance, moreover, there is no evidence that she had children, or even that she was married. The ‘household’ may well have consisted of female slaves and freed-women whom she employed, and who made up her *familia*.’ — On Acts 16:15.

The same writer had this comment on the jailer: “What has been said above (see Note on verse 15) as to the bearing of these narratives on the question of infant baptism applies here also, with the additional fact that those who are said to have been baptized are obviously identical with those whom St. Paul addressed (the word ‘all’ is used in each verse), and must, therefore, have been of an age to receive instruction together with the gaoler himself.” — On Acts 16:33.

Prof. J. Rawson Lumby, in his commentary on Acts in *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, writes of Lydia’s household:

“Of a like baptizing of a household see below (v. 33), and also cp. 11:14. We are not justified in concluding from these passages that infants were baptized. ‘Household’ might mean slaves and freed-women.” — On Acts 16:15.

“We cannot infer the existence of infant baptism from the instance of the baptism of whole families, for the passage in 1Cor. 16:15 shows the fallacy of such a conclusion, as from that it appears that the whole family of Stephanas, who were baptized by Paul consisted of adults.” — Neander in *History of the Planting and Training of the Christian Church by the Apostles*.

It frequently happens that an unworthy attempt is made to magnify the weight of the argument from household baptisms. It is sometimes allowed that infants cannot be got in any one of the households whose baptism is recorded; but the pædobaptist apologist nevertheless says that it would be strange if in the number of

households there was no infant. For instance, John Wesley begins his note on Acts 16:15 with a translation of the words of Bengel: “Who can believe, that in so many families there was no infant?” Mr. Madsen quotes Knowling who in *The Expositor’s Greek Testament* refers to Bengel’s familiar query. This attempt to make capital out of a number of cases, no one of which by itself gives the slightest support to the desired conclusion, may therefore be noticed here. We simply point out, then, that if there were an infant in all the households together, there must have been an infant in a certain one of them. Will our friends please point out one, or give the passage which implies one?

J. C. Lambert (a pædobaptist, and therefore quoted here) gives this crushing reply to those who try, as Mr. Madsen does, to argue from the number of cases while yet they cannot get an infant in any one case:

“This argument, it must be said, is constantly presented in an altogether exaggerated form. Language is used which implies that the baptism of a household is an incident of frequent occurrence. Dr. Schaff, for example, says ‘The presence of children in some of those households is far more probable than their absence in all’ (*Schaff-Herzog Encyclopædia of Religious Knowledge*, 1. 209). And even Bengel writes, ‘Quis credat in tot familiis nullum fuisse infantem?’ [Who can believe that in so many families there was no infant?]. But the use of a word like ‘tot’ [so many] and even the balancing of ‘some’ of those households over-against ‘all,’ is decidedly misleading, since, in point of fact, there are only three households of whose baptism we read, the households, namely, of Lydia (Acts 16:15), of the Philippian jailor (Acts 16:33), and of Stephanas (1Cor. 16). It is not the family of Cornelius to whom the rite is said to have been administered, but a mixed company that included his kinsmen and near friends” — *The Sacraments in the New Testament*.

Coming from an advocate of infant baptism, this is interesting.

### **PLUMMER ON HOUSEHOLD BAPTISMS.**

Mr. Madsen returns more than once to his argument from family baptisms. In two later chapters, 7 and 8, he refers again to Prof. Plummer’s treatment of the subject. On p. 71 he writes:

“Prof. Plummer, in the article on Baptism, already referred to in Hastings’ *Bible Dictionary*, observes that instances, ‘Especially those of the converts on the Day of Pentecost, of Cornelius and his friends, and of the Philippian jailer and his household, all tend to show that no great amount of instruction or preparation was at first required. But somewhat later ... after the Church had had larger experience of unreal converts, *much more care* was taken to secure definite knowledge and hearty acceptance of the truths of the Gospel. *This primitive freedom in admitting converts to baptism is in itself an argument in favour of infant baptism*, although no baptism of an infant is expressly mentioned.” — (Italics are chiefly Mr. Madsen’s.)

The reader should notice that Plummer’s argument here is not that those instances were instances of infant baptism. All the cases alluded to in above extract were cited by Plummer in the immediately preceding paragraph to show that “the recipients of Christian baptism were required to repent and believe.” Plummer proceeds to say, and truly, that, while belief and repentance were prerequisites to baptism in the apostolic days, there were not then found the probation and prolonged catechetical instruction of a later date. We may accept all this, and absolutely decline to admit the cogency of the “argument in favor of infant baptism.” Why — we may ask, without hoping for a very reasonable answer, — why should the fact that there is in the simple apostolic requirements of faith and repentance a “freedom” compared with a probation and catechuminate, lead us to reject what Plummer acknowledges to have been the primitive requirements? Because the post-apostolic church added to the Biblical requirements, shall we dispense with the Lord’s conditions? The reasoning is not very conclusive! We prefer to follow Plummer in the safe position that “the recipients of Christian baptism were required to believe and repent” (for he can give chapter and verse far this), rather than to accept his amazing transition from a “primitive freedom” to a dispensing with the Lord’s conditions.

Again, Mr. Madsen cites Plummer in connection with the objection to infant baptism made on the ground that infants cannot believe:

“Prof. Plummer disposes of the objection in the following summary: — ‘Whole households were sometimes baptized, as

those of Lydia, Crispus, the jailer, and Stephanas; and it is probable that there were children in at least some of these. There may also have been children among the three thousand baptized at Pentecost. According to the ideas then prevalent, the head of the family represented and summed up the family. In some respects the paterfamilias had absolute control of the members of his household. And it would have seemed an unnatural thing that the father should make a complete change in his religious condition, and that his children should be excluded from it. Moreover, the analogy of circumcision would lead Jewish converts to have their children baptized. Had there been this marked difference between the two rites, that children were admitted to the Jewish covenant, but not to the Christian — the difference would probably have been pointed out, all the more so, because Christianity was the more comprehensive religion of the two. There are, therefore, *prima facie* grounds for believing that from the first infants were baptized.’ Prof. Plummer goes on to strengthen the case by citing the words of Jesus concerning the little ones and his general attitude of benevolence towards them. This view, as presented by Prof. Plummer, appears to be all the more appealing, inasmuch as he weighs and appraises the Baptist argument, and concedes a *prima facie* case for baptism in the case of adults, upon repentance and faith.” — *The Question of Baptism*, pp. 75, 76.

We give this long quotation, for Mr. Madsen esteems it so highly that he says it “disposes” of his opponents’ argument. It disposes of it in the way the priest and the Levite disposed of the man who fell among robbers, — by passing by on the other side. Has Plummer proven or attempted to prove that there was an infant in one of the households baptized? No. Has he proven that infants were among the three thousand baptized at Pentecost? No; and he could not do so; for Luke says:

“They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:41-42).

There may have been “children” here, but certainly not “infants,” else they were the most remarkable infants that ever were on this earth, and the recipients of such church privileges as no Methodist or Anglican babies now receive. No; Plummer did not

prove nor did he attempt to prove. Look back to the quotation from him, and see the prominence of “probable,” “may” and “probably.” When Plummer wished to show that recipients of baptism in apostolic days believed and repented, he gave the Scripture texts, and did not need to fall back on those overworked servants of the pædobaptist cause, the blessed words “may” and “probable.” We do not need to say that “probably” Methodists believe in and practice what they call infant baptism; we have their precept and practice. We are not prophets; but we can assure Mr. Madsen that the argument of those who stand by New Testament teaching and example will not be disposed of by “probably.”

Plummer, we are told, strengthens his case by referring to Christ’s “general attitude of benevolence” towards infants. Nobody denies Jesus’ benevolence towards them. Pædobaptists do not insist on this benevolence more than we do.

Rather, we emphasize it more; for we do not think that the baptized infant has any precedence in this respect over the unbaptized one. The Lord has “benevolence towards” them all alike. But how does “benevolence” prove “baptism”? Will Plummer or Madsen hazard the suggestion that on the occasion in question Christ’s benevolence towards infants was manifested in his baptism of them? Neither has dared to say so.

We think, then, that Plummer has not quite disposed of our position. Nor do we for a moment believe that he himself would say so. For it is after this alleged disposal, indeed in the very next paragraph to that quoted from by Mr. Madsen, that Plummer has the following striking admissions:

“Not only is there no mention of the baptism of infants, but there is no text from which such baptism can be securely inferred.”

“It is probable that all that is said in Scripture about baptism refers to the baptism of adults.”

This is a strange disposal of our position!

## Jesus and the Little Ones.

“Of that reference to, infant baptism which it is so common to seek in this narrative, there is clearly not the slightest trace to be found.” — OLSHAUSEN, MATT. 19:13-14.

There is a common fallacy which logicians call *ignoratio elenchi*, which includes cases of “proving the wrong point.” Often if a man is asked to justify a certain statement of which proof is very difficult, if not impossible, he will defend instead another proposition for which the former may be mistaken. Mr. Madsen evidently is a believer in the skilful use of this fallacy in support of a feeble cause. For, when asked to prove his position that Jesus wishes infants baptized, he seeks to prove instead, what no one denies, that Jesus cares for them. We have already seen how Christ’s general attitude of benevolence towards little children is advanced in support of, not our benevolence towards, but baptism of, infants. The underlying assumptions of this argument are preposterous; it is foolish to suggest that baptism must accompany benevolence; and it is an unworthy insinuation that they who do not baptize infants are not so well-disposed towards them as the most ardent pædo-baptists are. There is, in *The Question of Baptism*, an absurd parade of the care of and benevolence towards children which infant baptism shows. Such a parade is no new thing in this connection. Some readers will remember Keble’s lines on “Holy Baptism,” with their outrageous suggestion:

“Where is it mothers learn their love?  
In every Church a fountain springs  
O’er which th’ eternal Dove  
Hovers on softest wings.”

Now, Keble no more needed to be reminded that mothers do not require to have their children baptized in order to love them, than Mr. Madsen stands in need of a reminder that to decline to baptize unconscious infants whose baptism the Lord has not warranted is a very different thing from being ill-disposed towards them. Benevolence is not a reason for baptism. We should be well-disposed towards all men; Christ had a heart of love for all: but this is no reason for baptizing non-believers. In a later chapter we hope to show how infant baptism has been associated with the doctrine of original sin. Even John Wesley declared: “Infants need to be



washed from original sin: therefore they are proper subjects of baptism.” We might retort, then, that they who deny that infants need baptism are more benevolent towards them than are those amongst the pædobaptists, who have believed or do now believe that infants need remission of sins. We agree most profoundly with the statement of J. A. Beet, a Methodist divine, that “there is not one word in the New Testament which even suggests in the slightest degree that spiritual blessings are, or may be, conveyed to an infant by a rite of which he is utterly unconscious.” This, coupled with the fact that there is no hint in the Scriptures of infant baptism, surely should prevent people from suggesting that they who do not baptize infants somehow neglect them, love them little, or are not benevolently disposed towards them.

In this article we have to treat of some passages about children which are not statements as to baptism at all, but which are alleged to contain “allusions which make it very difficult to refuse” infants Christian baptism.

### ***“OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM.”***

Mr. Madsen refers to Matt. 19:14 and Matt. 18:1-10. Jesus said:

“Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

and

“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.”

Now there is not a word about baptism in these verses. Mr. Madsen would not venture to assert that the children were baptized on this occasion. The disciples were rebuked; but there is not a syllable to show that the blessing desired by the parents involved baptism, or that the disciples were rebuked because they objected to such baptism. If so — and of course any reader will see that it is so, — how can this Scripture rightfully be used to rebuke us for declining to practice infant baptism? With what semblance of fairness can Mr. Madsen approvingly quote another pædobaptist to the effect that on the Baptist theory the disciples’ rebuke to the parents of the children was proper and righteous? The passage in question

shows that if Christ were on earth it would be good to bring infants to him for his blessing. Since none of us deny this, how do we favor the original objectors or share with them the Savior's rebuke? Let me quote a few sentences from *The Question of Baptism*:

“Of such’ clearly means children similar in age and condition.” “In express terms, Jesus includes the little ones in the Kingdom of Heaven. If, therefore, by Christ’s own language a baby belongs to the Kingdom, how can it be refused the outward and visible sign of the Kingdom, which is baptism” (p. 51).

It is not correct to say that “in express terms, Jesus includes the little ones in the Kingdom of Heaven.” The Lord definitely said, “Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God,” and “Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God” (John 3:3, 5). The kingdom, then, consists of twice-born people. None are in the kingdom who have only been born once by a natural birth.<sup>2</sup>

Again, “of such” does not mean “of these,” or mean “children of similar age and condition.” Let a few pædobaptists answer their Victorian representative. A. Plummer, after pointing out that Jesus’ word is “of such,” not “of these,” says:

“Not those particular children, nor all children, but those who are childlike in character, are possessors of the Kingdom; it specially belongs to them.” — On Matt. 19:13-15.

“*Of such* — *i. e.*, of childlike souls who come trustfully and unassumingly to receive (cf.18:2-4).” — E. E. ANDERSON, on Matt. 19:14.

“*One of such little children.* The child meant by our Lord is not a child in years, but in spirit, a person possessed of the childlike quality.” Prof. E. P. GOULD, on Mark 9:37, in *International Critical Commentary*.

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<sup>2</sup> The above holds good whether John 3:5 alludes to baptism or not. If “born of water” refers to baptism, as we believe, and as A. Plummer in his article on Baptism in Hastings’ *Bible Dictionary* declares was universally believed till the days of Calvin, then we see that baptism is initiatory into the kingdom which, in so far as it is manifest on earth in an organized form, is the church. Mr. Madsen believes “all children, by virtue of the Universal Atonement of Christ, are members of the Kingdom of God, and are entitled to be received into the visible Church of Christ by baptism.

“*ton, toiouton* denotes those possessing the childlike spirit of docility and humility.” Cf. Mt. 18:4.” — *Ibid*, on Mark 10:14.

We call attention to the striking words of Olshausen quoted at the head of this article. Olshausen was an able pædobaptist, who, it will be remembered, was formerly shown to have been misrepresented by Mr. Madsen (see chapter on The Commission). In the light of the foregoing, it is curiously interesting to read in *The Question of Baptism*:

“Yet Baptists, after their manner, say this has nothing to do with infant baptism — ‘Jesus was referring to the childlike qualities which His followers should possess,’ etc.” — Page 52.

These Baptists are in very good pædobaptist company. But Mr. Madsen believes that such a view leaves Christ’s rebuke without point; and he continues:

“It is utterly incredible that Jesus made such an ado over nothing. If this does not mean that parents are to bring their babies to Him in baptism, we require the Baptists to inform us in what other way babies can be brought to Christ, and so satisfy the express requirements involved in our Lord’s language” (p. 52).

With pleasure, we at last acknowledge a sentence with which we can agree. The first sentence in the above is correct. The ado was not over nothing; for the Scripture says it was about the unwarranted inhibition of the disciples. The rebuke they got for doing an unwarranted thing should make us all careful about doing unwarranted things (which is why we ask, — yet, alas! in vain — for Scriptural warrant for baby baptism). No; the ado was not over nothing; but does that prove it was over baptism? Has infant baptism become such an obsession to Mr. Madsen that it is, in his mind, the only possible antithesis to “nothing”?

Of the rest of the quotation, it may suffice to say that the children in question were evidently “brought to Christ” in some “other way” than baptism. Again, it is not hinted that Jesus baptized them; but it is definitely said that he “took them in his arms, and blessed them, laying his hands upon them” (Mark 10:16). If Mr. Madsen will only imitate the Lord Jesus in this, and not seek to go beyond the Savior’s example, few will find fault with him; they will only discount the efficacy to the extent in which the disciple must perforce be less than his Lord.

## ***“BABES AND SUCKLINGS.”***

Mr. Madsen makes use of Matt. 21:15-16: “But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children that were crying in the temple and saying, Hosanna to the son of David; they were moved with indignation, and said unto him, Hearest thou what these are saying? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea: did ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?”

One asks in wonder, What has “the perfection of praise as issuing from ‘babes and sucklings’ to do with baptism? Mr. Madsen asks: “Would this incident dispose them [the apostles] to ignore the babes and sucklings in carrying out their commission?” No, it could not dispose them to ignore anybody; but neither could it dispose them to baptize anybody whose baptism the Lord did not ask. We could apply the question to other things than baptism; “Would this incident dispose them to ignore the babes and sucklings” in the Lord’s Supper? Whatever cogency would be in Mr. Madsen’s answer to this second question will tell against the former one. As a fact, when infant baptism came in, infant communion also came in; and there is as much reason or want of reason in the one practice as in the other.

But Mr. Madsen has another curious sentence under this same heading. He thinks that the later command to disciple the nations; would be interpreted in the light of the fact, as he deems it, that the “babes and sucklings” of Matt. 21:16 are themselves in Scripture called “disciples.” He says:

“In Luke’s narrative of the same incident, the children are included in the term ‘disciples.’ Thus: — ‘The whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice,’ while the call for suppression ran: — ‘Master, rebuke Thy disciples.’ Luke 19:37-39.” — Pages 54-55.

This is interesting. We have but one objection to the statement that Luke includes the “babes and sucklings” (which Matthew alone mentions) in the term “disciples” (alone used by Luke). That objection is that the statement is demonstrably incorrect. The interested reader is asked to peruse Matt. 21:1-17 and Luke 19:29-46. He will learn that there were two occasions on which, according to Matthew, people cried “Hosanna to the son of David.” “The multitudes” did it on the way from Bethphage to Jerusalem (Matt. 21:8-

9); and, later, in the temple, the children did it (verses 15-16). It was regarding the second or temple incident that the Savior used the quotation concerning “babes and sucklings.” Now Luke’s statement about the “disciples” refers to Matthew’s former incident, and not to the latter or temple one at all; for he says, “As he was drawing nigh, even at the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice” (verse 37). From Mark we learn that the temple cleansing and conflict with the chief priests and scribes took place on the day after the triumphal entry, Jesus on the day of entry having merely entered the temple and “looked round about upon all things” (see. Mark 11:1-18). Anyone who reads can see that in Luke 19:45-46, there is a very much abridged account of what happened in the temple, *i. e.*, of the second incident recorded by Matthew. Mr. Madsen has simply made a confusion which a child in the intermediate division of a Sunday School should blush at making. Thus another argument in the book praised by our Methodist friends for its “convincing” nature and “judicious” references lies shattered in the dust.

### ***“FEED MY LAMBS.”***

So Jesus said to Peter (John 21:15), and Mr. Madsen uses the text as an argument in favor of infant baptism. Even if the “lambs” were infants, the text would obviously only furnish an argument for feeding them, and not for baptizing them. We have before pointed out how, in the absence of any text which contains within itself a reference to both babies and baptism, the pædobaptist apologist gets one baptism text and another text with infants, and by a process akin to that of a skilled juggler with two balls makes such lightning changes and passes as to deceive the onlooker. But now we see a stranger thing. Our friend is so poverty-stricken in argument that he has to take a text in which neither babe nor baptism is to be found, and make it apply to both! Other people than pædobaptists in our present opponent’s anxious case will remember that, even if we insist that the “lambs” of verse 15 represent a different class from the “sheep” of verse 16, there are “babes in Christ” who need feeding (1 Cor. 2:1). A few quotations from believers in infant baptism will show that we need not apologize for declining to

admit, in the absence of any attempted proof, that the “lambs” of John 21:15 were infants.

“Every spiritual shepherd of Christ has a flock, composed of LAMBS — *young converts*, and SHEEP — *experienced Christians*, to *feed, guide, regulate and govern.*” — ADAM CLARKE (Methodist) on John 21:15.

“The ‘lambs’ there are probably neither Christian children, nor recent converts, but, like the ‘sheep’ in vv. 16-17, Christians in general, the name being one of affection: cp. 1 Pet. 5:2-3.” — Dummelow’s *One Volume Bible Commentary* on John 21:15.

Meyer says that by all three words (“lambs” “sheep,” “little sheep”) Jesus “means His believing ones in general (1 Pet. 5:4), without making a separation between beginners and those who are matured, or even between clergy and laity.

### ***TO YOUR CHILDREN (ACTS 2:39).***

The same apostle Who received the injunction, “Feed my lambs,” later said: “For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him” (Acts 2:39). Mr. Madsen thinks that Pentecost bears witness to the impression which John 21:15 made on Peter’s mind; and evidently believes that “to your children” refers to infant baptism. What Mr. Madsen implies is frequently explicitly stated, For instance, Mr. F. Delbridge, B.A., Editor of the Tasmanian *Recorder and Methodist*, in an editorial on “Infant Baptism an Apostolic Practice,” wrote on Acts 2:39: “The particular word used for children in the passage (Gk. ‘tekno’) apparently indicating that he meant, not posterity, as is claimed by some, but the children of those he was addressing. For ‘posterity’ Peter uses a different word in the next chapter, viz., ‘huios’ (Acts 2:25). Seeing, too, that these words were immediately preceded by an exhortation to baptism (ver. 38), it is not likely that Peter would exclude the children from that ordinance.”

We would in reply call attention to a few things. (i) The word *teknon* (for *tekno* is either a misprint or a slip on Mr. Delbridge’s part) does not show that literal children are meant; for it is repeatedly used in the New Testament in another sense than that of actual and immediate descendants (cf. Matt. 2:18; John 8:39; Rom. 8:16-

17; 1 Tim. 1:2). (2) Does Peter by using *huios* for posterity in Acts 2:25 show that he limits the meaning of *teknon* to the literal children of those addressed? This is impossible, for in his epistle Peter writes to Christian women: "As Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose children [*tekna*] ye now are" (1 Pet. 2:6). (3) Both *huios* and *teknon* are used of a literal child and of posterity. (4) Even if Mr. Delbridge's assertion were as true as it is demonstrably incorrect, and we were to grant that the "children" of Acts 2:39 were the immediate offspring of those addressed by Peter, would that fact prove they were *infants*? Not at all. It is an almost constant vice of pædobaptist advocates that they confuse *children* with *infants*. *Teknon* is often found of those who are of mature age, or far beyond the period of infancy. (See Matt. 21:28; Luke 15:31; 1 Tim. 1:2, 18; Tit. 1:6; etc.) (5) Can we learn from the account in Acts 2 who were the subjects of baptism? Yes. In the first place, consider what was "the promise" which was offered to the children with others: it was, "Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (verse 38). That is the only promise stated in this connection. That promise was conditioned by Peter on two things, repentance and baptism; for he said: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Now this promise, with its antecedent conditions, was declared to be to the children" (verse 39). These children must have been folk who could fulfill the expressed conditions of verse 38. It is illegitimate to seek to transfer to one who cannot fulfill the conditions a promise expressly made on certain conditions: Again, it is said that the promise was for "even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (ver. 39). The promise then is surely for those who can hear and obey God's call rather than for those who cannot do this. Yet once more: We are not left in doubt as to the people who were baptized on Pentecost. Were they infants? No; for Luke says: "They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers" (verses 41-42). Clearly all who were baptized were hearers and receivers of the apostle's words. Our Methodist friends "baptize" folk who cannot be so described. In addition, "they" of verse 42 are those who in verse 41 are said to have received the

word and been baptized. So they were old enough for Christian instruction and church fellowship. The baptized persons of Acts 2:41 are the communicants of verse 42. Methodists retain infant baptism, but reject the practice of infant communion which came in with it.

Lambert, although a pædobaptist, declines to admit the cogency of the argument often drawn from Acts 2:39. Of the contention that “children” means not posterity but immediate offspring, he says:

“This view does not seem to be in harmony with the balance of the apostles thoughts.”

Then he continues in the following interesting fashion:

“But even if this particular point were conceded, and it were held that it is the sons and daughters of his hearers to whom the apostle refers, it cannot be said that his words contain any suggestion that infant children should be baptized. His call to those men was a call to repentance, repentance specifically for the sin of rejecting Jesus (verses 23, 26, 37), and to baptism as a sign of their repentance on the one hand, and of God’s forgiveness on the other. There is nothing to lead us to believe that he was urging them to have their young children baptized as well as themselves. In point of fact, it seems evident that there were no infants among the three thousand persons to whom the rite was administered on the day of Pentecost, since those who were baptized are expressly described as they that gladly received his word’ (verse 41).” — *The Sacraments in the New Testament*, p. 197.

In a later chapter, Mr. Madsen refers to Acts 2; 38, and, in his zeal to make a point against the Baptists, writes:

“Repentance is the title to baptism in this passage, but Baptists say, not repentance, but the evidence of it — faith — is the only valid title. Would a Baptist minister baptize a Pagan or a Jew on the same day as the man heard the gospel for the first time and before his repentance was assured?” (p.67).

In a footnote on the same page Neander is quoted as follows:

“At the beginning, when it was important that the Church should rapidly extend itself, those (among the Jews) who confessed their belief in *Jesus as the Messiah*, or (among the Gentiles) their belief in one God and Jesus as the Messiah, were, as appears from the New Testament, immediately baptized.”



Mr. Madsen is quite right in citing evidence to disprove an unscriptural probationary theory, and both Acts 2 and Acts 16 are against that. But yet our author trips. He overlooks that Acts 2 does not make repentance, and dispense with faith as, “the title to baptism:” Had the people who cried out “What shall we do?” (verse 37), and to whom Peter said, “Repent and be baptized,” not faith? The apostle had by most cogent reasoning convinced them that the murdered Jesus was Lord and Christ. It was because they believed this testimony that they were “pricked in their heart” and asked for direction. Plummet, in his article on “Baptism” in Hastings’ *Bible Dictionary*, states the position exactly. Of Acts 2:38, he says: “Here repentance is expressed, and faith in Jesus Christ is implied.” Again, even if we were to allow that Acts 2 made repentance and not faith “the title to baptism,” show would that fact help the pædobaptist cause? Are we to understand that the infants baptized by Mr. Madsen have repentance but not “the evidence of it, faith”? In the third place, there is a discrepancy between Mr. Madsen’s stated position and the quotation from Neander. Mr. Madsen finds fault with the Baptists for making faith the title, and yet he quotes Neander, who says that they who confessed that faith were immediately baptized.

### **ACTS 21:4-5.**

This passage, although it does not refer to baptism at all, is referred to by Mr. Madsen. The reader of it would wonder how even the neediest pædobaptist controversialist could use such a Scripture. *The Question of Baptism* puts the argument thus:

“In Acts 21:4-5, there is a description of Paul’s farewell to the ‘disciples’ at Tyre, in which it is shown that men, women, and children took part in the prayer meeting on the sea beach. Had the children not been expressly mentioned as included in the company of disciples, on Baptist principles we might conclude that the Apostles had positively ignored Christ’s peremptory words concerning the little ones. But here are married men, with their wives and families denominated as ‘disciples’.”(pp. 55-56).

The most certain way of refuting an attempted biblical proof of infant baptism is to quote the Scripture passage involved. In Acts 21:4-5, Luke says:

“And having found the disciples we tarried there seven days: and these said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not set foot in Jerusalem. And when it came to pass that we had accomplished the days, we departed and went on our journey; and they all, with wives and children, brought us on our way, till we were out of the city: and kneeling down on the beach, we prayed.”

A few remarks will show the emptiness of fine argument stated above. Many modern disciples take their children both to beach and to prayer meeting. That fact does not begin to suggest that they believe in infant baptism. Again, Mr. Madsen assumes that the word rendered “children” implies that those so designated were infants. That assumption cannot be proved; for we have shown that the same word (in singular or plural) is used of grown-up persons. (Matt. 21:28; Luke 15:31; 1 Pet. 1:14, 2:6, etc.). But Mr. Madsen’s strong point is that “the children” (in the sense of “infants,” else the proof vanishes) are “expressly mentioned as included in the company of disciples.” So if infants are “disciples,” they must have been baptized, since baptism has already been referred to by Mr. Madsen as the method of making disciples. The answer is that the children are not mentioned as included in the disciples. Read the passage again. The words “they all” in verse 5 refer to the “disciples” of verse 4. The disciples with their wives and children accompanied Paul’s party. Now, if I say that certain Methodists went with me to a certain place, shall I fairly be represented as having been “expressly mentioned as included in the company of” Methodists? Surely not. So, whether infants were there or not, it has yet to be proved that the children of Tyre are called “disciples.”

### ***PAUL’S LETTERS.***

“Paul,” writes Mr. Madsen, “inserts references to children as church members in his letters.” Mr. Tait, in his book on Baptism, refers more specifically to Eph. 6:14, and Col. 2:20.

This is another instance of the fallacy of irrelevant conclusion. Mr. Madsen has to show Scriptural warrant for baptizing *infants*, instead of doing which he shows that *children* were in the church.

We cordially agree that children were in the apostolic church. There are today in our congregations hundreds to whom we pass on the apostle’s exhortation: “Children, obey your parents in all

things, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord.” But how does this prove *infant* baptism or membership? Did Mr. Madsen ever gravely admonish his infant candidate in such language?

The very fact that many children are to be found to-day in congregations not practicing infant baptism should keep our pædobaptist friends from seeking to support their cause by suggestions that children are ignored or neglected when not baptized as infants. “Children properly trained may be brought savingly to know and love the Savior. When they do so they are fit subjects for baptism, and should then intelligently take their place in the church, to be henceforth exhorted to obey their parents and to serve the Lord in everything. The proper subjects, then, for baptism, are not then, women or children, *as such*; but persons who confess repentance towards God and faith in Christ.”

## **2 JOHN.**

Here is one of the gems in Mr. Madsen’s book:

“John thought it worth while to send a private letter (the Second Epistle) to a mother and her children, which he concludes with salutations from their little cousins. How very remarkable this reads in the light of the Baptist theory, which boldly affirms that when children are referred to in Church terms, they must necessarily be old enough to be believers, in the evangelical sense of the word” (p. 56).

Mr. Madsen’s own words give such an appropriate comment that we requote them: “How *very* remarkable this reads”! The man who argues from greetings between cousins in “a private letter” to the baptism of unconscious infants is proclaiming how hard pressed he is. A cause which needs such support is surely weak. We had better beware! If in our next letter we say, “Johnny sends his love to his cousins,” we shall be cited as being on the pædobaptist side! But how did Mr. Madsen know they were “little cousins”? The word “children” will not prove it, for reasons previously given (see Matt. 21:28; also, the word *tekna* is often used of men who are children of God). It is assumption that any of the “children” to whom the salutation was sent or of those who gave it were infants. As one reads *The Question of Baptism*, one often thinks, If only assumption were argument, how powerful a disputant Mr.

Madsen would be! Surely it ought to be clear to the most casual reader that if the children were old enough to be interested in apostolic epistles, they were not of the age of the babies whose baptism Mr. Madsen seeks to justify. Otherwise we can only say they were “very remarkable” infants. Again, in 2 John 4 we have mention of the fact that John found certain of the “children” of the elect lady “walking in truth.” If these could do so, it is foolish imagination to suppose that those of verses 1 and 13 could not or did not do likewise.

We may add that it is still keenly debated whether the “elect lady” was a church or a Christian matron. Allowing the latter, we point out that Mr. Madsen has shown neither infants nor baptism to be involved in the epistle.

### ***CHILDREN OF CHRISTIAN PARENTS HOLY (1 COR. 7:14).***

Mr. Madsen employs the usual argument drawn from this passage. He says:

“The remarkable statement of Paul to the Corinthian converts has to be reckoned with by the advocates of the Baptist exclusive theory. ‘For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the brother else were your children unclean, but now are they holy.’ (1 Cor. 7:14.) To contend that this reference has to do with the question of the legitimacy of marriage and its issue, is a convenient way of getting rid of a difficult passage in the path of the Baptist theory. Sound exegesis, however, lends such interpretation no support. It is manifestly special pleading with the intention of removing an awkward text” (*The Question of Baptism*, pp. 57-58)

If anyone will read 1 Cor. 7, he will find that the apostle was discussing the question of marriage. The question was raised, Should a believing wife depart from her heathen husband, or the Christian husband from his pagan wife? Paul replied that there was no need to do so, since the unbelieving partner was “sanctified” by the believing spouse. See verses 10-14. So it is not “a convenient way of getting rid of a difficult passage” to see its reference, not to baptism, but to marriage. Paul adds a word to enforce his point: If in such a marriage the believer was desecrated by intercourse with a heathen, then the children would be unclean; as it is, they are ho-

ly. Paul, says G. G. Findlay in *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, "appeals to the instinct of the religious parent; the Christian father or mother cannot look on children, given by God through marriage, as things unclean."

Now, does this argument of Paul's imply, as Mr. Madsen quotes Godet as affirming, that the custom of infant baptism existed? We shall see.

We first ask the reader to note that Paul does not speak merely of holy children, he speaks also of a hallowed parent. The word translated "sanctified" in verse 14 is the verb cognate with the adjective translated "holy" in the same verse. The unbelieving husband is "sanctified" by the wife. Findlay puts it that "the sanctification of the one includes the other so far as their wedlock is concerned." We never heard of anybody suggesting that the unbelieving husband should be baptized because of his holiness as expressed in this passage; yet the holiness of the children is no more clearly stated. In the second place, whatever others may do consistently, some of our Methodist friends cannot get much in favor of their practice from 1 Cor. 7:14. If Mr. Madsen seeks to get an argument from the children's holiness, he should notice that Paul's words only refer to children of whom one parent at least is a believer. "Else were your children unclean," Paul says. Now, Mr. Madsen's book begins with a quotation from the Methodist Book of Laws: "All children, by virtue of the Universal Atonement of Christ, are members of the Kingdom of God, and are entitled to be received into the visible Church of Christ by baptism." Whatever other Scriptures may be referred to in support of this statement, it is quite evident that the "holy" of 1 Cor. 7:14 cannot so be used; for holiness in the sense in which Paul here uses it is definitely limited to children of a believing parent and is predicated also of the unbeliever married to a Christian. Thirdly, we would like to point out that such a view of the passage as we have given is not peculiar to ourselves. Many pædobaptists state their conviction that 1 Cor. 7:14, so far from proving the existence of infant baptism in Paul's day, definitely disproves it.

Dean Stanley, one of the finest scholars produced by the Church of England, wrote thus:

"The passage, on the one hand, is against the *practice* of infant baptism in the Apostle's time. For (1) he would hardly have found-

ed an argument on the derivation of the children's holiness from their Christian parent or parents, if there had been a distinct act by which the children had themselves been admitted formally into the Christian society; and (2) he would not have spoken of the heathen partner as being 'holy' in the same sense as the children were regarded as 'holy,' viz., by connexion with a Christian household, if there had been so obvious a difference between the conditions of the two, as that one was, and the other was not baptized." — *Commentary on Corinthians.*

Neander refers to the passage as "rather evidence against the existence of infant baptism."

H. M. Gwatkin, in his *Early Church History*, implies that here "St. Paul disproves the institution."

Albert Barnes, the well-known Presbyterian commentator, and a most strenuous pædobaptist advocate, has some helpful remarks on the subject. We can only quote a few sentences. "It is a good rule of interpretation, that the words which are used in any place are to be limited in their signification by the connexion; and all that we are required to understand here is, that the unbelieving husband was sanctified in *regard to the subject under discussion*; that is, in regard to the question whether it was proper for them to live together, or whether they should be separated or not."

Of the argument from this passage that "children are 'federally holy,' and that they are entitled to the privilege of baptism on the ground of the faith of one of the parents," Barnes has some hard things to say, among them being this:

"It does not accord with the scope and design of the argument. There is not one word about baptism here; nor one allusion to it; nor does the argument in the remotest degree bear upon it. The question was not whether children should be baptized, but it was whether there should be a separation between man and wife, where the one was a Christian and the other not."

Such words effectively turn the edge of Mr. Madsen's suggestion that only Baptists in the support of a losing cause do not agree with his view of 1 Cor. 7:14. We could pass on to the modern champions of the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches in Victoria — Messrs. Madsen and Tait, who both use this text as an argument — the following admonition from their pædobaptist brother:

“I believe infant baptism to be proper and right, and an inestimable privilege to parents and to children. But a good cause should not be made to rest on feeble supports, nor on forced and unnatural interpretations of the Scriptures. And such I regard the usual interpretations placed on this passage.”

Most readers will think this is cogent enough, but we must notice another point. Mr. Madsen writes:

“Dummelow, in his recent commentary, remarks that the passage enunciates the principles which lead to infant baptism, viz., that the child of Christian parents shall be counted as a Christian.”

Dummelow does quote Lightfoot to this effect. We have already asked how this could support the view that “all children ... are entitled to be received into the visible Church of Christ by baptism.”

Other pædobaptists plead that while 1 Cor. 7:14 does not favor the view that infant baptism existed, yet it sets forth the principles which justify the practice. Stanley, already quoted, says, “The passage asserts the principle on which infant baptism is founded.”

Neander remarks:

“In the point of view here chosen by Paul, we find (although it testifies against the existence of infant baptism) the fundamental idea from which infant baptism was afterwards necessarily developed, and by which it must be justified to *agree* with Paul’s sentiments.”

Gwatkin has an interesting word:

“St. Paul’s argument — ‘else were your children unclean, whereas in fact they are holy’ — is a two-edged sword. On one side, he could not well put the holiness of the child on the same footing as that of the unbelieving parent; if one was baptized and the other not. But conversely, if the child of even a mixed marriage is holy, surely it is a fit subject for baptism. If St. Paul disproves the institution, he approves its principle.”

As against these men who admit that the practice was not in existence when Paul wrote, while yet Paul’s principle justifies the practice, we simply say that the intelligence of the inspired apostle was the equal of that of any pædobaptist. Paul surely knew the implications of his own words! If his words “disprove the practice,” as these men allow, why, then, in Paul’s opinion (else his belief and practice were out of harmony) his words did not carry with

them an approval of infant baptism. I would rather believe in the consistency of the Apostle Paul than in that of Stanley, Neander and Gwatkin.

Again, readers of church history know that the early justification of infant baptism generally was not that the child was holy, but that it was guilty of original sin which must be washed away in baptism. We have already quoted John Wesley as giving this as his first reason in favor of infant baptism. Many pædobaptists today thus teach. Our Roman Catholic friends do so. The Church of England Prayer Book refers to:

“the baptizing of this child, who being born in original sin, and in the wrath of God, is now, by the laver of regeneration in baptism, received into the number of the children of God, and heirs of everlasting life.”

These are more in harmony with the early views on the need and the benefit of infant baptism than is the statement that the principle of infant baptism is the holiness of the infant. Meyer thus decides against the right of our friends to get from Paul’s words either institution or principle:

“Had the *baptism* of Christian children been then in existence, Paul could not have drawn this inference, because in that case the [holiness] of such children would have had *another* basis. That the passage before us does not even contain an exegetical *justification* of infant baptism, is shown in the remarks on Acts 16:15 ... Neither is it the point of departure, from which, almost of necessity, pædobaptism must have developed itself ... such a point is rather to be found in the gradual development of the doctrine of original sin(s).” — Commentary, 1 Cor. 7:14.

### ***BABES IN HEAVEN.***

A few lines may be spared for this question. Mr. Madsen criticizes us for holding that one dying in infancy is saved, while yet we do not admit it to baptism. He writes:

“If the infant should die it is *fit for Heaven* as Christ’s ‘*purchased possession*’; but if it *lives*, it is not a *proper* subject for baptism into the membership of Christ’s Church” (p. 60). “Is it *easier* for an infant to enter Heaven than to find admission into the



Church? This is apparently what the Baptist position amounts to when treated by analysis” (p. 81).

We only notice this because some person might be found who would mistake pleasantry for argument. We would be glad to hear from Mr. Madsen as to whether any adults who die unbaptized will be in heaven. We shall not do him the discredit of supposing that he would give a negative reply. But, if so, Mr. Madsen could hardly recognize them as being in the Methodist Church. Shall we retort as a *reductio ad absurdum*, that it must be easier to get into Heaven than into the Methodist Church? I presume Mr. Madsen will allow that more folk will be in heaven than there are in the Methodist Church. If so, it would seem that the former place is the more easily entered. No; jests however sharp they may be, should not be put forth as arguments-especially if they are as much against your own position as that of your opponent.

## A Pædobaptist Miscellany.

“John’s baptism was essentially an act of consecration, preparatory to the kingdom, symbolizing by the immersion of the whole body the consecration of the whole man. But for all, except Christ, this consecration required repentance, and this change of mind, preceding baptism, is symbolized, not created, by going under and coming up out of the water.” — E. E. ANDERSON, M.A.

A brief mention ought to be made of certain miscellaneous arguments and statements put forth in *The Question of Baptism*, in chapters dealing with Baptist Proof-texts and Objections. We have thus to distinguish between “arguments” and “statements,” for some of the latter at least would be unduly honored by the former title.

### **JOHN’S BAPTISM.**

The baptism of John, which was over at the time when Jesus gave his great commission, cannot be referred to as deciding the question of the subjects of Christian baptism. But our pædobaptist friends so often insist that the commission must be interpreted in the light of what the Jews would already know of baptism that the subjects of the earlier baptism have great importance for them.

The Bible is explicit as to the people baptized by John: “Then went out unto him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins” (Matt. 2:5-6). The baptism was called “the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins” (Mark 1:1), manifestly because the candidates were required to repent. John Wesley’s comment on “preaching the baptism of repentance” may be accepted: “That is, preaching repentance, and baptizing as a sign and means of it.”

We never heard of anyone trying to get direct support for infant baptism in the New Testament statements regarding the subjects of John’s baptism. Pædobaptists here seem to need all their skill for the attempt to break the force of the texts as against their position. In such an attempt Mr. Madsen has an interesting reference to John’s baptism of Jesus. Every believer in Christ knows that He was sinless and so could not repent. It has often been asked, Seeing

that John's was a "baptism of repentance unto remission of sins," how could the sinless One submit to the rite? In answer, we could accept two statements: the first from Mr. Madsen to the effect that "the baptism of Jesus, like his birth and death, was unique"; the second from Dummelow — "Though sinless, Jesus came to identify himself with sinners. He would be 'under the law that he might redeem those that were under the law' (Gal. 4:4-5)." But of Jesus' baptism, Mr. Madsen pens this remarkable sentence:

"No argument can be drawn from it as to the subjects of baptism, except, perhaps, that they should be sinless, and infants come close enough to that category, though Dr. Carson speaks of their 'sins' (p. 63).

This is delightful. But infant baptism, as we have already noticed, was early advocated on the ground that infants, as guilty of original sin, needed remission, and John Wesley himself defended it for this reason. Such advocates did not think infants "come close enough to that category." Moreover, see how the suggestion that "perhaps" we can look upon sinlessness as a condition of baptism applies to the Methodist custom of adult baptism. The Methodist Church of course practices believers' baptism. For instance, in the tract on *Should Only Believers be Baptized?* is found the following passage:

"The writer was not baptized in childhood. He was converted at the age of sixteen, and, after studying the question, was baptized as a believer by the usual Methodist practice of pouring."

Was sinlessness the category here? Our friends really ought to refrain from using arguments against the position of others which would tell with equal force against their own avowed practice of believers' baptism.

### ***THE EUNUCH.***

Mr. Madsen calls attention to the fact that Acts 8:37 ("And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus is the Son of God") is an interpolation, and is omitted from the Revised Version. We do not, and should not, use the text as if it were from the pen of the inspired historian. But this is far from saying that the passage misrepresents the facts. Many paedobaptist writers gladly agree that

Acts 8:37 is in complete harmony with what must have occurred. *e. g.*, Dummelow's Commentary says it is "a very early and trustworthy marginal addition, which was ultimately incorporated into the text. The simplicity of the baptismal confession is a proof of its genuineness." *The Expositors' Greek Testament* says the words "may well have expressed what actually happened, as the question in verse 36 evidently required an answer."

We may look at the thing from another point of view. If a man as old as the eunuch must have been were to come to Mr. Madsen, of what would the latter gentleman wish to be assured? Mr. Madsen would not baptize him if he were obviously an unbeliever. The Methodist tract speaks of one; "baptized as a believer." In my copy of the *Order of Administration of the Sacraments and other Services for the use of the People called Methodists*, in the section dealing with the ministration of baptism to such as are of riper years, a confession of faith is demanded of the person to be baptized. Was the eunuch a believer? If so, his case may be quoted as a warrant for our practice; and if a similar warrant by way of Biblical example is given for the baptism of an infant, we shall likewise practice infant baptism. But there is no such example.

### ***SIMON MAGUS.***

The record of the baptism of this man is found in Acts 8:13. The following verses tell of his subsequent terrible sin and Peter's severe rebuke of him. Mr. Madsen devotes several pages to the incident. It is frequently used as an objection to our position. Sometimes, a writer will say: Here is a case in which your adult baptism benefited little; see how after baptism a man can be "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." Again, the passage is sometimes quoted as an indisputable instance of the baptism of an unbeliever. The question is really a very simple one. Simon was either a believer in Christ, or he was not. (1) If he were a believer, then clearly our paedobaptist friends cannot quote his case against our practice. (2) If he were not a sincere believer, how does that fact help the paedobaptist position? The profitless baptism of an adult fraud could not by any possibility give warrant for the baptism of a babe whose holiness or whose position in the kingdom is advanced as a reason for its baptism. There is no authority for infant baptism

then on either view. Moreover, how can Simon's case be more against our practice than it is against the Methodist practice of believers' baptism? In the case of adults, Methodists insist as much as we do on a confession of faith; the difference is that they ask for a longer confession. So it is clear that whether Simon were a genuine believer who soon fell into sin, or a man who was a disbeliever from the beginning, his case would not help the paedobaptist position.

Now, we may notice, on its merits, a remarkable statement which Mr. Madsen makes. He says of Simon:

"Here we have an instance in which a notorious unbeliever received baptism in New Testament times" (p. 68).

The only answer needed is given in Acts 8:13. Remember these are not Philip's words, but the words of Luke, writing many years after the event: "Simon also himself believed." Mr. Madsen's denial of the inspired historian's words will not help his cause.

### ***THE BAPTISM OF SAUL.***

The paragraph in which Mr. Madsen replies to our Baptist friends may be quoted:

"Acts 22:16: 'And now, why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on His name.' Here is Saul under conviction, but not converted. We have precisely the same reason for believing that Saul had not washed his sins away, as for believing that he had not received Christian baptism, viz., the direction to do both. The presumption is that, up to this point in his experience, he had done neither. There was no proposal to delay baptism until his sins were washed away, and this material fact does not give support to the Baptist theory" (pp. 68-69).

Presumably, the above was written as a kind of *ad hominem* argument. Its point is to convict some who quote Acts 22:16 as in favor of the baptism of believers of inconsistency in that they delay baptism until sins are forgiven. We must agree that Acts 22:16 is not a verse which can harmonize with the view that Saul's sins were forgiven prior to his obedience in baptism. But yet it is true that the baptism enjoined in Acts 22:16 is the baptism of a believer and of a penitent. When the Lord appeared to Saul, the persecutor was led to believe in Jesus of Nazareth as the Lord Christ. Acts

22:16 can be quoted as a proof text on our side because as a fact it does enjoin the baptism of a penitent believer in Christ. There is no such command in the New Testament for the baptism of a non-believer, be he adult or infant.

### ***THE LORD'S DAY.***

What has the Lord's Day to do with the subjects of baptism? Not very much; but our pædobaptist friends think they can convict us of inconsistency. Mr. Madsen puts the matter thus:

“The fact that infant baptism can claim a very ancient history, and the sanction of almost universal practice, is not received by the Baptists with any favor. They affirm it is based on usage alone, and not on Scripture alone and is, therefore, to be discredited. We are asked to produce a passage which commands the baptizing of infants. Here, again, we use their particular argument against their own practice. Why do they, in common with other Christians, observe the Lord's Day? The Baptists set aside a positive command in Scripture to keep holy the Sabbath Day, and regard the first day of the week — Sunday — as the Christian Sabbath, and they do it on the ground of usage alone. There is no other” (pp. 73-74).

There are two wrong things in the above paragraph: (1) the statement that we “set aside a positive command in Scripture” when we observe the Lord's Day; and (2) the assertion that we have equal authority for infant baptism and the Lord's Day. On the first of these, we may point out that there is not in the New Covenant a command of “Sabbath” observance. Christians are “not under the law.” In the New Covenant, with a change of priesthood, there is also a change in the law (Heb. 7:12, Cf. Col. 2:14-16). If anybody were because of church usage to set aside God's commandments, he would be guilty of sin — whether that command had to do with Sabbath or baptism. The second point we may notice a little more fully. When Mr. Madsen declares that usage alone is our warrant for baptism and the Lord's Day, what kind of “usage” does he mean? Is he speaking of church usage in post-apostolic days? Then, it is not correct to say that this is our warrant for the Lord's Day. We have the day mentioned in Rev. 1:10. We also have the statement that the disciples met “upon the first day of the week” to break bread (Acts 20:7). Does Mr. Madsen mean “us-

age” in the New Testament church? Then, it is not correct to say that we have such in regard to infant baptism. So either Mr. Madsen is employing the word “usage” in different senses when he speaks of having in “usage” like authority for the Lord’s Day and for infant baptism, or else he is making an assertion which is incorrect. In either case, his argument falls to the ground. The difference between our positions may be stated thus:

“We observe a Lord’s Day, and Mr. M. observes baby-baptism. He says our authority for the one is the same that he has for the other! Let us see: —

1. The Lord’s Day is expressly mentioned in the New Testament — Baby-baptism is never mentioned therein.
2. The commemoration of the Lord’s death on the first day of the week has apostolic example. Infant baptism has no Bible example at all.”

If Mr. Madsen will produce warrant for infant baptism such as we have given in the above for our observance of the Lord’s Day, we shall be pædobaptists within twenty-four hours of receipt of the authority.

## Post-Apostolic Practice.

“The New Testament evidence, then, seems to point to the conclusion that infant baptism, to say the least, was not the general custom of the apostolic age. And now it ought to be noticed that this conclusion is greatly strengthened if we examine the light that is thrown backwards upon the age of the apostles from the post-apostolic history and literature.” — J. C. LAMBERT, in *The Sacraments in the New Testament*.

We do not refer to the post-apostolic days as if the teaching or practice of the church then is in any way to be considered as authoritative. The New Testament must be our sole guide in matters pertaining to the ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ. The only appeal which we can sanction is to the Word of God. We go to the Fathers for the practice of a later age; we read the Scriptures for the will of God. In the New Testament we find both commands for and instances of the baptism of believers; but there is not anywhere within its pages either example or precept concerning infant baptism, nor is there any text which necessarily implies infant baptism. That should settle the question for us. To those who regard the Scriptures as alone authoritative it would matter but little if it were proved (as of course it cannot be) that infant baptism was in existence immediately or soon after the death of the apostles.

We have already indicated that in the centuries in which our pædobaptist friends find infant baptism there are also to be found a great many things which Protestants at least agree in rejecting. One writer has put it thus:

“Romanists quote the Greek and early Roman Fathers of the first four centuries, in proof of monastic life, the celibacy of the clergy, the merit of perpetual virginity, the Pontificate of Peter in Rome, and infant communion in the Lord’s Supper. Protestants quote the same authorities for infant baptism, and argue from them in the same manner as the Romanists for their traditions. But Protestants repudiate the Greek and Roman Fathers as competent and credible witnesses for infant communion, monastic life, and a bachelor priesthood: yet they quote with confidence and hear with gladness the same authors in favor of infant baptism. This we regard as an indefensible aberration from sound logic and fair play.”



Mr. Madsen has a chapter on "The Practice of the Early Church," the "early church" being the church of the second and third centuries. While we do not feel bound to treat an argument drawn from extra-Scriptural sources as having any weight in the settlement of the question as to those whom the Lord wanted to be baptized, still some may be helped by an examination of the alleged proof from the post-apostolic age.

### ***THE DIDACHE.***

There is one book from which Mr. Madsen does not quote in the chapter under review. This is the "Didache," or "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," which is described by Schaff as "The Oldest Church Manual." It is generally agreed by Christian scholars that it is one of our most remarkable and reliable sources of knowledge regarding the church of the sub-apostolic age. Its date is probably from 100 to 120 A.D.; some place it earlier, and a few later; parts of it may be of a considerably later date.

The "Didache" knows nothing of infant baptism. Its reference to subjects is brief:

"And as regards baptism, baptize thus: having first communicated these instructions, baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in living water."

Later it mentions that the candidate should fast for a day or two preciously.

Pædobaptists have often sought to explain away the absence of mention of infant baptism in this book. James Heron, in *The Church of the Sub-Apostolic Age*, does it thus:

"The great majority of those admitted to the Church during the period in question were adult converts from heathenism, or at least persons capable of being taught. The baptism most prominent in such circumstances will be necessarily adult baptism."

We can give a crushing reply to this argument, so often presented, in the words of a pædobaptist scholar. J. C. Lambert (a pædobaptist, who thinks it possible that infant baptism came in in certain places after the destruction of Jerusalem, and that it had received the sanction of the Apostle John himself) says:

"If the silence of the New Testament is suggestive, much more so is the silence of the *Didache*. For while in the former baptism is

dealt with historically and doctrinally, from the point of view of its connection with the preaching of the gospel and with faith, in the latter it is dealt with liturgically, from the point of view of its place in the order of public worship; and if infant baptism was practiced at all, it is difficult to see how it could be altogether ignored in this handbook of ritual prescriptions.”

The writer proceeds to reply to Dr. Schaff’s endeavor to break the force of such considerations as the foregoing:

“‘Infant Baptism,’ he says, ‘has no sense, and would be worse than useless, where there is no Christian family or Christian congregation to fulfill the conditions of baptism, and to guarantee a Christian nurture.’ The remark is very just in itself, but, as applied to the *Didache* with the view of explaining why its silence about infant baptism cannot properly be used as an argument against the apostolic origin of the practice, it seems remarkably *mal a propos*. Surely, towards the end of the first century (Dr. Schaff assumes the work to have been written then), and in a church which had drawn up its own Church Manual, there were Christian families and Christian congregations to guarantee the conditions of Christian nurture. And so, when we find that in this early handbook the directions for baptism take no cognizance whatever of infants, but provide for adult baptism alone, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that, at all events in that part of the Church in which the *Didache* circulated, infant baptism can neither have been regularly practiced nor regarded as the Apostolic rule.” — *The Sacraments in the New Testament*.

### **JUSTIN MARTYR.**

Justin wrote his *Apology* about 150 A.D. Mr. Madsen quotes him as saying:

“Many men and women amongst us, 60 or so years old, were discipled to Christ in their childhood.”

There is no mention whatever of baptism in this passage. The sole force of it lies in the words “in their childhood.” J. C. Lambert declines to recognize that Justin here refers to either infant baptism or infant discipleship. He says that “in the picture which he [Justin] gives of the baptismal arrangements of the Church in his own day, infant baptism finds no place.” Lambert denies that the word *pais*

which Justin uses necessarily means an infant or even a young child. In the New Testament *pais* and its diminutive *paidion* are used of a girl twelve years of age (Mark 5:39, 42; Luke 8:51-54). There are in Churches of Christ great numbers of people who were “discipled to Christ in their childhood” who yet received baptism as believers.

### **IRENÆUS.**

Irenæus is said to have become Bishop of Gaul in 178 A.D. He is quoted by Mr. Madsen as writing of Jesus:

“He came to save all persons by Himself — all I say who by Him are regenerated to God — infants, and little ones, and children, and young and old.”

Baptism is not mentioned in this passage. It is believed by most pædobaptists that this is an allusion to infant baptism, the term “regenerated” being read as implying this; but some pædobaptists have declined to admit the necessity of the inference. Lambert, in *The Sacraments in the New Testament*, refers to this passage from Irenæus as “probably the earliest reference to infant baptism,” though “even here, it will be observed, baptism is not directly mentioned; so that the passage cannot be cited as an unequivocal witness for the practice of infant baptism.” The allusion is doubtful, then; and, even were it indisputable, it is about three generations too late to be authoritative.

### **ORIGEN.**

This well-known Father and leader of the Alexandrian school, who lived 185-254 A.D., is appealed to by the author of *The Question of Baptism*, because he says: “The Church has received a tradition from the Apostles to give baptism to little children.”

Mr. Madsen notes that a discussion has waged as to whether the *parvuli* of Origen would include infants. In reality, the controversy on this point is superfluous. Irrespective of this, here are the decisions of three scholars on Origen’s statement.

Neander in his *Church History* writes:

“Origen in whose system infant baptism could readily find its place, though not in the same connection as in the system of the

North African Church, declares it to be an apostolical tradition, an expression, by the way, which cannot be regarded as of much weight in this age, when the inclination was so strong to trace every institution which was considered of special importance to the apostles; and when so many walls of separation hindering the freedom of prospect, had already been set up between this and the apostolic age.”

Such a statement from a staunch pædobaptist will keep us from saying that because Origen called child-baptism an apostolic tradition therefore that statement is to be accepted.

Dr. Wilhelm Moeller, Professor Ordinarius of Church History in the University of Keil, says:

“Origen ... makes appeal to it as to an ancient tradition. But that the universal ecclesiastical tradition was not in favor of it is shown by Tertullian’s opposition to infant baptism.”

In similar fashion J. C. Lambent writes:

“It is not till we come to a writing of Origen, which dates from the second quarter of the third century, that we find for the first time, the claim made on behalf of child baptism (*parvuli*, not *infantes*, is the word used) that it rests upon apostolic tradition. And there are two considerations which go far to qualify this claim. One is the well-known fact that by the time of Origen it had become very customary to trace back to the apostles institutions and ideas that were by no means apostolic. The other is that Origen’s testimony as to the apostolic origin of child baptism is not in keeping with the attitude to the subject of his predecessor Tertullian, or with the practice of the Church, for more than a century after his own time, — indeed, right on to the days of Augustine.” — *The Sacraments in the New Testament*.

### **TERTULLIAN.**

Tertullian, of Carthage, the first of the great Latin Fathers, lived between 150 and 230 A.D. (some say 160-220). Prof. Orr and J. Vernon Bartlet date his conversion at about 190 or 192. Tertullian wrote many books and treatises, including a tractate on Baptism. Mr. Madsen devotes nearly a page to the question whether the tract on Baptism was written before or after its author’s conversion to Montanism in 202. Now, Mr. Madsen knows perfectly

well that the material thing is not whether Tertullian wrote a few years before or a few years after the year 200. His opposition to infant baptism may have belonged to the end of the second century or to the beginning of the third. The striking thing is that the very first writer to mention infant baptism is an opponent of it, and that his opposition to it is held by such eminent and scholarly pædobaptists as Neander and Lambert to discountenance the claim that Origen makes that the practice was an apostolic tradition.

After quoting from Tertullian's *De Baptismo*, Mr. Madsen writes:

“Tertullian would have delayed the baptism of infants until they were old enough to know Christ, notwithstanding that he recollects his Lord said, ‘Forbid them not.’ The Baptists, therefore, range him on their side. But Tertullian would delay the baptism of virgins and widows. Do the Baptists follow him here, and endorse his authority? At this point Tertullian’s opinion is worthless. In any case, he is not with the Baptists in their practice and belief, while his testimony on infant baptism, to which he was in antagonism, proves the prevalence of the practice in the second century.”

The word “notwithstanding” in this passage is delicious. I presume Tertullian had read his Bible; if so, he ought to have known that the passage in which Jesus said, “Forbid them not,” said not a word about baptism. Again, the question, “Do the Baptists follow him” in postponement of baptism of widows? is a most ingenious way of distracting attention from the issue. Baptists and members of Churches of Christ do not need to “follow” Tertullian in their practice. For the baptism of believers we have abundant New Testament authority. It is the pædobaptist controversialist who, destitute of proof of infant baptism in the Scriptures, needs to drag in an argument from post-apostolic practice. Why we refer to Tertullian is, not to use him as authority for our position, but to show that the great African leader and very first writer to deal expressly with the subject of infant baptism opposes the very thing for support of which pædobaptist champions appeal to the Fathers.

Mr. Madsen began his treatment of Tertullian thus: “Neander remarks, ‘in the last years of the *second* century, Tertullian appears as a zealous opponent of infant baptism.’” We do not see how we can do better than continue the quotation thus happily begun. The famous church historian and pædobaptist scholar wrote:

“Immediately after Irenæus, in the last years of the second century, Tertullian appears as a zealous opponent of infant baptism; a proof that the practice had not as yet come to be regarded as an apostolical institution; for otherwise he would hardly have ventured to express himself so strongly against it. We perceive from his argument against infant baptism that its advocates already appealed to Math. 19:14, a passage which it would be natural for every one to apply in this manner. ‘Our Lord rebuked not the little children, but commanded them to be brought to him that he might bless them.’ Tertullian advises, that in consideration of the great importance of the transaction, and of the preparation necessary to be made for it on the part of the recipients, baptism as a general thing should rather be delayed than prematurely applied, and he takes this occasion to declare himself particularly opposed to haste in the baptism of children. In answer to the objection drawn from those words of Christ, he replies: ‘Let them come while they are growing up; let them come while they are learning, while they are taught to what it is they are coming; let them become Christians when they are susceptible of the knowledge of Christ. What haste, to procure the forgiveness of sins for the age of innocence! We show more prudence in the management of our worldly concerns, than we do in entrusting the divine treasure to those who cannot be entrusted with earthly property. Let them first learn to feel their need of salvation; so it may appear that we have given to those that wanted.’ Tertullian evidently means, that children should be led to Christ by instructing them in Christianity; but that they should not receive baptism until, after having been sufficiently instructed, they are led from personal conviction and by their own free choice, to seek for it with sincere longing of the heart. It may be said, indeed, that he is only speaking of the course to be followed according to the general rule; whenever there was momentary danger of death, baptism might be administered, even according to his views. But if he had considered this to be so necessary, he could not have failed to mention it expressly. It seems, in fact, according to the principles laid down by him, that he could not conceive of *any efficacy whatever* residing in baptism, without the conscious participation and individual faith of the person baptized; nor could he see any danger accruing to the age of innocence from delaying it; although this view of the matter was not logically consistent with his own sys-

tem.” — Neander’s *Church History*, T. & T. Clark’s Edition, Vol. I., pp. 425-426.

We give this long quotation in fairness to Neander and to Tertullian. It contains much which modern pædobaptists might read with benefit, and furnishes a wholesome corrective of what less famous advocates of infant baptism than Neander have sought to say regarding Tertullian’s position.

### **CYPRIAN.**

The conversion of Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, is dated at about 245 A.D., and his martyrdom at 258.

A bishop Fidus submitted a question to a council at Carthage, in which he asked whether a child should be baptized very soon after its birth, or not till eight days after, as in the case of circumcision. Fidus favored the latter view. Cyprian and his colleagues, to the number of sixty-six, sent a reply to Fidus in which the following passages occurred:

“In this course which you thought was to be taken, no one agreed; but we all rather judge that the mercy and grace of God is not to be refused to any one born of man. For as the Lord says in his Gospel, ‘The Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them,’ as far as we can, we must strive that, if possible, no soul be lost.” — Cyprian’s *Works*, in T. & T. Clark’s *Ante-Nicene Library*.

“But again, if even to the greatest sinners, and to those who had sinned much against God, when they subsequently believed, remission of sins is granted — and nobody is hindered from baptism and from grace — how much rather ought we to shrink from hindering an infant who, being lately born, has not sinned, except in that, being born after the flesh according to Adam, he has contracted the contagion of the ancient death at its earliest birth, who approaches the more easily on this very account, to the reception of the forgiveness of sins — that to him are remitted, not his own sins, but the sins of another.” — *Ibid.*

Only two things need to be said of Cyprian’s position. The first is that his letter is a century and a half too late for it to have any weight as to the rightfulness of infant baptism. What matters it whether Fidus be supported in his view that each of us would

shrink from bestowing the baptismal kiss on “such an object” as a new-born babe, or whether we magnanimously declare with Cyprian that “none of us ought to revolt at that which God has condescended to create,” and “although the child be but just born, yet it is no such object that any one ought to demur at kissing to impart the divine grace and the salutation of peace”? In any case, we prefer first century and apostolic authority to third century practice. In the second place, we call attention to the view of Cyprian that the infant would receive remission of sin (original sin) in baptism.

Origen, who claimed that child-baptism was an apostolical tradition, is quoted by Mr. Madsen as saying: “Because by the sacrament of baptism, the corruption of their birth is removed, infants are baptized.” Of Origen, Harnack says:

“It was easy for Origen to justify child baptism, as he recognized something sinful in corporeal birth itself, and believed in sin which had been committed in a former life. The earliest justification of child baptism may therefore be traced back to a philosophical doctrine.”

Neander may be quoted again:

“But when now, on the one hand, the doctrine of the corruption and guilt, cleaving to human nature in consequence of the first transgression, was reduced to a more precise and systematic form, and on the other, from the want of duly distinguishing between what is outward and what is inward in baptism (the baptism by water and the baptism by the Spirit), the error became more firmly established, that without external baptism no one could be delivered from that inherent guilt, could be saved from the everlasting punishment that threatened him, or raised to eternal life; and when the notion of a magical influence, a charm connected with the sacraments continually gained ground, the theory was finally evolved of the *unconditional necessity of infant baptism*. About the middle of the *third* century, this theory was already generally admitted in the North African Church.” — *Church History*, I.; pp. 426-427.

Now, if we cannot get infant baptism mentioned till several generations after the apostolic age, and if when it is first mentioned the defenders of it insisted on it as a means of ensuring to the infant forgiveness of sin, are pædobaptists of Mr. Madsen’s persuasion who quote Origen and Cyprian advancing a very cogent argument? I can understand John Wesley being enamored of the ear-



ly defenders of infant baptism, for the founder of Methodism argued for the practice because infants were guilty of original sin which needed to be washed away in baptism. So, today, the Romish Church, and the Church of England, in their authorized works similarly associate baptism, even infant baptism, with forgiveness. But Mr. Madsen argues for baby-baptism because the babies are holy; and he thinks he can quote Origen and Cyprian as witnesses to the practice while yet rejecting their doctrine. He tries to twit the Baptists by saying that for the first three centuries no one opposed infant baptism on modern Baptist principles. We reflect that Mr. Madsen cannot get mention of infant baptism till the end of the second century; and that no one of his authorities advocates it on modern Methodist principles as enunciated by the author of *The Question of Baptism*.

### ***“A HISTORICAL FACT.”***

An attempt is frequently made by pædobaptist controversialists to help their cause by the argument that there is no record for centuries of the child of Christian parents being baptized in adult years. A similar argument has sometimes been applied to the Scriptures. When we say, Give us a case of or precept enjoining infant baptism in the New Testament, the pædobaptist retort occasionally is, Do you give us a case of the baptism in later age of the son or daughter of Christian parents. Our friends seem consistently to forget that the real issue between us is as to whether we shall be content to do that for which we have specific authority; or whether we shall in addition do that for which there is no such explicit authority. We know we are doing the Lord's will in baptizing penitent believers, because God has asked this; but we cannot by any possibility without a special revelation know we are doing God's will in baptizing a baby — whether on the ground of holiness, or sinfulness — because there is no syllable in the Bible to show that the Lord ever asked it.

With regard to the later centuries, every reader of church history must know that there was very frequent delay of baptism, both of those whose parents were Christians and of those who from heathenism were brought to belief in Christ. Here are a few of many statements of eminent pædobaptists.

We first cite Neander:

“But if the necessity of infant baptism was acknowledged in theory, it was still far from being uniformly recognized in practice. Nor was it always from the purest motives that men were induced to put off their baptism.”

“Infant baptism was not universally adopted by believers. For not only was the example of Constantine the Great, who postponed his baptism till near death, undoubtedly fashionable and not only did many who were within the close range of Christian influence delay the decisive step, but there is reason to suppose that many baptized Christians did not in the 4th cent. push forward the baptism of their children. — H. G. WOOD, in Hastings’ *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*.

Cheetham, in his *Church History*, dealing with the period from 313 to 590 A.D., says:

“A great hindrance to the baptism of infants was the desire to reserve for a later age the sacrament which might (it was thought) wash away the sins of the previous life.”

Schaff, writing of the same period, says:

“But notwithstanding this general admission of infant baptism, the practice of it was by no means universal. Forced baptism, which is contrary to the nature of Christianity and the sacrament, was as yet unknown. Many Christian parents postponed the baptism of their children, sometimes from indifference, sometimes from fear that they might by their later life forfeit the grace of baptism, and thereby make their condition the worse.”

If the foregoing historians are correct as to their statement of a frequent postponement — and Mr. Madsen dare not challenge the correctness of their declaration, — then at once it is seen to be a trivial question whether we can give the name of one child of Christian parents who was baptized in adolescence or maturity.

We give a quotation from *The Question of Baptism*, under the heading of “A Historical Fact”: “Dr. Halley, however, has an interesting historical fact for the Baptists to debate. They claim that Chrysostom, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzen, Augustine, and several others, all had ‘Christian’ parentage, and yet were not baptized in infancy. But Dr. Halley contends that there is no record of a child, whose parents were baptized Christians *at his birth*, allowed to

pass infancy without baptism during the first thousand years A.D.”  
— Page 95.

Again: —

“Dr. Halley, after reviewing the alleged evidence, demands: ‘Show me the unbaptized man, or woman, boy or girl, born of baptized parents.’ ‘Christian’ parentage is alleged by the Baptists, which is not the point in dispute, for it is evident that parents may become Christian when their children are in their teens. Our position is — were these parents ‘baptized Christians’ when their children were born’ And we say they were not, or what amounts to the same thing there is no credible evidence that they were.” — p. 96.

We call attention, in the first place, to the ingenious way in which Mr. Madsen says that *the Baptists* claim that Chrysostom, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzen and Augustine are eligible to be quoted in this connection. If “the Baptists” “claim” this, then they are in such good pædobaptist company that their natural regret at being the subjects of Mr. Madsen’s disapproval will somewhat be mitigated.

In his *Christian Institutions*, Dean Stanley says:

“Even amongst Christian households the instances of Chrysostom, Gregory Nazianzen, Basil, Ephrem of Edessa. Augustine, Ambrose, are decisive proofs that it was not only not obligatory, but not usual. All these distinguished persons had Christian parents, and yet were not baptized till they reached maturity.”

Baptists claim! We may not agree with Stanley; but his was not a Baptist claim. He was a Church of England scholar of such attainments and recognized ability that it might not be impossible to find some who would on *a priori* grounds think that, if A. Stanley and A. Madsen could not both be right, it was not likely that Stanley would be the one to be wrong.

No one will accuse F. W. Farrar of ignorant championship of a Baptist claim. In his *Lives of the Fathers*, Farrar writes:

“Gregory of Nazianzus was born about the year 330, five years after his father’s baptism. Nonna had wished for a boy, and vowed that if a son were born to her she would devote him to God; in other words, have him trained to be a presbyter. When her prayer was fulfilled she took the child in her arms to the church, and consecrated his little hands by laying them on the sacred book.”

Of the delay in Gregory’s baptism, Farrar says:

“It was the unscriptural custom of the fourth century to delay baptism till ripe age, sometimes even, as in the case of Constantine, till the deathbed, because the risk of dying unbaptized seemed smaller than the risk of falling into mortal sin after baptism. It seemed quite right both to Gregory and to his pious parents to have postponed his baptism; and yet he had such strange thoughts of God as to imagine that though he had lived from childhood a pure and holy life he would be eternally lost merely for lack of the external ceremony.”

H. E. Wood writes:

“Gregory of Nazianzus, whose parents were both Christians, was not baptized till he was come to years of discretion ... The same was true of Ephraim Syrus, ... and probably of Basil the Great.” — Hastings’ *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*.

Schaff says:

“Even after Constantine, there were examples of eminent teachers, as Gregory Nazianzen, Augustine, Chrysostom, who were not baptized before their conversion in early manhood, although they had Christian mothers.”

Moeller refers to Basil, Gregory of Nazianzen, Chrysostom, Jerome and Augustine, in similar fashion. The *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopædia* could be quoted as proving delay in the case of Basil and Gregory Nazianzen. Canon Venables in Murray’s *Dictionary of Christian Biography* wrote of Basil the great:

“His parents were members of noble and wealthy families and Christians by descent.” “The date of Basil’s baptism is uncertain, but, according to the prevalent custom, it was almost certainly delayed, until he reached man’s estate.”

Of Chrysostom, Venables said that he was baptized at the age of twenty-three years, although he was the child of Christian parents, his mother being left a widow when he was an infant.

We can truly say that, in so far as the question of the rightful subjects of baptism is concerned, we do not care twopence whether or not Basil, Gregory, Chrysostom, and Ambrose, were or were not sons of Christian parents or baptized at maturity. Our authority for the baptism of believers would still be the Word of God; and the weakness of pædobaptism would still be that claims to do a thing in the name of the Lord for which no example or precept can be adduced in the Scriptures given for the very purpose of making us

wise unto salvation. We have only noticed the men referred to because we are concerned with truth, and we want folk to see to what extremities that man is reduced who will pen a page and a half against what he says “the Baptists” claim; whereas we have quoted not from ignorant immersionists but from some of the most scholarly men who have advocated infant baptism and who yet have made the same claim.

There is one thing, however, yet to be noted. Mr. Madsen’s challenge was that the parents were not “baptized Christians” when their children were born.” Five times in the course of one paragraph does Mr. Madsen insist on this point, that the parents be shown to be Christians *at the birth* of the child concerned. Some of our previous quotations bear on this very point. But in addition we wish to call attention to the fact that Mr. Madsen’s objection here has no bearing at all on the controversy between Victorian Methodists and either Baptists or ourselves with reference to the subjects of baptism. Look at the matter a little. Is the principle in the case of a child before whose birth the parents were “baptized Christians” a different one from that in the case of one who is an infant at the time of its parents’ conversion? No. Do Methodists baptize only the babies of those whose parents were “baptized Christians” when their children were born”? No; they never suggest such a thing. Why “parents” rather than “parent”? Does Mr. Madsen believe that both parents must be Christians in order to the baptism of a child? No; he denies this. Again, when Mr. Madsen and his Tasmanian fellow-defender of infant baptism, Mr. Delbridge, quoted “to your children” in Acts 2:39 as showing that the children should be baptized, did they then lead us to understand that the “children” eligible should be children born after, not before, the Christian baptism of the parents? By no means; such parents would have been hard to get on Pentecost, on the first day on which the apostles acted on the instructions of what Mr. Madsen calls “the baptizing commission.” “Baptized Christians *at his birth*” then, does not touch the point; it does not help the pædobaptist argument. Why, then, is it used? Chiefly because of a pleasant if fictitious fancy that it may embarrass the other side, or possibly in order to get the unwary to think that at last in *The Question of Baptism* there is a forceful argument in favor of what we have shown to be an unscriptural position.



## The Action of Baptism.

“For the first thirteen centuries the almost universal practice of Baptism was that of which we read in the New Testament, and which is the very meaning of the word ‘baptize’ — that those who were baptized were plunged, submerged, immersed, into the water.” — DEAN STANLEY, in *Christian Institutions*.

“Without doubt the perfect idea of baptism is realized when one who has come to the years of discretion makes himself his own profession of faith in the Lord, knowing what he has done and having counted the cost, and then is immersed in the waters of baptism.” — JOHN WATSON (“IAN MACLAREN”), in *The Doctrines of Grace*.

The only reason why any believer in Christ should wish to submit to baptism is that the Lord Jesus commanded it. Save as an act of obedience and surrender to the authority of Christ, the act is unmeaning. It is because this element of obedience comes in that we plead for the immersion of penitent believers. We ought to let the Lord decide as to what he wishes us to do. If he commanded sprinkling or pouring, then we wish to have water poured or sprinkled upon us. Our immersion will not do, if the Lord commanded something which is not immersion. Similarly, if our Savior asked for immersion, we shall not say that sprinkling or pouring will do as well; for, just as pouring is different from sprinkling, so are sprinkling and pouring both different from immersion. The foregoing words may show how unfair it is for Mr. Madsen to write that “the amount of water to be used in baptism is essentially the basis of the controversy.” This is by no means the case. If sprinkling is baptism, we do not care whether Mr. Madsen sprinkles ten drops of water or a billion drops. If pouring is baptism, he may pour a cupful or a bucketful. If immersion is baptism, we care not whether the immersion takes place in a baptistery, a pond, a river, a lake, or an ocean. What we ask is that in each case the thing be done which the Lord asked to be done.

We wish to call attention to the fact that no one denies that the person who is immersed is baptized. No debate takes place on this question. Mr. Madsen admits that “baptism may be validly administered by immersion.” Ministers of nearly all the churches which practice sprinkling will on occasion immerse rather than lose their

flock. The Anglican Church has more than sanctioned immersion, for its Prayer Book explicitly states that the priest shall take the child (if it may well endure it) and “dip it in the water, discreetly and warily.” The recent erection of a baptistery in St. Paul’s Cathedral, Melbourne, witnesses to the belief of a great church in immersion. The only disputed question is as to whether sprinkling or pouring are also baptism. Many pædobaptists, as Dean Stanley, who admit that immersion was the primitive church custom, justify departure therefrom on the grounds of expediency, as in cold climates, and of propriety. Some, as Mr. Madsen, believe that from the beginning sprinkling and pouring were to be found.

We may say that when a scholar reading the classical writings of Greece, comes across the word transliterated in the New Testament “baptize,” he never translates it by “sprinkle” or “pour.” The Greeks had a word which specifically meant “sprinkle” (*rantizo*, see Heb. 9:13, 19, 21; Lev. 6:27, etc., Septuagint). They possessed a word meaning “pour” (*cheo*, Ezek. 20:33-34, etc., Sept.; *ek-cheo*, “pour out,” occurs in Acts 2:17-18; Rev. 16:1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 17). Not once is *baptizo* translated by “sprinkle” or “pour,” and never is either *cheo* or *rantizo* used of the ordinance of baptism.

### **LEXICONS.**

Greek lexicons agree that the primary meaning of *baptizo* is to dip, immerse, plunge, submerge. In the figurative uses of the word given in the lexicons, *dip* is the basis of the figure. Not one is quoted by our pædobaptist friends which gives “sprinkle” or “pour” as either a primary or secondary meaning. We quote from a few lexicons.

LIDDELL & SCOTT. — I. *To dip in or under water.* Of ships, *to sink* them. Passive, *to bathe*. Metaphorically: *soaked in wine, over head and ears* in debt; *drowned* with questions. II. *To draw* wine from bowls in cups (of course by *dipping* them). III. *to baptize*, N.T., Eccl.

DONNEGAN. — *To immerse repeatedly into a liquid; to submerge, sink* (ships).

SOPHOCLES. — *To dip, to immerse; to sink.* Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods (146 B.C. to 1100 A.D.).

MALTBY (Bishop of Durham). — *To plunge; to immerse.*



SCHREVELIUS. — To baptize, dip, immerse, wash, cleanse.

BAGSTER. — “Pr. to dip, immerse; to cleanse or purify by washing; to administer the rite of baptism; to baptize.”

CREMER. — *Baptizo*, “to immerse, to submerge.” He says: “The peculiar N.T. and Christian use of the word to denote *immersion*, *submersion* for a religious purpose — to baptize, John 1:25 ... may be pretty clearly traced back to the Levitical washings” (Lev. 14:8-9, etc.).

On p. 46 of *The Question of Baptism*, Mr. Madsen referred to “the very highest authority on Greek and Greek usage’ — Grimm’s *Wilke’s Lexicon of N.T. Greek*.” I very much regret that by a singular omission this “very highest authority” is not directly quoted from in the chapter in which Mr. Madsen seeks to instruct his brethren as to the Scriptural “Mode of Baptism.” Mr. Madsen summarizes Bannerman’s summary of lexicons, and says:

“Grimm does not give ‘immersion’ as one of the meanings at all. The word he translates as immersion is ‘baptisma.’” — p. 101.

Now it is true that Grimm translates *baptisma* as “immersion.” When we remember that *baptisma* is used in Rom. 6:4; Eph. 4:5; 1 Pet. 2:21, of the ordinance of Christian baptism, the careful reader will be at no loss to understand to what extent Mr. Madsen helps the cause of sprinkling or pouring by quoting Grimm as translating *baptisma* by “immersion.” We give a statement as to Grimm’s treatment of *baptizo*.

GRIMM’S LEXICON (edited by THAYER) — I. 1. Prop., to dip repeatedly, to immerge, submerge. 2. to cleanse by dipping, wash, bathe. 3. Metaphorically, to overwhelm.” II. In the N.T. it is used particularly of the rite of sacred ablution, first instituted by John the Baptist, afterwards by Christ’s command received by Christians and adjusted to the contents and nature of their religion, viz., an immersion in water, performed as a sign of the removal of sin, and administered to those who, impelled by a desire for salvation, sought admission to the benefits of the Messiah’s kingdom.”

BULLINGER. — *Baptizo* (in form a frequentative of *bapto*, *dip* or *dye*). *Baptizo* to make a thing *dipped* or *dyed*. *To immerse* for a religious purpose, may be traced back to the Levitical washings, see Lev. 14:8-9, etc. (out of which arose the baptism of proselytes), which were connected with the purification which followed on and completed the expiation from sin.”

We give also some quotations from well-known pædobaptist authorities — dictionary writers, historians, etc.

### **DICTIONARIES AND ENCYCLOPÆDIAS.**

HASTINGS' DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE. — The rite is nowhere described in detail; but the element was always water, and the mode of using it was commonly immersion. The symbolism of the ordinance required this. It was an act of purification and hence the need of water. A death to sin was expressed by the plunge beneath the water, and a rising again to a life of righteousness by the return to light and air; and hence the appropriateness of immersion." — Article on "Baptism," by A. Plummer.

IBID. — "The ritual of baptism consisted of an immersion of the baptized person in water (Mt. 3:16, Mk. 1:10, Ac. 8:38)." — Article on "Church," by S. C. Gayford.

HASTINGS' ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF RELIGION AND ETHICS. — "Immersion seems to have been the practice of the Apostolic age; in continuity with Jewish proselyte baptism; and it is implied in Paul's language, specially in his figure of baptism as spiritual burial and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5, Col, 2:12). But the form was not held essential; and when conditions presented practical difficulties — whether local, climatic, or due to physical weakness — it came to be modified (cf. *Didache*, 7). The most usual form, of which we have evidence from the 2nd. cent. onwards, as regards adults, was that of standing semi-immersed in water, up to knees or waist, combined with threefold pouring over the head (triune affusion)," "Baptism," by J. V. Bartlet.

We call attention to the apostolic practice of the first sentence, and the later modifications thereof referred to in the last two sentences.

HASTINGS' DICTIONARY OF CHRIST AND THE GOSPELS. — Baptism: "A rite wherein by immersion in water the participant symbolizes and signalizes his transition from an impure to a pure life, his death to a past he abandons, and his new birth to a future he desires." "That the normal mode was by immersion of the whole body may be inferred from the meaning of *baptizo*, which is the intensive or frequentative form of *bapto*, 'I dip,' and denotes to *immerse* or *submerge*. — Article by the late Marcus Dods.

There are no works of reference in more common use or in higher esteem than these three. The fact that the writers of the articles were pædobaptists gives force to their admissions.

PROTESTANT DICTIONARY. — “Baptism. — This word is Greek, and signifies prop. *dipping*, a ceremonial washing with water, and is the name of one of the two sacraments ordained by Christ.”

CATHOLIC DICTIONARY. — “In Apostolic times the body of the baptized person was immersed, for St. Paul looks on this immersion as typifying burial with Christ, and speaks of baptism as a bath.”

### ***CHURCH HISTORIANS, ETC.***

MOSHEIM. — “In this century [*i. e.*, the first century] baptism was administered in convenient places not in the public assemblies, and by immersing the candidates wholly in water.”

NEANDER. — ‘The usual form of submersion at baptism, practiced by the Jews, was transferred to the Gentile Christians. Indeed, this form was the most suitable to signify that which Christ intended to render in object of contemplation by such a symbol; the immersion of the whole man in the sprit of a new life.’ — *History of the Planting and Training of the Christian Church by the Apostles.*

KURTZ. — “Baptism was administered by complete immersion (Acts 8:38) in the name of Christ or of the Trinity (Matt. 28:19).”

SCHAFF. — “The usual form of baptism was immersion. This is inferred from the original meaning of the Greek *baptizein* and *baptismos*; from the analogy of John’s baptism in the Jordan; from the apostles’ comparison of the sacred rite with the miraculous passage of the Red Sea, with the escape of the ark from the flood, with a cleansing and refreshing bath, and with burial and resurrection; finally, from the general custom of the ancient church, which prevails in the East to this day.” — *History of the Church: Apostolic Christianity, A.D. 1-100.*

GWATKIN. — “Immersion was the rule. The Jews were very strict, holding that even a ring on a woman’s finger prevented complete immersion; and though the Christians were not likely to be so pedantic, the whole symbolism of Baptism requires immer-

sion, and so St. Paul explains it" (Rom. 6:3-5). — *Early Church History to A.D. 313*.

FISHER. — "The ordinary mode of baptism was by immersion." — *The History of the Church*, Period I., "The Apostolic Age."

DOLLINGER. — "At first Christian Baptism commonly took place in the Jordan; of course as the Church spread more widely, in private houses also. Like that of St. John, it was by immersion of the whole person, which is the only meaning of the New Testament word. A mere pouring or sprinkling was never thought of. St. Paul made this immersion a symbol of burial with Christ, and the emerging a sign of resurrection with him to a new life: Baptism is a 'bath.' Of the Ethiopian's baptism it is said, that both he and Philip went down into the water and so the Evangelist baptized him."

ROBERTSON. — "Baptism was administered by immersion, except in cases of sickness, where affusion or sprinkling was used." — *History of the Christian Church*, Book I., 64-313 A.D.

BINGHAM refers to immersion or dipping as "the original apostolical practice," and quotes Rom. 6:4. and Col. 2:12 as passages "which plainly refer to this custom." — *Antiquities of the Christian Church*.

HARNACK. — "The ceremony of the individual's immersion and emergence from the water served as a guarantee that old things were now washed away and gone, leaving him a new man. — *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*.

LAMBERT does not think "that the mode was ever treated as an absolute ceremonial necessity which could yield neither to time, place, nor circumstances," yet has the following: "The view that immersion was the original mode of baptism finds a very strong support in a figure which Paul uses both in Romans and Colossians in connection with a doctrinal reference to the sacrament (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12). He speaks of baptism as a burial with Christ into death, and a rising again with him from the grave. Undoubtedly this shows that immersion was the usual mode of administering the rite as known to Paul." — *The Sacraments in the New Testament*.

ALLEN. — "The rite of baptism has undergone many changes in the lapse of time; immersion which was the prevailing mode in

the ancient church, has given place to sprinkling or pouring.” — *Christian Institutions*.

MC GIFFERT. — “The ordinary mode of baptism in the apostolic age was immersion.” — *History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age*.

E. TYRRELL GREEN. — “It is probable that S. John the Baptist immersed in Jordan those who came to him for baptism, and immersion of converts was, so far as we can gather, the regular practice of the Church in Apostolic times. The example of the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch by Philip the deacon would seem to be a clear case in point. There can be no doubt, too, that baptism by immersion was the normal practice of the Primitive Church.” — *The Church of Christ*.

### **SECONDARY MEANING OF “BAPTIZO.”**

It will be noticed that lexicons from which we have quoted give various secondary meanings of *baptizo*, as *to sink* (ships), and *to draw* (wine). Liddell & Scott refer to its metaphorical usage by persons *soaked* in wine, *over head and ears* in debt, *drowned* with questions. Grimm adds to *overwhelm*.

Now, accepting all these secondary meanings, who is there so dull that he cannot see that not one of them is out of harmony with “dip,” “immerse,” “submerge,” which the lexicons give as the primary meaning? And not one of them could ever have been the secondary meaning of a word meaning “sprinkle” or “pour.” Mr. Madsen quotes Axtell as saying:

“The drinking of wine, the buying of goods which brings debt upon one, the listening to hard questions, and such acts have no likeness to the act of dipping.”

When the Greeks used *baptizo* in connection with such things, it was never when the wine, the debts, or the questions were present in such scanty quantities as is the water at a Methodist “christening.” There was a superabundance of wine, debt or questioning. In each case the man was metaphorically “overwhelmed.” As Liddell & Scott say, he was ‘soaked in wine,’ drowned with questions, over head and ears in debt.

So it is with all the other secondary meanings. If *baptizo* be used in the sense of *to draw* wine from bowls in cups, then Liddell

& Scott carefully explain that this was “of course by *dipping* them.”

Consider this word from *The Question of Baptism*:

“Through 30 pages Dr. Axtell expounds and illustrates the usage of the word in Scripture and classical literature, and maintains: — (i) That *baptizo*, when used to express the idea of putting an object into a liquid meant not simply to dip, but to *sink* or *drown*.”

Neither Axtell nor Madsen could prove that to save themselves from the penalty of baptism or drowning. But now let us ask, How could *baptizo* come to be used of the sinking of ships? What do ships do when they sink? Do they suffer the sprinkling of rain upon their decks in some way comparable to the sprinkling which pædo-baptists administer to infants? Or is it not the case that we say ships sink when they so go under the water as to be immersed or submerged?

About that drowning (which no lexicon that I have seen gives as a literal meaning of *baptizo*) Even if we were to accept the rendering, how would that favor a controversialist who is desperately anxious to prove sprinkling or pouring as valid baptism? If immersion be prolonged for a few minutes, the result may be drowning; there is thus no violent breach between the primary and this alleged meaning of *baptizo*. But suppose sprinkling were continued upon one — the quantity and rate of, say, Methodist sprinkling being maintained — what would be the result in that case? The poor man might die of cold, of exposure, of starvation, of old age, or even of *ennui*; but I venture to say that the last thing we could expect him to die of would be drowning.

This is perhaps enough on this part. of the question, until Mr. Madsen will produce the reputable lexicons which tell us that *baptizo* means to *drown*. We would have thought that Josephus, who lived from 37 to 95 A.D., and who wrote in Greek, might have understood the Greek language and its meaning as well as Axtell. Josephus wrote of the murder of Aristobulus:

“Continually pressing down and immersing [baptizing] him while swimming, as if in sport, they did not desist till they had entirely suffocated him.” — *Antiquities* XV., 3, 3.

Again: —

“The child was sent by night to Jericho, and was there dipped [baptized] by the Galls, at Herod’s command, in a pool till he was drowned.” — *Wars* XXII., 22, 2.

That was no sprinkling, though Josephus calls it a baptizing. These passages also prove that while yet the drowning came as a result of the baptizing, the word *baptizo* did not for Josephus mean “drown.” No one speaks of drowning a person till he is drowned or suffocated.

We are not sure whether amazement or amusement will predominate in the case of those who witness the extraordinary defenses of their position which men will put forth in their hour of need. We have just noted the attempt to get *baptizo* mean *to drown*, though how that would benefit anybody whose only warrant for the ordinance is the commission, which includes the word *baptizo*, is not very clear. *The Spectator*, the organ, of the Methodist Church in Victoria, in its issue of October 25, 1912, has the yet more audacious statement: —

“Most of the authorities hold that to immerse is to drown.”

We have asked for the authority which proves that the Greek word *baptizo* means “to drown.” Now, we shall request that some authority — other than *The Spectator*, — be given for the position that “to immerse is to drown.” Our friends need not give us “most of the authorities”; one will do to begin with. Some folk believe that the immersion of hundreds of people during the Scoville mission was not unconnected with the concern now manifested in pædobaptist ranks. We are glad to reassure the editor of *The Spectator* by saying that no homicide was committed by any baptizer; not one of the hundreds immersed was drowned. John Wesley wrote on Rom. 6:4. “We are *buried with him*. — Alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion.” It is pathetic to consider what nonsense Dr. Axtell, Mr. Madsen and *The Spectator* (who between them declare that both “baptize” and “immerse” mean “drown”) would make the honored founder of Methodism write. Yet, I am loth to believe that John Wesley meant (nay, at the risk of rashness I shall confidently declare he did not mean) “the ancient manner of drowning by drowning.”

In several places Mr. Madsen refers to the admission of Dr. Carson, who pleaded that *baptizo* “always signifies to dip,” that all the commentators and lexicographers were against him in this

opinion. We would call attention to the fact that Carson appealed to the lexicons as supporting his contention with reference to the primary meaning. He said:

“I should consider it the most unreasonable skepticism, to deny that a word has a meaning, which all lexicons give as its primary meaning. On this point, I have no quarrel with the lexicons. There is the most complete harmony among them, in representing dip as the primary meaning of *bapto* and *baptize*.”

But Carson denied that the lexicographers made out their case so far as the alleged secondary meanings were concerned. In our treatment, we have not entered into this question; supposing the secondary meanings to be granted, it is still true that dip, and not *sprinkle* or *pour*, is at the basis of all the secondary and figurative meanings. No lexicon is quoted by our pædobaptist friends as giving either “sprinkle” or “pour” even as a secondary meaning. Why we take the trouble to mention this matter at all is that Mr. Madsen harps on all the lexicons being admittedly against Dr. Carson to such an extent that the unwary reader who does not know a word of Greek might suppose that our Methodist friend had got an admission from a Baptist author that the lexicons somehow favored pouring or sprinkling; than which nothing could be more unfounded.

### **LUTHER AND CALVIN.**

We revere the names of these men, but cannot recognize their authority. Our Lord’s command remains the same, whatever Calvin and Luther said of it. In the statement of Dr. Antell’s position (which the author of *The Question of Baptism*; evidently adopts, else his elaborate summary is superfluous) is the following:

“The Bible doctrine and mode were restored at the Reformation. Luther favored sprinkling. Calvin preferred pouring.” — p. 118.

Axtell is quoted by Mr. Madsen as holding that in the centuries after the apostolic age, an unscriptural mode, viz., dipping, became the general rule. The fact that all the church historians already quoted are against him on this point of course matters not to this pædobaptist apologist.



As to the rest of the above paragraph concerning the Reformation and the reformers, we invite a reading of the following from Dr. Philip Schaff, at once one of the most strenuous pædobaptist advocates and a leading church historian:

“The *mode* of baptism was no point of dispute between Anabaptists and Pædobaptists in the sixteenth century. The Roman Church provides for immersion and pouring as equally valid. Luther preferred immersion, and prescribed it in his baptismal service. In England immersion was the normal mode down to the middle of the seventeenth century.” — Schaff’s *History of the Church*; “Swiss Reformation,” Vol. I., p. 8.

In a footnote, Schaff says: —

“Edward VI. and Queen Elizabeth were immersed, according to the rubric of the English Prayer Book. Erasmus says, ‘With us’ (on the Continent) ‘infants have the water poured on them; in England they are dipped.’”

Schaff quotes Luther’s own words when he wishes to set forth Luther’s doctrine, a practice I would venture to commend to the author of *The Question of Baptism*, when a second edition is contemplated.

“‘Baptism,’ he says, ‘is that dipping into water whence it takes its name. For, in Greek to baptize signifies to dip, and baptism is a dipping.’ ‘Baptism signifies two things, — death and resurrection, that is, full and complete justification. When the minister dips the child into the water, this signifies death; when he draws him out again, this signifies life. Thus Paul explains the mattes (Rom. 6:4) ... I could wish that the baptized should be totally immersed, according to the meaning of the word and the signification of the mystery; not that I think it necessary to do so, but that it would be well that so complete and perfect a thing as baptism should also be completely and perfectly expressed in the sign.” — *Reformation, A.D. 1517-1530*, I., pp. 218-219. In Wace and Bucheim’s translation of “On the Babylonish Captivity of the Church,” in their book *First Principles of the Reformation*, the closing sentence given by Schaff is rendered thus: “it would be well that so complete and perfect a thing as baptism should have its sign also in completeness and perfection, even as it was doubtless instituted by Christ.” We leave the unprejudiced reader to form his own conclusion as to whether the position of the greatest of the reformers is adequately

represented in the three words given to it in Mr. Madsen's book: "Luther favored sprinkling."

Schaff refers to and quotes from John Calvin:

"Calvin regarded immersion as the primitive form of baptism, but pouring or sprinkling as equally valid." "He says, Instit. IV. ch. xv., Sec. 19: 'Whether the person who is baptized be wholly immersed, and whether thrice or once, or whether water be only poured or sprinkled upon him, is of no importance; churches ought to be left at liberty in this respect to act according to the difference of countries. The very word baptize, however, signifies to immerse; and it is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church.'" — "Swiss Reformation," II., p. 373.

John Calvin was a great and learned man, and we would rather listen to him than to some modern pædobaptists; but yet he was not a great enough man for us to follow when he calmly says it "is of no importance" whether or not we adhere to what was the primitive practice and the very meaning of the word given by our Lord.

### ***NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING.***

Doctrines of men may interest us, views of great reformers may well merit attention, and statements of *church* historians as to post-apostolic practice may not be unimportant; but after all the believer in Jesus Christ will seek for guidance as to the action of baptism in the Scriptures. He will want to know whether the dipping, immersion, submersion, which lexicons agree to be the primary meaning of the word *baptizo* are in harmony with the New Testament teaching and practice. Such a reader will soon find that there is complete harmony here.

### **The Baptism of John.**

We may appropriately begin with the baptism of Jesus, our great Exemplar. In Mark 1:9, we are told Jesus "was baptized of John in the Jordan." Matt. 3:16 and Mark 1:10 represent the Savior after baptism as "coming up out of the water." The Greek preposition in Mark 1:9 (see R.V., margin) is "into"; Mark says the baptism was "into the Jordan."

It is common to try to break the force of this by saying that John baptized so many people that it was a physical impossibility for him to immerse them all. Mr. Madsen (p. 110) has the usual objection, referring to a number “estimated as ranging from 300,000 to two millions, and within a period of six months.” When our friends give us a scriptural statement as to the numbers baptized by John personally and the time within which the baptism took place, we may be willing to do a sum in proportion; but it is idle to try our arithmetic on guesses. The Scripture passage supposed to contain the difficulty is Matt. 2:5-6: “Then went out unto him Jerusalem, and all Jordan, and all the region round about Jordan; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.” There is one way of testing whether sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, constituted the baptism here. If “baptize” means “sprinkle” or “pour,” then the word it means may be substituted for it in the above passage. The reader is invited to make this substitution, and see if he thinks the result is in harmony with what happened. “Were immersed of him in the river Jordan” at least makes sense. “Poured in” or “sprinkled in” does not.

Again, it might not be quite superfluous to point out that the average time taken up in a pædobaptist sprinkling is no less than that in the average immersion. Would Mr. Madsen seek to get rid of the difficulty in John’s baptism by accepting and defending John Wesley’s solution:

“It seems, therefore, that they stood in ranks on the edge of the river; and that John, passing along before them, cast water on their faces, by which means he might baptize many thousands in a day”?

Of course, Wesley, though picturesque, was wrong; for it is the Word of God which says John baptized “in the river Jordan” and “into the Jordan.” Candidates came “up out of the water,” so that they must have been down into it.

We have already cited pædobaptist scholars — Gayford in Hastings’ *Bible Dictionary*, Schaff, Dellinger, and Green — as holding that John immersed people; Stanley, Geikie, Edersheim, Meyer, may be added.

E. H. Plumptre says emphatically:

“Immersion had clearly been practiced by John, and was involved in the original meaning of the word.”

## **The Eunuch.**

The account of the baptism of Jesus agrees with the record in Acts 8:36-39 of the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch. There was a going “down into the water” and a coming “up out of the water.” It has been held by some that the “into” of verse 38 may only denote close proximity to; but Luke before said (v. 36) they came “unto” the water, and now says that as a subsequent act they went “down into” it. If an endeavor be made to break the force of this by saying that, even if they were in the water, still sprinkling could be the act performed, we reply (a) that the very reason which now generally keeps those who practice sprinkling or pouring from going down into the water (since there is no need for such a cumbersome method) would have kept Philip from doing such a superfluous thing; while the reason which now makes a candidate for immersion go “down into” the water would sufficiently explain why the eunuch went down; (b) we learn from Rom. 6:4 that baptism is a burial. So, after the eunuch went down into the water, he was there buried in baptism, and subsequently came up out of the water. We could trust any unprejudiced person who desired simply to follow Bible teaching and example to read these passages and learn from them his duty.

In *The Question of Baptism* there appears the following passage:

“The Rev. Isaac Rooney, F.R.G.S., who has been through the Holy Land, writes from personal observation: ‘Ain Jala, on the road to Gaza, where the Ethiopian Eunuch was baptized, is not a well or pool, but a little stream flowing from a spring.’ To immerse a man in it is out of the question.”

That is perhaps the funniest word in a book whose author has preserved it from insipidity by the insertion of many curious statements. We have not the honor of the acquaintance of “the Rev. Isaac Rooney, F.R.G.S.,” which of course is not surprising when it is considered that “from personal observation” he can tell us of the eunuch’s baptism and its location! As a fact, the scene of the eunuch’s baptism is still keenly debated by scholars. Robinson refers to Wady-el-Hasy. Thomson, in *The Land and the Bible*, has another suggestion: “There is a fine stream of water, called Murubbah, deep enough even in June to satisfy the utmost wishes of our Baptist friends.” While we do not know the site, we have the authority

of the Word of God for the statement that there was water enough for two men to go down into it, and for the one there to baptize the other; baptism being a “burial.”

Not all pædobaptists are unable to see that immersion harmonizes, as sprinkling does not, with the record of the eunuch’s baptism. “The context,” writes R. J. Knowling in *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, “indicates that the baptism was by immersion, and there can be no doubt that this was the custom in the early church.”

### **Baptism a Burial.**

From Rom. 6:4 and Col. 2:12 we learn that the early Christians were buried with Christ in baptism. In sprinkling, or pouring, there is no enveloping, no covering up, such as is implied in the word “buried”; in immersion there is. Some pædobaptists endeavor to destroy the argument from Rom. 6:4 by saying that Jewish, Greek, or Roman burials were not as ours. But different modes of burial do not conflict with the fact that in burial, however performed, there is a covering up which harmonizes with what takes place in immersion, and which fails to harmonize with the act performed when a minister sprinkles water on the head or face of a child.

In the Methodist tract, *Does Scripture Teach Immersion?* published by the Spectator Co., this argument occurs:

“Burial, amongst the Greeks was regarded as having been officially performed when a little dust was sprinkled over the body. See the *Antigone* of Sophocles, p. 27, Donaldson’s edition,

‘Someone has just now  
Entombed the body and is gone; that is,  
He has sprinkled thirsty dust over the corpse,  
And done what else religious fear requires.’

The second example is in Virgil’s *Æneid*, 6:365, Bowen’s Edition. Here again the same thing, *i. e.*, a body, lying unburied, is described, and the dead hero is made to say:

‘Save me from these great sorrows my hero  
Over me pour  
Earth as in truth thou canst,  
And return to the Velin shore.’”

This part of the tract must have been written in the hope that the reader would not look up the passages referred to. We shall give a line or two more from “Antigone,” and, since Donaldson’s is the translation selected by the Spectator Company, we use this. The tract referred to lines 245-247; in lines 255-256, the same sentinel is represented as saying:

“For he  
Was out of sight, not closed within a tomb,  
But lightly overheard with sprinkled dust,  
As when some passer-by will shun the curse.”

Of course the Greek word *baptizo* does not appear in the above passage; and it is clear that, if the dust were sprinkled in such abundance as to overheard the body and put it “out of sight,” then there must be a very strained analogy between it and a pædobaptist sprinkling.

Regarding the quotation from the *Æneid*: some readers may need to be reminded that this was written in Latin, not in Greek. There is no light thrown by the passage on Paul’s words, “buried with him in baptism.” Why did the author of the tract use Bowen’s edition? Because the word “pour” in it is suggestive of the pouring — which the tract writer calls baptism. But the Latin word for “pour” is not in the original at all. For the reader who know even the rudiments of Latin, it will be a sufficient refutation of the attempted argument to say that the words which Bowers renders “pour earth” are *terram iniice*.” *Inicio* means *throw* or *cast in, on, or over*. J. W. Mackail renders Virgil’s words: “Either do, then, for thou canst, cast earth over me.” John Conington, once Corpus Professor of Latin in Oxford University, translates:

“And either heap, as well as you can,  
Some earth upon a wretched man.”

It is a most unworthy thing to try to get the ignorant to believe that somehow Virgil, the great Latin poet, has settled it that a little pouring is equivalent to burial, and this with a view to keep men from going down into the water and being buried with their Savior in baptism. If the same effort were put forth to lead people to obey as is being spent in ingenious attempts to keep them from obedience, it would be well. It must not, however, be supposed that all pædobaptist waiters descend to such argumentation as that to

which we have just replied. Many of the ablest and most scholarly pædobaptist advocates candidly allow, that Rom, 6:4 and Col. 2:12 imply immersion. Already we have referred to J. V. Bartlet (Hastings' *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*), Gwatkin, Dollinger, Bingham and Lambert, and John Wesley as holding this view.

In addition we beg to quote the following striking admissions:

"We are buried with Him (in the act of immersion) through that baptism into His death." — James Denney on Rom. 6:4 in *Expositor's Greek Testament*.

"The rite of baptism, in which the person baptized was first buried beneath the water, and then raised from it, typified to Paul the burial and resurrection of the believer with Christ." — A. S. Peake on Col. 2:12 in *Expositor's Greek Testament*.

"Baptism has three parts — descent into, burial under, and ascent out of, the water."

"Paul's statement assumes that baptism is by immersion." — A. E. GARVIE, in *The Century Bible*.

"Immersion is implied in Rom. 6:4, and Col. 2:12." — A. PLUMMER, in *Hastings' Bible Dictionary*.

"The figure was naturally suggested by the immersion in baptism, which St. Paul interprets as symbolical of burial, the emersion similarly symbolizing the rising again to newness of life." — T. K. ABBOTT, on Col. 2:12, in *International Critical Commentary*.

"Baptism is the grave of the old man, and the birth of the new. As he sinks beneath the baptismal waters, the believer buries there all his corrupt affections and past sins; as he emerges thence, he rises regenerate, quickened to new hopes and a new life. This it is, because it is not only the crowning act of his own faith but also the seal of God's adoption and the earnest of God's Spirit. Thus baptism is an image of his participation both in the death and in the resurrection of Christ." — LIGHTFOOT on Col. 2:12.

"This passage cannot be understood unless it be borne in mind that the primitive baptism was by immersion." — CONYBEARE & HOWSON on Rom. 6:4.

"The original meaning of the word baptism is immersion, and though we regard it as a point of indifference, whether the ordinance so named be performed in this way or by sprinkling — yet we doubt not, that the prevalent style of the administration in the apostle's days was by an actual submerging of the whole body un-

der water. We advert to this, for the purpose of throwing light on the analogy that is instituted in these verses.” — CHALMERS ON ROM. 6:3-4.

“Baptism has a double function. (1) It brings the Christian into personal contact with Christ, so close that it may be fitly described as union with Him. (2) It expresses symbolically a series of acts corresponding to the redeeming acts of Christ.

Immersion = Death.

Submersion = Burial (the ratification of Death).

Emergence = Resurrection.”

“When we descended into the baptismal water, that meant that we died with Christ — to sin. When the water closed over our heads, that meant that we lay buried with him, in proof that our death to sin, like His death, was real. But this carries with it the third step in the process. As Christ was raised from among the dead by a majestic exercise of Divine power, so we also must from henceforth conduct ourselves as men in whom has been implanted a new principle of life.” SANDAY & HEADLAM, in *International Critical Commentary*.

In *The Spectator* of September 20, in “Current Topics,” under the initials “A.M.,” appeared the following remarks on the present subject:

“If our Lord had died by drowning instead of by crucifixion, then these passages would support the meaning for which the writer [of a note to A.M.] contends. The passages are: ‘Buried with Him by baptism into death;’ ‘Planted together in the likeness of His death.’ These refer to the ‘likeness’ of Christ’s death. Our Savior was lifted up on the Cross, not plunged down into a submerging method of death. How can dipping under water correspond to the ‘likeness of His death?’”

Extra publicity is perhaps sufficient punishment for the above. It is in harmony with the emphatic reminder in *The Question of Baptism* that we are buried, “‘by baptism into *His death*,’ not by baptism into His grave.” In reply we give two quotations from pædobaptist authorities. The first is from the leading commentary on Romans:

“But why is baptism said to be specially ‘into Christ’s *death*’? The reason is because it is owing primarily to the death of Christ



that the condition into which the Christian enters at his baptism is such a changed condition.” — SANDAY & HEADLAM.

The second is from Dummelow’s Commentary, quoted from by Mr. Madsen, and so admired by the Methodist Church of Victoria that it is a text book at Queen’s College:

“Our baptism implied such a breaking-away from the old sinful life as may be compared to death.” “Our baptism signified an identification of our hearts and wills with Christ which amounted to a real union with Him, so that, while we look to His death as the ground of our acceptance, we also identify ourselves with that alienation from the sin of the world which crucified Him, of which His death was the final stage.” “Therefore, our immersion beneath the waters of baptism signified death and burial with Christ from the sinful life of the world. But it is not only His death that is ours. We come up out of the water, as He rose from the dead, that we might begin to live in a new condition animated by His risen life.”

The number of pædobaptist scholars of the front rank who have been cited as holding that “burial with him in baptism” refers to immersion most effectually gets rid of the suggestion of the author of *The Question of Baptism*, that this is a special Baptist interpretation.

A word in passing may be spared in reply to Mr. Madsen’s criticism that immersionists present a “conflicting symbolism of baptism,” when they speak of the believer being *born* of water and yet as being in baptism *buried* with Christ. The quotations given above from Peake, Abbott, and Sanday & Headlam, remove the apparent conflict. Mr. Madsen might have reflected, though, that he could with precisely the same degree of relevancy — or irrelevancy — have found fault with the Scriptural reference to Christ’s emergence from the grave in which he was buried; Christ is “the first-born from the dead” (Col. 1:18).

### **John 2:23.**

“John also was baptizing in Ænon near to Salim, because there was much water there.” So says the inspired apostle. That “because” does not suit sprinkling or pouring. Mr. Madsen refers to the people’s needs or the requirements of the “beasts of burden,” as being the reason of the choice of location. The “beasts of burden”

here are as imaginary as we saw that the infants were in the baptism texts and the baptism in the infant texts. The apostle says John *baptized* at Ænon, *because* there was much water there. As usual, we prefer the Bible statement to Mr. Madsen's gratuitous imagination. Mr. Madsen baptizes nowhere because of much water: he does not need it. Dr. Marcus Dods thus answers the contention of his less famous pædobaptist brothers:

“‘Because many waters were there,’ or ‘much water; and therefore even in summer baptism by immersion could be continued. It is not the people's refreshment’ that is in view. Why mention this any more than where they got their food?’” — *Expositor's Greek Testament*.

### **Baptism of Suffering.**

We read of Jesus' "baptism" of suffering in Mark 10:38 and Luke 12:50. Why is this metaphorical language employed? Clearly because the Savior's suffering was so great, so intense, that he seemed to be enveloped, overwhelmed, by it. To liken his suffering to a sprinkling would be abhorrent to every believer. So the Oxford "Helps to the Study of the Bible" says:

“The original mode of baptism was immersion. Hence the metaphorical use of the word of an overwhelming sorrow.”

So also Principal Salmond calls it “another figure for suffering, overwhelming suffering in which one is immersed or submerged.”

### **Baptism in the Holy Spirit.**

In several places in the New Testament we have mention of baptism in the Holy Spirit (*e. g.*, Matt. 2:11; Acts 1:5; 11:16). This language is figurative. Whether baptism is sprinkling, pouring or immersion, no one believes either that people were literally sprinkled, poured or immersed in the Spirit, or that the Holy Spirit was literally poured or sprinkled upon them. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is only explicable on the view that the Spirit so took possession of those who were recipients of it that they might fitly be said to be enveloped in or overwhelmed by it. Neander says:

“In respect to the form of baptism, it was in conformity with the original institution and the original import of the symbol, per-

formed by immersion, as a sign of entire baptism into the Holy Spirit, of being entirely penetrated by the same.” — *Church History*, I., p. 422.

When the Scriptures describe the action of God in sending the Spirit in such abundant measure upon men that the result could be called a baptism, they use such expressions as these: “On the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 10:45). “He hath shed [R.V., poured] forth this” (Acts 1:5). In the Methodist tract, *Does Scripture Teach Immersion?* we have a reference to such texts under the heading, “How God Baptized”; the writer stating:

“No jugglery with words can get away from God’s plain definition given in this passage. Baptism means pouring, and by that method the true baptism, that of the Spirit, was given on Pentecost.”

Let us examine this. (1) If because the Holy Spirit is stated to have been poured out, we may therefore say pouring is baptism, what about the text, “The Holy Spirit *fell* on them” (Acts 11:15)? Will some brilliant exegete find a new sect with “falling” as the Scriptural mode of baptism? (2) We call attention to the fact that our paedobaptist friends confuse two things, viz., the act of God in sending the Spirit, and the resultant effect on the disciples. That effect was such that the disciples, as it were, were overwhelmed by, immersed in, the Spirit. Plumptre, the well-known Church of England commentator, thus refers to this baptism of the apostles: “Their spirits were to be so fully baptized, *i. e.*, plunged, into the power of the Divine Spirit, as their bodies had been plunged in the waters of the Jordan” (on Acts 1:5). (3) We wish to emphasize this, that if “baptism means pouring,” then the thing poured is the thing baptized, and *vice versa*. If the Holy Spirit was poured, and if pouring is baptism, then it was the Holy Spirit that was baptized! “No jugglery with words” can disprove that. Similarly if the disciples were baptized, and if baptism is pouring, then the disciples were poured! But the Holy Spirit was not baptized, nor were the disciples poured: the Bible teaching is that God poured out the Spirit in such profusion that as a result the disciples were baptized. (4) When the Bible says the Holy Spirit was *poured* or *shed* (Acts 2:17-18, 33; 10:45), it has to be borne in mind that the word thus translated is *ekcheo*, not *baptizo*. Nobody disputes that the former

word means *pour out*, but we ask in vain for a shred of evidence that *baptizo* has this meaning.

### **1 Corinthians 10:1-2.**

Amongst the passages which Mr. Madsen thinks definitely exclude immersion is the above. Paul says: —

“Our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.”

It is plain that the chief point of the comparison made by Paul between the Israelites and the Christians to whom he was writing was that as the “fathers” were baptized into a new relationship to Moses, so were the Christians baptized into a new relation to Christ. As Prof. Findlay in *The Expositor’s Greek Testament* puts it:

“‘They all received their baptism *unto Moses* in the cloud and in the sea,’ since in this act they committed themselves to the guidance of Moses, entering through him into acknowledged fellowship with God.” Does Paul’s allusion show that baptism is not necessarily immersion?

Mr. Madsen says:

“The baptism of the cloud was probably by rain drops, and of the sea by flying spray. But it was the glory of the passage through the sea that not a man of Israel’s pilgrim people was immersed. When Pharaoh’s host attempted the passage, they received immersion, with disastrous consequences.”

Briefly we may reply: (1) The baptism of 1 Cor. 10:1-2 must surely be interpreted in harmony with what the same writer said in Rom. 6:4 of baptism as a burial. (2) Mr. Madsen seems to imply that there was a baptism “of the cloud” and a baptism “of the sea.” Now Paul gives no hint that there was a baptism in the cloud, or in the sea, *separately*; but “in the cloud *and* in the sea.” “The cloud was over the upraised and congealed walls, and the people passed through this sea-cloud channel.” (3) Mr. Madsen’s rain-drops are imaginary ones; a reference to Ex. 12:21-22 will show that the cloud is not represented as a watery cloud, but that which led the people as a pillar of fire by night and as a cloud by day. (4) The alleged baptism by flying spray of the sea is out of harmony with

two Biblical facts: (i) the waters were congealed (Ex. 15:8); (ii.) the Israelites passed over by dry ground (Ex. 14:29). This forbids the sprinkling of rain as the baptism. Again, if spray had been blown across a channel wide enough to allow a company containing six hundred thousand men, besides children and cattle (Ex. 12:37), to cross in a single night, let the reader judge how “dry” the ground on the one side must have been! (5) Yes, the “Egyptians were immersed, and more than immersed; they were drowned; but the Israelites were simply baptized.”

Not all pædobaptists are inclined to cavil at 1 Cor. 10:1-2. Schaff would infer immersion from this very passage. So would Prof. Knowling. Plummer gives it as his opinion that:

“Being under the cloud points to submersion, while passing through the sea may signify emersion.” — Article on “Baptism,” in Hastings’ *Bible Dictionary*.

Meyer, on 1 Cor. 10:2, says of the preposition *en*, “in,” that it is local, ““indicating the element in which, by immersion and emergence, the baptism was effected.”

Alford comments:

“‘Received baptism to Moses;’ entered by the act of such immersion into a solemn covenant with God.” “The allegory is obviously not to be pressed minutely: for neither did they *enter* the cloud nor were they *wetted by the waters* of the sea; but they *passed under* both, as the baptized passes under the water.” — Commentary on 1 Cor. 10:2.

## **1 Peter 3:20-21.**

Peter says:

“While the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls, were saved through water: which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism.”

Whereupon Mr. Madsen remarks:

“These eight souls — saved through water — were not immersed; that was reserved for the people who remained outside the ark.”

How does this help a man who says sprinkling or pouring is baptism? We thought the pouring also was reserved for the disobedient outsiders!

It was not a little sprinkling that either saved Noah's company or drowned the others! Peter says that Noah was saved by water; he also says that in a sense water (in the antitype, baptism) saves the Christians. There is nothing here inconsistent with the thought of immersion.

Prof. Knowling, E. H. Plumptre and other pædobaptists believe that the type of the Flood presupposes immersion as baptism.

### **Baptism of Three Thousand.**

From Acts 2:41 is inferred the baptism of three thousand persons in one day. Mr. Madsen says that "to assert that these were all immersed is to defy probability." He quotes Mr. Rooney as saying that such immersion "was a physical and geographical impossibility. Jerusalem is on a hill, and there is no pool of water in which people could be immersed."

There were acres of water within easy distance, including the following pools: Bethesda, Solomon's Pool, Siloam, Old Pool, Pool of Hezekiah, Upper and Lower Gihon. Josephus mentions places of bathing in the Tower of Antonia.

Mr. Madsen brings in the usual objection that the Jews would not allow their waters to be polluted. From John 5:1-4 and 9:7-11, we learn that such objection does not lie against Siloam and Bethesda. But it has been further objected that these pools were in the charge of the apostles' enemies; and so the use would be withheld. Mr. Madsen hints at this when he remarks on the improbability of water being available "for the sake of Christian baptism in the city which crucified Jesus Christ." It is wonderful how often the Scriptures contain answers to modern objectors: Luke annihilates the above objection when he says that the disciples had "favor with all the people" (Acts 2:47). but Mr. Rooney says it was a physical impossibility! How many qualified baptizers were there? We know not; there were twelve apostles, but numbers besides, for the company of disciples amounted to one hundred and twenty (Acts 1:15), and it was long before the days when clerical hands alone were supposed to validate the sacraments. But suppose only the twelve apostles officiated. If Peter spoke for three hours (he began about 9 a.m.; see Acts 2:15), then baptizing could begin at noon. A man can easily immerse another in a minute; twelve could baptize

twelve in a minute, seven hundred and twenty in an hour, and three thousand in four hours and ten minutes. So the apostles could have done it all themselves in an afternoon, with time enough to take a rest for one hour and three quarters in the middle of their work. Still, someone may say: You cannot do baptizing according to the rule of three; theoretically it could be done, but, practically, not so. Well, in the Telugu country in India, on July 3rd, 1878, there were 2,222 baptized in one day. At six o'clock in the morning two native preachers took their place in the river. When these two became tired, two others took their places, and they in turn were relieved by still other two. At eleven the work stopped for the usual midday meal and rest. It was resumed at two, and about five o'clock the 2,222 converts had been "buried with Christ in baptism" by six men, only two of them officiating at the same time.

Not all pædobaptists write foolishly about "a physical and geographical impossibility." E. H. Plumptre, in *Ellicott's New Testament Commentary*, says of the baptism of the three thousand:

"(1) Immersion had clearly been practiced by John, and was involved in the original meaning of the word, and it is not likely that the rite would have been curtailed of its full proportions at the very outset. (2) The symbolic meaning of the act required immersion in order that it might be clearly manifested, and Rom. 6:4 and 1 Pet. 2:21, seem almost of necessity to imply the more complete mode. The pools or swimming-baths of Bethesda and Siloam (see John 5:7; 9:7), or the so-called Pool of the Virgin, near the Temple enclosure, or the bathing-places within the Tower of Antony (Jos. Wars, V. 5, section 8), may well have helped to make the process easy."

What of Rev. Rooney's "no pool" and "geographical impossibility" after this?

### **Baptism of the Samaritans.**

Of the baptisms recorded in Acts 8:12, Mr. Madsen writes:

"A similar difficulty as to the water supply has to be met in conceiving the Samaritan revival, with the subsequent baptism of multitudes, as being by immersion. If this transpired in the capital city, it would appear that Jacob's Well was its reservoir. Upon that supposition, it is to be remembered that, in Christ's time a woman

of the city came out to the well to draw water. It is scarcely thinkable that the well could be used for immersing the converts, since the woman of Samaria knew of no other place where water could be had" (p. 111).

No passage in *The Question of Baptism* shows more confusion or inaccuracy than this. Nobody ever suggested, in spite of Mr. Madsen's implication, that "the Samaritan revival" was "by immersion"! Mr. Madsen calmly takes it for granted that "the capital city" was the city from which the woman of Samaria referred to in John 4 came to draw water at Jacob's Well. John 4:3 definitely tells us that Sychar was the city to which Jesus came. Now Sychar was not "the capital city." The capital city was of old called Samaria, and since the time of Herod the Great Sebaste; it was miles away from Jacob's Well.

Nobody with knowledge of Palestinian geography fancies that the people of "the capital city" were dependent upon Jacob's Well for drinking or baptizing. The city of Sebaste had plenty of water of its own. Josephus says Hyrcanus "brought streams to drown it"; while this could only refer to the lower part of the city, it is clear that there was water enough nearby. Sir Charles Wilson refers to "two fine springs" in the vicinity of the modern village, "from which small streams flow for a short distance." I may add that while it used to be debated whether Luke in Acts 8:5 referred to "a city of Samaria," or to the capital city, the revisers, because of the weight of manuscript authority, have adopted the reading "*the* city of Samaria." This means "the capital city." Further, when Mr. Madsen says "the woman of Samaria knew of no other place where water could be had," he pens what he must know he could not prove if his life depended upon it.

We must express our sorrow at having to answer such an argument as that which we have quoted above from *The Question of Baptism*. Whether it was due to the lamentable ignorance of the author thereof, or to his unbounded confidence in the ignorance of those he would be likely to succeed in keeping from baptism, we do not know.



### **Ezekiel 36:25.**

The Methodist tract previously referred to cites Ezekiel 36:25 as deciding by “word of prophecy” that sprinkling is baptism. It says: —

“How perfectly the change of heart in His people is described. Dr. Guthrie called it ‘the Gospel in Ezekiel.’ And God symbolizes it by the sprinkling of water. ‘Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean. From all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you.’ Is anything more beautiful than that?”

No; nothing is more beautiful than that; and nothing is more gratuitous or incapable of proof than that the prophecy refers to baptism. There is no such identification in Scripture. The tract writer refers to Dr. Guthrie. Guthrie in his book, *The Gospel in Ezekiel*, correctly describes the “clean water” referred to by Ezekiel. He calls our attention to Num. 19, where the “water of separation” or purification is described. Guthrie writes:

“The water is such as the Jews understood by *clean* water — not free from impurity, and in itself clean, but that maketh clean — in the words of the ceremonial law, ‘water of purifying.’ This was prepared according to a divinely appointed ritual. Look how it was prepared, and you shall see it reddening and changing into blood” (p. 244).

After alluding to Num. 19 and the ashes of the red heifer therein referred to, Guthrie says:

“These [the ashes], being carefully collected, are mixed with pure water in a pure vessel — and that water is the *clean* water of my text” (p. 245).

Guthrie rightly finds such water typical of something higher even than baptism. A century ago the challenge was made by Alexander Campbell that anyone would show where sprinkling or pouring mere water on any person for any moral, ceremonial or religious use, was ever done by the authority of God since the world began. The challenge is not met by referring to Ezek. 36:25; for illustrious paedobaptists confess that that “clean water” was not water by itself. The sprinkling of Ezek. 36:25, moreover, was done by God; baptism in water has been committed to Christ’s disciples as their work, and for the performance of that there is a going

down into the water, a burial therein, and a coming up out of the water.

# The Evil of Infant Sprinkling.

“Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” — MATT. 5:19.

“It is highly necessary that we remind ourselves, how great presumption it is to make light of any institutions of divine appointment; that our obligations to obey all God’s commands whatever are absolute and indispensable; and that commands merely positive, admitted to be from him, lay us under a moral obligation to obey them, an obligation moral in the strictest and most proper sense.” — BISHOP BUTLER, in *The Analogy of Religion*.

There are to be found many people who confess that in apostolic days believers were immersed, but who acquiesce in the change to the sprinkling of water upon infants. After all, what does it matter? There are some who look upon the discussion regarding baptism as a dispute concerning such a little thing that it makes no difference whichever way it is decided. Convenience, taste, custom, seem to settle it one way or another: why should not each way be equally good? We wish therefore to make a brief statement of some reasons why we cannot agree that infant baptism or sprinkling is as good as the immersion of a penitent believer.

1. There is the question of divine warrant to be considered. Ministers of all pædobaptist churches repeat over infants, “I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Not one of them can show any authority from Father, Son or Holy Spirit. Love of truth and reverence for God’s name should keep us from using the Divine name without warrant.

2. Shall we do what God asks in the way he asks? Infant baptism v. believers’ baptism, sprinkling v. immersion, is another way of saying disobedience v. obedience. Is obedience to God not an important enough thing for us to insist upon? Were we to allow that baptism is a little thing, still would not love to Christ make us regard that little thing he asks? Read the text at the head of this article, and see the Savior’s opinion about obedience to little commands.

3. Infant sprinkling tends to destroy the unity of the Spirit. See Eph. 4:5; there is “one baptism.” We have quoted the admissions

of many pædobaptists that infant baptism and sprinkling were not found in apostolic days. If the “one baptism” is for Paul necessary to “the unity of the Spirit,” and if Christian Union is necessary for the conversion of the world, than it is a serious thing to put something else in place of the baptism for which we have explicit Scriptural authority.

4. There is often serious harm done to the subject of infant baptism. We frequently hear it said: “Well, at least it can do the child no harm.” Is this so? What happens in the case of many “baptized” in infancy who grow up in a manifestly unconverted state? “Thousands grow up with the belief that in infancy they were made Christians — they speak of ‘Our Savior’ and go now and then to church. That they are not Christians never enters their heads. Tell them so, and they indignantly ask whether you think them Jews or Pagans. Were they not born in a Christian land? and were they not made children of God in holy baptism? But for this delusion they might be brought to discern their true condition; and such discernment would lead in many instances to deep concern and true conversion.”

5. It is sad to think how sprinkling of water on unconscious infants for baptism has obscured the symbolism of the ordinance. He who reads Rom. 6:3-4 should learn that immersion is not a purely arbitrary requirement. Our Lord Jesus died, was buried, and rose again: Paul lets us know that these are the great facts of the gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-4), the ground of our hope. Every time a penitent believer is baptized, the great facts are in act confessed. The believer has died to sin, is buried with Christ, and rises from the watery grave to walk in a new life. Conybeare and Howson, the well-known Church of England writers, say:

“Baptism was (unless in exceptional cases) administered by immersion, the convert being plunged beneath the surface of the water to represent his death to the life of sin, and then raised from this momentary burial to represent his resurrection to the life of righteousness. It must be a subject of regret that the general discontinuance of this original form of baptism (though perhaps necessary in our northern climates) has rendered obscure to popular apprehension some very important passages of Scripture.”

We altogether disagree with the parenthetical words in the above; but the writers’ remarks are otherwise noteworthy.

It would be well for all to do just what God would have them do, and to trust the Divine Wisdom, which will lay upon us no unreasonable command. God wishes us to become “obedient from the heart to that form of teaching” delivered by him (Rom. 6:17).

“Thy will is good and just,  
Shall I Thy will withstand?  
If Jesus bids me lick the dust,  
I bow at His command.”