

# The Ante-Nicene Fathers

## On Baptism.

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By REV. ROBERT W. SANDERS.

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“ Prove all things ; hold fast that which is good.”—I Thes. 5:21 .

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## PREFACE.

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With the humble desire that this little volume may do some good, the undersigned sends it forth to take its chances among the many books to the making of which there is no end.

Let the reading public be charitable towards its imperfections, and may the Lord of the Truth bless its modest mission!

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CHESTER, SOUTH CAROLINA,

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## THE ANTE-NICENE FATHERS ON BAPTISM.

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### INTRODUCTION.

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Perhaps no class of religious writings have received more erroneous treatment than the works of the Fathers. By some their value has been overrated; by others underrated. There are those who have regarded them as "dogmatic authorities" in the settlement of certain principles and practices of Christianity. In consequence of this too great veneration of the Fathers they have been placed upon a level with the inspired writers themselves.

As a rebound from this extreme, too many have gone to the opposite course of throwing them aside to be altogether ignored and neglected.

It is well for us to strike "the golden mean" and value them for what they are and for what they are really worth. And to the end that we may be helped to deal wisely with the Church Fathers the following is copied as a timely sug-

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gestion from a late writer in the *Sunday School Times*:

“We are ready to criticise their opinions like those of other writers, to discriminate between the truth and error in their pages, to cross-examine their testimony and weigh their arguments, to discover which of the books assigned to them are genuine and which are spurious—in short, to study them by the methods of historical criticism, and then to value them for what they may be proved to be worth. So used, the Church Fathers are of very great value to the thoughtful Christian reader.” (See *S. S. Times*, January 18th, 1890, p. 30, Article by Rev. Geo. T. Purves, D.D.)

If carefully read, the Fathers will throw much light upon the faith and practice of the early Christians. Sometimes they beautifully accord with the teachings of our New Testament, and again they are painfully at variance with the spirit and letter of the Holy Word. They leave with us, as we glance through them, an impression of the unity, completeness and adaptedness of our blessed religion. They furnish us with much that is valuable in the way of Christian evidences—much in the line of polemical implements with which to batter down the bul-

works of even "modern infidelity," so-called.

But apart from this general interest in the Fathers, they are of special, though more limited value, in respect of their teachings in relation to Christian Baptism.

It is to the general drift of their writings in this last particular that we propose having reference in the excerpts which are to follow. In presenting these extracts to the reading public with some brief discussion and comments upon them, we shall rely, in large measure, in our quotations, upon the American Reprint of the Edinburgh Edition (English) of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, sent out by the "Christian Literature Publishing Company," from Buffalo, in 1885.

These patristic works are not often found even in the tolerably good private libraries; and in those of the ordinary home, consisting usually of a meagre supply of good books, the writings of the Fathers are almost entirely unknown.

Hence it may not be justly regarded as a matter of the least importance that some short selections from their productions should be placed before the common reader. Circumstances which, we trust, are not unfruitful of

profit, have led to the proposed undertaking. Let it be in no polemical or unkind spirit that the task before us is assumed.

Controversy, in the common acceptance of the term, is neither intended nor desired. We only aim to search for and to exhibit the truth, remembering that conservative disputation may serve important ends.

The writer would here gratefully acknowledge his indebtedness to his beloved brother, Rev. J. Hartwell Edwards, for the use of certain volumes and for a few kind suggestions. Also to his revered friend and most honored teacher, Rev. John A. Broadus, D.D., LL.D., for some helpful quotations from the Greek of Justin Martyr and the Latin of Cyprian and Irenaeus, their original writings not being in hand while the labor of copying was being done.

**THE ANTE-NICENE FATHERS ON BAPTISM.**

## CHAPTER I.

There is, as it would seem, a somewhat widespread and popular notion that the teachings of the Fathers very strongly, if not uniformly, support infant baptism sprinkling and pouring. But is this really the case? Let us see.

Some of the "Apostolic Fathers," so-called—(as for example Clement, of Rome, Hermas, Ignatius and Polycarp)—have so little to say concerning baptism at all that it is scarcely worth while to quote them. And yet we will call attention to the following brief passages:

Clement, in the second epistle attributed to him, but whose genuineness is doubtful, speaks of "keeping our baptism pure and undefiled." (Section 6.)

Ignatius (to the church at Smyrna) says it is not lawful to baptize "without the bishop." (Section 8.)

To Polycarp Ignatius says: "Let your baptism be to you as armor, faith as a helmet, love as a spear, patience as a panoply." (Section 6.)

Hermas in "Pastor," Bk. I, vision 3, chap. 3, p. 14, says: "Hear then why the tower is built upon waters. It is because your life has been, and will be, saved through water." Again in "Pastor," Bk. III, Similitude IX, chap. XVI, p. 49, Hermas remarks: "The seal then is the water: they descend into the water dead, and they arise alive . . . Accordingly they descended with them into the water, and again ascended."

In some of these passages, there is the outcropping of the notion of baptismal regeneration, but no support for pouring and sprinkling, nor for infant baptism.

The exact date of some of these writers, called "Apostolic Fathers," is difficult of decision. From the best evidence available, they seem to range from the last part (near the close) of the first century up to the latter part of the second century. Clement of Rome, according to some, died about 91 A. D.; Barnabas, A. D. 100; Ignatius, A. D. 114; Polycarp, in the year 167; while in the "American Reprint" of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hermas is placed

at A. D. 160. Again, it will be remembered that some critics regard it highly probable that the works ascribed to Barnabas and Hermas were written, not by themselves, but by some Christian in their names, during the second century. (See Cramp, "Catechism on Baptism," page 15.)

In his estimable work on "The Act of Baptism," Doctor Henry S. Burrage quotes from Barnabas and Hermas. (See pp. 38-40.)

With regard to the Epistle of Barnabas, he says: "Now believed to have been written before A. D. 119"; and with reference to Hermas, he remarks, "*The Shepherd*, attributed by Irænæus, Tertullian, and Origen to Hermas, . . . but now believed by many to have been the work of an unknown writer of the middle of the second century."

From those writings that are attributed to Barnabas (A. D. 100) we copy the following:

"Blessed are they, who, placing their trust in the cross, have gone down into the water." (See "Epistle of Barnabas," ch. XI, p. 144, on Psalm 1:3-6.)

In commenting upon Ezekiel, 47:12, Barnabas says, in the same connection (ch. XI), "This meaneth that we indeed descend into

the water full of sins and defilement, but come up bearing fruit in our heart, having the fear [of God] and trust in Jesus in our spirit."

Does not this language of Barnabas clearly point to his view of the *act* in baptism and also to the qualifications of a subject suitable for the rite? Immersion and capacity for exercising faith must have been in mind, whatever mistake there was as to the efficacy of the water.

**THE ANTE-NICENE FATHERS ON BAPTISM.**

## CHAPTER II.

*Justin Martyr*, A. D. 110-165, in First Apology, ch. lxi, p. 183, on "Christian Baptism," says:

"I will also relate the manner in which we dedicated ourselves to God when we had been made new through Christ; lest, if we omit this, we seem to be unfair in the explanation we are making. As many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting for the remission of their sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them. Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerate. For in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water. For Christ also said, "Except ye be

born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Here it is interesting to quote Dr. Philip Schaff on "The Teachings of the Twelve," p. 30. He refers to Justin's language as "*the next oldest description of baptism*" to that of "The Teaching" itself.

Again, on page 32 of "The Teaching" by Dr. Schaff ("*Baptism in the Didache*"), he remarks, "Justin Martyr, when he says that the converts were led to a place "where there is water," means probably a river; since water sufficient for pouring or sprinkling could be had in every house."

In the same connection Dr. Schaff says, "The preference for a river was naturally derived from our Saviour's baptism in the Jordan." And he further says, "Tertullian represents it as a matter of indifference whether baptism take place in the sea, or in a lake, or a river, or in standing water, but he insists on *trine* immersion."

As to the significance of *baptizo* (the Greek word), he says, "Immersion must be meant" . . . "it is the proper meaning of the Greek word here used." Let it be remembered that Dr. Schaff is a Pedobaptist, Professor in Union Theological Seminary, and is here discussing

baptism in "*The Didache*" which he affirms "takes its place among the genuine documents of the Apostolic Fathers so-called—Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Ignatius, Barnabas, Hermas. "These writings," he adds, "fill the gap between the Apostles and the Church Fathers, from the close of the first to the middle of the second century."

*Justin Martyr*, ch. xiv, p. 201, in his "Dialogue with Trypho," says, "By reason, therefore, of this laver of repentance and knowledge of God, which has been ordained on account of the transgression of God's people, as Isaiah cries, we have believed, and testify that that very baptism which he announced is alone able to purify those who have repented; and this is the water of life. But the cisterns which you have dug for yourselves are broken and profitless to you. For what is the use of that baptism which cleanses the flesh and body alone? Baptize the soul from wrath and from covetousness, from envy and from hatred; and lo! the body is pure."

From all this it is evident that Justin taught neither infant baptism nor pouring and sprinkling.

And yet, eager to support the practice of in-

fant baptism by the testimony of the Fathers, some Pedobaptists have affirmed that Justin teaches or gives endorsement to this custom. But the facts of the case do not seem to make it correct to say that Justin even remotely refers to the practice of baptism in the case of infants. It is a matter of inference, and inference far-fetched at that, that he ever refers to infant baptism at all. In one case in which it is mistakenly claimed that Justin taught infant baptism it is curious to note the passage in the Greek from which it is inferred. The phrase is this: *Ematheteuthesan ek paidon*, which is correctly rendered, *were taught from childhood* (or from children).

Dr. G. J. Johnson ("Pedobaptist Sophistry Exposed," pp. 18-19), in commenting on this language of Justin, remarks: "Justin Martyr, in the quotation made from him above, does not say one word on *baptism*, nor does he speak of *infants*. The Greek words are *ematheteuthesan*, which means *were taught*, or *discipled*, and *ek paidon*, signifying *from childhood*, or *the period of youth*." In the English (American Reprint), from which we are quoting, the passage reads: "And many, both men and women, who have been Christ's disciples from childhood, remain

pure at the age of sixty or seventy years.”  
(See “First Apology,” ch. xv, p. 167).\*

\*The Greek of Justin is as follows:

*Καὶ πολλοὶ τινες καὶ πολλὰ ἐξήχοντοῦται καὶ  
ἐβδομηχοντοῦται, οἱ ἐκ παίδων ἐμαθητεύθησαν τῷ  
Χριστῷ, ἀφθοροὶ διαμένουσι.*

**THE ANTE-NICENE FATHERS ON BAPTISM.**

## CHAPTER III.

After Justin Martyr, let us turn now to Irenæus, A. D. 120-202. (See "Against Heresies," Bk. II, chap. xxii, § 4 and § 5.)

Speaking of Christ our Lord, Irenæus here says: "Being thirty (30) years old when He came to be baptized, and then possessing the full age of a Master (teacher), He came to Jerusalem so that He might be properly acknowledged by all as a Master . . . Being a Master, therefore, He also possessed the age of a Master, not despising or evading any condition of humanity, nor setting aside in Himself that law which He had appointed for the human race, but sanctifying every age by that period corresponding to it which belonged to Himself. For He came to save all through means of Himself—all, I say, who through Him are born again to God" (*Renascuntur in Deum*)—"infants, and children, and boys, and youths, and old men. He therefore passed through every age, becom-

ing an infant for infants, thus sanctifying infants; a child for children, thus sanctifying those who are of this age, being at the same time made to them an example of piety, righteousness, and submission; a youth for youths, becoming an example to youths, and thus sanctifying them for the Lord. So likewise He was an old man for old men, that He might be a perfect Master for all, not merely as respects the setting forth of the truth, but also as regards age, sanctifying at the same time the aged also, and becoming an example to them likewise. Then, at last, He came on to death itself, that He might be "the first-born from the dead, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence, the Prince of life, existing before all, and going before all."

In fairness to all, we here append the Latin sentence containing the phrase which is of special interest:

"Omnes enim venit per semetipsum salvare: omnes, inquam, *qui per eum renascuntur in Deum*, infantes, et parvulos, et pueros, et juvenos, et seniores. Ideo per omnem venit aetatem," etc.

With respect to the age and ministry of Jesus, Irenæus goes on to speak as follows:

“Now, that the first stage of early life embraces thirty years, and that this extends onwards to the fortieth year, every one will admit; but from the fortieth and fiftieth year a man begins to decline towards old age, which our Lord possessed while He still fulfilled the office of a Teacher, even as the Gospel and all the elders testify; those who were conversant in Asia with John, the disciple of the Lord, [affirming] that John conveyed to them that information. And he” (i. e. John) “remained among them up to the times of Trajan.”

As to this quotation from Irenæus, in a part of which some Pedobaptists imagine they see reference to infant baptism, we remark :

(1). The supposed reference is in the phrase, “*are born again unto God*,” which, as we have seen, is from the Latin, “*Renascuntur in Deum*.” Now, Irenæus is here talking of “regeneration” and not of baptism. He describes the Lord as passing through the different ages of life from that of infant to that of an old man, that He might “save all,” be “an example of piety,” etc., and might “sanctify” various ages. (2). It will be borne in mind that we have not the original works of Irenæus, but only the translations; and the English Editor says, “The text,

both Latin and Greek, is often most uncertain." (See Introductory Note," vol. I of Ante-Nicene Fathers, pp. 311-312). (3). Moreover, observe that not only is the term "*baptizo*" not used, but "*renascor*," so that he is writing of the "new birth." (4). Note also the reference to our Lord as having a ministry of ten years' duration and as living to be fifty years old!

In view of these facts, what reliance can be placed upon this quotation from Irenæus in the attempt to make it appear that he refers to infant baptism!

In a foot note as to this expression, "*renascuntur in deum*," the editor says he thinks it clear, from Bk 3, ch. 17, § 1, p. 444, that there is a reference here to baptism. But here again Irenæus' language is as follows: "And again, giving to the disciples the power of *regeneration* into God, He said to them, "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." But here it is strangely assumed that "the sacrament of baptism is 'the power of the regeneration into God'"; a doctrine not sustained by the New Testament nor taught at all except by those who believe in "baptismal regeneration."

So, upon the whole, it seems very clear that

Irenæus can not be fairly quoted as referring at all to infant baptism. Some other writings of Irenæus go towards the establishment of the same conclusion, e. g.:

In the Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 1, p. 574, are to be found two "Fragments from the last writings of Irenæus," (Fragments XXXIV and XXXVI). They were discovered, the editor tells us, in the year 1715 A. D. by [Christopher Matthew] Phaff, a learned Lutheran, in the Royal Library at Turin, the manuscripts from which they were taken not being catalogued nor classified, so that they have now disappeared from the collection. From the latter of these Fragments (36) we will quote some sentences to show that "being born again unto God" (spiritual regeneration) and "being baptized" are by no means equivalent terms with Irenæus.

Whatever may have been his mistake as to sharing the common error of his time with regard to the cleansing efficacy of water, he clearly had a profounder view of "spiritual regeneration" accompanying it. That it is an assumption to affirm that he means baptism in the words "*renascuntur in Deum*" we shall see when we hear him as follows:

“True knowledge, then, consists in the understanding of Christ, which Paul terms the wisdom of God hidden in a mystery, which ‘the natural man receiveth not,’ the doctrine of the cross, ‘of which if any man taste’ he will not accede to the disputations and quibbles of proud and puffed-up men, who go into matters of which they have no perception. For the truth is unsophisticated; and ‘the word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart,’ as the same Apostle declares, being easy of comprehension to those who are obedient. For it renders us like to Christ, if we experience the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings.’ For this is the affinity of the apostolical teaching and the most holy ‘faith delivered unto us,’ which the unlearned receive, and those of slender knowledge have taught, not ‘giving heed to endless genealogies, but studying rather [to observe] a straight-forward course of life; lest, having been deprived of the divine Spirit, they fail to attain to the kingdom of heaven. For truly the first thing is to deny one’s self and follow Christ, and those who do this are borne onward to perfection, having fulfilled all their Teacher’s will, *becoming sons of God by spiritual regeneration*, and heirs of the

kingdom of heaven, those who seek which first shall not be forsaken."

In connection with Irenæus, we will refer next to Clement, of Alexandria, (A. D. 153-217).

After Justin Martyr and Irenæus, Clement, of Alexandria, is conceded to be the founder of Christian literature. He was at the head of the Catechetical School at Alexandria. Alexandria was now "the earliest seat of Christian learning," and the "brain of Christendom." On pages 216-217 ("The Instructor") Clement says: "As, then, those who have shaken off sleep forthwith become all awake within; or rather, as those who try to remove a film that is over the eyes, do not supply to them from without the light which they do not possess, but removing the obstacle from the eyes, leave the pupil free; thus also we who are baptized, having wiped off the sins which obscure the light of the Divine Spirit, have the eye of the spirit free, unimpeded, and full of light, by which alone we contemplate the Divine, the Holy Spirit flowing down to us from above.  
. . . . And since knowledge springs up with illumination, shedding its beams around the mind, the moment we hear, we who were un-

taught become disciples. Does this, I ask, take place on the advent of instruction? You can not tell the time. For instruction leads to faith, and faith with baptism is trained by the Holy Spirit." Note the expressions—"faith with baptism," and "*instruction leads to faith.*"

Further on, Clement says:

"In the same way, therefore, we also, repenting of our sins, renouncing our iniquities, purified by baptism, speed back to the eternal light, children to the Father."

From all this we see that Clement refers to the proper subjects of baptism as those who profess faith and repentance. Though he regards them as "purified by baptism," thus attaching efficacy to the rite, yet they are such persons as could "repent of sin" and renounce iniquity." They were led by instruction to faith, and their faith was viewed as going along "with baptism."

**THE ANTE-NICENE FATHERS ON BAPTISM.**

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**CHAPTER IV.**

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We will now appeal to Tertullian, one of the very greatest of the Fathers (A. D. 145-220-240). Let us see what he teaches both as to the act and the suitable subjects of baptism.

In his "De Spectaculis," ch. iv, p. 81, he says: "Lest any one think that we are dealing in mere argumentative subtleties, I shall turn to the highest authority of our 'seal' itself. When entering the water, we make profession of the Christian faith in the words of its rule; we bear public testimony that we have renounced the devil, his pomp, and his angels." Note the words, "when entering the water, we make profession of the Christian faith . . . we bear public testimony," etc.

In his "De Corona," ch. iii, p. 94, Tertullian says: "To deal with this matter briefly, I shall begin with baptism. When we are going to enter the water, but a little before, in the pres-

ence of the congregation and under the hand of the president, we solemnly profess that we disown the devil, and his pomp, and his angels. Hereupon we are thrice immersed, making a somewhat ampler pledge than the Lord has appointed in the gospel."

In chapter vi, p. 661, "On Repentance," where he is urging that baptism is not to be presumptuously received, he says: "Moreover, a presumptuous confidence in baptism introduces all kind of vicious delay and tergiversation with regard to repentance; for, feeling sure of undoubted pardon of their sins, *men* meanwhile steal the intervening time, and make it for themselves into a holiday-time ('furlough') for sinning, rather than a time for learning not to sin."

On page 662, of the same, he remarks: "That *baptismal* washing is a sealing of faith, which faith is begun and is commended by the faith of repentance. We are not washed *in order that we may* cease sinning, but *because we have* ceased, since *in heart* we have *been* bathed already . . . And so it is becoming that learners *desire* baptism, but do not hastily *receive* it."

In his treatise "De Baptismo" (On Baptism), ch. i, p. 669, Tertullian says: "Happy is our

sacrament of water, in that by washing away the sins of our early blindness, we are set free *and admitted* into eternal life."

In ch. iv, pp. 670-671, his language is: "And accordingly it makes no difference whether a man be washed in a sea or a pool, a stream or a fount, a lake or a trough" ("standing water," says Dr. Schaff in *Didache*, p. 32); nor is there any distinction between those whom John baptized in the Jordan and those whom Peter baptized in the Tiber."

Surely, from these references of Tertullian to Christian baptism, it is plain enough as to his view of both the act of baptism and the qualifications for the sacred ordinance.

Speaking in ch. x of our Lord's question (Matt. 21:25; Mk. 11:30; Lu. 20:4) whether John's baptism was from heaven or of men, about which he says, "they were unable to give a consistent answer," he adds: "But *we*, with but as poor a measure of understanding as of faith, *are* able to determine that that baptism was *divine* indeed, (yet in respect of 'the command, not in respect of efficacy too, in that we read that John was *sent by the Lord* to perform this duty')." "

In ch. xi, "On Baptism," Tertullian refers

to the objection that "the Lord did not baptize," in such language as to show that he held to the view that John and Christ's disciples afterwards practiced the same baptism; in other words, that John's was Christian baptism. "And thus it was with the self-same 'baptism of John' that his disciples used to baptize, as ministers, with which John before had baptized as forerunner. Let none think it was some other, because no other exists, except that of Christ subsequently."

According to Tertullian, therefore, John's baptism was indeed "from heaven;" it was the same, too, as that afterwards practiced by the disciples and was "divine" and, in respect of the act and the subject, forever binding.

That we may clearly see how vigorously Tertullian opposed Infant Baptism, let us quote his language as found in chapter xviii, p. 677, 678, 679, in his treatise "On Baptism."

"But they whose office it is, know that baptism is not rashly to be administered. 'Give to every one who beggeth thee' has a reference of its own, appertaining especially to almsgiving. On the contrary, this *precept* is rather to be looked at carefully: 'Give not the holy thing to the dogs, nor cast your pearls before swine;

and, lay not hands easily on *any*; share not other men's sins.' If Philip so 'easily' baptized the chamberlain, let us reflect that a manifest and conspicuous evidence that the Lord deemed him worthy had been interposed. The spirit had enjoined Philip to proceed to that road; the eunuch himself, too, was not found idle, nor as one who was suddenly seized with an eager desire to be baptized; but after going up to the temple for prayer's sake, being intently engaged on the divine Scripture, was thus suitably discovered—to whom God had, unasked, sent an apostle, which one again the Spirit bade adjoin himself to the chamberlain's chariot . . . .

And so, according to the circumstances and disposition, and even age of each individual, the delay of baptism is preferable, principally, however, in the case of little children. For why is it necessary—if (baptism itself) is not necessary—that the sponsors likewise should be thrust into danger? Who, both themselves, by reason of mortality, may fail to fulfill their promises, and may be disappointed by the development of an evil disposition, *in those for whom they stood?* The Lord does indeed say, 'Forbid them not to come unto me.' Let them 'come,' then, while they are growing up; let

them 'come' while they are learning, while they are learning whither to come; let them become Christians when they have become able to know Christ. Why does the innocent period of life hasten to the 'remission of sins?' More caution will be exercised in worldly matters: so that one who is *not* trusted with earthly substance *is* trusted with divine! Let them know how to ask for salvation that you may seem (at least) to have given "to him that asketh . . . . If any understand the weighty import of baptism, they will fear its reception more than its delay: sound faith is sure of salvation."

In chapter xx, same subject, (pp. 678-679), Tertullian, in treating of preparation for and conduct after baptism, says, "They who are about to enter baptism ought to pray with repeated prayers, fasts and bendings of the knee, and vigils all the night through, and with the confession of all by-gone sins, that they may express the *meaning* even of the baptism" (of John). "They were baptized, saith the Scripture, 'confessing their own sins.' To us it is matter for thankfulness if we do *now* publicly confess our iniquities or our turpitudes. . . . 'Then,' some one will say, 'it becomes *us*, too, rather to fast *after* baptism.' Well, and who

forbids you, unless it be the necessity for joy and the thanksgiving for salvation?"

These somewhat long excerpts from the references made by Tertullian to baptism can leave no doubt of two things, viz.: (1) That Tertullian believed in and insisted upon immersion as essential to Christian baptism. (2) That he vigorously opposed Infant Baptism and did so for several reasons: (a) The importance of the sacred rite. (b) The unsuitableness of the age of infants. (c) The innocence of infants. (Though Tertullian held to the doctrine of original sin he believed one is not accountable for that, but only for actual sins, and that being the case, he held that there was no necessity for infants to be baptized.) (d) The necessity of instruction previous to baptism.

From the views expressed by Tertullian it would seem that he *could* have opposed infant baptism on the ground of expediency arising from the notion about sins committed after baptism. But he was clearly an unconditional opponent of it. (See Dr. Wm. Williams' Lectures on Church History.)

But some of the advocates of infant baptism tell us that Tertullian's opposition to the practice was unable to arrest it; that it went on in

spite of his influence, and that it must *therefore* have been Apostolical. To this we reply: There were other grievous errors, to-wit, the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, etc., which became very prevalent about this time. How would it do to argue that they, too, must have been Apostolical, since they appeared thus early and could not be successfully resisted by the influence of those who opposed them? For example, according to the ablest church historians, certain accompanying and preparatory ceremonies were connected with baptism as early as the second and third centuries, to-wit, exorcism (expulsion of the devil), breathing upon the candidates as a sign of imparting the Holy Spirit, the touching of the ears, the signing of the cross upon the forehead and breast, and, in Africa, the giving of salt as the emblem of the divine word. (See Schaff's History of the Christian Church, vol. II, pp. 486, 487.) These ceremonies in some cases even "overshadowed and obscured the original simplicity of the sacrament" (baptism).

When, therefore, it is affirmed that infant baptism is known to have been practiced at so early a period in the history of Christianity, and it could not be checked by the influence of

Tertullian and other opponents of the custom, and that *for this reason* it must have been Apostolical, we may reply that the argument proves too much. For, upon the same ground, we might infer that these other great evils named above were also Apostolical. Whereas, in fact, evangelical christendom rises up in condemnation of them as plainly unscriptural. Before leaving Tertullian, let the reader be reminded that he was the first of the Fathers to make unquestionable mention of infant baptism.

Though some think they see references to the practice in Justin Martyr and Irenæus, we have observed already that this view rests upon mere *inference*, and that the inference is erroneous and far-fetched.

And note especially that while Tertullian is a stickler for Apostolic authority and practice, he does not say to those holding to infant baptism that they are going against Apostolical precept and example. From this we may very well *infer* that they did not claim it *was* Apostolical, or else he, in so strenuously opposing it, would have insisted upon the fact that it was *not*.

**THE ANTE-NICENE FATHERS ON BAPTISM.**

## CHAPTER V.

Let us see, in the next place, something of the teachings of *Hippolytus*, who, though his history is Roman, is himself nevertheless a Greek. "He is the disciple of Irenæus, and the spirit of his lifework reflects that of his Master." He was born A. D. 170 and died A. D. 236, and was therefore partly contemporaneous with Tertullian, outliving the latter probably about (16) years. In his "Discourse on the Holy Theophany," § 2, p. 235, Hippolytus says, "But there is also that which is more honorable than all—the fact that Christ, the Maker of all, came down as the rain, and was known as a spring, and diffused Himself as a river, and was baptized in the Jordan. Oh, things strange beyond compare! How should the boundless river that makes glad the city of God have been dipped in a little water! The illimitable spring that bears life to all men, and has no end, was covered by poor and temporary

waters! He who is present everywhere, and absent nowhere—who is incomprehensible to angels and invisible to men—comes to the baptism according to His own good pleasure.”

On page 236, § 5, the same writer represents our Lord as saying to John, “Baptize me, John, in order that no one may despise baptism. I am baptized by thee, the servant, that no one among kings or dignitaries may scorn to be baptized by the hand of a poor priest. Suffer me to go down into the Jordan in order that they may hear my Father’s testimony, and recognize the power of the Son. ‘Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then at length John suffers Him.” And then immediately in description of this typical baptismal scene, Hippolytus quotes Matthew 3:16-17. “And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water,” etc.

And now, we ask, in all candor and seriousness, who can read these words of Hippolytus without receiving the impression that the writer was viewing the act performed by John as that of an immersion, and the example of Christ in that act as one for the imitation of all His followers in all the ages?

Such an act as that of pouring or sprinkling in the case of this baptism of Jesus was, in the conception of Hippolytus, out of the question.

But to go on quoting from the same writer, we find in § 10, on page 237, that he uses language which at once points unmistakably both to immersion and to faith and confession of sin on the part of the one who becomes a recipient of the holy rite. His words most surely do not imply either infant baptism or sprinkling or pouring. They can not be fairly or naturally interpreted as admitting of either, whatever may have been the writer's notion of the efficacy of the water.

“For he who comes down in faith to the laver of regeneration, and renounces the devil and joins himself to Christ; who denies the enemy and makes the confession that Christ is God; who puts off the bondage and puts on the adoption, he comes up from the baptism brilliant as the sun, flashing forth the beams of righteousness, and, which is indeed the chief thing, he returns a son of God and joint heir with Christ.”

**THE ANTE-NICENE FATHERS ON BAPTISM.**

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**CHAPTER VI.**

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As next in the list of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, we refer to the writings of Cyprian. He was born A. D. 200 and was converted in A. D. 246. In A. D. 248 he became Bishop of Carthage, holding that position until A. D. 258, when he suffered martyrdom.

Cyprian is the first of the Fathers to support Infant Baptism, and by reference to his 58th epistle (p. 353, vol. v of the Ant. FF.) it will be seen that, with all his earnestness in advocating the practice, he does not claim for it, in this letter to Fidus, any apostolic authority. He argues in favor of it upon the basis of kindness and benefit to the child that receives the sacrament. In § 2, page 354, he says, "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.' From this and many other like utterances, we conclude that Cyprian regarded baptism as a ceremony of divine efficacy. In other words, we readily see that he was a strong supporter of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration and the consequent necessity of baptism in order to salvation—an error which by this time had become very prevalent and which, with its evil tendencies and results, should be very greatly deplored.

As fitly describing the state of belief existing in the third and fourth centuries concerning baptism, we may here introduce the testimony of so able and clear a writer and ecclesiastical historian as Principal Cunningham, in his great work on "Historical Theology." (See Historical Theology, vol. I, pp. 203, 204.) Although this distinguished theologian was himself a Pedobaptist and referred to the ordinances as not only "signs," but "seals of spiritual blessings," he condemns the error of baptismal regeneration in the strongest and most unqualified terms when treating of the ceremonies of baptism and the Lord's Supper as they were viewed by many during the two centuries (3rd and 4th) already mentioned.

He says, "The symbolical character of the sacraments was soon more or less obscured or lost sight of, and some traces of the Popish principles of the *opus operatum*—i. e., some inherent power or efficacy of the ordinances themselves, irrespective of the faith and character of the recipient—began to make their appearance, which, in the progress of ignorance and corruption of the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, were gradually more and more developed."

"The first step," he continues, "in the progress of error in this matter was a confounding, more or less thoroughly, of the sign with the thing signified; and this gradually expanded into an ascription to the sacraments of a power of producing or conferring, by something like an inherent efficacy of their own, what they merely represented or symbolized. Before the end of the third century the fathers were accustomed to speak of baptism as being at once the remission of sin and the renovation of the moral nature . . . . Hence, baptism came at length to comprehend, and thereby shut out or abolish, so far as the professed doctrinal system was concerned, the great fundamental principle of justification by faith, and to be received as

a substitute for that great change of moral nature indispensable to salvation, which is effected by the Holy Spirit through the belief of the truth." Before closing his discussion of the unfortunate tendencies of the period under consideration, so far as baptism is concerned, Dr. Cunningham refers to baptismal regeneration as "an error, the maintenance of which may be confidently regarded as indicating an entire ignorance of the fundamental principles of the gospel."

Now, a very cursory reading, even, of the letter of Cyprian to Fidus, will reveal the reason of his vigorous advocacy of infant baptism. In his case, as in the case of all the first supporters of the practice, the importance of it was magnified and the custom itself was begun from the belief of a magical and mysterious efficacy which was conceived as inhering in the rite. Hear him again (§ 3 and 4): "For God," he says, "as He does not accept the person, so does not accept the age; since He shows Himself a Father to all with well-weighed equality for the attainment of heavenly grace. For, with respect to what you" (Fidus) "say, that the aspect of an infant in the first days after his birth is not pure, so that any one of us would

still shudder at kissing it, we do not think that this ought to be alleged as any impediment to heavenly grace. . . . For although the infant is still fresh from its birth, yet it is not such that any one should shudder at kissing it in giving grace and making peace; since in the kiss of an infant every one of us ought, for his very religion's sake, to consider the still recent hands of God themselves, which in some sort we are kissing, in the man lately formed and freshly born, when we are embracing that which God has made."

Again, he continues (§ 5): "For which reason we think that no one is to be hindered from obtaining grace by that law which was already ordained, and that spiritual circumcision ought not to be hindered by carnal circumcision, but that absolutely every man is to be admitted to the grace of Christ, since Peter also in the Acts of the Apostles speaks, and says, 'The Lord hath said to me that I should call no man common or unclean.'"

To all this, add his words in § 6, and we see how plain it is that Cyprian would have infants baptized on the ground of compassion to the child and with the idea of spiritual profit which must be wanting in case there was a refusal to

allow the child to be baptized. "And, therefore, dearest brethren," he says, "this was our opinion in council, that by us no one ought to be hindered from baptism and from the grace of God, who is merciful and kind and loving to all. Which, since it is to be observed and maintained in respect of all, we think is to be even more observed in respect of infants and newly-born persons, who on this very account deserve more from our help and from divine mercy, that immediately, on the very beginning of their birth, lamenting and weeping, they do nothing else but entreat."

Now then, from the fact that the first distinct and undoubted reference to infant baptism in the Church Fathers was made by Tertullian (A. D. 145-220-240), and that he, in mentioning it, most vigorously opposed it, giving clear and unmistakable reasons for his opposition, and yet in his argument against it does not even hint that any apostolic authority was claimed for it by those whom he was opposing; and from the fact that the first of the Fathers who supported infant baptism was Cyprian (A. D. 200-258), and that he, in so earnestly giving sanction to it, does not plead for it any apostolic precept or example, but argues for it upon the

ground of "mercy and grace," "heavenly grace," and the like, to the child, while on the other hand he speaks of the refusal of baptism to infants as that which "hindered from obtaining grace," and affirmed that "absolutely every man is to be admitted to the grace of Christ,"—from all this, what may we legitimately conclude was true in respect of infant baptism in the light of its earliest history?

The following deductions, it does seem to us, may be safely made from the facts of the case:

(1). That infant baptism did not arise till towards the close of the second or the early part of the third century, A. D.

(2). That its rise was gradual.

(3). That it had to beat its way into common practice in the face of vigorous opposition as an error of deplorable tendencies.

(4). That when it first appeared it was not claimed to be apostolical, but

(5). Was advocated by its ablest defendants upon the ground of spiritual benefit to the child.

(6). It was an outgrowth of the doctrine of "baptismal regeneration" and the idea of the consequent necessity of baptism in order to salvation.

(7). In tracing in the Fathers the relation

between the practice of infant baptism and the doctrine of "baptismal regeneration" we not only find that the one was the result of the other, but that the teachings of the Fathers are far more uniform and vigorous in favor of "baptismal regeneration" than they are in favor of infant baptism. So that, finding neither of these doctrines taught in the New Testament, it would hardly seem logical or consistent to advocate infant baptism because supported by the Fathers, and yet condemn and reject the doctrine of "baptismal regeneration" notwithstanding it is even more strongly supported by them. And if the one, as Principal Cunningham so firmly believed, contravenes "the fundamental principles of the gospel," how shall we reconcile the other with those same "fundamental principles?" If the one tends to obscure or set aside, in its practice and logical outcome, the cherished principle of "justification by faith," should we not most carefully weigh the tendencies of the other?

Before closing with Cyprian, it is interesting to note a distinction which he observes between the Act done in what is called "Clinic Baptism" and that in an immersion. His language is such as to show that he regarded immersion,

and not sprinkling or pouring, as the Act done in Christian Baptism. At any rate, while conceiving "Clinic Baptism" to be legitimate, he recommends that the subject of baptism ("sprinkling of the water"), if not satisfied in case of recovery from his sick bed, "*should seek to be baptized.*"

We will quote from Epistle 75, § 12 and § 13, pp. 400, 401, vol. v, Ant. Fathers. (Oxford Ed., Epist. 69.) Cyprian is here writing to "Magnus, On Baptizing the Novatians, and Those who obtain Grace On a Sick Bed." He says, "You have asked, also, dearest son, what I thought of those who obtain God's grace in sickness and weakness, whether they are to be counted legitimate Christians, for that they are not to be washed, but sprinkled with the saving water. . . . As far as my poor understanding conceives it, I think that the divine benefits can in no respect be mutilated and weakened."

Further on he says, "Whence it appears that the sprinkling also of water prevails equally with the washing of salvation." And again, referring to "clinics" (§ 13, p. 401), he remarks, "Or if any one think that those have gained nothing by having only been *sprinkled* with the saving water, but that they are still empty and

void, let them not be deceived, so as if they escape the evil of their sickness and get well, they *should seek to be baptized.*" Now, why this distinction between "*having only been sprinkled*" and the "*be baptized,*" if the latter, as to the *act* in the sacred rite, was not an immersion while the other was but a substitute resorted to in the case of a "*clinic*"—one upon a sick bed—and therefore not in a condition, as it was conceived, to receive baptism by immersion? Certainly this is an important distinction which Cyprian here draws. It must be viewed as throwing light upon the origin of sprinkling as a substitute for baptism. It took its rise, just as the practice of baptizing infants did, from the notion of the efficacy of the rite. As the baptism of one was regarded necessary to his regeneration and salvation, and in the case of his being on a sick bed he could not "*be baptized,*" let him be "*sprinkled* with the saving water." It therefore becomes easy to trace the beginning of both infant baptism and of sprinkling back to the belief of baptismal regeneration.

To some it will be matter of interest to place here from Cyprian the Latin words which he employs to signify respectively, "to wash," to "sprinkle," to "affuse," to "baptize."

For “*washed*” he uses *loti*; for “*sprinkled*,” *perfusi* and *aspergi*; for “*affused*,” *perfundi*; for “*baptize*,” as in the expression, “*they should seek to be baptized*,” the word is *baptizentur*, which is a form of *baptizo*, *baptizare*, etc., this last being transferred from the Greek *baptizo*, just as is true of the English, “*baptize*.”

**THE ANTE-NICENE FATHERS ON BAPTISM.**

## CHAPTER VII.

In volume vii of the American Reprint of the Edinburgh Edition of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, what is known as "The Constitutions of the Holy Apostles" forms a conspicuous part. The date of these has been variously fixed in the third and fourth centuries, some placing them in the latter part of the third century, while others regard them as being of considerably later date. As a matter of fact, it seems they are a compilation whose materials, no doubt, differ in age, the entire work not being later probably than the fourth century.

At all events, they appear in the volume of the Ante-Nicene Fathers as above referred to (vol. vii), and are classed with the literature of the Church Fathers of that age.

In Book iii, chapter 18, p. 431, in treating "Of What Character He Ought To Be Who Is Initiated," the "Constitutions" read thus: "But let him that is to be baptized be free from all

iniquity; one that has left off to work sin, the friend of God, the enemy of the devil, the heir of God the Father, the fellow-heir of His Son; one that has renounced Satan, and the demons, and Satan's deceits; chaste, pure, holy, beloved of God, the son of God, praying as a son to his father, and saying, as from the common congregation of the faithful, thus: "Our Father which art in Heaven," &c.

Of course, no one would ever suppose this language to even *hint* at infant baptism.

Turning to Book vii, chapter 22, p. 469, we again read as follows: "But before baptism, let him that is to be baptized fast; for even the Lord, when He was first baptized by John, and abode in the wilderness, did afterwards fast forty days and forty nights. . . . But he who is to be initiated into His death ought first to fast, and then to be baptized. For it is not reasonable that he who has been buried *with Christ*, and is risen again with Him, should appear dejected at His very resurrection."

This again by no means points to infant baptism, or to sprinkling and pouring. It is clearly the immersion of one who, as an intelligent and responsible person, it is said, should fast and then be "initiated into His death" by being

*“buried with Christ.”* In chapters 40 and 41 of the same Book vii, page 476, we have directions concerning the Catechumen who “is to be baptized.” “Let him learn what concerns the renunciation of the devil, and the joining himself with Christ; for it is fit that he should first abstain from things contrary, and then be admitted to the mysteries. . . . Let, therefore, the candidate for baptism declare thus in his renunciation: I renounce Satan, and his works, and his pomps, and his worships, and his angels, and his inventions, and all things that are under him. And after his renunciation let him in his consociation say: And I associate myself to Christ, and believe, and am baptized into one unbegotten Being, the only true God Almighty, the Father of Christ, the Creator and Maker of all things, from whom are all things; and into the Lord Jesus Christ, His Only Begotten Son. . . . And I am baptized into the Holy Ghost, that is, the Comforter,” &c.

Once more: In Book viii, chapter 47, section 50, p. 503, we read: “If any bishop or presbyter does not perform the three immersions of the one admission, but one immersion, which is given into the death of Christ, let him be deprived; for the Lord did not say, ‘Baptize into

my death,' but 'Go ye and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' Do ye, therefore, O bishops, baptize thrice into one Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost, according to the will of Christ, and our constitution by the Spirit."

Here we have not simply immersion, but trine-immersion, there being one immersion required into the name of each Person of the Holy Trinity.

A few more quotations and we will close the subject of Christian baptism as it is presented in the writings of the Ante-Nicene Fathers.

*Origen* (A. D. 185-254) makes a significant reference to Baptism when, after referring to the crucifixion of our Lord and the Christian's conformity to His death, he alludes to the emblematic teaching of the Act in baptism as set forth by Paul in Romans, ch. vi: "So also His burial has an application to those who have been made conformable to His death, who have been both crucified with Him, and have died with Him; as is declared by Paul, 'For we were buried with Him by Baptism, and have also risen with Him.'" (See Book ii, chapter lxix, p. 459, *Origen* "Against Celsus.")

In Gregory Thaumaturgus (A. D. 205-265), in *Homily iv*, pp. 68-71, vol. vi, Ant. ff., we have a representation of baptism as an "Image of our regeneration as it is emblematically presented in these waters." . . . . "O river of Jordan, accompany me in the joyous choir, and leap with me, and stir the waters rhythmically, as in the movements of the dance; for thy Maker stands by thee in the body. Once of old didst thou see Israel pass through thee, and thou didst divide thy floods, and didst wait in expectation of the passage of the people; but now divide thyself more decidedly, and flow more easily, and embrace the stainless limbs of Him who at that ancient time did convey the Jews through thee." . . . "Immerse me" (he represents Christ as saying), "in the streams of Jordan, even as she who bore me wrapped me in children's swaddling clothes."

The Clementine Recognitions and Homilies (vol. viii, Antc. ff.) were probably written about the middle of the third century. While they boldly teach the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, they clearly make against infant baptism; e. g., in vol. viii, p. 132, *Recognitions of Clement*, Book iii, chapter 67, "Invitation to Baptism," we read: "When he (Peter) had

given them these and such like precepts, he made proclamation to the people, saying: 'Since I have resolved to stay three months with you, if any one desires it, let him be baptized; that, stripped of his former evils, he may for the future in consequence of his own conduct, become heir of heavenly blessings, as a reward for his good actions. Whosoever will, then, let him come to Zacchaeus and give his name to him, and let him hear from him the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. Let him attend to frequent fastings, and approve himself in all things, that at the end of these three months he may be baptized on the day of the festival. But every one of you shall be baptized in ever flowing waters, the name of the Trine Beatitude being invoked over him; he being first annointed with oil sanctified by prayer, that so at length, being consecrated by these things, he may attain a preception of holy things.' "

One more excerpt. It is made from what is called, "The Teaching of Simon Cephas in the City of Rome," and is found in vol. viii, p. 673, Antc. Fathers, under the head of "Ancient Syriac Documents." This "Teaching of Simon" seems to have been written about the time of

Eusebius whose church history runs up to about A. D. 324, and it shows that infant baptism was not then in contemplation by the writer. The passage reads: "For when we glorify the Father, we glorify the Son also with Him; and when we worship the Son, we worship the Father also with Him; and when we confess the Spirit, we confess the Father also and the Son; because in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Spirit, were we commanded to baptize those who believe, that they may live forever."

You see that faith is here set forth as a prerequisite to, or condition of, the act of baptism: "Commanded to *baptize those who believe.*"

**THE ANTE-NICENE FATHERS ON BAPTISM.**

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CHAPTER VIII.

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A review of the Ante-Nicene Fathers brings us up to the year 325 A. D. Their writings, including those of the Apostolic Fathers, as they are called, bridge the chasm, so to speak, between the Apostles themselves and the period in Church History which opens with the second quarter of the fourth century. To the writings of these Fathers there has been added the famous "Teaching of The Twelve" (*The Didache*). It appears in connection with the *Apostolic Constitutions*, in the "American Reprint of the Ante-Nicene Fathers." The celebrated document is contained in the manuscript of Bryennios, found in the Jerusalem Monastery in that "Greek quarter of Constantinople called Phanar." (*Schaff*). This treasure had lain unknown for eight hundred years. It was discovered in 1873 and a part of it was afterwards published in 1875. In 1878 it was more carefully examined, and in 1883 it was published in

the Greek text, and with notes in Greek by its learned discoverer and editor, Philotheos Bryennios, at Constantinople. The literary sensation produced by its publication, it will be remembered, was very great. "German divines" and others "fell upon the precious morsel with ravenous appetite."

Dr. Philip Schaff who published in 1885 a learned history of baptism in connection with this "Teaching of The Twelve," as it is called, refers to the manuscript as "The oldest Church Manual," and in speaking of the interest which it produced, and the "various estimates" of it, he says, "The cause of this unusual attention to an anonymous book of less than ten small octavo pages, is obvious. The post-Apostolic age from the destruction of Jerusalem (A. D. 70), to the middle of the second century, is the darkest, that is, least known in Church History. The newly discovered document promised a long desired answer to many historical questions. . . . Pedobaptists found in it a welcome argument for pouring or sprinkling. . . . Baptists pointed triumphantly to the requirement of immersion in living water as the rule, and to the absence of any allusion to infant baptism. . . . We must look at the Didache,

as on any other historical document, impartially and without any regard to sectarian issues."

. . . . "The *Didache* claims no Apostolic authority; it is simply the summary of what the unknown author learned either from personal instruction or oral tradition to be the teaching of the Apostles, and what he honestly believed himself." . . . "It takes its place among the genuine documents of the Apostolic Fathers, so-called,—Clement, of Rome, Polycarp, Ignatius, Barnabas, Hermas. These writings fill the gap between the Apostles and the Church Fathers, from the close of the first to the middle of the second century."

Dr. Schaff, then, regards the "*Teaching*" as furnishing a contribution to "that mysterious transition period between A. D. 70 and 150." Dr. John A. Broadus, in his great Commentary on Matthew, page 39, says the *Didache*, or "*Teaching*," was "written some time in the second century, probably in the latter half of the century."

In treating, therefore, of what the Fathers say upon the subject of baptism in the early centuries as following upon the age and inspired writings of the Apostles, it will be proper to introduce an excerpt or two from this notable contemporaneous document.

From Dr. Schaff, on the subject of "Baptism in the *Didache*" (p. 30), we will take the translation of chapter vii, with which may be compared that of the same writer on pages 184, 185, and 186 in the same work.

This extract will show what is set forth in *The Didache* on the subject of the ordinance of Christian Baptism:

"As regards Baptism, baptize in this manner: Having first given all the preceding instruction (on the Way of Life and the Way of Death, chs. i-vi), baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in living [running] water.

"But if thou hast not living water, baptize into other ( $\acute{\epsilon}\iota\tau\epsilon$ ) water; and if thou canst not in cold, [then] in warm [water]."

"But if thou hast neither [neither running nor standing, neither cold nor warm, in sufficient quantity for immersion], pour ( $\acute{\epsilon}\chi\chi\epsilon\iota\omicron\nu$ ) water on the head three times, into the name of Father and Son and Holy Spirit."

"But before Baptism let the baptizer and the candidate for Baptism fast, and any others who can; and thou shalt command him who is to be baptized to fast one or two days before."

After quoting and translating the *Didache* on

the subject of Baptism, Dr. Schaff remarks: "Baptism shall take place after preceding instruction in the Way of Life and the Way of Death. Nothing is said of Infant Baptism. The reference to instruction and the direction of fasting show that the writer has in view only the Baptism of catechumens, or adult believers. Christianity always begins by preaching the gospel to such as can hear, understand and believe."

Again, says Dr. S., with reference to the Act in baptism (pp. 32-33), "The normal and favorite mode of Baptism is threefold immersion 'in living water,' i. e., fresh, running water, either in a stream or a fountain, as distinct from standing water in a pool or cistern. Immersion must be meant, otherwise there would be no difference between the first mode and the last, which is aspersion or pouring. Besides it is the proper meaning of the Greek word here used. The preference for a river was naturally derived from our Saviour's Baptism in the Jordan."

He then speaks of "three exceptions" to immersion in living water, viz:

"(a) Baptism (by immersion) into other water (*εἰς ἄλλο ὕδωρ*), i. e. any other kind of (cold) water in pools or cisterns.

(b) Baptism (by immersion) in warm water (in the houses), when the health of the candidate or the inclemency of the climate or season may require it.

(c) Threefold aspersion of the head, where neither running nor standing, neither cold nor warm water is at hand in sufficient quantity for total or partial immersion." "The aspersion of the head," Dr. S. adds, "was the nearest substitute for total immersion, since the head is the chief part of man."

We see then both from the *Didache* itself (ch. vii), and from this distinguished Pedobaptist scholar's comments upon its teachings in regard to baptism, that it lends no support to infant baptism, and gives no countenance to any act in baptism but that of immersion, except in the case of an insufficiency of water of any kind (running, or standing, or cold, or warm) for even a *partial* immersion!

Now, just here it is pertinent to inquire, how often is it supposable that such an extreme case would arise as that of having not enough, and being unable readily to procure enough, of water,—(running, standing, cold, or warm)—to immerse in? Even granting the utmost that Pedobaptists might claim to be taught in the

*Didache* in favor of pouring or sprinkling, certainly it allows nothing but immersion except in a case of most peculiarly rigid necessity,—a necessity which is *practically* out of the question. For under what sort of circumstances shall we suppose one to be placed who could not obtain a sufficiency of water,—running, standing, cold, or warm,—“for total or partial immersion!”

And now, before laying aside the “Teaching” in this discussion, let us note one other striking thing in connection with its directions as to baptism, and that is its recognition of the fact that the Greek word *baptizo* does not signify to “pour,” but to “immerse.”

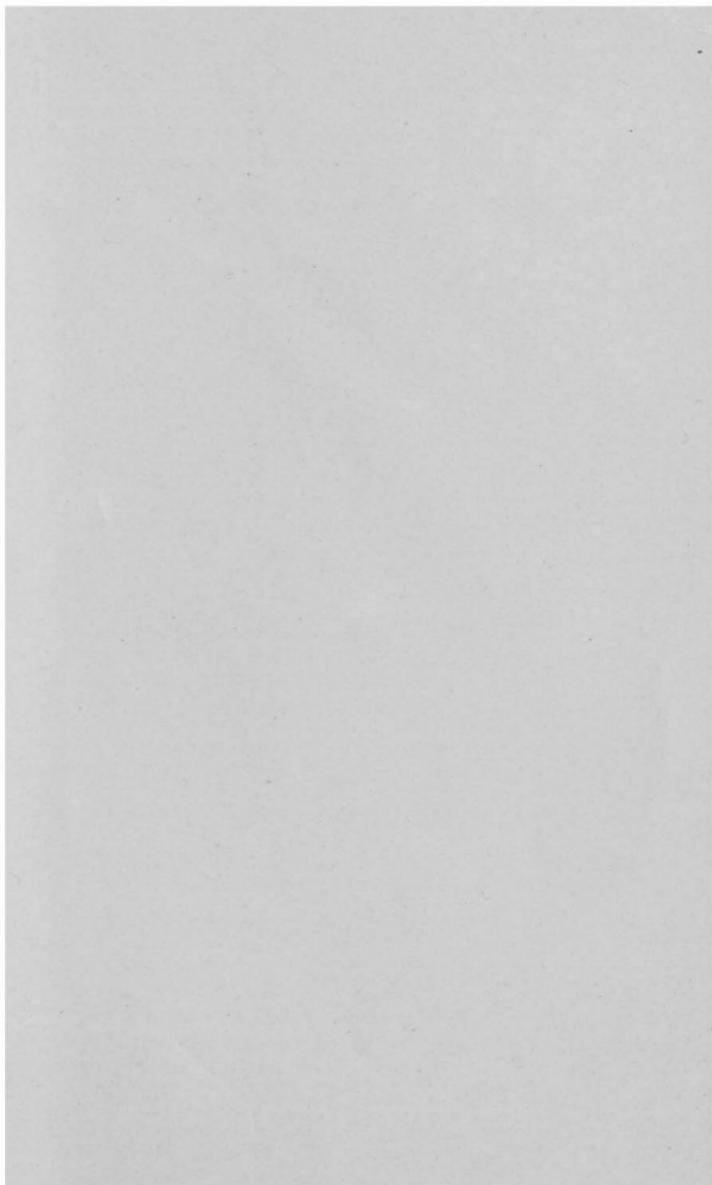
Its directions are to *baptize* (immerse), and then it is added that if that is not practicable on account of an insufficiency of water, “*pour* water thrice upon the head.”

In the one case *baptizo* is used, in the other case, *ekcheo*. Now, why this use of *ekcheo*, to *pour*, if *baptizo* ever means to pour? The very terms employed imply a distinction between the act done in *baptizing* and that done in *pouring*. The one is a totally different and unlike act from the other, and the *pouring* is not to be done *unless by necessity the other (the baptizing) is impossible*.

With this difference in the use of *baptizo* and *ekcheo* in the *Didache* may be compared that which everywhere obtains between the same two Greek words as they are used in the Greek of the New Testament. The word *baptizo* is *invariably* used in the New Testament when the ordinance of baptism is referred to, while the word *ekcheo*, to pour, is *never* so used. The same difference of usage occurs also in the case of *baptizo*, to "immerse," and *rantizo*, to "sprinkle." Like the New Testament, therefore, the "Teaching of the Twelve," on the one hand, gives no countenance to infant baptism; and on the other hand, its directions concerning baptism are such as to show that in the use of the word *baptizo* no act was contemplated but that of an immersion. When the circumstances rendered *that* act impossible, *another* might be resorted to in its place, viz., a *pouring*. And in order to express the latter act, *baptizo*,—the only word employed in the New Testament to signify what is done in baptism,—is laid aside and the word *ekcheo* is used. The significance of such usage is certainly plain as well as conclusive.

Dr. Schaff's criticism is appropriate and timely: "Immersion must be meant, otherwise

there would be no difference between the first mode and the last, which is aspersion or pouring. Besides it is the proper meaning of the Greek word here used." Dr. Schaff then adds: "The preference for a river was naturally derived from our Saviour's baptism in the Jordan." Thus we see that Dr. Schaff, a learned Presbyterian, in his able treatise on the *Didache*, only admits what the celebrated John Calvin (Institutes, vol. ii, p. 491) long ago granted as to the significance of the Greek word *baptizo*. Calvin says: "The very word *baptizo*, however, signifies to immerse; and it is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church."



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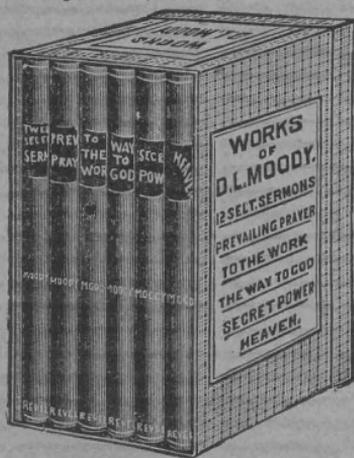
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