

# Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.  
Vol. XIV. No. 3.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, January 20, 1869.

WHOLE SERIES.  
Vol. XXXIII. No. 3.

## Religious.

### BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT AND FIRE.

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In Matthew iii. 11, it is written, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." Passages parallel or partly parallel to this are to be found, Mark i. 8, "But he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost;" Luke iii. 16, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire;" John i. 33, "The same is he that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost;" Acts i. 5, "But ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence;" xi. 16, "But ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." By a reference to the original it will be seen that in all these passages the preposition *en* is used in connection with the Holy Ghost. Matthew, Mark and John use the same preposition in connection with water, but Luke does not. He employs the dative case without a preposition. This he does both in his Gospel and in the Acts of the Apostles. Why he does so it is not material now to inquire. It is enough to know that, like the other Evangelists, when he speaks of baptizing with the Holy Ghost, he makes use of *en*.

It is of course essential to a correct exegesis of the passage before us (Matthew iii. 11) that it be accurately translated.—The scholarship of the age declares *immerse* to be the meaning of the Greek *baptizo* anglicized *baptize*. Everybody knows that "Ghost" should be superseded by "Spirit" and if, as Harrison, in his volume on *Greek Prepositions*, affirms, the English *en* comes through the Latin from the Greek *en*, it is plain that the latter should be rendered *in*. The passage then ought to read, "He will immerse you in the Holy Spirit and fire."

Two points claim attention: 1. Immersion in the Holy Spirit. 2. Immersion in fire. Let us proceed in the order indicated.

1. *Immersion in the Holy Spirit.* It is plain that this form of expression was suggested to John the Baptist by his administration of baptism in the Jordan. He doubtless meant to be understood as saying what was equivalent to this, namely: "As I put those I baptize under water, thus the Messiah (so much greater than I that I am not worthy to loose his sandals) will administer a superior baptism, and put those who receive it so fully under the influences of the Holy Spirit, that they may be said to be immersed in the Spirit." The word *baptize*, though perverted as to its meaning by Pedobaptists, is generally used, in its figurative sense, like the word *immerse*, to suggest the idea of abundance. The late unhappy war may be referred to as furnishing many illustrations of this fact. How often was it reported that fields of conflict were "baptized in blood," that there were "bloody baptisms," etc., etc. These forms of expression have become crystallized in our military literature. Does it enter into the mind of a sane man, when he hears of field of battle "baptized in blood," that there was but little blood shed? Never. The idea of copiousness at once presents itself, and he would feel fully authorized to say there had been a terrible slaughter. When the Hon. S. S. Prentiss, in his great speech at Washington in 1838, said that Kentucky's soil, in a certain contingency, would be "rebaptized with a new claim to the proud but melancholy title of the *dark and bloody ground*," did not every one understand him as meaning that there would be a copious effusion of blood? There was no other conception of his meaning.

Now this idea of copiousness is always presented in the New Testament when baptizing in the Holy Spirit is referred to.—And if it be asked why the word *baptize*, so suggestive of copiousness, is used in such a connection, the answer is, because the Gospel dispensation was to be pre-eminently the dispensation of the Spirit. As the Messiah was to be the administrator of this dispensation, we see a divine propriety in the words: "For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." That is, the

Spirit, in his unmeasured fulness of blessing, is placed at the sovereign disposal of the Messiah. In one place we read, "The Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified." This does not mean that the Spirit was not then in the world, nor that he had not been in the world in all ages; for "holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit;" but it means that in the programme of divine dispensations it was arranged for the copious, the abundant effusions of the Spirit to follow the glorification of Jesus. And this was historically true. It was ten days after the glorification of the Redeemer when the Spirit was given in Pentecostal munificence. Just before his ascension it was said, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence." Cornelius and his house received the same baptism, and doubtless it was received by believers in Samaria, Antioch, etc. It was sufficient, however, for what occurred on Pentecost, and in the family of Cornelius to be specified; for it virtually proclaimed that both Jews and Gentiles were partakers of the Spirit. National distinctions were abolished, and Gentiles were to be "of the same body" with Jews. Christ was to make out of the two "one new man." The phrase "baptism of the Holy Ghost" is used by many in a very inaccurate sense, as if the Holy Spirit himself is the administrator of the baptism.—It is not so. It is the exclusive prerogative of Jesus the Messiah to administer this baptism. The Spirit is designated as the element in which the baptism takes place, but the Messiah administers the baptism.—It is his right to do so, for the divine government is mediocrally administered, and Jesus is the Mediator.

It may shed some light on this subject, if we remember what scholars have often told us, namely: That the Hebrew word, and also the Greek term, translated *Spirit*, mean *air in motion, atmosphere, etc.* Air is essential to animal life. In its absence there can be no physical vitality.—So the Spirit of God is essential to divine life in the soul. There is no spiritual life without the Holy Spirit. From the Spirit goes forth a life-giving influence. This life-giving influence is where the Spirit is, and the Messiah puts the subjects of his grace under this influence. He immerses them in it. A recognition of this fact will make plain many Scriptural expressions.—For example, we read of being "in the Spirit," "praying in the Holy Spirit," "praying with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit," "living in the Spirit," "walking in the Spirit," etc. Why is a man *in* the Spirit? Because Jesus, the Messiah, has baptized, immersed him in the Spirit. Being in the Spirit, he can pray in the Spirit, he can pray in the Spirit, live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit; but he can do nothing in the Spirit till he is himself in the Spirit. All he enjoys in the sphere of Christian devotion, and all he does in the sphere of Christian activity, result from the promptings of the Spirit, whose influences, in their copiousness, supplied John with the baptismal analogy of which he availed himself in saying, "He will immerse you in the Holy Spirit."

It is proper to notice the fact that many passages of Scripture represent the Spirit as being *in* Christians. He is said to be "given" to them, to be "received" by them to "dwell" in them, etc.; and they are commanded to be "filled with the Spirit." While these forms of expression refer to the Holy Spirit as an indwelling and sanctifying agent, the phrase, "baptize in the Holy Spirit" represents him under the imagery of the baptismal element. Into this element Jesus baptizes; this is spiritual immersion. Surely, if the Spirit is in Christians, and if Christians are in the Spirit, the expression is not too strong to say they are immersed in the Spirit. And, indeed, no other phraseology can adequately present the meaning of the words "in the Spirit." Pedobaptists dwell on the fact that the Spirit is said to be "poured out." We admit it; but the pouring is no more baptism in the Spirit than the pouring of water into a baptistery is baptism in water. The pouring out of the Spirit does not justify the use of the words *in the Spirit*; but immersion in

the Spirit calls for, and vindicates the use of, these very words. What is here intended to be said is, that we divest the phrase *in the Spirit* of its meaning, unless we concede that the Messiah, in the baptism he administers, puts the subjects of his grace *in* the Spirit, so that they are enveloped in the Spirit, as the subjects of literal baptism are enveloped in water. Pedobaptists, with their views of the "baptism of the Holy Spirit," cannot tell how any one can get into the sacred place denoted by being *in* the Spirit. In other words, they cannot give a consistent interpretation of the phrase, *in the Spirit*: for in its baptismal connections it can be explained only on the hypothesis that baptism is immersion.

If asked whether I consider regeneration and baptism in the Holy Spirit synonymous I answer, Not strictly so. That is to say, the copious fulness of the Spirit's baptismal influences is such as to include his regenerating, sanctifying, witnessing, and indwelling operations.

But it is time to go to the second point.

#### 2. *Immersion in Fire.*

The general opinion of "fire-baptism" seems to be that it refers to what commentators call "the kindling, sanctifying fire of the Holy Ghost." See Lange on Matt. iii. 11, though he dissents from this view.—Dr. Schaff, his translator, says, however, "This prophecy was literally fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples in tongues of fire." This is a very unsatisfactory view of the matter. It would, perhaps, have never been thought of but for the words, "cloven tongues like as of fire," in Acts ii. 3. It is added, "and it, (that is, the fire, for it can refer to nothing else) sat upon each of them." If this was the fire-baptism, that much-abused word *baptizo* must have another meaning given it, namely, *sit*. This will be wonderful, that a Greek active verb through the translation-process, becomes an English neuter-verb!

One serious objection to Dr. Schaff's view is, that in Acts i. 5, there is no mention of fire. It is said, "Ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence." It does seem that the words "and fire" would have been used if the fire-baptism was to occur on Pentecost. It is not necessary to say that the term *fire* is never used in the Bible as the symbol of the spirit of devotion. It may possibly be so used in Psalm xxxix. 3, Luke xxiv. 32, 1 Thess. v. 19.—Let everything be conceded in regard to these and other similar passages which may be demanded. Still the fact remains that in an overwhelming majority of instances in which the term *fire*, as a metaphor, occurs in the Bible, it is the symbol of pain, punishment, vengeance. This no one can deny. Nor can it be overlooked that the Spirit of inspiration has specially selected the term *fire* to denote the torment of the wicked in the eternal world. Hence we read of *hell-fire*, or more literally *the hell of fire*, everlasting *fire*, the lake of *fire*, etc.—The words under consideration, "baptized in fire," refer, I doubt not, to the punishment of the finally impenitent. So many dissent from this view, it is proper that convincing proof of its correctness be presented. When John the Baptist uttered the words, "He shall baptize," etc., he had many auditors, and they were divided into two classes—the righteous and the wicked, the penitent and the impenitent. We learn from Matthew that many were baptized, confessing their sins, and also that "Pharisees and Sadducees were present." We learn from Luke that "the people" were present, and that John said "unto them all I indeed baptize you in water; \* \* \* He shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire." It will not do to say all the people were to be baptized in the Holy Spirit.—This was not the case. And if the term *fire* denotes "the kindling, sanctifying fire of the Holy Ghost," the tautology is very nearly incredible. If it is said that it is most in accordance with the demands of grammar to say the same persons were to receive baptism in the Spirit and in fire, I shall not delay to argue the point. While it is evident that John spoke to the people, I suppose his language was somewhat elliptical, and that his meaning, fully ex-

pressed, would be this: He, the Messiah, whose harbinger I am, will immerse some of you, the penitent, in the Holy Spirit, and immerse others of you, the impenitent in the fire of hell. A passage similar in construction and meaning is Luke ii. 34, "Behold this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel." Here we are not taught that the same persons will fall and rise again, but that the result of Christ's being appointed a Saviour will be, that some will reject him to their ruin, while others will receive him to their salvation. Or to express the ideas in Scriptural language, Jesus will be to some "a stone of stumbling," and to others "the foundation laid in Zion."

But the supreme argument to prove that baptism in fire means the punishment of the finally impenitent, is supplied by the import of the term *fire*, as used in the verse preceding, and the verse succeeding, the words under consideration. The tenth verse reads thus: "And now also the axe is laid to the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." No one doubts that the word *fire* here symbolizes the punishment of the wicked in hell. The twelfth verse is as follows: "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor; and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Here likewise the term *fire* is symbolic of the punishment of the hopelessly lost. Now the question arises, Can *fire* in the eleventh verse have a meaning different from its meaning in the tenth and the twelfth verses? If so, seldom has so remarkable a fact been recorded in the annals of interpretation. But it cannot be. The tree not bringing forth good fruit, representing the wicked, is to be cast into the fire; the chaff, the symbol of the wicked, is to be burned with unquenchable fire; and therefore the wicked are to be immersed, enveloped in fire. I do not see how any other consistent exegesis can be given, and an inexorable necessity requires the one here presented. Alas! what a terrible retribution awaits the ungodly! Fire, proverbially known as productive of pain, is the emblem of their suffering, while immersion in fire indicates that the suffering will be so great as to be perfectly overwhelming. May those who read this article be immersed in the Holy Spirit, that they may never have experimental knowledge of what is meant by immersion in fire.

For the Christian Messenger.

#### LET GOD SPEAK.

In the "march of intellect," men are apt to look too favorably upon the claims of a new theory in its antagonism to an old opinion, especially if the new view is the offspring of a brilliant brain, whose influence is great in the world of science and letters. It is not strange that apparent conflicts between the inspired record and these later expositions are developed. The last two centuries have brought out facts which have revolutionized the theories and thinking of the wise. Old philosophies have been modified, and new ones have been born. Divine truth, of course, is ever the same; but man's conception of it may be varied; and his perception of it can not be more perfect than the clearness of his revelation. The natural heart of a man, the most distinguished in science and philosophy, is still at enmity against God; and it is not strange if that enmity improves any opportunity to attack God's word.—That word should stand upon the sure vantage-ground secured by a translation as accurate in form and sense as is practicable. A moment's thought will suffice to verify this position; and further examination will convince that there are now facilities for the attainment of much greater accuracy in rendering the thought from the dead languages than those enjoyed by the revisers of King James.

The mental activity of the age has pushed investigation in every direction, and many materials for definite conclusions have been obtained, which, until recently, were want-