

An Exegesis.

BY REV. W. H. RICHAN.

"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God." John iii. 5.

We have here indicated the instrumentality by which, and the agent by whom, regeneration is effected.

If "water" here means the water of baptism, then baptism regenerates, and none can be saved without it; but such a conclusion is contrary to the general teaching of the Word.

In Titus iii. 5, we find a similar expression, "The washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." The word here rendered "washing" is not hudo, as in our text, but loutro, which by commentators generally is explained to mean bath, laver or font.

In Old Testament times water was regarded as a symbol of that which cleanses. "Then will I sprinkle clean (or cleansing) water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you."

Ezek. xxxvi. 25. If this refers to the baptism with water, as pedo-baptist would have us believe, then water cleanses from filthiness and idols; but baptism is not the "putting away the filth of the flesh." 1 Peter iii. 21. There is evidently an allusion here to the levitical rite of cleansing with water and the ashes of a red heifer, Num. xix. which was a type or symbol of real cleansing.

Again, "water" is frequently used as an emblem of the Word. Ps. i, "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water." As the tree draws sustenance from the water, so does the godly man from the Word. Ps. xlvii. "There is a river the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God."

Ezekiel xlvi. Here we see waters issuing from the sanctuary, increasing in volume as they roll onward toward the sea, and causing joy and gladness whithersoever they come. What is this but a picture of the progress and effects of Gospel truth? Isaiah lv. "Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." Verse 3, "Incline your ear and come unto me, hear and your soul shall live." Verse 10, "For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven. . . so shall my Word be that goeth forth out of my mouth."

Again, is not the word the grand instrumentality by which the great change is brought about?

This is the sword which kills, Eph. vi. 17; Heb. iv. 12, and the vehicle which brings life. "John v. 25. "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and they that hear shall live." And vi. 63, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." It is that which dispels the darkness; "The entrance of thy words giveth light," Ps. cxix 130, and "is not my Word like as a fire, saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" Jer. xxiii. 29. But see 1 Peter i. 23, "Being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God." See also James i. 18, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth," i. e., made us his children by his word. Now is it reasonable to suppose that the Saviour in speaking of regeneration and the means by which it is to be effected would refer to the agency of the Holy Spirit and make no allusion to the instrument by which the work is accomplished?

But, having referred to the word as the instrumentality, we find him in pursuance of his purpose, the regeneration of his inquirer, making a practical application of his doctrine, by presenting to him in the 14th and the following verses the very essence of the Gospel which he is required to believe, and which is able to make him wise unto salvation. It may be objected to this interpretation that it is contrary to the laws of language to couple in this way two words, one of which (water) is figurative and the other (spirit) literal.

But is not the word pneuma, signifying breath or air, which is applied to the third person of the Trinity, also symbolical? Does it not symbolize the office which the Spirit performs in the work of regeneration and sanctification. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, etc., so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

"The Spirit like some heavenly wind Breathes on the sons of flesh, Creates anew the carnal mind, And forms the man afresh."

In Ezekiel xxxvii. chap. we find a figurative description of the process of regeneration. The prophet is there commanded to say unto the dry bones: "Oh ye dry bones hear the word of the Lord," and then to the wind: "Come from the four winds, oh breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live." What can this "breath" symbolize but the agency of the Holy Spirit in regeneration? Have we not here "water and the Spirit?"

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger. The Lexicons Again.

MR. EDITOR,—

I find by a number of the Wesleyan just received, that the lexicon question has been revived, by an advertisement in that paper in which Bro. Hall of Melvorn Square offers \$50 each for certain Greek-English and other lexicons named in Rev. D. D. Currie's Catechism. Rather a bold stroke of Bro. Hall thought I, as I read the advertisement, and all the more so since Mr. C. sought to make it appear in his challenge of 1878 that he possessed those very books. I notice that Mr. C. answers the advertisement, but does not produce one lexicon asked for. It may be no business of mine, but being somewhat interested in the matter, you will perhaps allow me to make a few remarks on Mr. C's reply, not that Mr. Hall is not fully capable of handling the matter himself.

Mr. Hall having asked for Greek-English lexicons of Schrevelius and others given in Mr. C's catechism that define baptizo by sprinkle: Mr. C. replies: "The lexicons of Schrevelius, &c., are not Greek-English, but Greek-Latin lexicons, wherein the meaning of the Greek words are given, not in English but in Latin." It is refreshing after over two years of suspense to find that some one has succeeded in bringing Mr. C. to confess that he did falsify the lexicons after all. Bravo Bro. Hall! You have succeeded by a very few words in accomplishing what I failed to do by many thousands.

In the above confession Mr. C. condemns his catechism, for as is well known he says the definitions on page 12 are those "as given" by Schrevelius, &c.; and again: "Schrevelius gives these definitions, &c;" then follow a list of English words, not Latin as we should expect according to Mr. C's statement above. Whether Mr. C. really meant to convey the idea that the lexicons contained those identical words as found in the catechism, I will not say; if he did not he was most unfortunate in the choice of words, and if he did he could not have chosen words to express his meaning more fully than those used by him. That those lexicons gave those very English words would be the impression of the great majority of readers, and that impression would be deepened and confirmed by the following from Mr. C's article in the Wesleyan of August 29th, 1879, in reply to my request for him to meet me in Halifax to discuss the question: He says: "On another occasion, and in another way, we may at an early day show that the authorities given by us have been, in every particular, accurately quoted." Can words be plainer, or could any man condemn himself more completely?

I do not know whether that promise

was fulfilled, but this I do know that either those lexicons are Greek-English, or they were falsified, if as Mr. C. says he quoted them "accurately in every particular;" that the latter is the case has been clearly shewn by Mr. C's reply to Mr. Hall, for he says they are Greek-Latin, and "do not give any English meaning at all." To "quote accurately" he should have given the Latin definitions, but instead of that we find professed translations of them, nor are even the translations correct, for according to Dr. White (from whom Mr. C. sought help in the hour of peril, but in vain) says "that to apply lavo in the force of sprinkle, to baptizo is wholly out of the question." The italics are Dr. White's. It will be remembered that in Mr. C's Moncton Times letter signed by three clergymen, that was the ground he took, viz., that baptizo means lavo, and lavo means sprinkle, therefore baptizo means sprinkle. But Dr. White having shewn that lavo in the sense of to sprinkle "occurring only in the poets (which definition I may say in passing, cannot be sustained even in the poets) has shewn Mr. C's position to be untenable.

Why is the author of the catechism so silent about the Greek-English lexicon of Grove? He should be required to explain himself on that point. The silence is ominous; and why is nothing said about the lexicons of Cole and Dwight which are professed to be quoted from in the catechism? Were I in Nova Scotia, I should be disposed to order the three lexicons of Grove, (sprinkle edition) Cole, and Dwight, through the Methodist Book Room. I observe Mr. C. still sticks to the mutilating theory. He says: "They (the lexicons) must necessarily be altered; and mutilated (Mr. C. seems to have felt the force of this necessity himself); or as the title page of each altered volume says 'improved' to suit the demand. Publishers will not bring out large and expensive volumes without a fair prospect that they will sell." This just means that the lexicographers and publishers aim not to give correct definitions of words, but to make money; that if they find their books will go off better by giving certain meanings to words, although they know such meanings are not correct, still they will put them in. Or in other words, these men knew that baptizo means to sprinkle, but they know also that if they put in sprinkle their books will be unsold upon their shelves, but that would never do, so they put the wrong meaning, viz., immerse, because then they will do a good business. It is to be hoped that catechism writers are not actuated by such motives.

We are told by Mr. C. that in America "a large proportion of the English-speaking people are Baptists who will not buy lexicons that condemn their creed, and that these lexicographers and publishers have "improved" their lexicons "to suit the demand, so that a purchaser can get anything in that line he desires"!!! Is it not strange if those men are so accommodating that all the colleges and academies encourage them in their evil course by ordering the "altered, mutilated, and improved editions?" If the books are "made to order" like boots and shoes, &c., why do they not "order" a sprinkle edition? If those guilty men had an eye to numbers in publishing their lexicons, and not correctness, then they would not have given any definition that savoured of dipping or immersion, for Pedobaptists in the states far outnumber the Baptists. The latter, of all kinds number about 2,100,000 as nearly as I can find, and the former at the very lowest calculation 4,600,000, of which Methodists of various kinds number about 3,170,000. So that those men did not have a good eye to business in laying their plans, and Mr. C's argument comes to nothing, and he sinks deeper into the mire than ever.

Perhaps the translators and publishers of our English Bibles were actuated by the same mercenary motive, viz.: "love of money" when they published a book which said that Naaman "dipped himself seven times in Jordan," that the people "were baptized of John in the river of Jordan," &c., &c. If so they have succeeded admirably for the book has had a most remarkable sale.

The only lexicon Mr. C. has put his finger on as mutilated is that of Liddell and Scott. It may be remembered that the American publishers of that lexicon were written to concerning Mr. C's

charge; their reply, and Mr. C. must have seen it at the end of my pamphlet — was: "You may be assured that this work in question is entirely free from the charge to which you refer. There has never been one word put into the article baptizo in the American edition, or removed from it except in accordance with the English edition." The word "pour" was taken out of the English edition because no case could be found in Greek literature which would justify such a definition, consequently it was struck out. Mr. C. rightly says, Catechism page 72. "We should appeal to the tribunal of usage, which is of supreme authority, and the rule in the language. Usage is a higher tribunal than the authority of all critics," and Dr. Graves says: Debate page 280:—"Lexicons are authoritative and valuable only, as they establish meanings given by quotations from approved authors;" with which Dr. Carson also agrees, for he says, page 23: "The just and most obvious method of ascertaining the meaning of a word, is to examine its origin and use in the language." To the tribunal of usage the word "pour" as a definition of baptizo was brought, and condemned by a jury of the most eminent scholars in Europe; (with whose verdict American scholars fully agree) these men, although they did not sit at one time or in one place were unanimous in their verdict, which being conveyed to Liddell and Scott, they expelled the intruding word from the place it has so long held; the American publishers finding this, dealt with it in the same way.

So according to Mr. C's own principle "pour" has no claim whatever as a definition of baptizo, and the case of sprinkle is equally hopeless.

I must now ask you Bro. Selden and your readers too, to forgive me; I had no idea of writing so long a letter when I began, but when I got into it, it seemed so much like old times that I let my pen go.

I find that the Editorship of the Wesleyan is to be changed. My surprise thereat is small in proportion as it was great at the change about a year or so ago.

Charming weather here. Prospects of good crops excellent. Stormy weather in the House of Commons, as you have seen ere this concerning Bradlaugh election for Northampton.

Yours,

Melksham, Wilts. J. BROWN.

For the Christian Messenger.

Our European Letter.

(From our regular correspondent.)

PARIS, FRANCE, June 19, 1880.

This is favorable weather to talk about Arctic explorations. Nordenskjold, the Swedish explorer, after having been made the object of general ovations in Paris and in Naples, expects to return soon upon another expedition. He is ambitious, and has declared that he will continue to go and return until a final day when he will return no more, for by his words he predicts that such a day will come, and that he like Franklin and others will be heard from no more. He who succeeds in finding a passage to the North Pole will indeed leave a name that will go down to posterity, but in all probability this passage will vary every year, according to the movement of icebergs, and after winters of unusual severity cannot be found at all. And then the peril that ships upon this route must always face will doubtless be greater than advantage gained. Merchants would probably reflect that the homely proverb of the "longest way round is the quickest way home" was a sound one, after a few vessels had been locked in ice for a year or two. But this is a progressive age, and if it is proved that there is an open polar sea it will not be long before an immense raft as strong as two or three icebergs will connect the open sea with the southern sea, and there will be rapid railroad transportation, or, still better, a canal! And when the French have finished their canal in Central America this will in all probability be the next one in consideration.

When one goes strolling about the immense abattoirs of Paris at La Villette he sees many curious sights, but none stranger than the performances of the Hebrew butchers. Among the many hundreds of workmen about the abattoirs, young fellows alert and strong, who sing and laugh as they work so

rapidly and skilfully, there are some you instinctively pick out at once as peculiar; for they do not proceed in the same manner as the others. These are the Jewish sacrificers. There are four of them at the central abattoir, but many more altogether. They are according to the usages of their race, designated by the grand Rabbi after a previous examination, since for them there are certain formulas to observe, and, as all know, the Israelites do not easily cast aside old traditions. Every animal intended for the nourishment of the Jews must be bled to death. This method seems a cruel one. Beside, as soon as the beast is dead it must be opened and examined with care, for if it is impure it cannot be delivered to these "people of God."

False counts, marquises, chevaliers, are as plenty as raspberries in summer now a days. They are to be found in all the capitals of Europe. The latest of this interesting class who has been caught playing his tricks is the Chevalier de Seeligman, and his numerous tricks and frauds having been proved against him, he is condemned to three months in prison.

LOUIS.

For the Christian Messenger. Foreign Missionary Matters.

Dear Bro. Selden,—

This morning I received a letter from Bro. W. F. Armstrong dated Gulf of Suez, 18 June. He says that he and family embarked at Bimlipatam on 23rd May and took the steamer at Madras on 29th of the same month, and after a comparatively pleasant trip they arrived at Port de Galle on 1st June and at Aden on the 15th. Though it was the period of the South-west Monsoon, they had only three days of rough weather and were also favored with comparatively cool weather. But Mrs. A. and her little daughter Katie had not gained much strength so far from the journey, but were hoping that the bracing and cooler breezes of the Mediterranean might nourish vitality and repair the wasted energy of the invalids.

Bro. A. with the concurrence of his colleagues, has put the Chicacole Mission in the care of Miss Hammond.

Bro. A. reports that a very interesting state of things in a religious sense, was manifest at the time of his leaving Chicacole, and which made him quite reluctant to leave. He had baptized 10 since January 1, and "several others had asked for the ordinance."

You have learned that Bro. A. has informed us by cable despatch of his arrival in London, July 7.

Let us hope that the passage across the Atlantic may fully invigorate Mrs. A. and daughter.

Yours truly,

W. P. EVERETT, Sec'y. F. M. B. St. John, N. B., July 12, 1880.

Words of Cheer.

ST. MARTIN'S, N. B., July 12, 1880.

Dear Bro. Selden,—Please publish in the Messenger of this week the following extract of a letter just arrived from Rev. Dr. McKenzie, and much obliged, Sincerely yours,

I. E. BILL.

BOSTON, July 8, 1880.

REV. I. E. BILL,

My Dear Brother:—I am delighted to see by your note published in this week's Messenger, that you are engaged upon a work of such magnitude and importance, as that of our denominational history, as it worked itself out under your own personal observation in the Maritime Provinces. Your topics as announced in your prospectus, cover a wide field, and your material is the best and most abundant. Such a task will be one affording profound pleasure and when completed will put us all under a heavy debt of obligation to you. That is a work which I sincerely hope you may be spared to finish, and a book, I hope I may live to read.

There is much of romance in our denominational history, as developed in the Provinces, and you were an eye-witness, and more, you were a prominent actor, among the men who, under the Divine guidance, made that history.

It was in my heart to cheer you on in your laudable effort, to give us your recollections of Baptist men and doings, and I have now uttered what was in my heart. Wishing you every blessing, with pleasant memories of the days when I toiled at your side for a little season, and with kindest regards,

I remain, dear Brother, Yours very cordially, W. S. MCKENZIE.