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The Christian Visitor.

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"Hold fast the form of sound words." - 2 Timothy, i. 13.

SAINT JOHN, N. B., THURSDAY, MAY 19, 1870.

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WHAT IS CHRISTIAN BAPTISM?

By A. SERMON. Preached by Rev. E. C. Carter, on his own pulpit on the fourth Sabbath of the Christian year, May 1st, and published for the "Visitor" by special request.

Know ye not that so many of us were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Look at the evidence from Translations of the Bible. The early translations of the bible have been examined on this subject.

Six translations were made during the first 300 years from the birth of Christ, and eight during the next 500 years, making fourteen in 800 years.

Our opponents in this controversy pretend to make frequent reference to and great use of these prepositions. But in so doing they remind me of children carelessly handling edged tools.

Let us translate it to please them, and were all baptized of him with the river of Jordan. With those days came John the Baptist preaching with the wilderness of Judea.

Let us examine these passages. For those various ablutions among the Jews by sprinkling, pouring, &c.

Let us examine these passages. I will quote the whole of Mark vi. 1-4. "Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem."

How would it read, "ran violently down to the sea, and perished with the water." Matt. xiii. 47. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea."

Here the preposition eis means out of, and was simply able to bring them out of the water after the church had been immersed.

But some may ask, does eis never mean from? Yes, when the circumstances of the case require it, but in all these cases it truly has the signification of out of.

Why was this? Jesus had been in the midst of a crowd that pressed upon him.

After all, the question is, do the words baptizo and baptisma in these passages mean wash or immerse?

Let us look at the baptism of the Israelites into Moses. Paul, in 1st Cor. x. 1-2, uses the following language: "Moreover brethren I would not have you ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea."

Let me quote two pedo-baptist witnesses in this case, who give us a very sensible view of it: "Witians, a very learned Lutheran divine, who died 1708, says, 'How were the Israelites baptized in the cloud and in the sea, seeing they were neither immersed in the sea nor wetted by the cloud?'"

Prof. Stuart, "They went through the sea on dry ground. Yet they were baptized in the cloud and in the sea. The reason and ground of such an expression must be, so far as I can discern, a surrounding of the Israelites, on different sides by the cloud and by the sea, although neither the cloud nor the sea touched them. It is therefore a kind of figurative mode of expression derived from the idea that baptizing is surrounding with a fluid."

The Israelites were clearly immersed (figuratively) in the cloud and in the sea, inasmuch as they were completely surrounded and covered.

Let us look at those passages of Scripture where baptizo is used when the Christian ordinance is not referred to. A little book on baptism has been kindly loaned me, written by Peter Edwards, several years pastor of a Baptist Church at Portsea, Hants Co., England, giving his reasons for becoming a pedo-baptist, and addressed to the Baptist Church of which he had been pastor, Jan. 12, 1795.

I have examined carefully that portion of the book which has reference to the mode of baptism. His first and most important argument is derived from his view of the above mentioned passages. "I will quote," he says, "I come now to consider the term baptizo, which is the only term made use of to express this ordinance, and this I shall do by setting down those places where it is used as a verb or a noun when the ordinance is not intended."

1. For those various ablutions among the Jews by sprinkling, pouring, &c. 2. For a custom among the Pharisees of washing before meals.

3. For a superstitious washing of household furniture, cups, pots, &c. With these instances in view, I would propose to the reader two questions: 1. Is the word baptizo used in these instances to express immersion only?

2. Is it used to express any immersion at all? I have not time to quote more from the Rev. Mr. Edwards. But observe, that in these passages is the pedo-baptist's stronghold. I admit that if he can prove that in these instances the word has no reference to immersion, but means a washing, as our version teaches, or a sprinkling and pouring, as he infers, then he has gained a strong point, and has proved that baptizo does not invariably mean to immerse or something equivalent to immerse.

Let us examine these passages. I will quote the whole of Mark vi. 1-4. "Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashed hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash (nupto) their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash (baptizonto) their hands, they eat not. And many other things there be which they have received to hold, as the washing (baptizonto) of cups and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables."

Notice a few items in the foregoing account. 1. Mark records it as the custom of not only the Scribes and Pharisees, but of all the Jews, to wash their hands before eating, and calls it a tradition of the elders.

Jesus rebukes this custom, by not observing it. It was not authoritative, nor necessary for cleanliness, but traditional.

MR. SPURGEON AND HIS WORK.

Having had much intercourse with Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, and his devoted brother, Rev. James Spurgeon, during the winter I have passed in England, I give my American friends, who may read this, some of the information I have received from and about him.

When Mr. Spurgeon came to London, about fifteen years ago, and took charge of the Church of which Rev. Benjamin Keach, John Gill, D.D., John Rippon, D. D., and Joseph Angus, D. D., had successively been Pastors, he found them worshipping in an old church edifice, in a location quite surrounded by stores, and urgently demanded for business purposes. Surrey Garden Hall was soon required and obtained, in which to hold the thousands of worshippers who desired to wait on the young Pastor's ministry.

I heard Mr. Spurgeon preach his first sermon after his partial restoration to health, and noticed some languor and fatigue apparent towards the close of his sermon, but no direct allusion to his affliction was made by him, except as a lesson applicable to all Christians to be profitably drawn from afflictions in general.

I might give you the testimony of many other able scholars to the same effect. But why should I? The word baptizo means immerse in classical Greek, in the Greek Christian Fathers, yet when referring to the Christian ordinance, it is why should it not be used in the same manner, those passages? The fact is, as is so used, and here is not the slightest reason for giving to the word any other meaning.

After two weeks, I introduced Rev. Dr. Bronson and Rev. Mr. Goss, Miss Goss, Miss Bronson, Rev. Dr. Goodwin, from Chicago, of the Congregational Church, to him in his room, after morning service, and he greeted them all with his accustomed smile of welcome, and in a few minutes enjoyed a real hearty laugh at some remark that was made, and seemed not at all anxious that our visit should be brief, yet we had the good sense and piety to make it so.

I have ascertained that the Tabernacle Church owns property valued at nearly four hundred thousand dollars, most of which has been accumulated during their present pastor's ministry; besides the Tabernacle building, which is very spacious as an audience room, not only, but has over twenty rooms for other purposes, under and behind it; some of them large enough to accommodate hundreds of people.

Well as we have seen the Jews did not immerse themselves in coming from the market, they did immerse such articles of household furniture as are mentioned above. Why, there should any one endeavor to prove from the mentioned passages that the word meant something different from what it means in classical Greek, the early Christian writers, and all of passages where it occurs in the New Testament.

1. The word baptizo in Greek means dip to plunge, to immerse. There is no asse to be found in classical literature where the word occurs where it does not require to be translated by immerse, or by a word of kindred affication.

2. There is scarcely a Greek Lexicographer who will venture to say it means anything. And most of those who say it means to tell us that when it is so translated it means washing done by immersion.

3. I am not aware that there is any Lexicographer who ventures to say it means to sprinkle, or to pour. And if one were to found, he would prove nothing against the testimony of the many who give no such meanings.

4. It is doubtful if there ever was a translator of the bible who ever ventured to state this word to sprinkle or to pour. It is plain that most persons who have translated it, have rendered it to immerse.

THE COMING GIRL.

An exchange describes what it calls "The Coming Girl." We trust the photograph is a correct likeness, and that the distinguished personage may move on rapidly and arrive soon.

She will vote, will be of some use in the world, will cook her own food, will earn a living, and will not die an old maid. The coming girl will not wear the Grecian bead, dance the German, ignore all possibilities of knowing how to work, will not endeavor to break the hearts of unsophisticated young men, will spell correctly, understand English before she affects French, will preside with equal grace at the piano and the washboard, will spin more yarn for the house than the street, will not despise her plainly clad mother, her poor relations, or the hand of an honest worker, will wear a bonnet, speak good plain, unisping English, will darn her old stockings, will know how to make doughnuts, and will not read the Ledger oftener than she does the Bible.

The coming girl will walk five miles a day, if need be, to keep her cheeks in glow; will mind her health, her physical development, and her mother; will adopt a costume both sensible and conducive to comfort and health; will not confound hypocrisy with politeness; will not practice lying to please instead of frankness; will have the courage to cut an unwelcome acquaintance; will not think that refinement is French duplicity, that assumed hospitality where hate dwells in the heart is better than outspoken condemnation; will not confound grace of movement with silly affectation; will not regard the end of her very being to have a bean; will not smile and be a villain still.

The coming girl will not look to Paris, but to reason for her fashions; will not aim to follow a foolish fashion because milliners and dress makers have decreed it; will not torture her body, shiver her soul with penitentials, or ruin it with wine and pleasure. In short, the coming girl will seek to glorify her Maker and to enjoy mentally His works. Duty will be her aim, and her life a living reality.

WARM YOURSELVES.—There are many persons who, if they could, would sit by the fire and draw in its heat without exertion or trouble. And so they may, when they are so feeble as to be incapable of labor. But if one be in good health, the physician says to him, "Stir abroad. Rouse the energy of your system by exercise. Work, walk, climb! Let your blood be your stove!"

There are many Christians who use meetings as lazy and dainty people use fires. They go to them to be warmed, and suck in without exertion a certain moral stimulus, not wholesome because derived from no exertion of their own. Their pastor should say, "Go out and work. Create

one reason why so many adult members of our churches never take any part in social religious meetings is, that they were not trained to do so from the start. Their early education was sadly neglected. When I asked an excellent man of thirty to take part in a prayer meeting, he re-

plined, "I was not called out by the pastor of the church where I joined ten years ago, and I have never learned. It is hard to begin now."

A new convert's subsequent career commonly depends on the first six months of his religious life. He should at once be "put into harness." He should be called on to pray, and to say a word for Jesus, and to engage in some kind of practical work. Like a raw recruit, he should be drilled, and taught to handle his spiritual weapons.

One of the best training schools I know of is the Young People's Meeting—a weekly gathering for those who are yet young in years, or young in religious experience (even though they be forty years old). A new convert is not so bashful in the presence of young disciples gathered in a private parlor as he would be in a church lecture-room before the elders or deacons, or the veterans of whatever name. If he breaks down in his first attempts, he does not mind it so much. He soon gets used to the sound of his own voice; he acquires fluency; he learns how to use "the gift that is in him." From this training school he comes into the Sunday School, or the weekly conference meeting of the church, with some equipment for Christ's service.

During the last fifteen years there has been such a Young People's Meeting in the two churches (of New York and of Brooklyn) to which I have been permitted to minister. It is arranged on this wise. The meeting is held in a private house, for by this method a social intercourse is promoted throughout the congregation. In the course of the year fifty families open their houses for an evening visit from the other members of the flock. The place of meeting is selected by a committee chosen annually. It is held on Monday evening, at 8 o'clock, and commonly lasts one hour. The spot selected is announced from the pulpit on the Sabbath. No inconvenience is occasioned to the household who receive the meeting under the roof. The sexton of the church takes a cart load of camp stools to the house about supper time, and a box of hymn books. They are placed in the hall. As each one comes in he helps himself to a seat and a hymn book. The service is conducted by some one designated beforehand. As soon as a new convert has spoken a few times, and "got the hang of things," he is appointed to lead a meeting. Some may object that this process may tend to produce forwardness and self-conceit; or else that the meeting may suffer from being in the hands of an inexperienced novice. But I have never seen either of these results to follow. The crying sin of our churches is not excessive forwardness for Christ in anything; it is rather an excessive backwardness or a tongue tied timidity.